



making

for

two or

more

sonny han
graduation portfolio
columbia gsapp march

abstract:



singularity

exceptionality

disparity



multiplicity

commonality

collectivity

- 1. post-plantation hudson yards**
- 2. infrastructure for wills**

break: catalog throne

- 3. amorphous families**
- 4. school of generations**

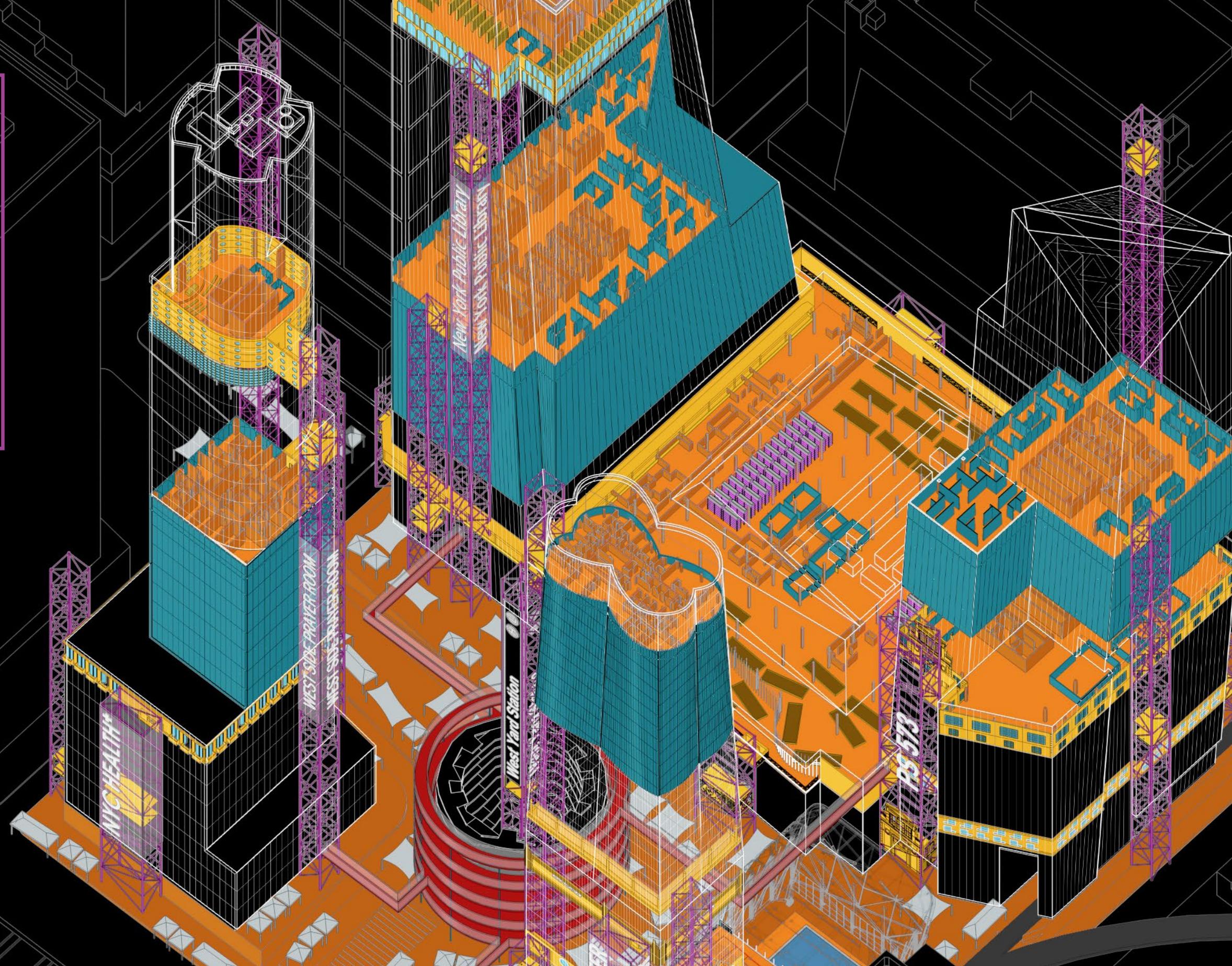
break: architectural photography

- 5. split rock heritage shelters**
- 6. unconditioned art space**

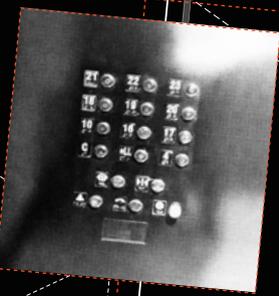
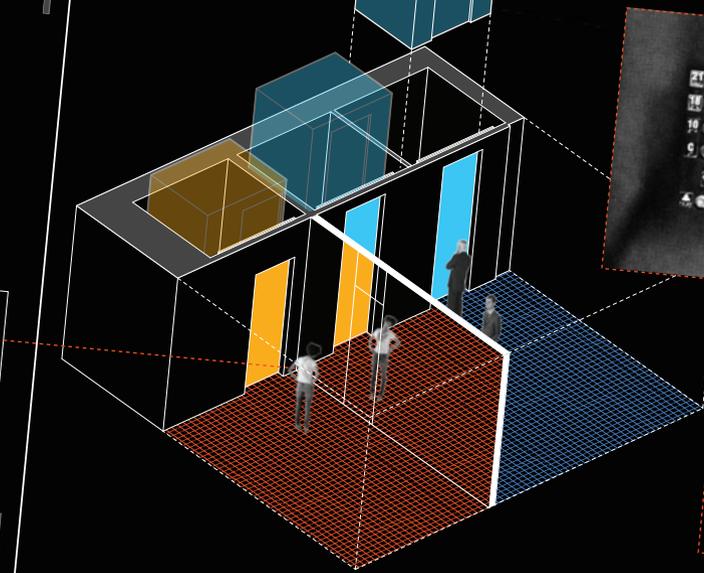
post-plantation hudson yards

adv 5: post-plantation futures
studio critic: Mabel O. Wilson
collaborator: Gene Han

The post-plantation future is when the mirage of the unreachable, inaccessible, immaterial world of Hudson Yards is shattered. It is where the image physically collides with the very world from which it exploited in order to—to quote Katherine McKittrick—“envision not a purely oppositional narrative but rather a future where a correlated human species perspective is honored.”



Within the building, individuals' movements are controlled by the limitations imposed by the elevator, and by the surveillance cameras whose data is collected by Related Companies.



25 ft

"The pool for [my wife] and I was very helpful because she has multiple sclerosis and it's easy for her to be in a pool for exercise, and I have severe rheumatoid arthritis. We asked them about all the amenities, and they kept saying, 'We don't know what you'll be able to do.'"

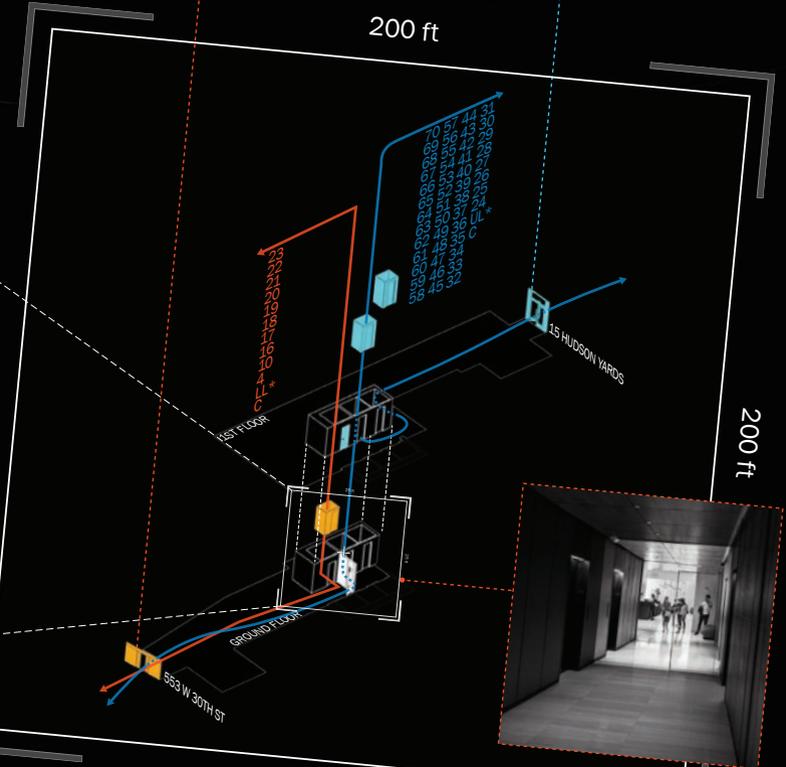
Ronnie Clark



Ronnie Clark (left), Ayenda Carmichael (middle) and Chanel Moody (right), with her 2-year-old daughters, Journee, are bringing a lawsuit against 15 Hudson Yards.

"My housing specialist told me I would not be able to use their pool on the 51st floor. She explained to me that I wouldn't be able to use the playground. She explained I couldn't come in through the front entrance. If I'm coming from 34th Street and I'm closer to 15 Hudson Yards and it's windy, I wouldn't be able to go through this door here? No, I wouldn't have to go around to 553 West 30th. I hear that I'm not going to put my daughter through that..."

Chanel Moody



200 ft

200 ft

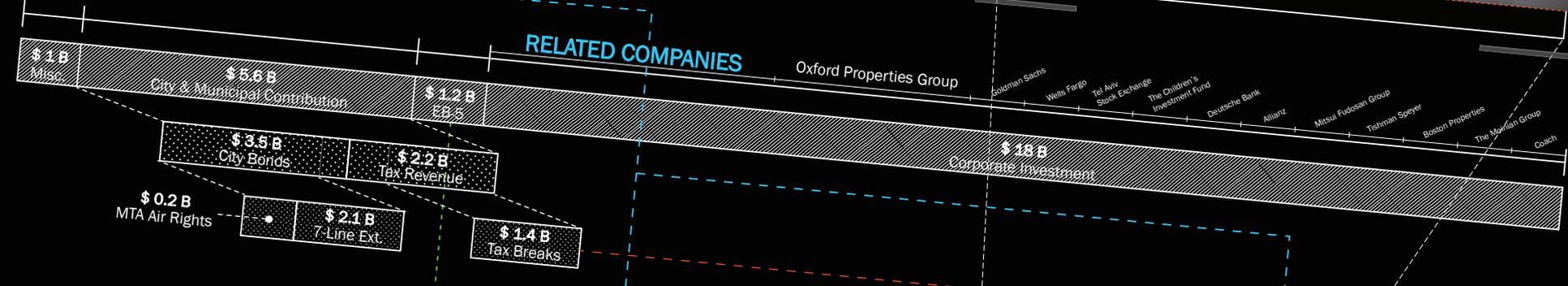


Related Companies included about 100 affordable housing units, and were able to receive 20-year tax abatement through 421-a.

The affordable housing units have a so-called "poor door," "poor floors," and "poor addresses."

The key components of the plantation logic are the exploitation, extraction, and deception at scales as large as the global trade network and as small as an elevator. From its inception, Hudson Yards development engaged in siphoning tax funds from the residents of the city—most egregiously from the residents of Harlem. The affordable housing units included in the luxury tower, 15 Hudson Yards, gave the developers a handsome tax break, and the affordable housing residents a poor address, a poor door, and a poor elevator.

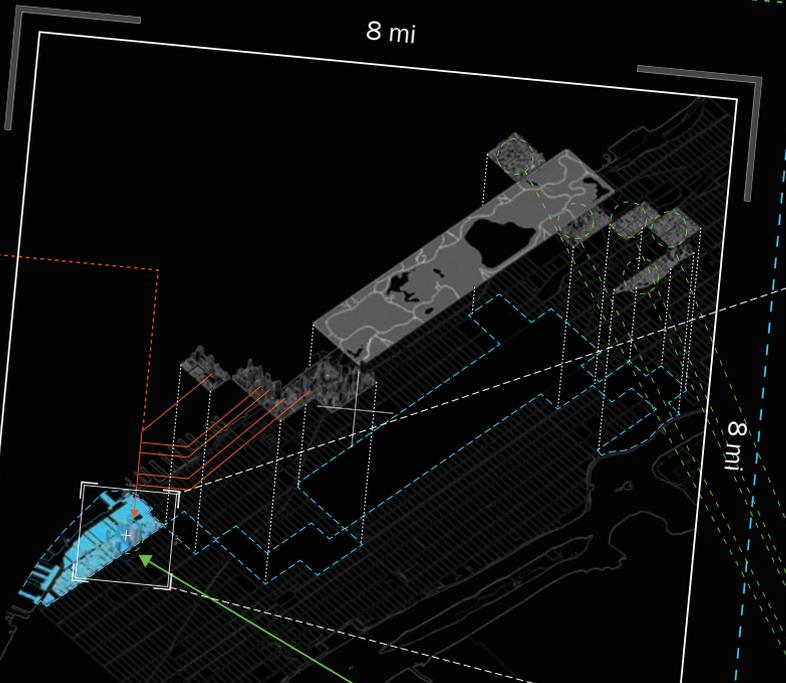
left: "follow the money" diagram



Oxford Properties Group

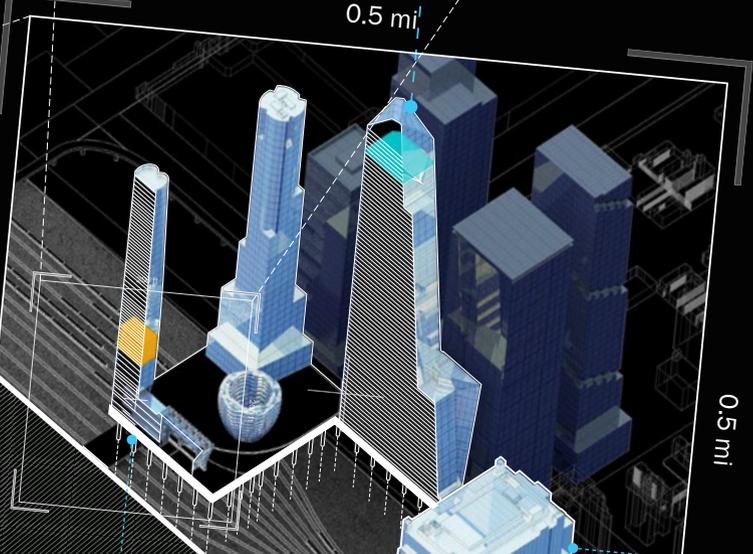
- Soldman Sachs
- Wells Fargo
- Tel Aviv Stock Exchange
- The Children's Investment Fund
- Deutsche Bank
- Allianz
- Mitsui Fudosan Group
- Tahmineh Speyer
- Boston Properties
- The Morgan Group
- Coach

The "new" business development as advertised by the Hudson Yards developers as part of the "self-financing" model. 90% of "new" businesses in Hudson Yards are relocating from Midtown.



8 mi

\$ 1.2 Billion worth of opportunity cost was extracted from lower income areas in the city and was contributed to Hudson Yards development via a "financial" gerrymandering of EB-5 Visa Program.

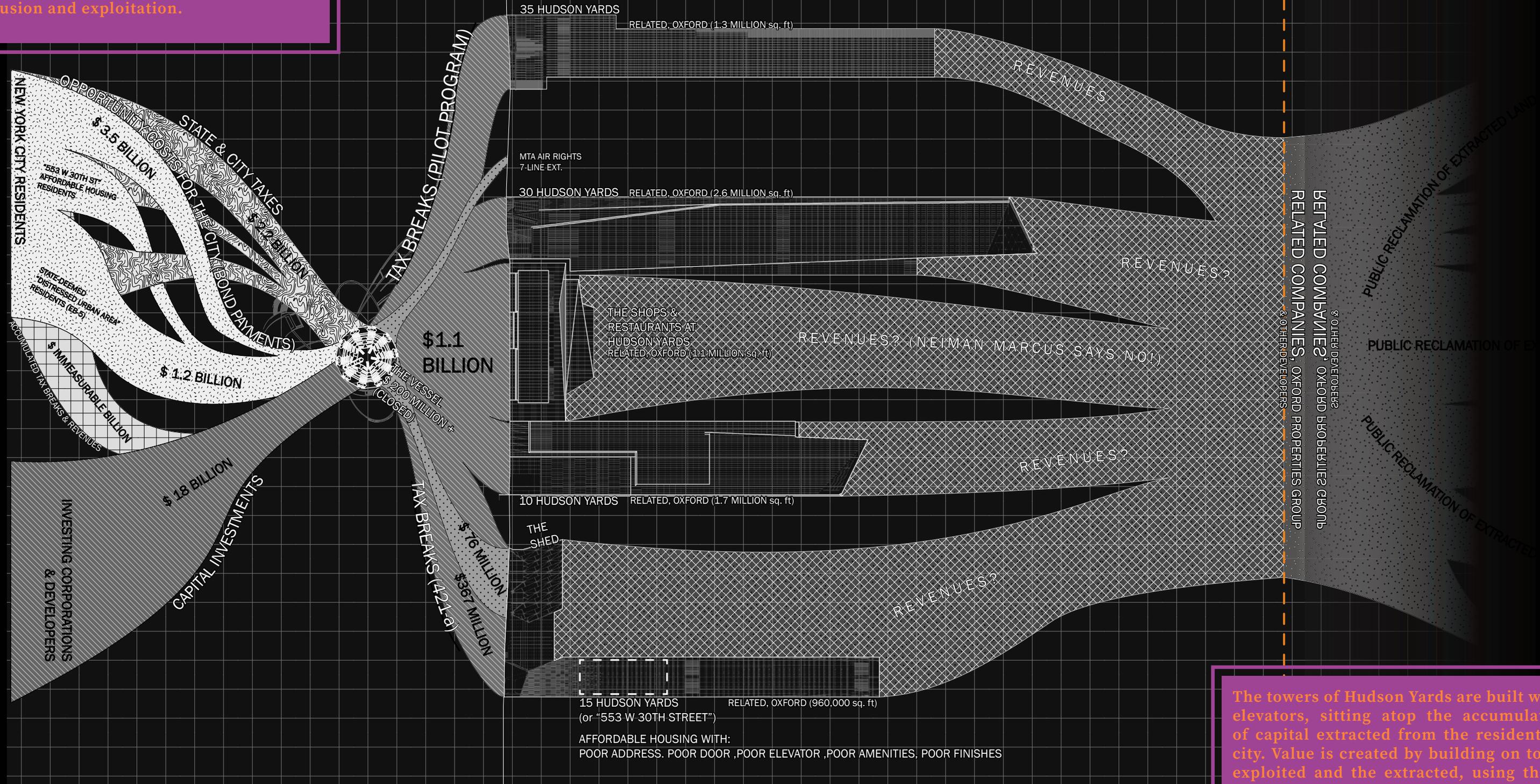


0.5 mi

0.5 mi

The processes of capital and opportunity extraction and accumulation by the developers and colluding governmental entities must be mirrored-reversed. Wealth and power that has been accumulated by the developers must be siphoned back into the public domain over time.

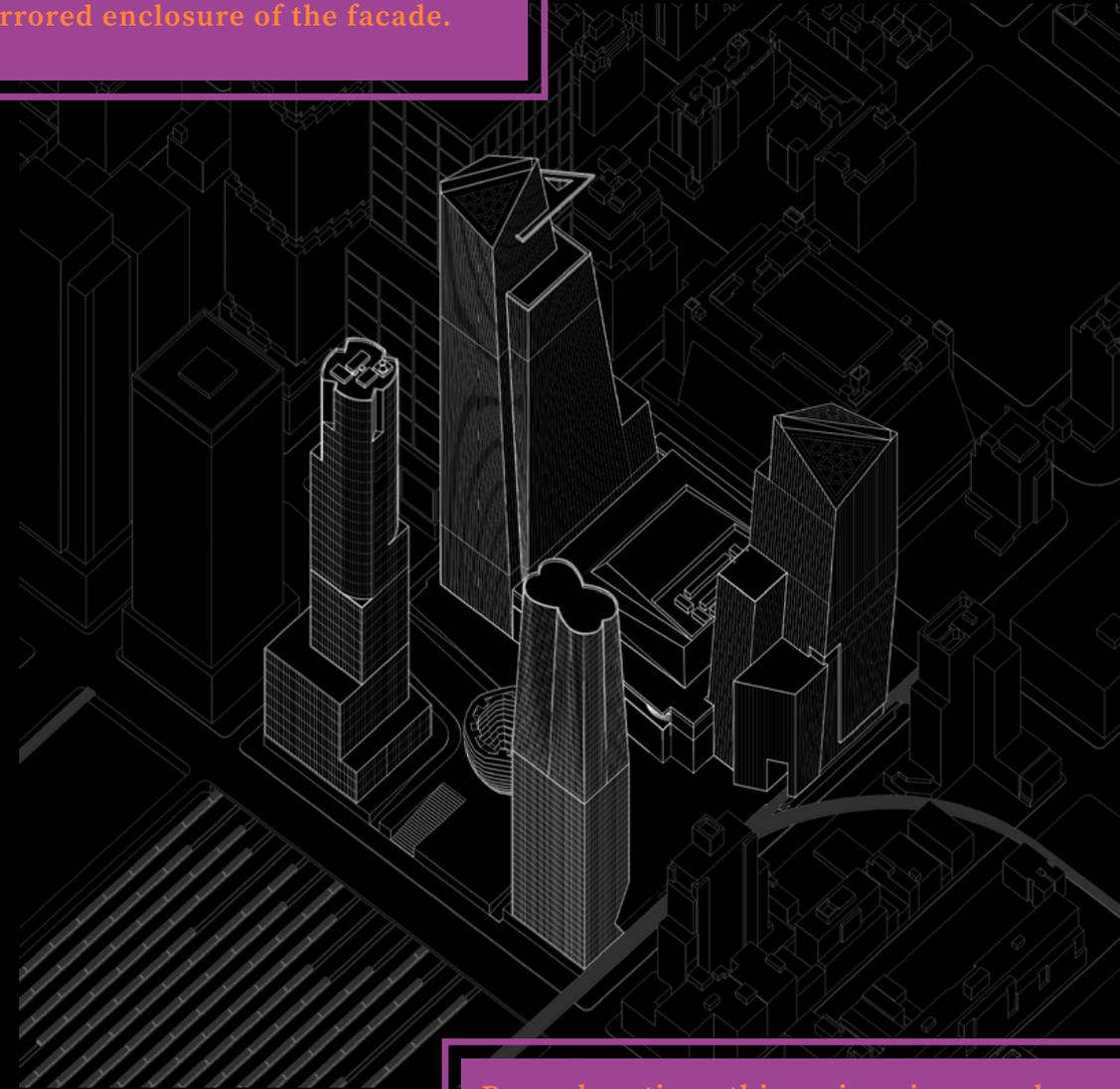
The elevator replicates the ground on which it sits and positions them high in the air. But when the very ground on which it sits is built through the exclusion and exploitation of the "other," the elevator replicates these practices of exclusion and exploitation.



15 HUDSON YARDS (or "553 W 30TH STREET") RELATED, OXFORD (960,000 sq. ft)
 AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITH:
 POOR ADDRESS. POOR DOOR, POOR ELEVATOR, POOR AMENITIES, POOR FINISHES

The towers of Hudson Yards are built with such elevators, sitting atop the accumulated pile of capital extracted from the residents of the city. Value is created by building on top of the exploited and the extracted, using them as a stepping stone while hiding their presence.

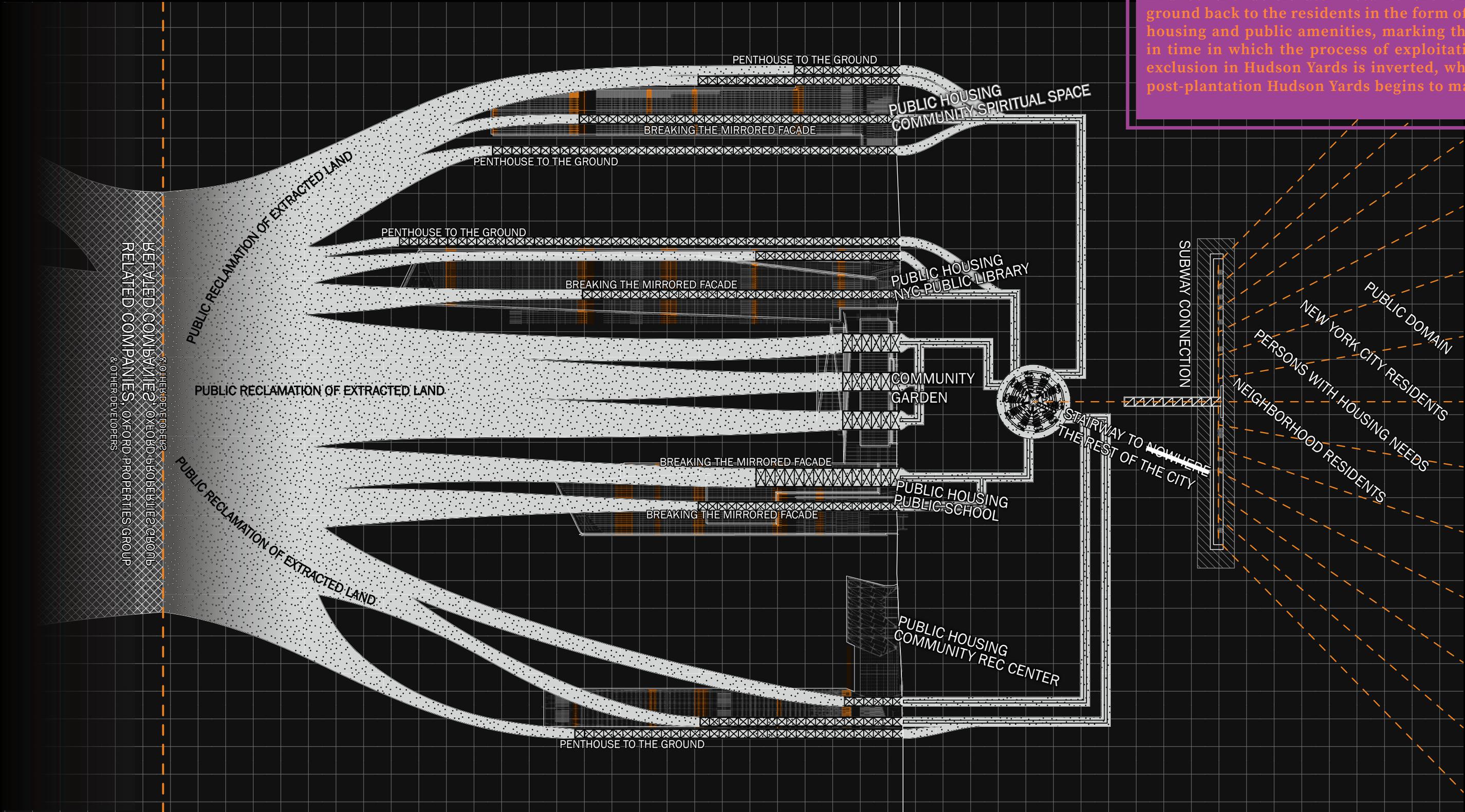
Such wrongdoings of the developers and the government to the residents of the city, thus, shall be repatriated through the inverse of this logic—a kind of a *DE-ELEVATOR*, which, instead of replicating the ground and elevating them above, condenses the individualized floors and brings them back to the public ground. Instead of hiding behind, it confronts the mirrored enclosure of the facade.



By subverting this mirroring enclosure, the threshold of the vertical enclosure as a line of symmetry is broken and transformed by multiplying and overlaying the public ground plane at different datums. During this process, the mirrored glass facades are replaced with new facades for the corresponding programs, so as to more directly connect those floors to the ground.



And so the de-elevator returns the extracted ground back to the residents in the form of public housing and public amenities, marking the point in time in which the process of exploitation and exclusion in Hudson Yards is inverted, where the post-plantation Hudson Yards begins to manifest.



RELATED COMPANIES, OXFORD PROPERTIES GROUP & OTHER DEVELOPERS

PUBLIC RECLAMATION OF EXTRACTED LAND

PUBLIC RECLAMATION OF EXTRACTED LAND

PUBLIC RECLAMATION OF EXTRACTED LAND

PENTHOUSE TO THE GROUND

BREAKING THE MIRRORED FACADE

PENTHOUSE TO THE GROUND

BREAKING THE MIRRORED FACADE

PENTHOUSE TO THE GROUND

BREAKING THE MIRRORED FACADE

BREAKING THE MIRRORED FACADE

PENTHOUSE TO THE GROUND

PUBLIC HOUSING
COMMUNITY SPIRITUAL SPACE

PUBLIC HOUSING
NYC PUBLIC LIBRARY

COMMUNITY
GARDEN

PUBLIC HOUSING
PUBLIC SCHOOL

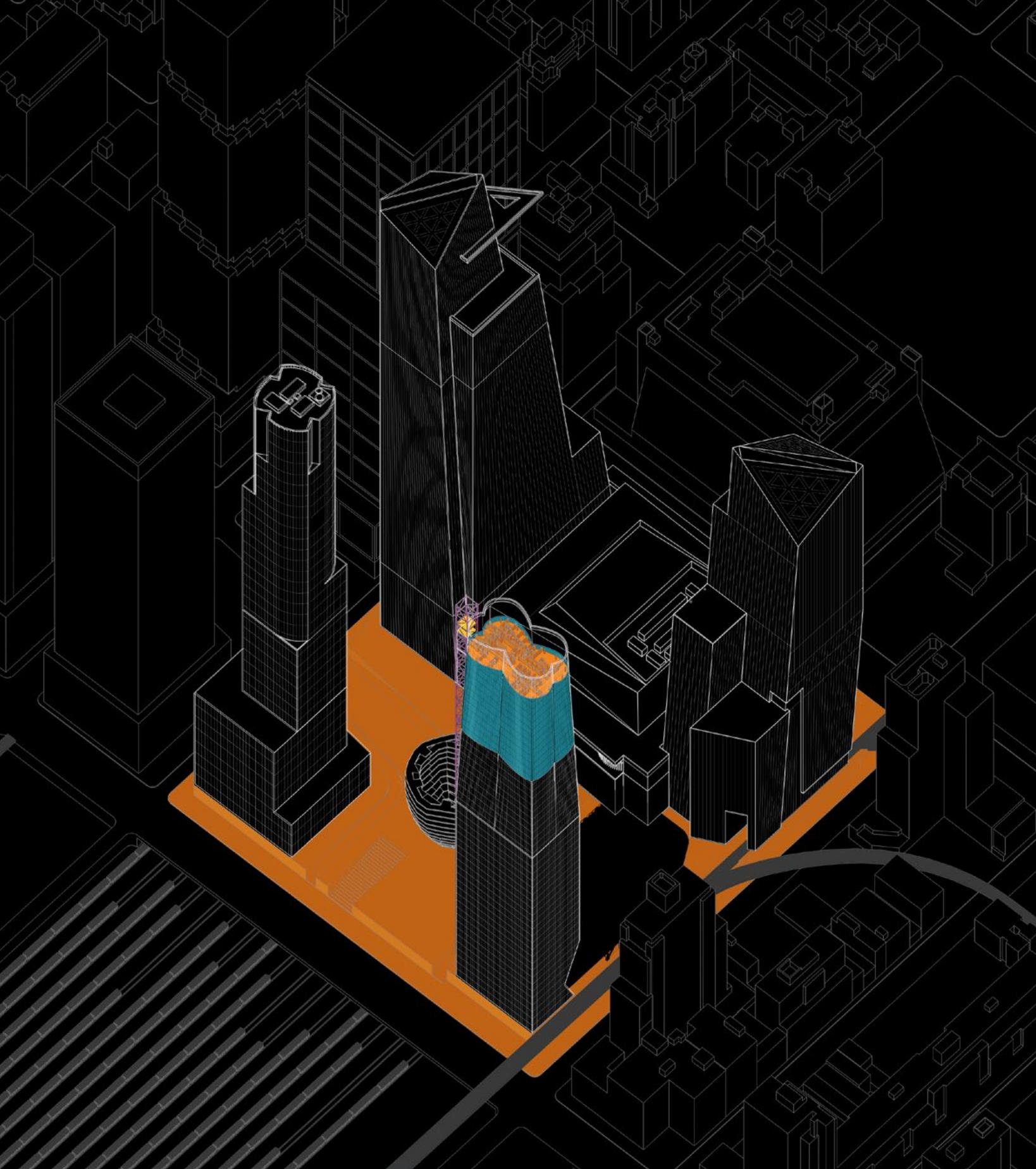
PUBLIC HOUSING
COMMUNITY REC CENTER

SUBWAY CONNECTION

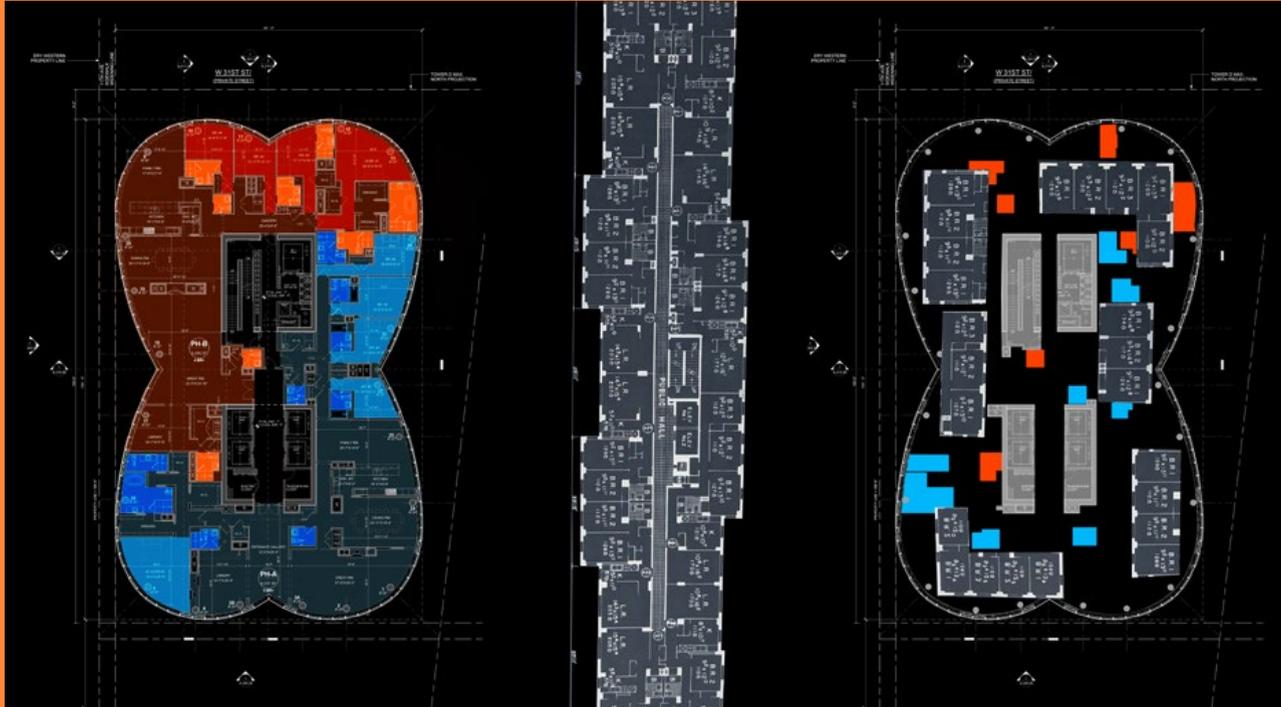
STAIRWAY TO NOWHERE
THE REST OF THE CITY

NEW YORK CITY RESIDENTS
PERSONS WITH HOUSING NEEDS
NEIGHBORHOOD RESIDENTS

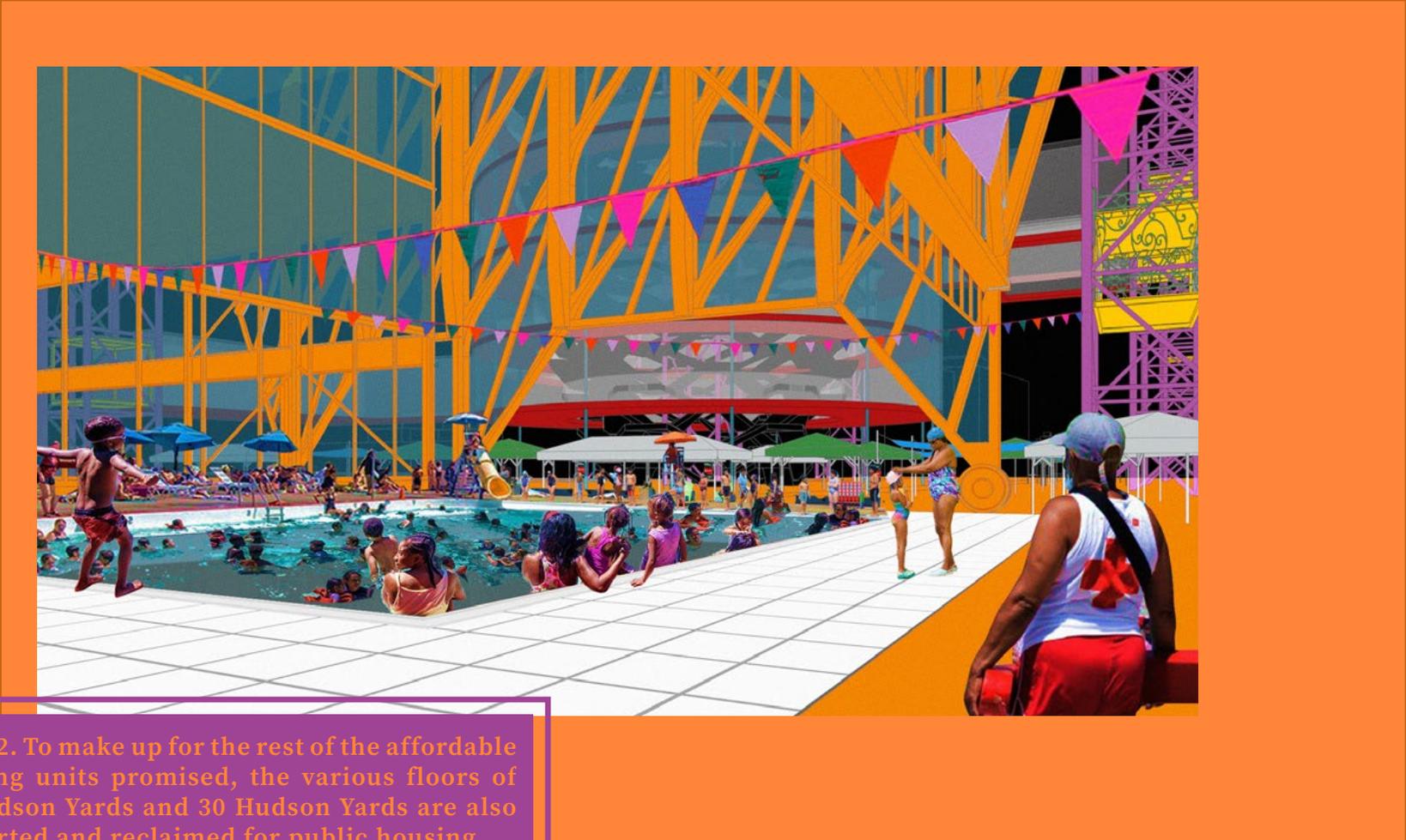
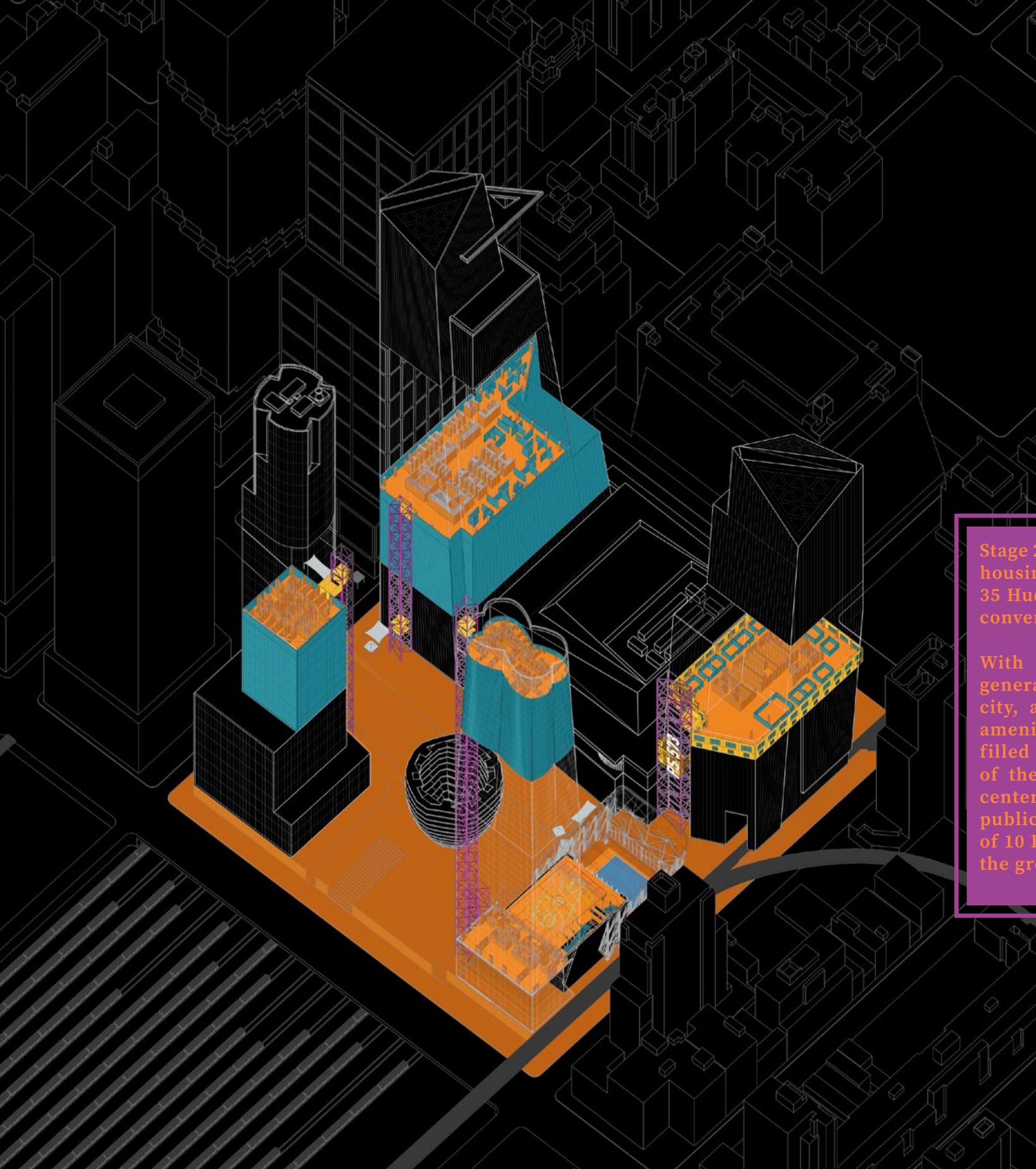
PUBLIC DOMAIN



Stage 1. Against the unstable and speculative betting on the part of the city and the state, the repatriation for the residents of the city begins at the reclamation of the platform ground on which the development stands alongside the conversion of the empty condominiums of 15 Hudson yards into public housing.

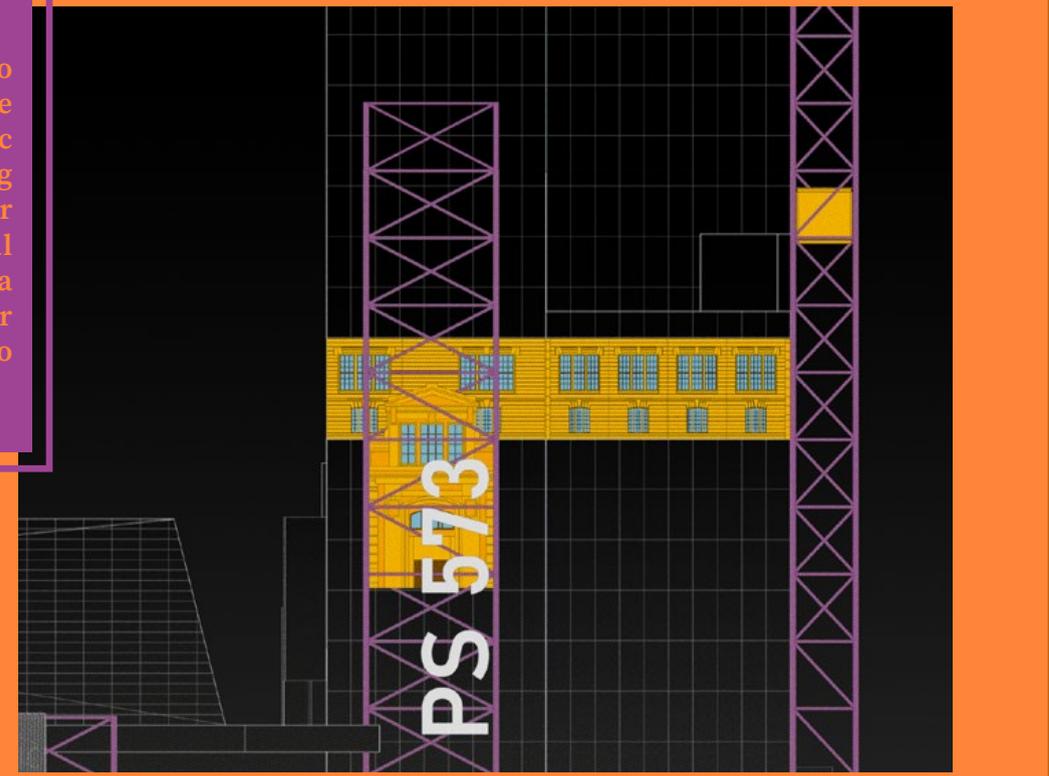


Related Companies is failing on its promise to construct 1,000 affordable housing units by coming short of 893 units. The two penthouses on the 66th floor could fit an entire floor equivalents of the Grant Houses.



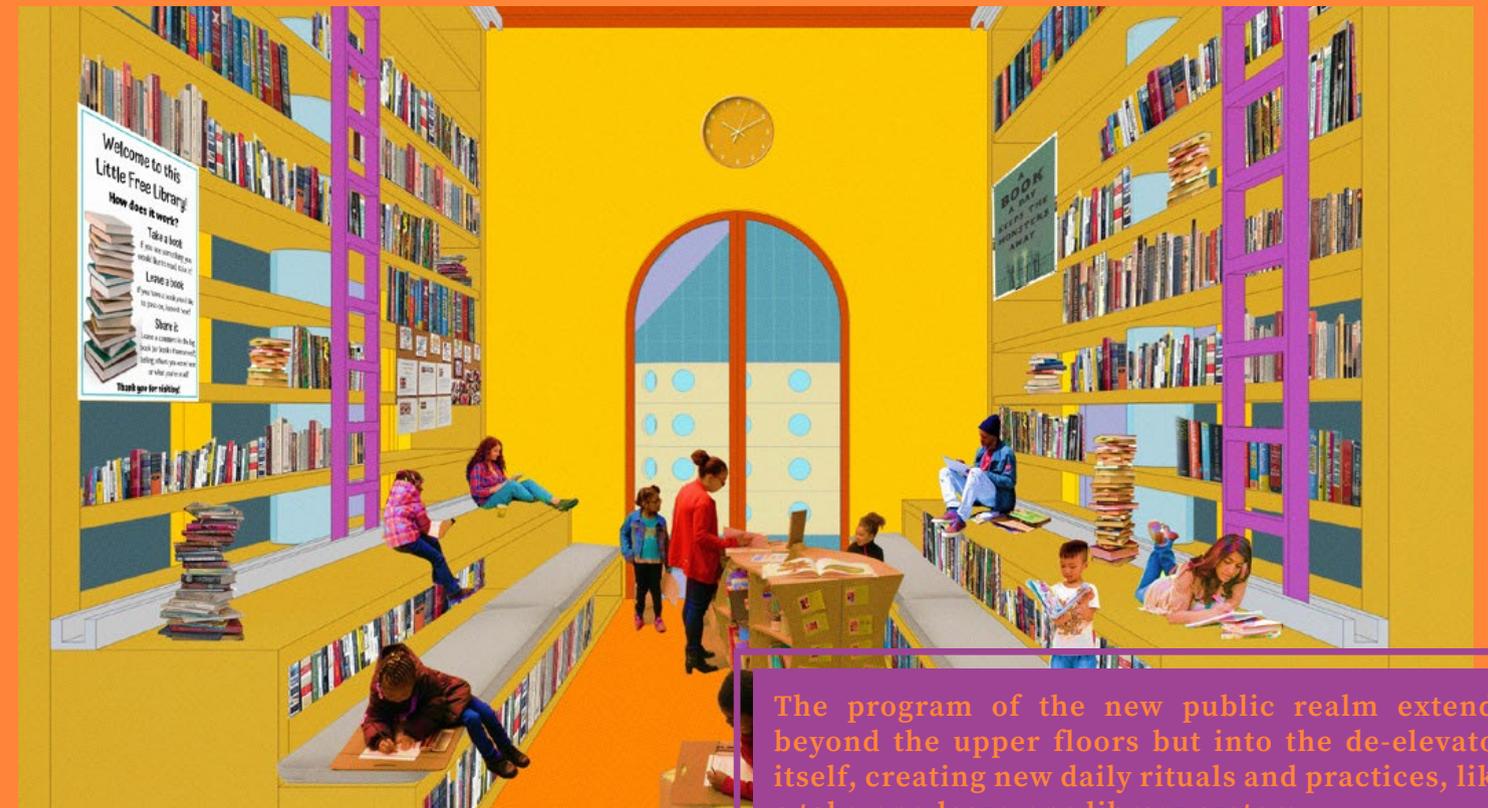
Stage 2. To make up for the rest of the affordable housing units promised, the various floors of 35 Hudson Yards and 30 Hudson Yards are also converted and reclaimed for public housing.

With greater inability for the developers to generate enough revenue to pay back the city, and with the grater demand for public amenities for the block, which is now getting filled with actual residents, the fourth floor of the Shed is converted into a recreational center. Meanwhile, right across the Shed, a public school is built on the 19th and 20th floor of 10 Hudson Yards, which is also connected to the ground level via the de-elevator.

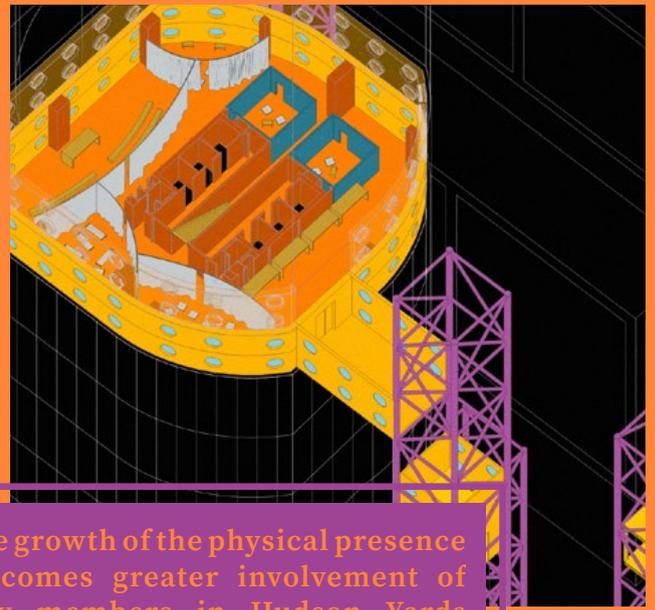
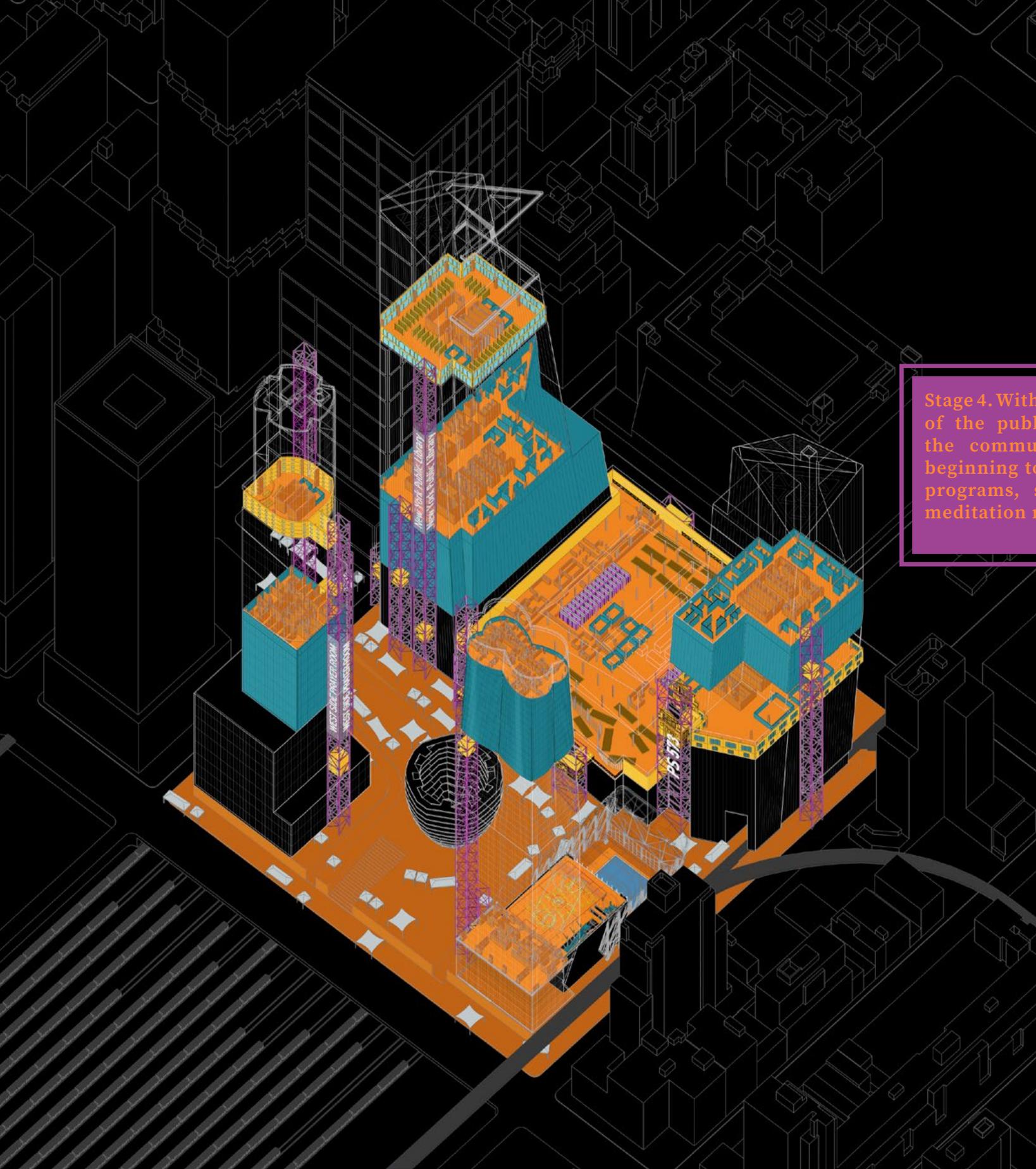


Stage 3. With a rapidly growing resident population, the municipality is at a stronger position to reclaim even more floors from the developers and bringing them to the public ground.

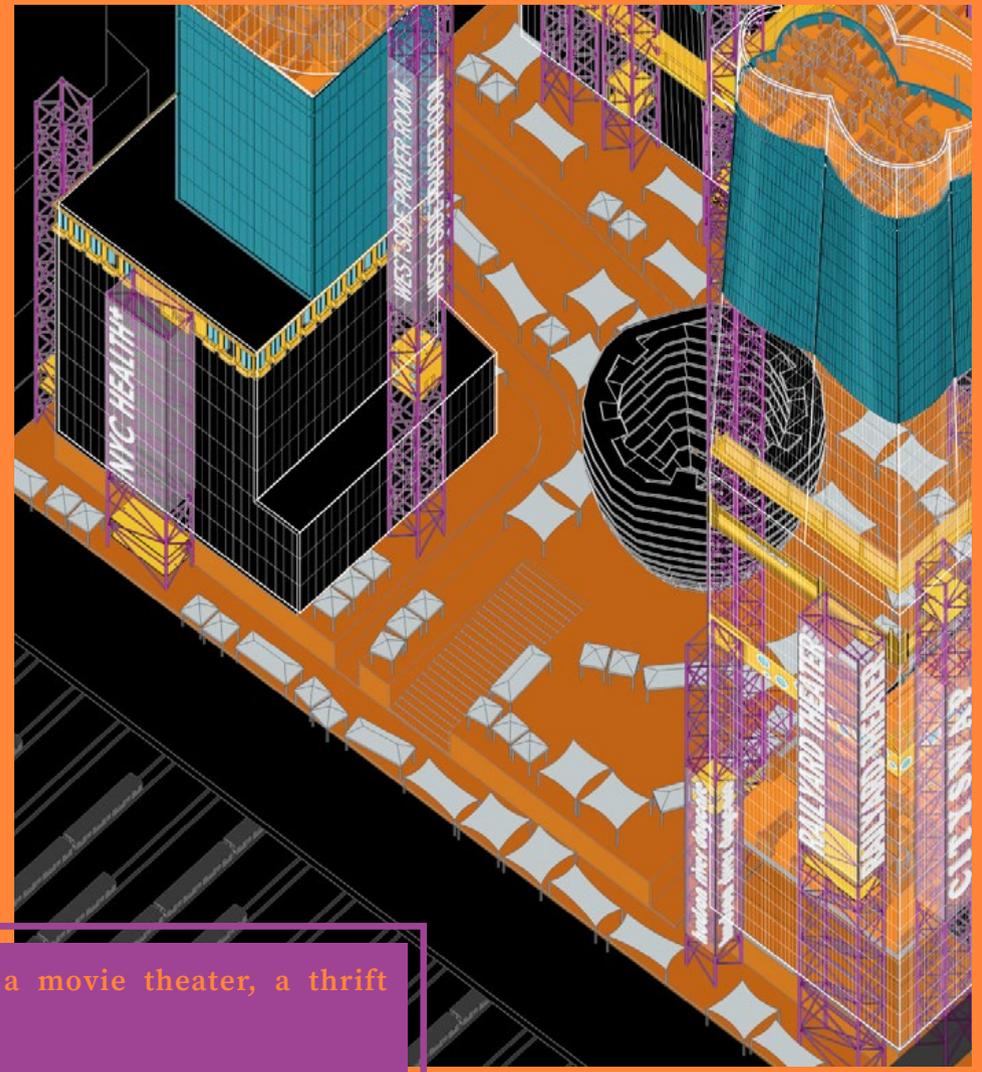
The floors left vacant by Neiman Marcus is converted into a community garden with both indoor and outdoor farming, while a floor in 30 Hudson Yards is returned to the residents in the form of a public library.



The program of the new public realm extends beyond the upper floors but into the de-elevator itself, creating new daily rituals and practices, like a take-one-leave-one library system.

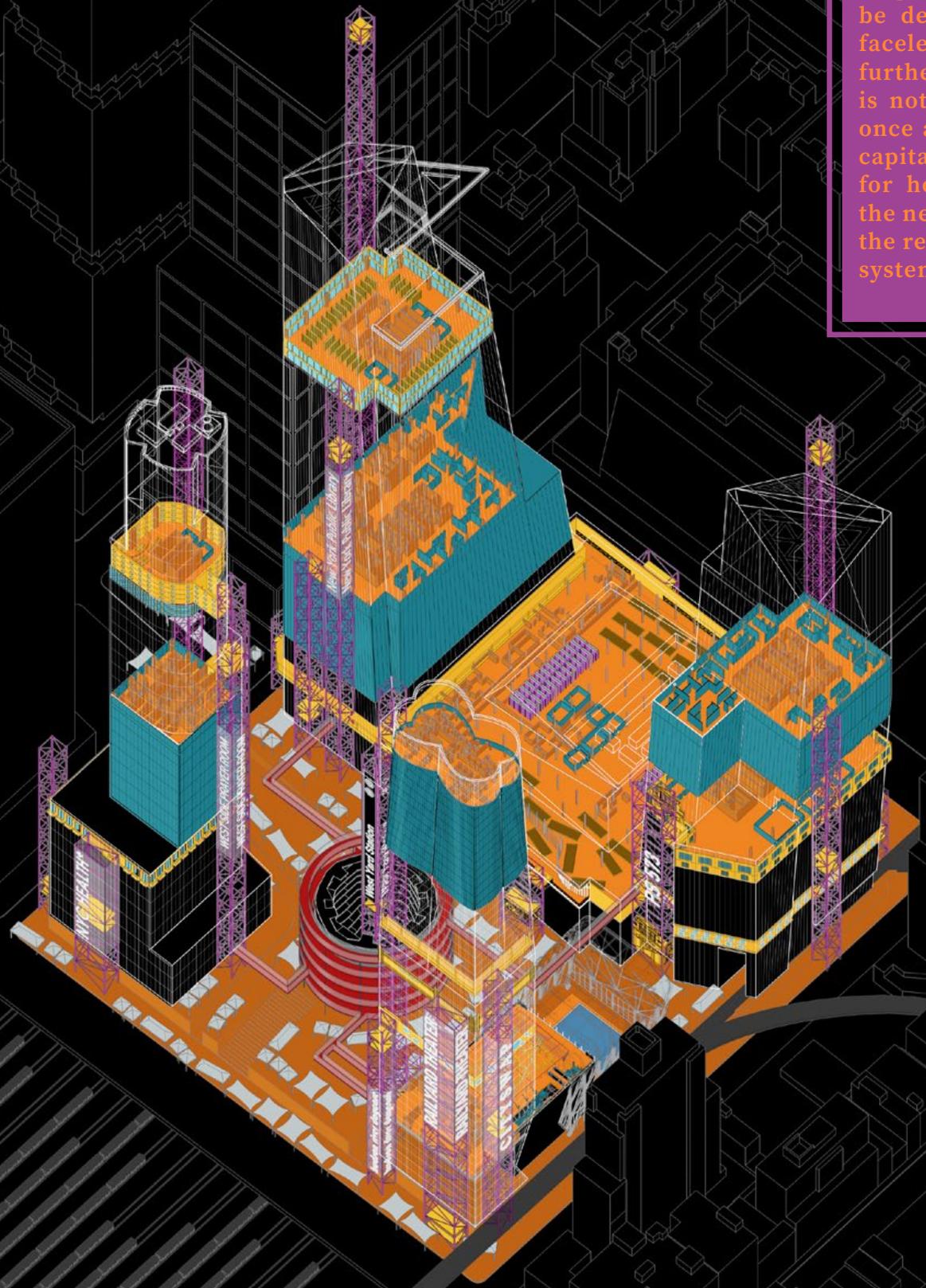


Stage 4. With the growth of the physical presence of the public comes greater involvement of the community members in Hudson Yards beginning to generate more community driven programs, such as a community prayer or meditation room.

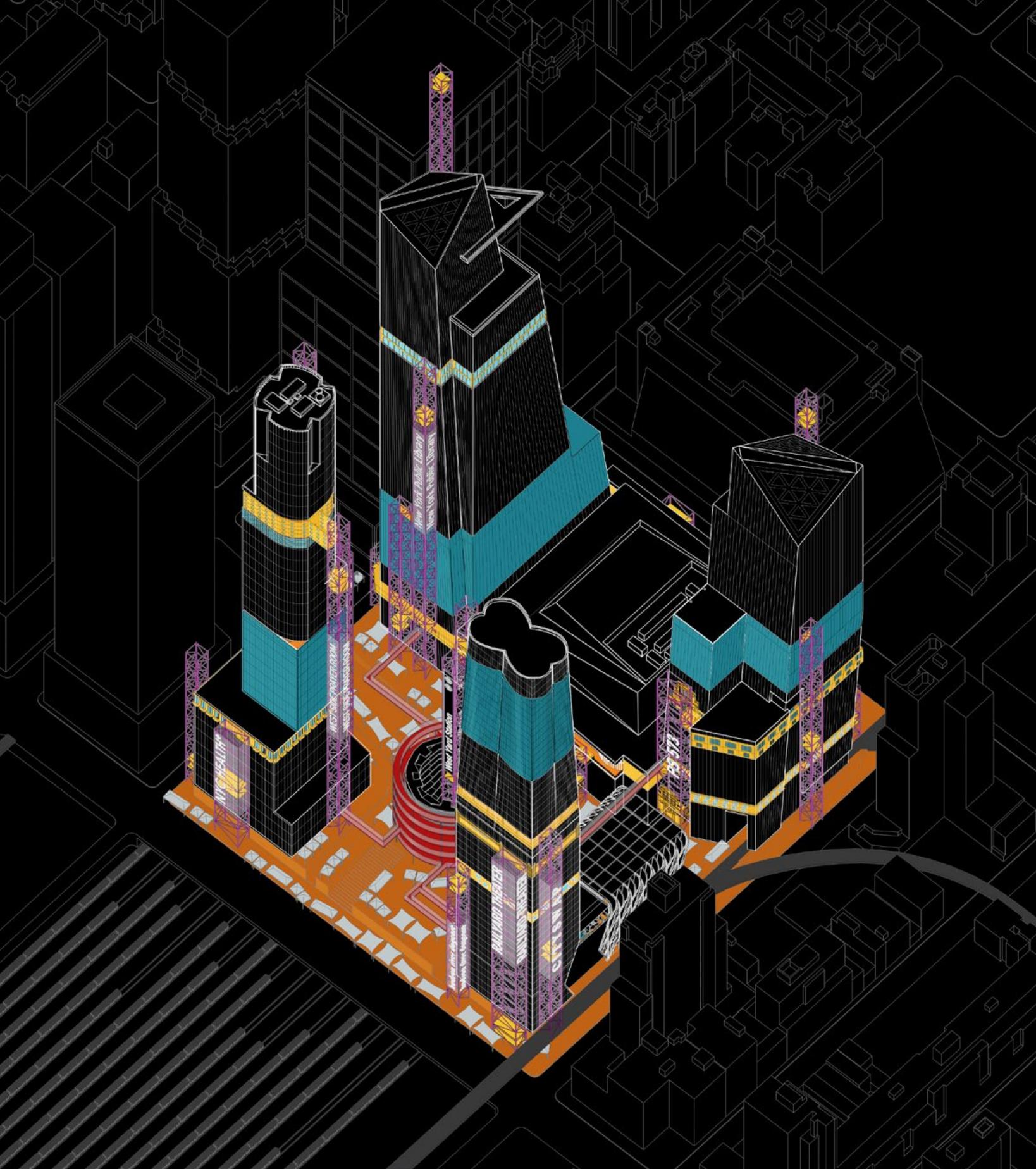


Or a health clinic, a movie theater, a thrift store, etc.

Stage 5. The elevated grounds continue to be de-elevated to the public ground, as the faceless mirrored facades get broken down further. However, the process of reclamation is not purely internal to the site. The Vessel, once a symbol of absurd wealth and late-stage capitalism, becomes a piece of infrastructure for horizontal connections from both within the neighborhood via elevated walkways and to the rest of the city by connecting to the subway system through the existing rail yard below.

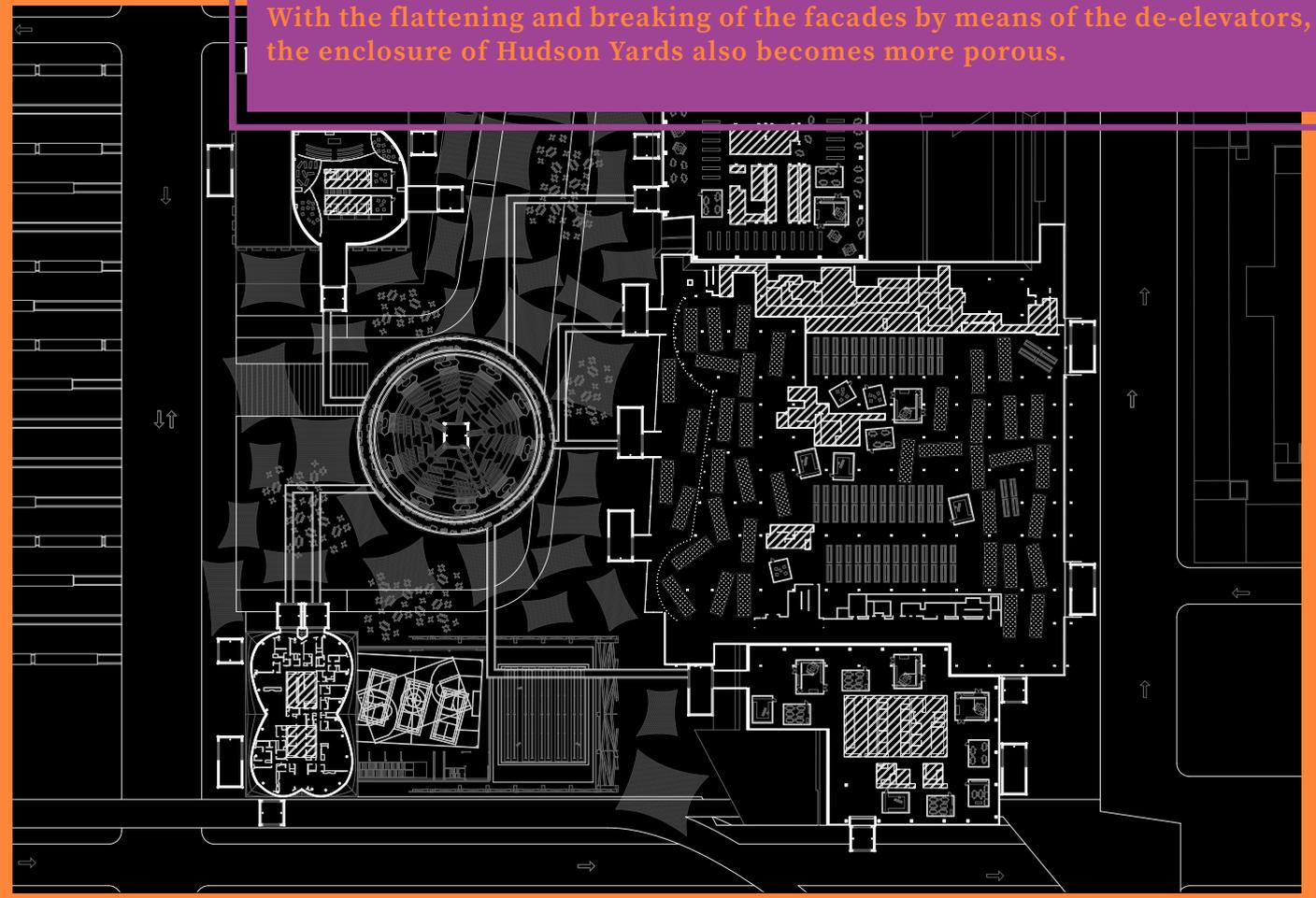


This new transportation hub sits in the middle of the site activating the ground level, amplifying the limited existing presence (by Related Companies) of the food vendors adjacent to the current 7-line MTA station. This amplification starts to blossom into a full market life whereby the neighborhood reclaims the public grounds on which Related gatekeeps today.



Through each step, the exploitative logics and practices of Hudson Yards and its developers are subverted by inverting the exclusive elevator core, breaking the mirrored glass facades, and bringing the extracted floors of the towers back to the public ground.

With the flattening and breaking of the facades by means of the de-elevators, the enclosure of Hudson Yards also becomes more porous.



The programmatic and architectural transformations, then, serve as a stepping stone for the exploited and marginalized residents of the city to not only reclaim the agency that was seized, but also to maintain and expand the said agency throughout the neighborhood, and beyond.



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THE
FISH
FOR
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post-plantation hudson yards
advanced 5 studio

infrastructure for wills

core 1: broadway stories
studio critic: Anna Puigjaner

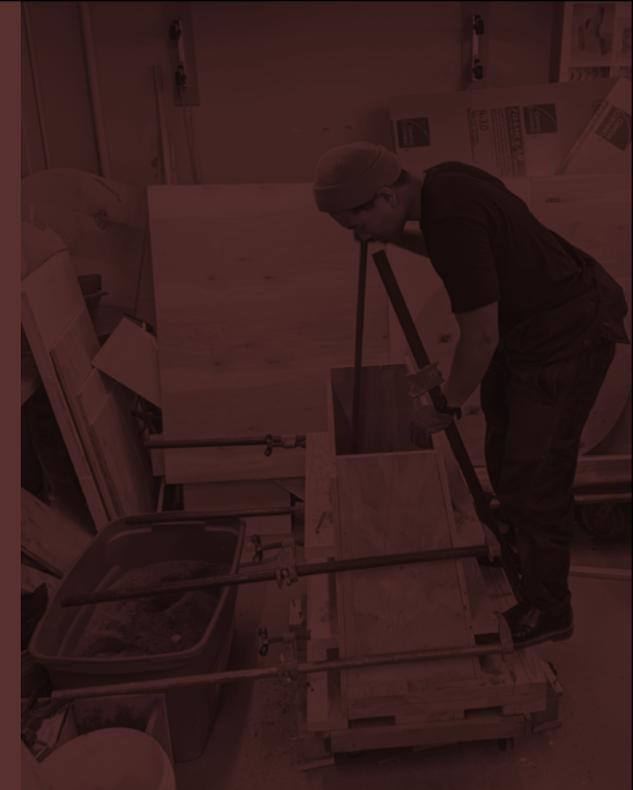
A semester-long project on Broadway in Manhattan that investigates the relationship between the public and the private through careful examination of not just the spaces between the buildings, but aspects of this major avenue that are often overlooked. The proposal begins with the questions: as the urban life becomes tirelessly capitalized, digitized, and thus “immortalized,” are we beginning to forget about our eventual demise? And what really happens when we forget about death? The infrastructure for wills proposes an conceptual system of spatial interventions on common, existing storefronts on Broadway, though not limited to the avenue. The intervention entails excavating the existing ground floors of said storefronts through the foundation to make a void, the dirt and debris of which become the walls that characterize the space. Within the void, one can write their will. However, the physical copy of the will, nor the content of it, is not the most important product here. Rather, the focus is on the act of writing the will itself, which allows the writer to reflect on the material and immaterial things they own, the people they love, and whose memories they cherish, and the lives that they have led so far.





The infrastructure of last wills occupy existing empty storefronts, scattered along Broadway. As the floor is carved beneath to make a space removed from the ever-going city, the residual earth is piled up and packed to form a rammed earth wall. The result is a striking presence of the earth on the storefront window.





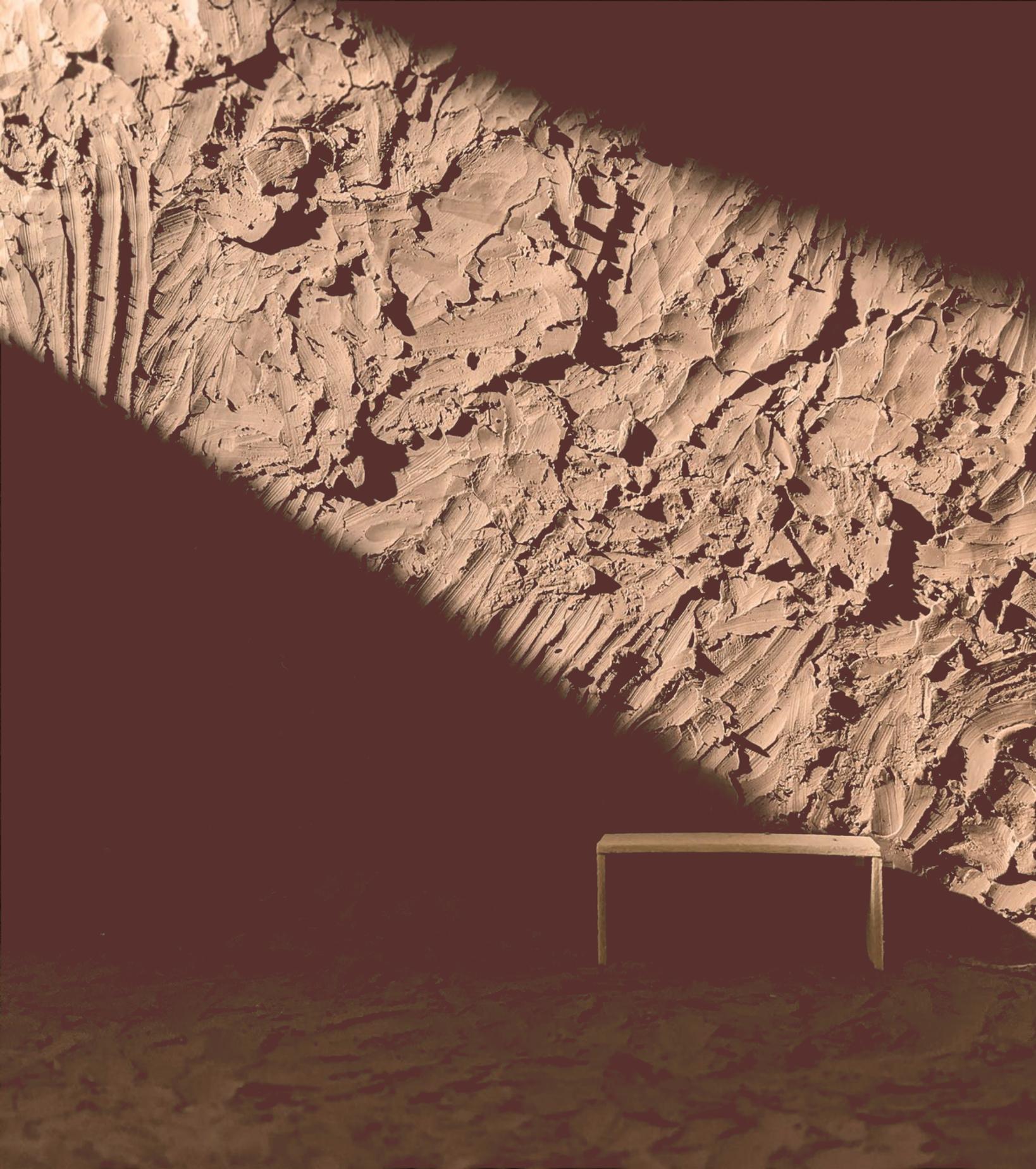
The earthen wall stands almost against the glass—but not touching, accenting the gravity of the earth, and the tension between it and the glass.





One then enters through the door to the carved space below, where they are given a blank will, which they can fill out as they ponder through the people and things that matter in their lives.





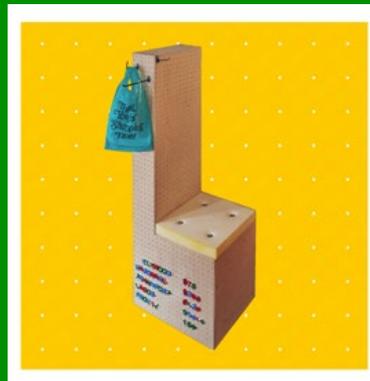
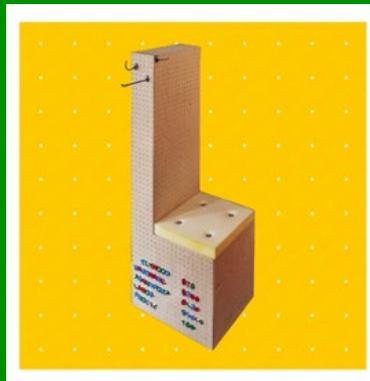
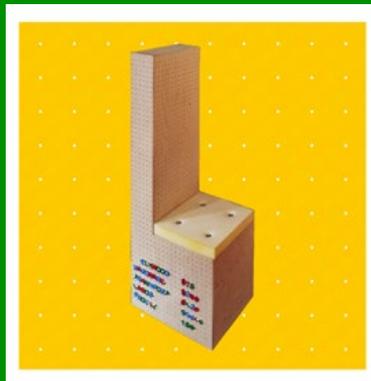
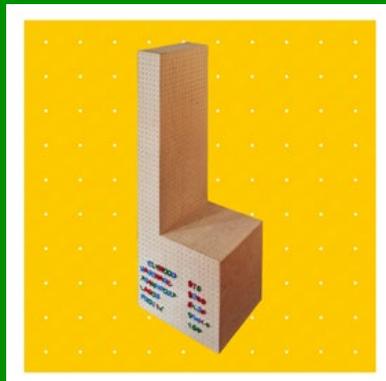
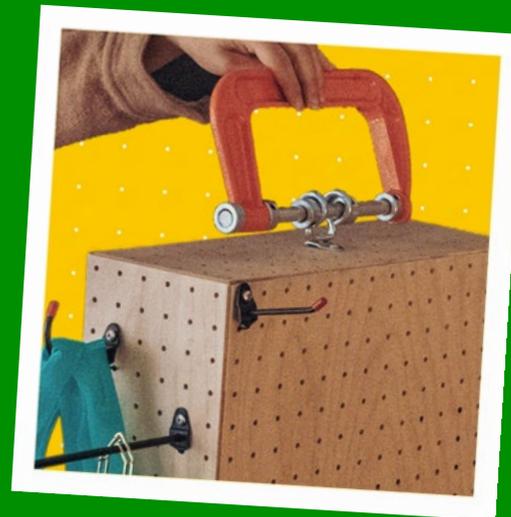


catalog throne

1:1 detail fabrication

instructor: Zachary Mulitauaopele

It is a chair, a coat hanger, a storage, a bag holder, a tic-tac-toe board, a mirror holder, a spelling board, or what-have-you. The catalog throne combines ready-made items that can be ordered off of a McMaster-Carr catalog and design-fabricated elements for a wild variety of uses. Order yours today.

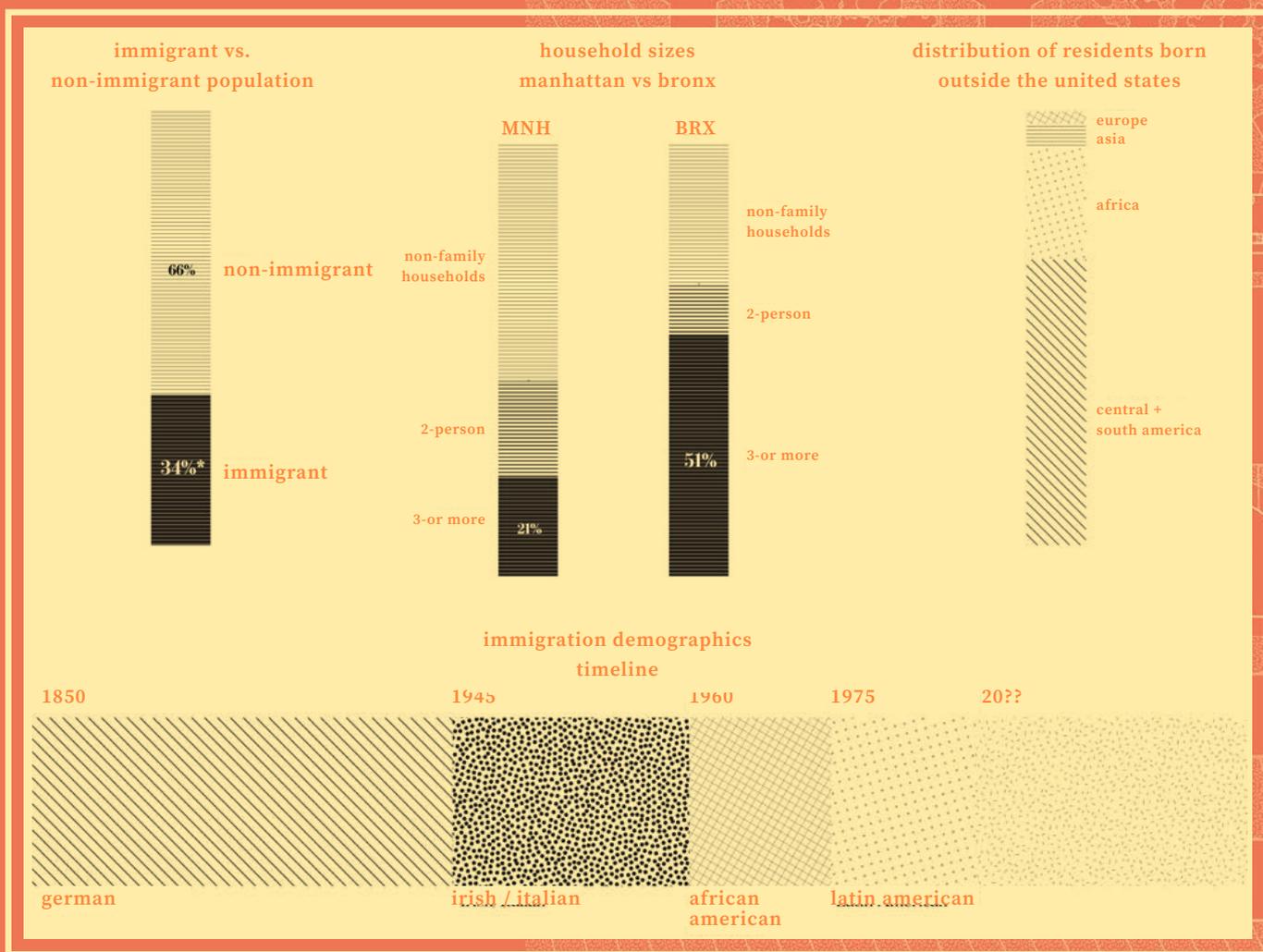




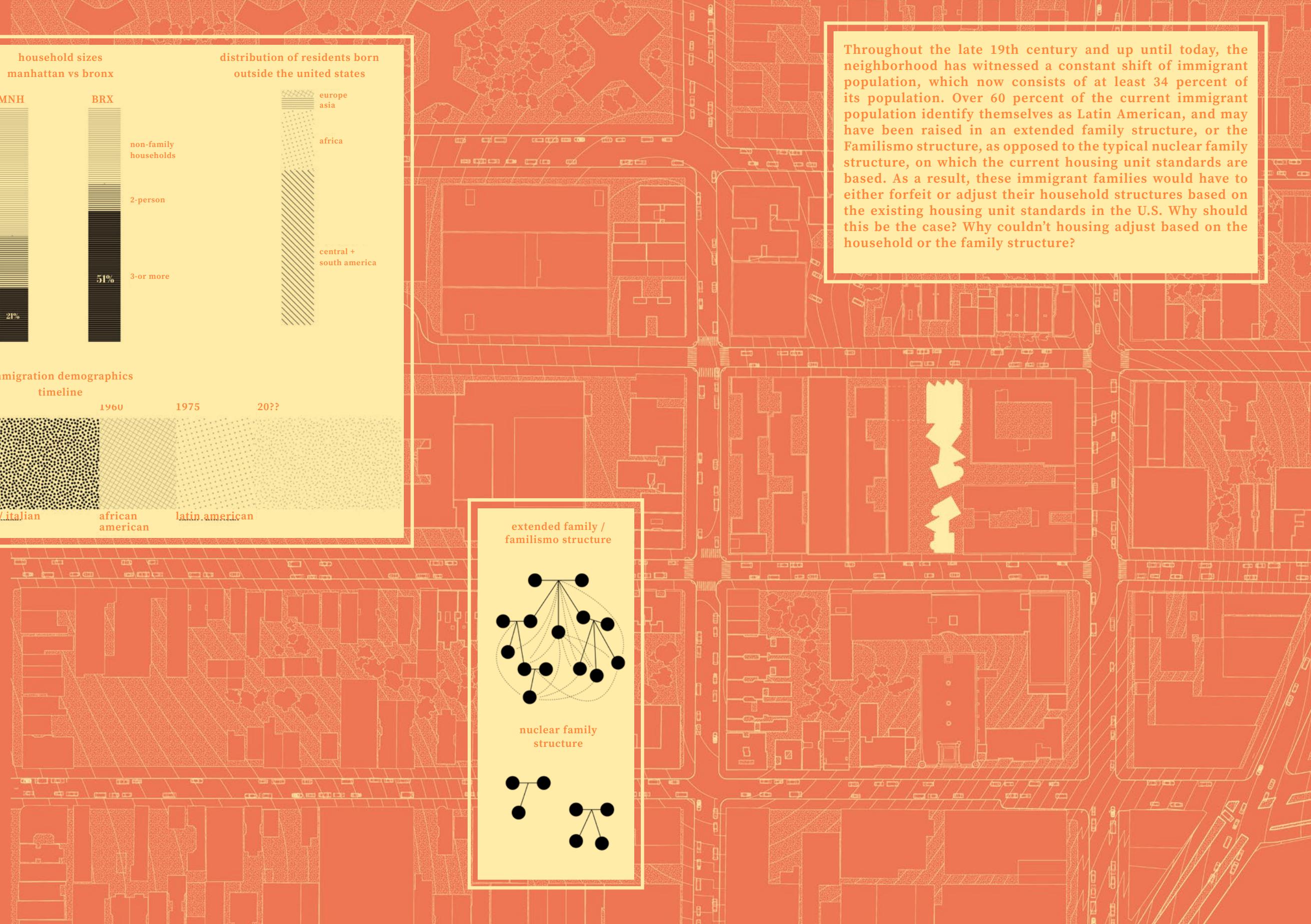
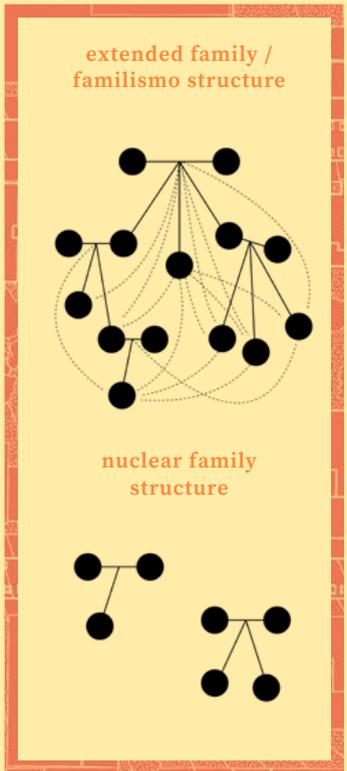
amorphous families

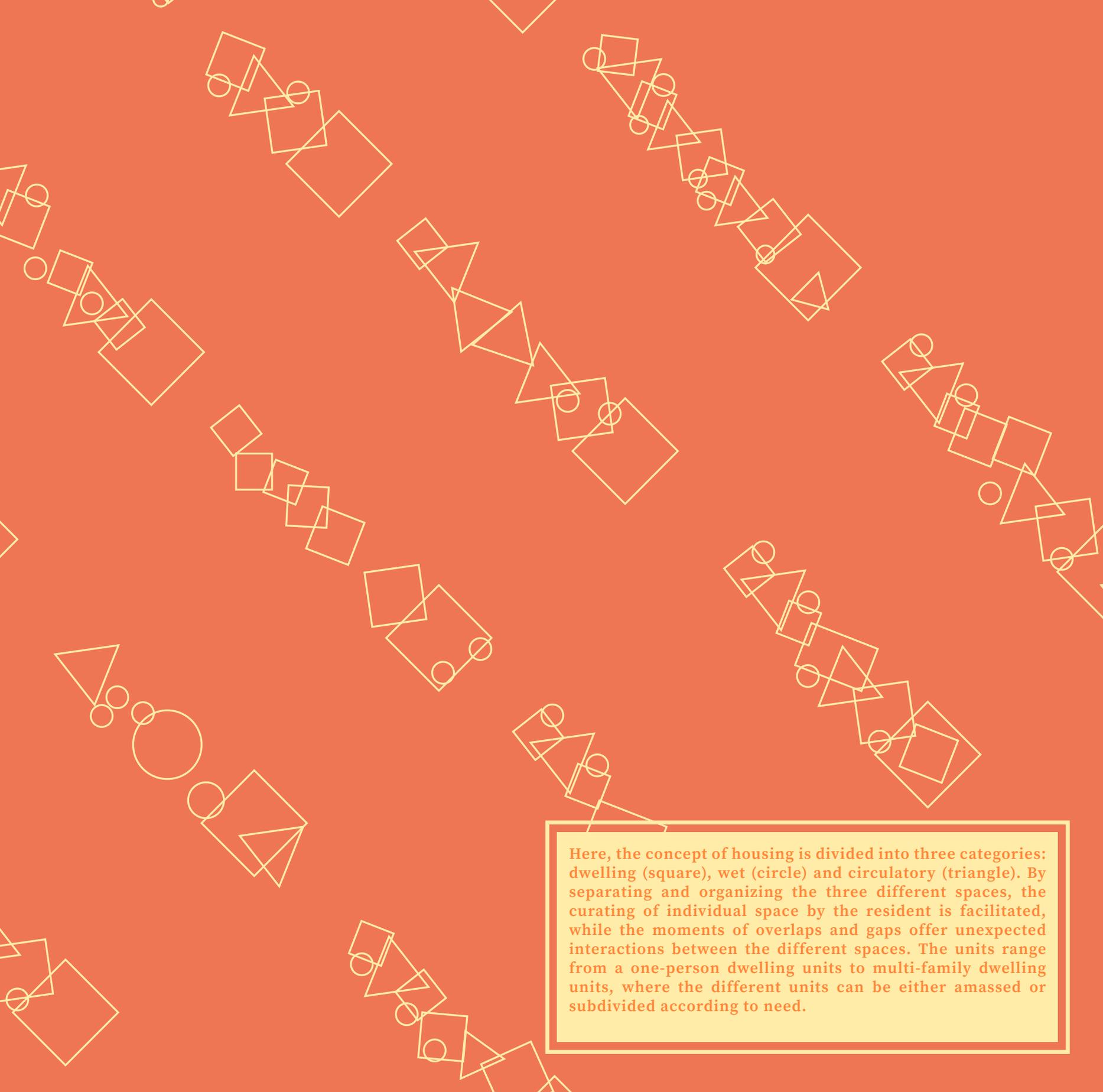
core 3: housing, complete and incomplete
studio critic: Adam Frampton
collaborator: Nikolas Bentel

Housing proposal in the Melrose neighborhood in the Bronx, New York, that caters to flexible and ever-changing family and household structures of the large immigrant population of the neighborhood. The project begins with a critique on the “standardized” understanding of housing based on the heteronormative white American nuclear family structure to which often larger immigrant families are forced to conform. Instead, the proposal operates under the pretense that housing should be shaped around the family structure, rather than the other way around.



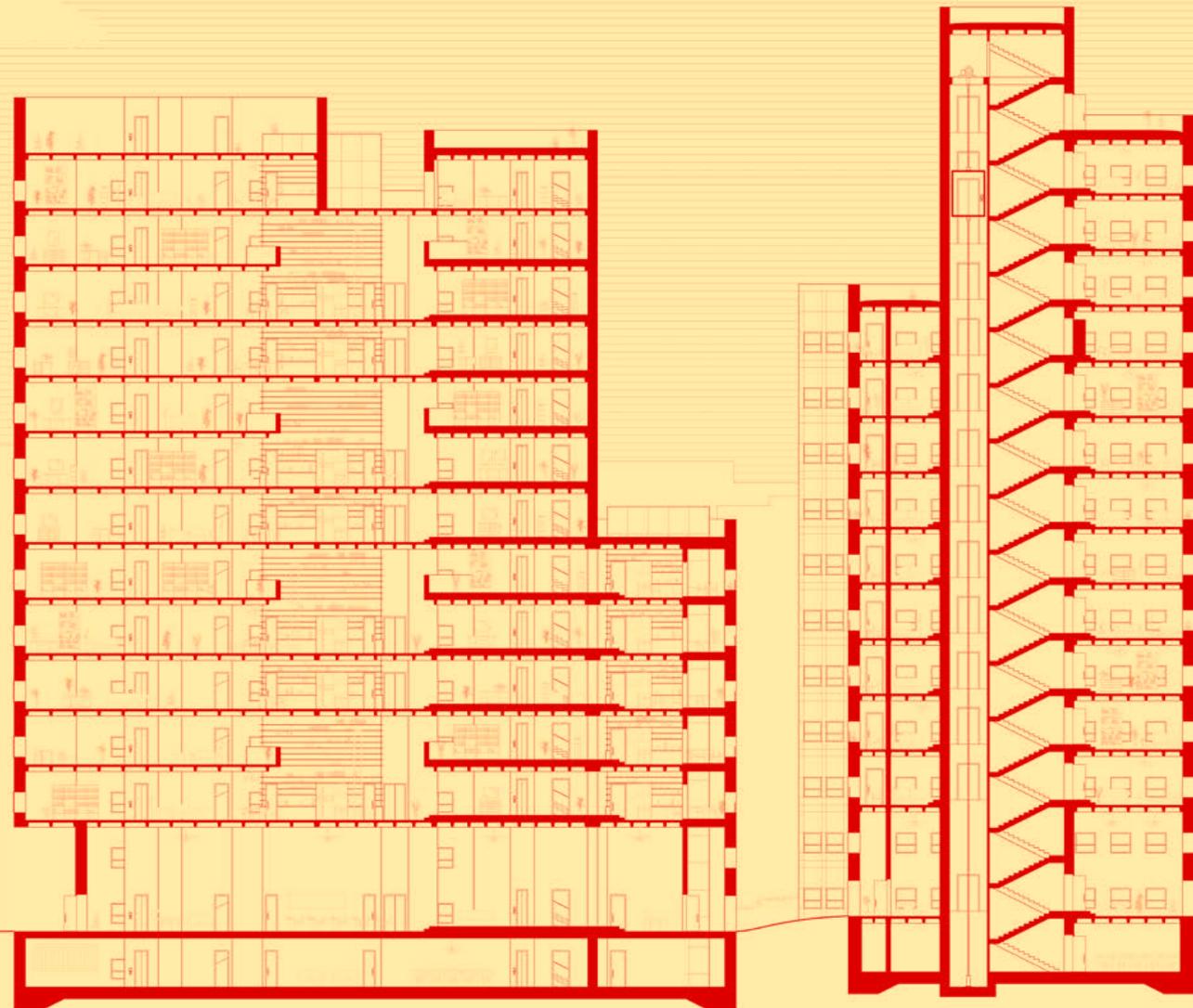
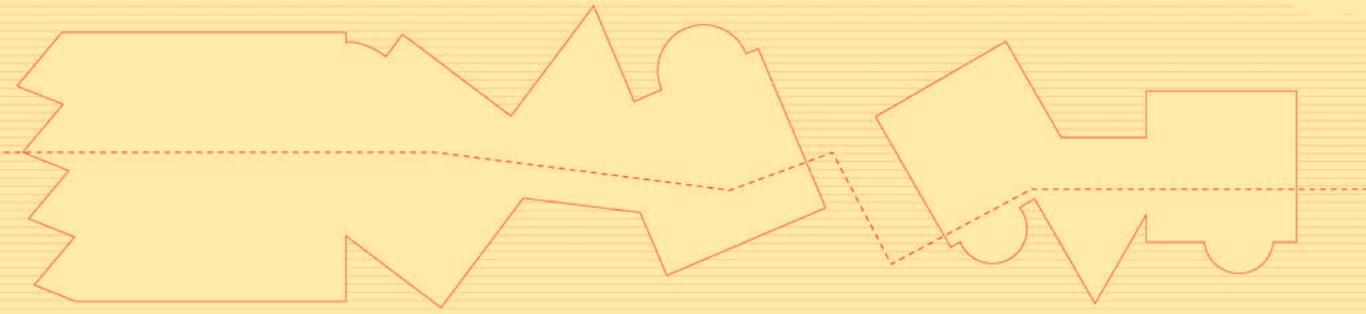
Throughout the late 19th century and up until today, the neighborhood has witnessed a constant shift of immigrant population, which now consists of at least 34 percent of its population. Over 60 percent of the current immigrant population identify themselves as Latin American, and may have been raised in an extended family structure, or the Familismo structure, as opposed to the typical nuclear family structure, on which the current housing unit standards are based. As a result, these immigrant families would have to either forfeit or adjust their household structures based on the existing housing unit standards in the U.S. Why should this be the case? Why couldn't housing adjust based on the household or the family structure?





Here, the concept of housing is divided into three categories: dwelling (square), wet (circle) and circulatory (triangle). By separating and organizing the three different spaces, the curating of individual space by the resident is facilitated, while the moments of overlaps and gaps offer unexpected interactions between the different spaces. The units range from a one-person dwelling units to multi-family dwelling units, where the different units can be either amassed or subdivided according to need.



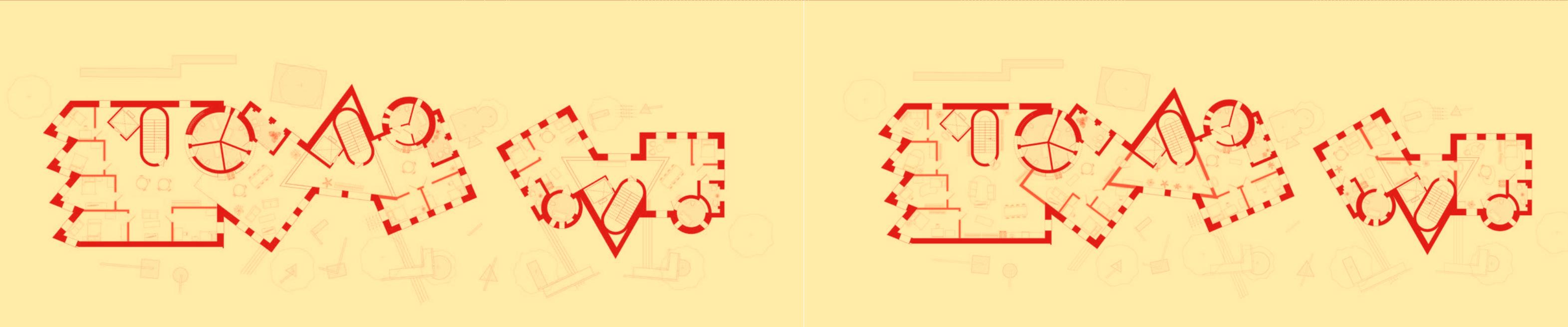


The overlapping of the programmatic volumes result both in section and in plan. As seen to the left, many of the units may share a double-height communal space, allowing for greater sense of spaciousness, which can be advantageous the more residents there are in each unit.

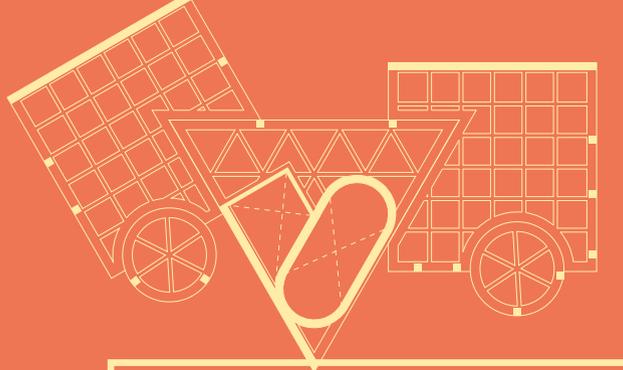
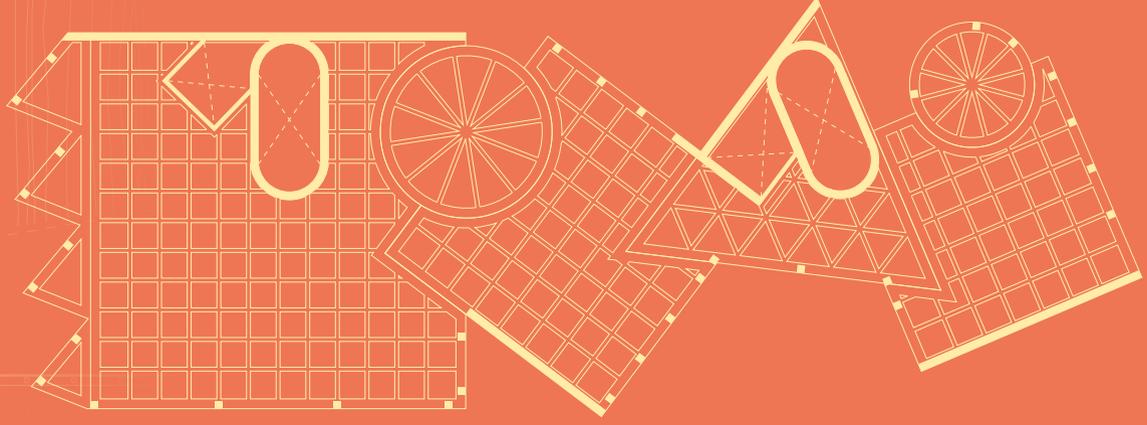
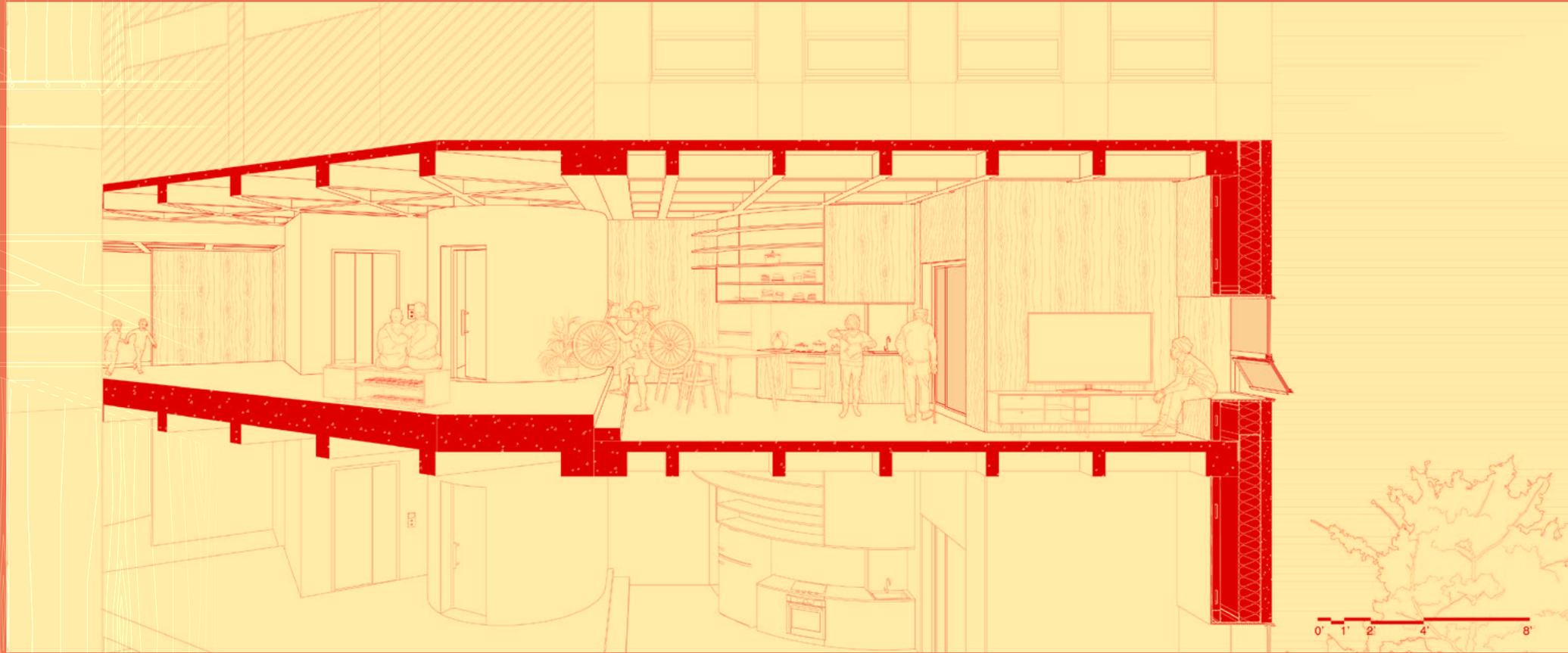
To the right, the ground floor plan shows the public programs proposed specifically for the immigrant communities. In addition to the mail room, the ground floor of the north cluster serve as a community learning center as well as an immigration attorney office.

Below, the two typical floor plans show two different types of configurations of partition walls that can be added to or subtracted according to the needs of the residents. The geometries can be used as a guide, or can be ignored, if wanted.

The left configuration imagines large units that can accommodate an extended family structure. A combination of three dwelling squares, two wet circles and one circulation triangle can be amassed to host a family of ten, or can all be subdivided into three units of various sizes. Whereas the right configuration imagines each unit being separated.



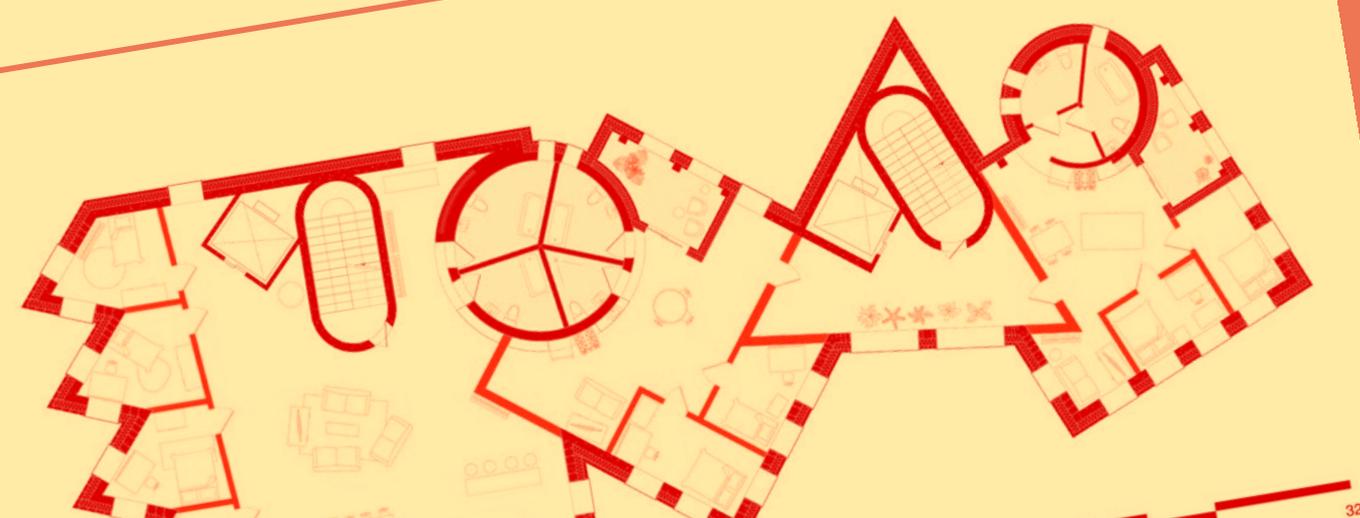
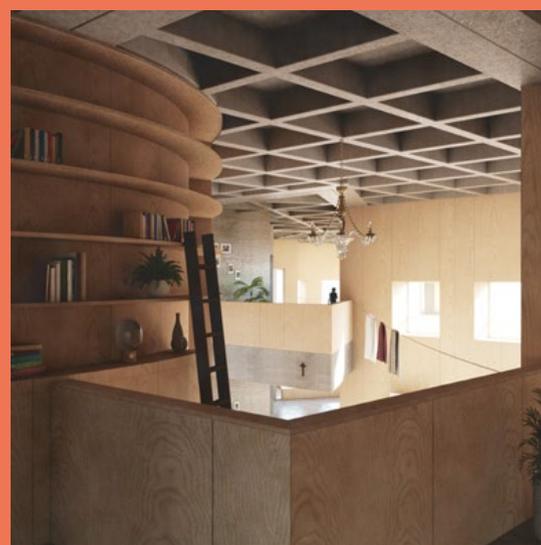
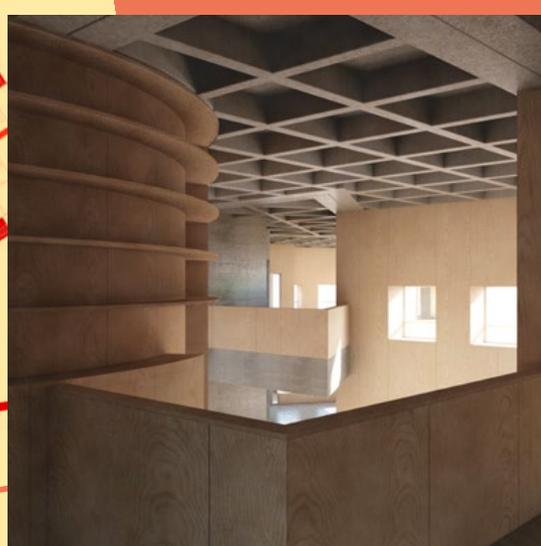
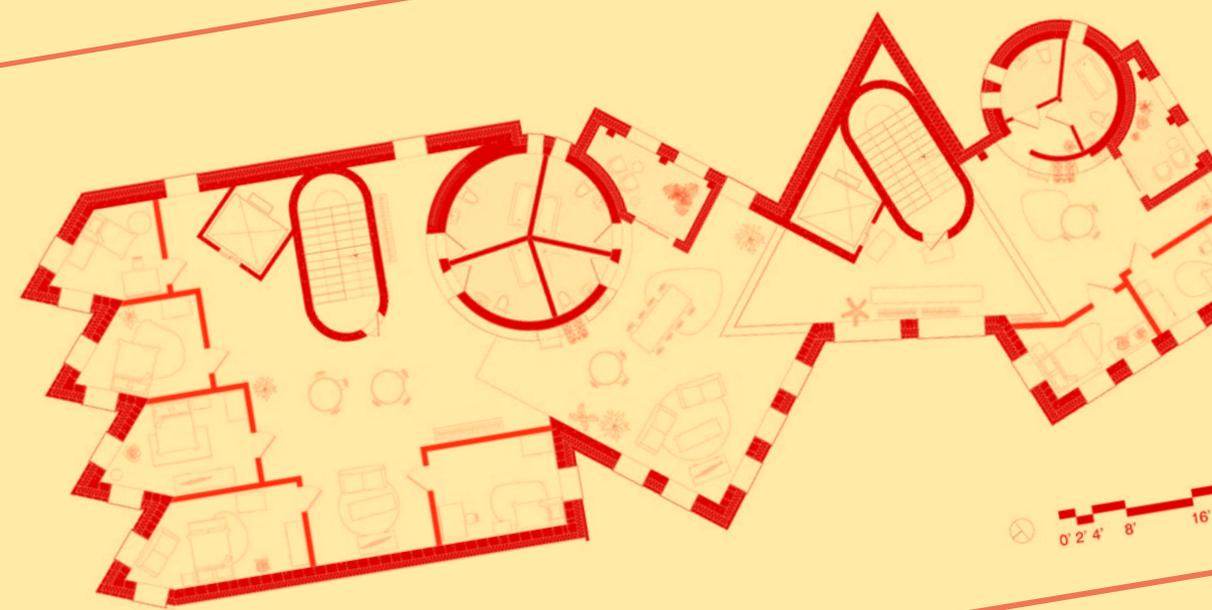
The perimeter walls are nearly 24" deep due to the thick layer of insulation that begins to consider the building as a passive house building. The deep walls then also allow for occupation, either as a nook to sit on, or as storage spaces. The interior walls, however, are light and can be constructed at various configurations to meet the needs of the size of the family.



The structure is composed of reinforced concrete columns and concrete waffle slabs that reinforce the geometry of each space.



Focusing on the everyday, the un-spectacular, the amorphous family housing proposal imagines interior domestic settings that can vary widely from scenario to scenario.





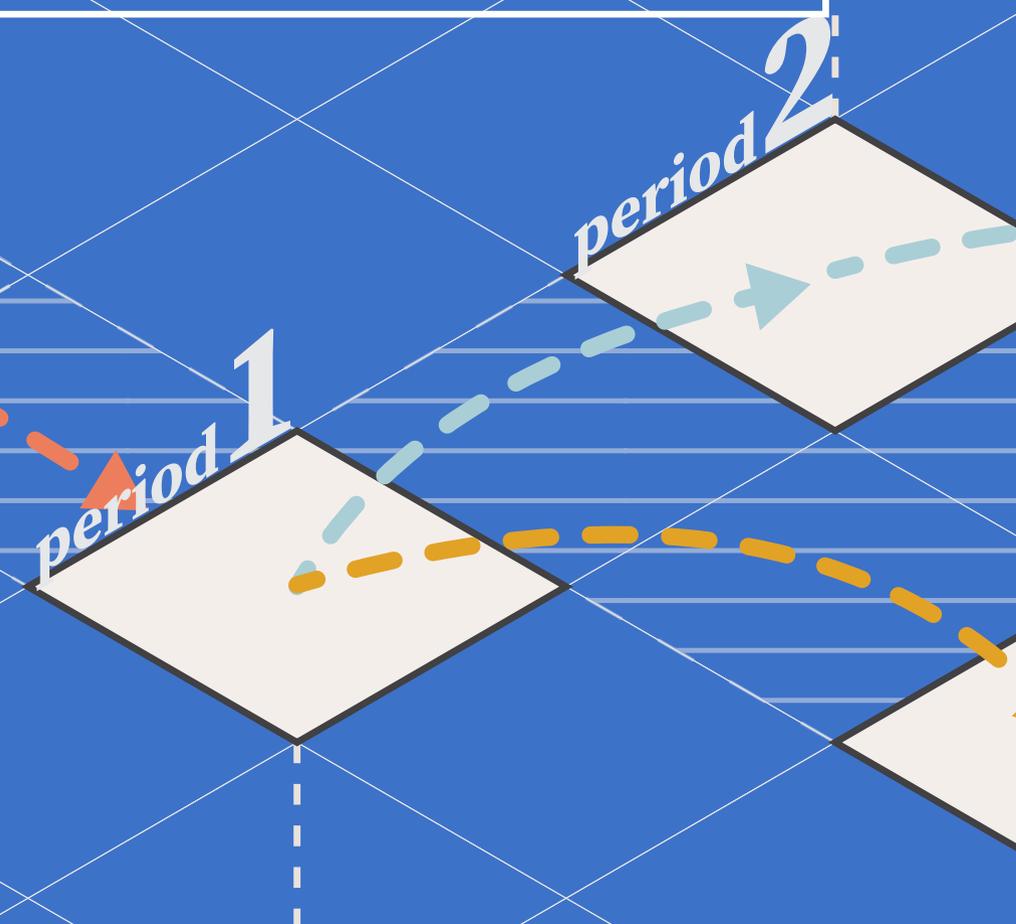
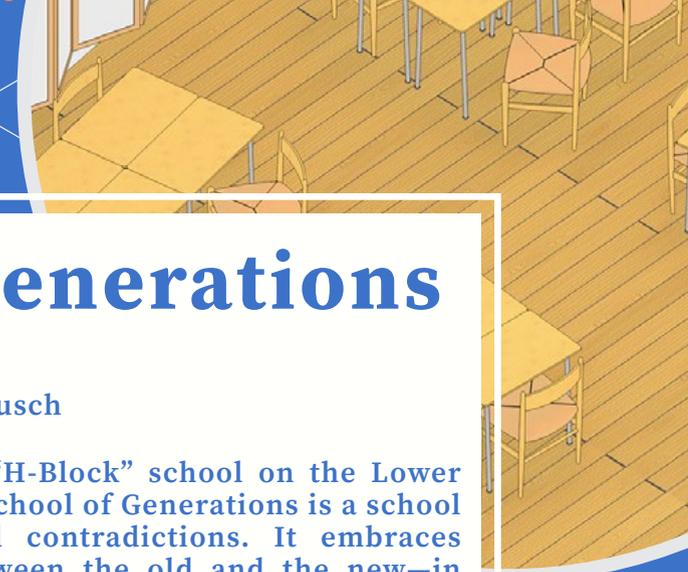
the amorphous family
core 3 housing studio



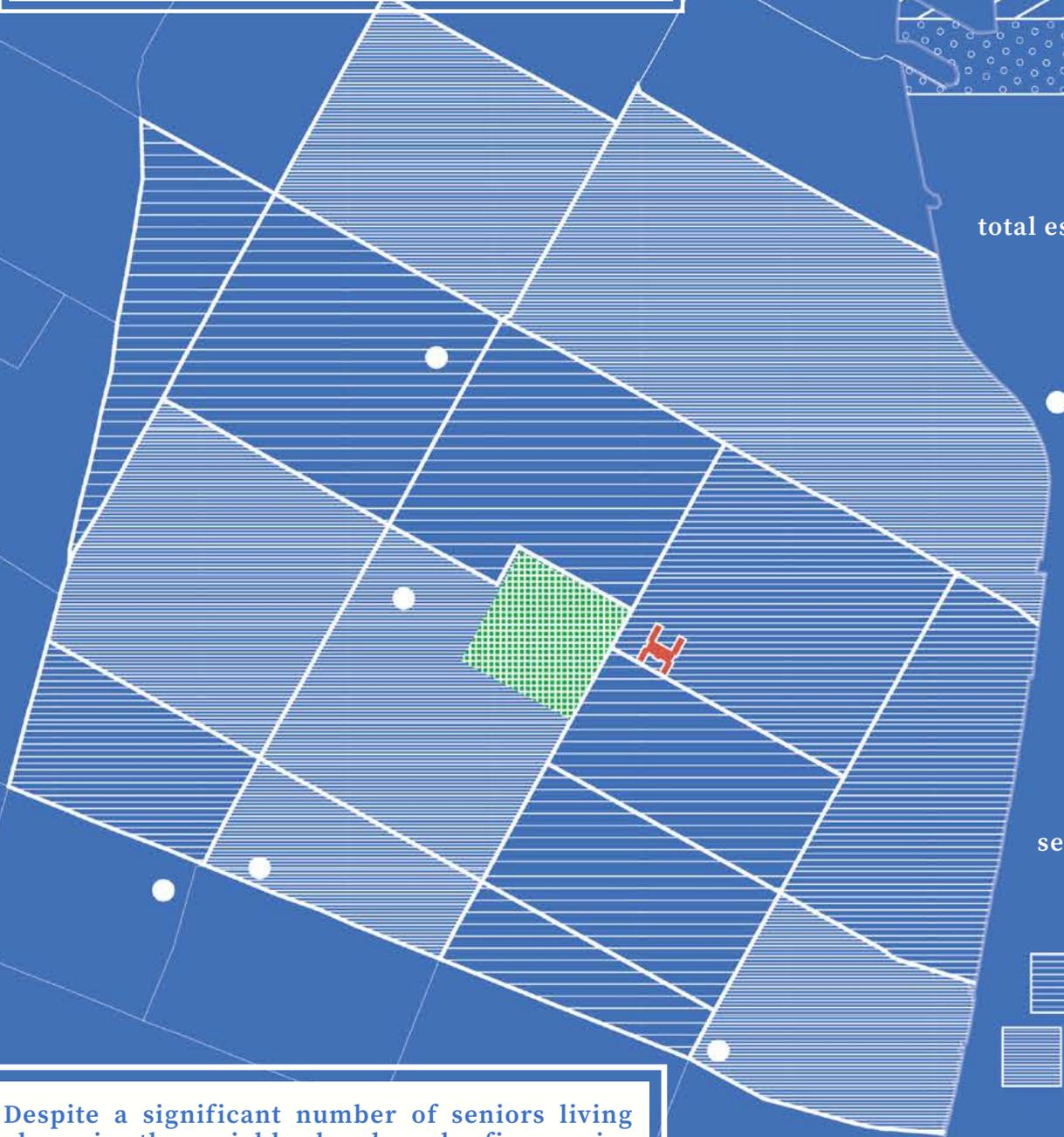
school of generations

core 2: school of outsiders
studio critic: Christoph Kumpusch

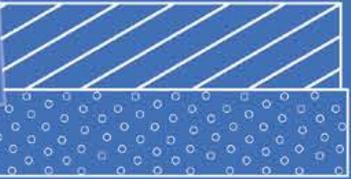
Intervention on an existing “H-Block” school on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. The School of Generations is a school of coexistence, duality, and contradictions. It embraces the reciprocal moments between the old and the new—in materials and forms, between a junior and a senior, between the inside and outside, between circulation and occupation. In accordance, the architecture of the school aims to understand the existing context, not just as a simple “H-Block Plan,” but looking carefully at the materiality, the patina, then intertwining the new interventions carefully in order to parallel these reciprocal relationships functionally, formally, and in detail in the hopes of generating a bridge between the younger children and older adults.



senior population near PS 64
by census tract



seniors living alone (49%): 5949



seniors living with others (51%): 6076

total estimated senior population: 12,000

● senior centers

seniors living alone (% of households)



Despite a significant number of seniors living alone in the neighborhood, only five senior centers exist nearby. With loneliness during later stages in life negatively impacting both physical and mental health especially in later years of life, and with the growing generational gap, the school of generations can connect the junior generation and the senior generation in the community.

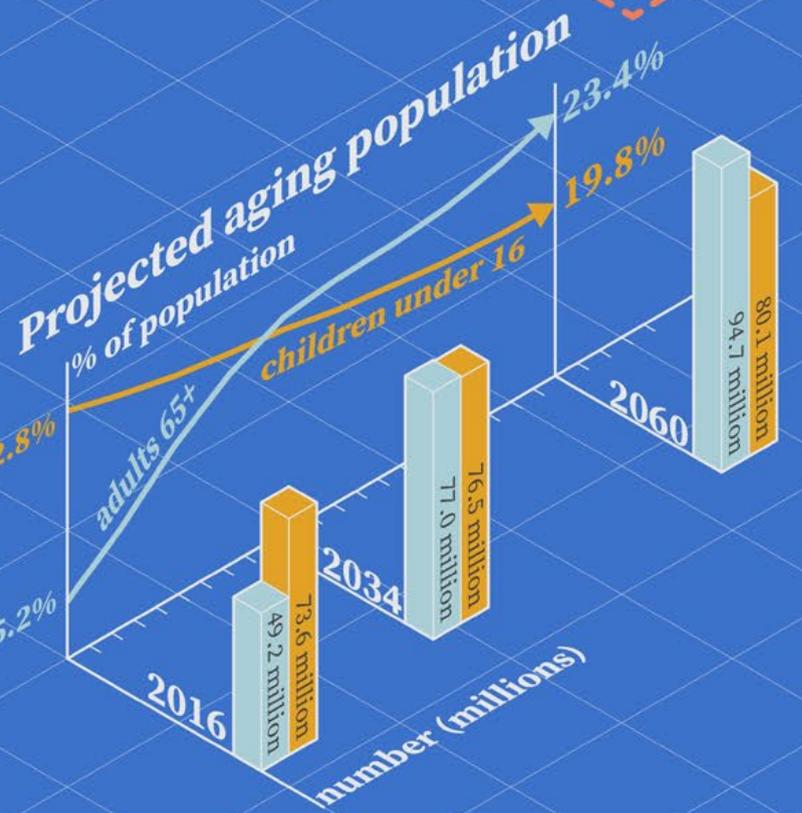
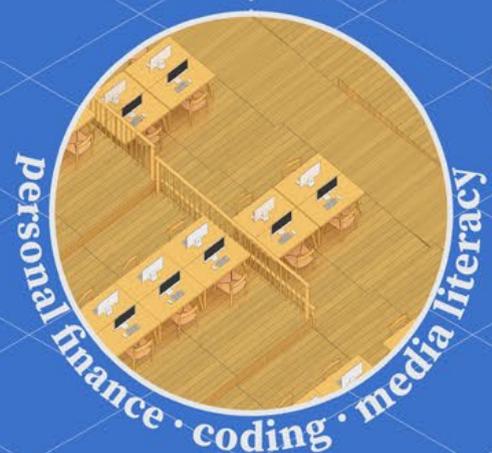
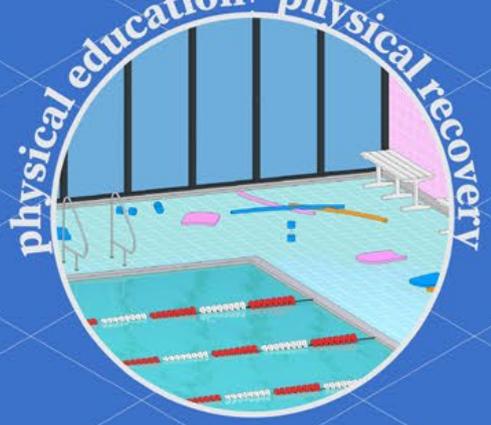
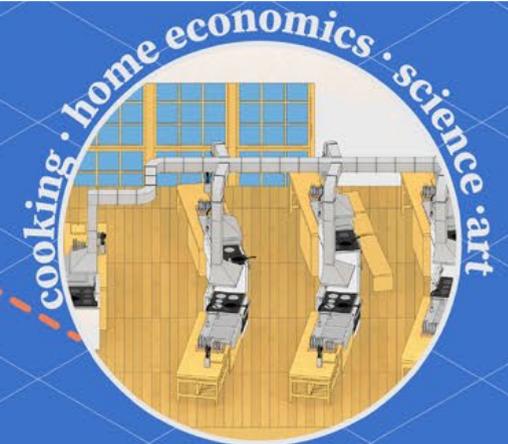
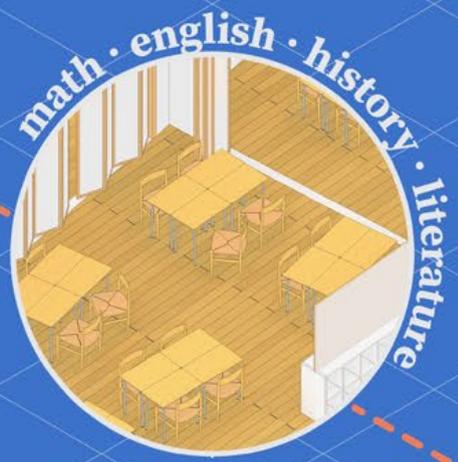
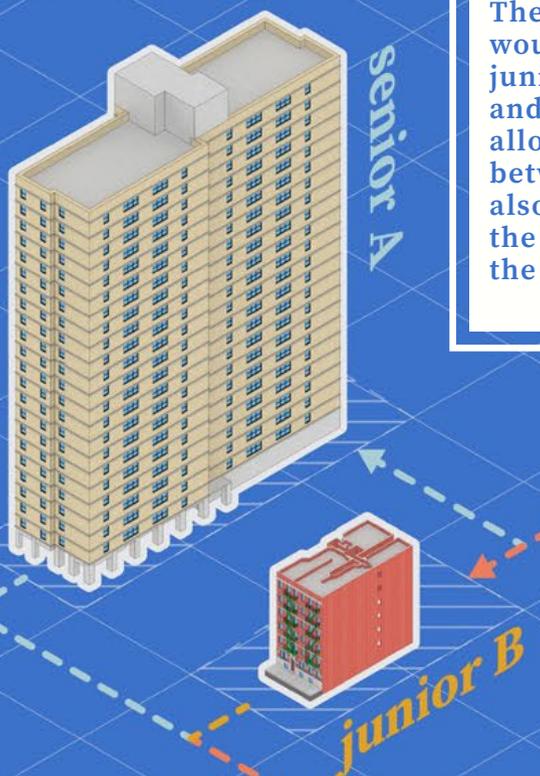


Instead of a massing study beginning with the H-Block model, the character of the existing building told through its fragments are studied.

Pieces of the floor tiles, bricks, and old bits of dimensional lumber are juxtaposed with translucent acrylic panels with the aim of striking a balance between “old” and the “new.” The acrylic panels are cut and situated in ways that shed light on the certain characteristics of each element.

The walk-to-school program would connect a senior with a junior, whereby they would go to and from the school each day—allowing stronger friendships between the classmates, but also increasing the safety of the school commute for both the junior and senior students.

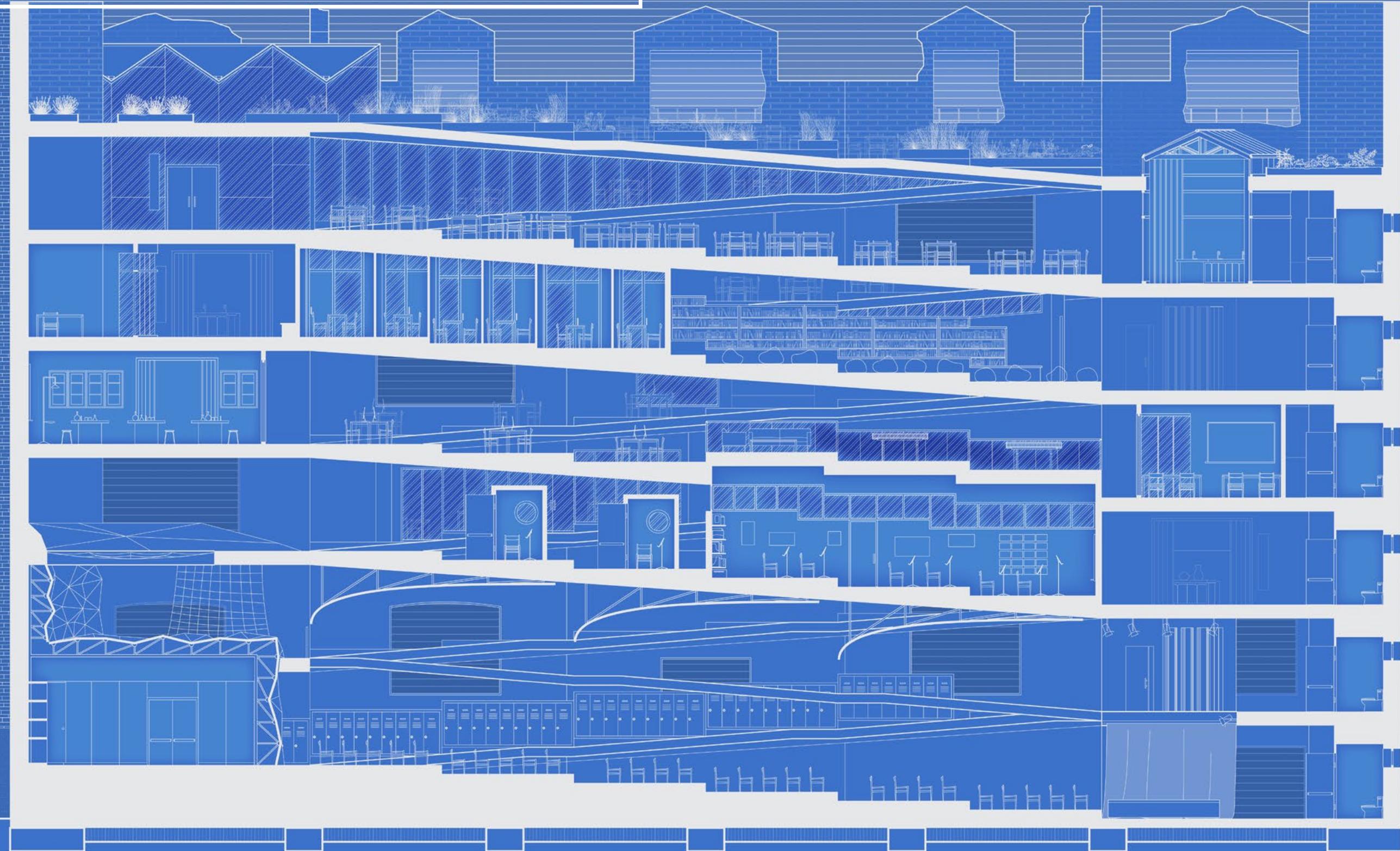
Students will sometimes be in junior-only or senior-only classes, depending on the subject. However, classes like physical education, gardening, cooking, and art can serve as classes where generational collaborations can occur.



The School of Generations proposes a multi-generational school whose student body is composed of juniors between kindergarten and grade 8, as well as seniors, who would share classrooms and courses. The school would offer courses like physical education, cooking, and coding, which both juniors and seniors can collaborate. Through the intermingling of different generations in the student body and faculty, the school promotes a stronger and wider network of neighborly connections within the school's district.

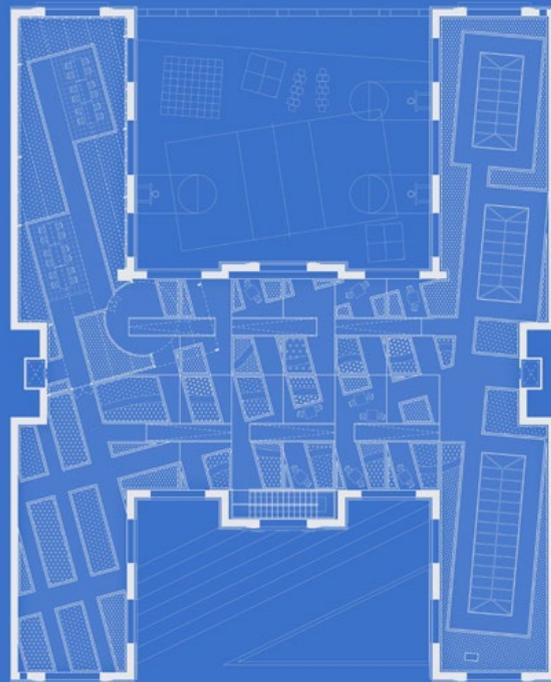
Just as the main goal of the school focused on removing the barriers and making connections between the two generations, the architecture also forgoes the idea of disparate, distinct programs and floors. In doing so, the east and west edges of the building are connected via ramps and stepped floors, which serve as programmatic spaces.

As students move from the ground floor “play” zone, they go up to the “experiment” zone, then up to the “focus” zone, until they reach the “sharing” zone. In between each zone, programs begin to blend, allowing for hybrid activities.



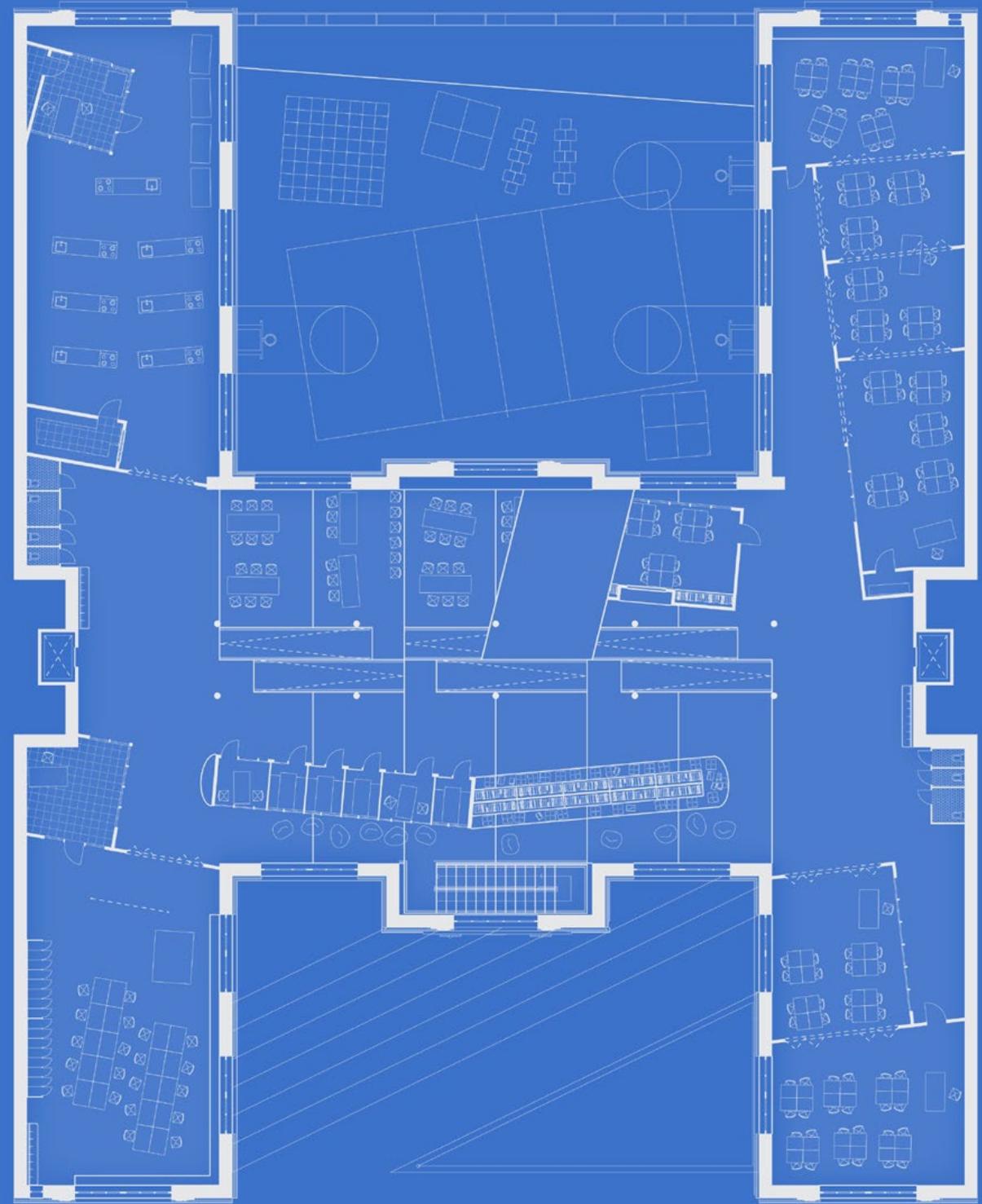


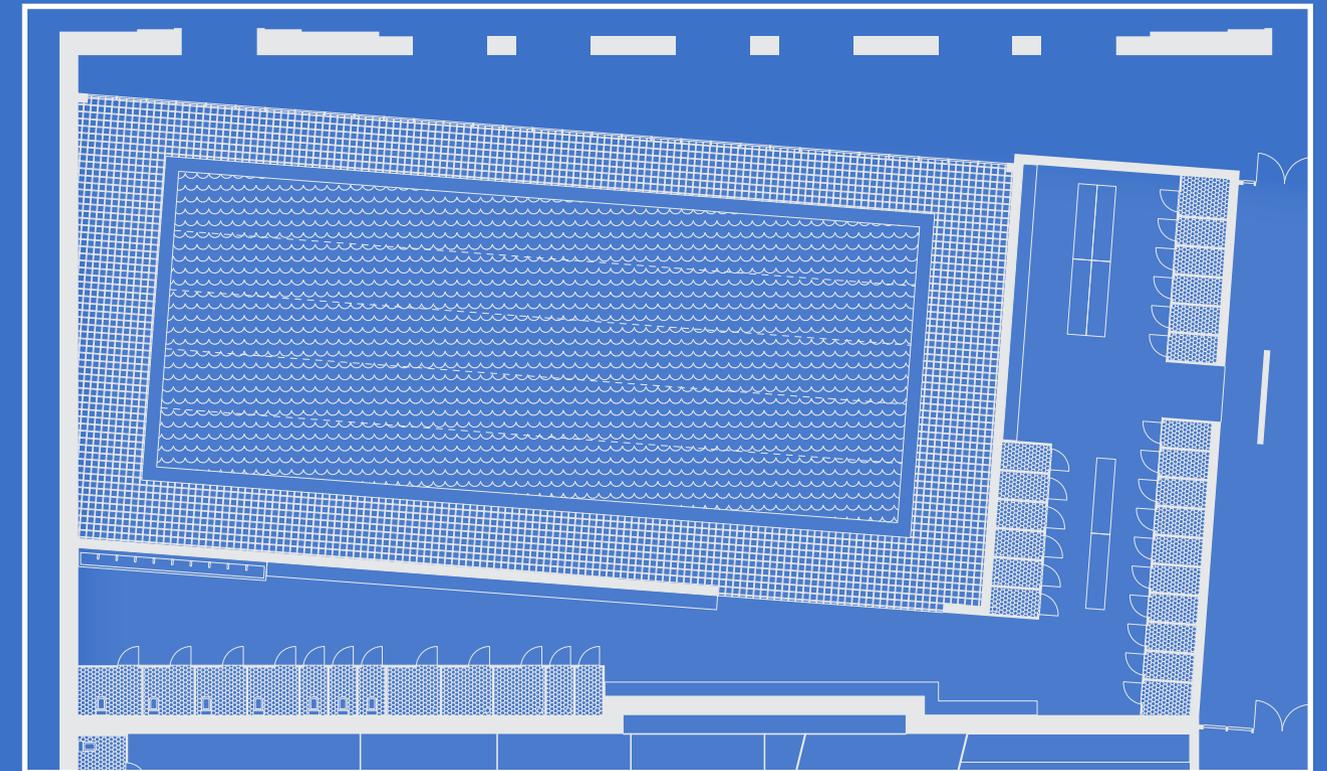
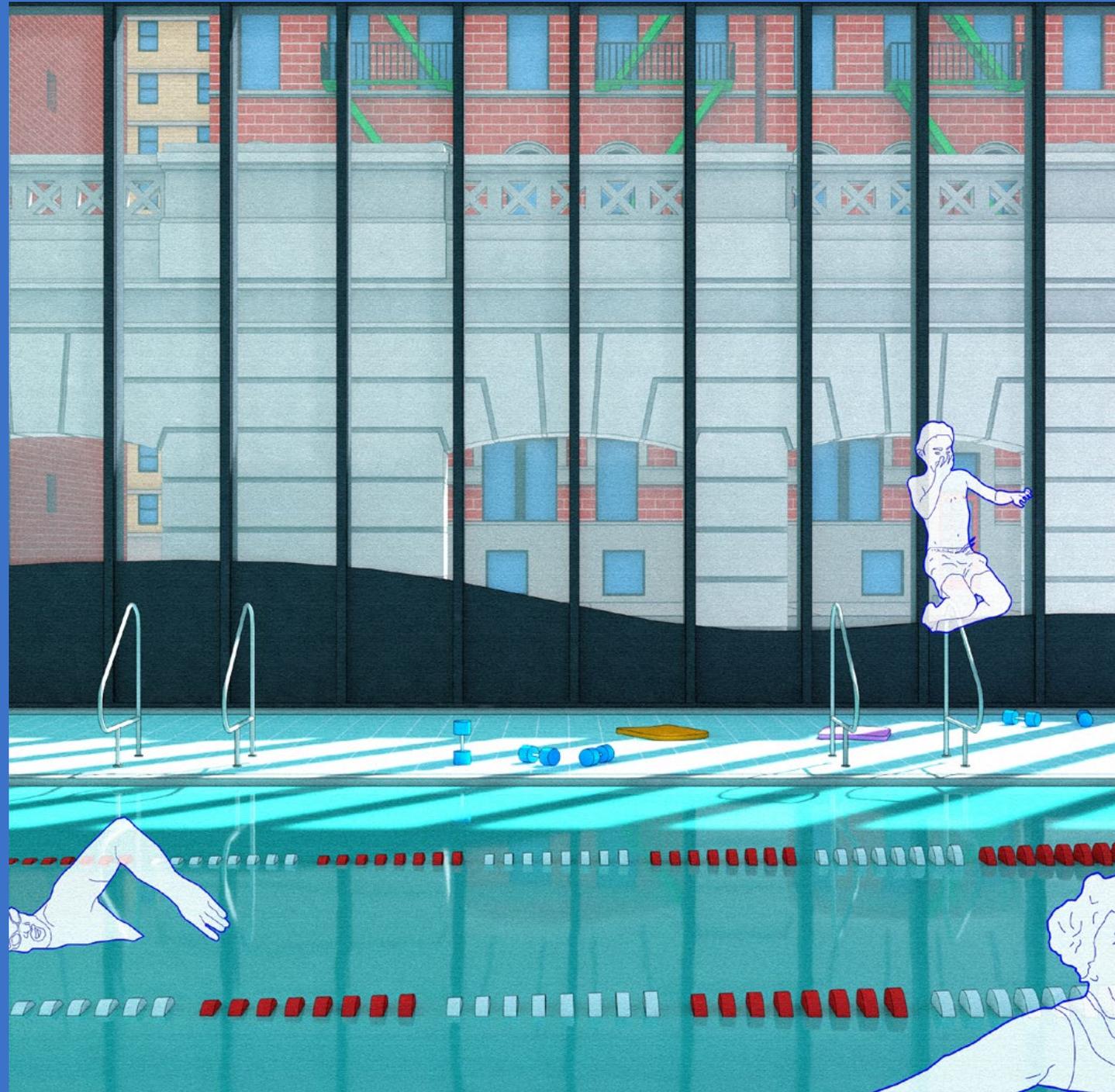
The ground floor plan features recreational zone, with programs like a swimming pool, a dance and a yoga studio, a climbing structure, and a performance hall.



The floor plan of a typical floor shows the points where programmatic zones begin to blend in the stepped floors. Here, the “focus” zone, composed of classrooms, libraries, and reading rooms blend with the “sharing” zone, composed of a learning kitchen and a cafeteria.

Students can harvest vegetables grown from the top floor garden, which can then be studied in the greenhouse classrooms or be cooked in the learning kitchen immediately below.

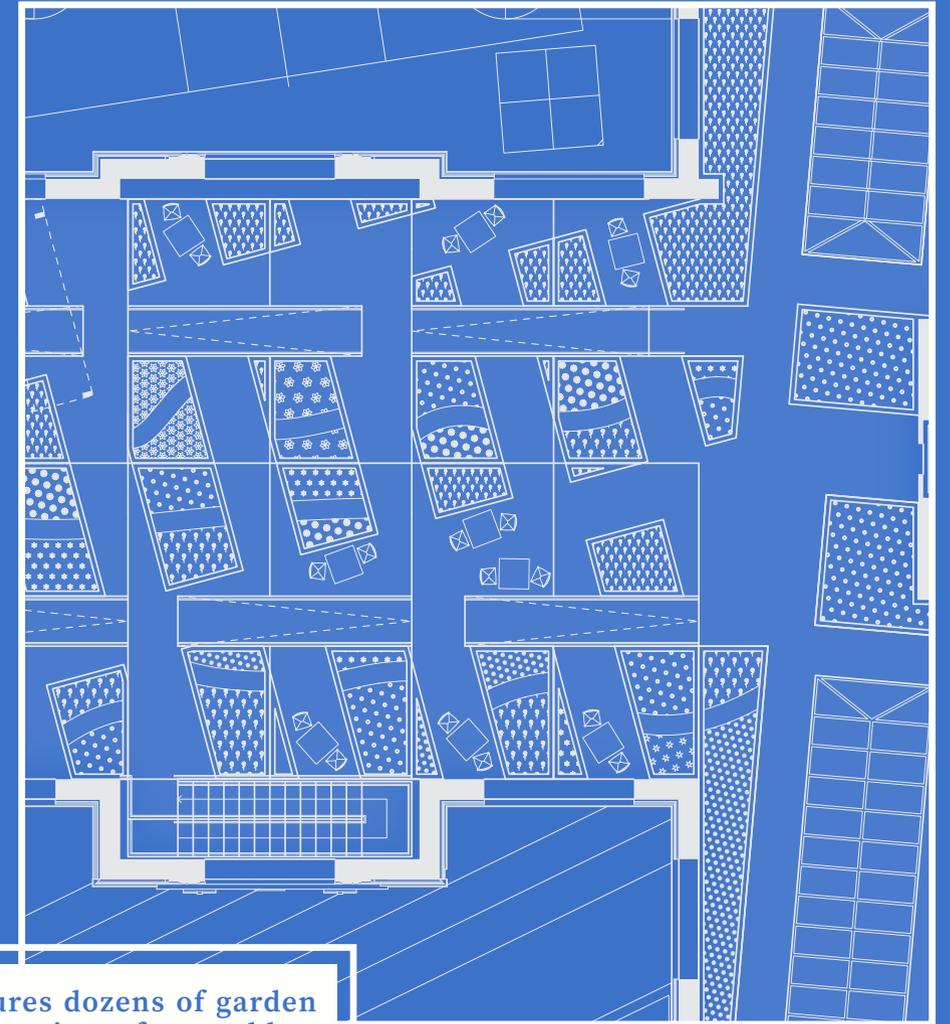




Local middle school students once visited 500N studio. When asked what they would like in a school, many replied a “swimming pool.”

Situated slightly askew from the existing wall of PS 64, the facade of the swimming pool allows for a covered entry into the school building to the east.

At the indoor pool, both the juniors and seniors can partake in swimming lessons, water aerobics, physical therapy sessions, or simply just play.



The top floor garden area features dozens of garden beds that can be used to grow a variety of vegetables, allowing not only for the students to learn about the process of gardening, but also for co-generational gardening activities.

The existing roof panels are removed, exposing the existing beams and joists. These beams and joists are treated to lighten up the ambiance of the space, while also referring to the previous life of the building.



the school of generations
core 2 studio



architectural photography

architectural photography
instructor: Michael Vahrenwald





split rock heritage shelters

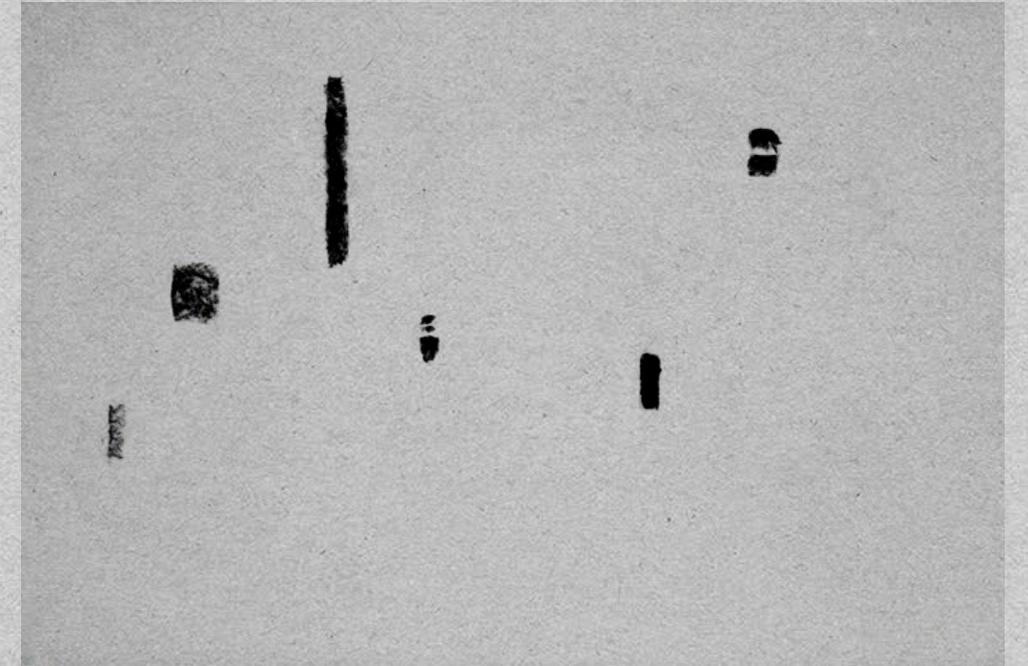
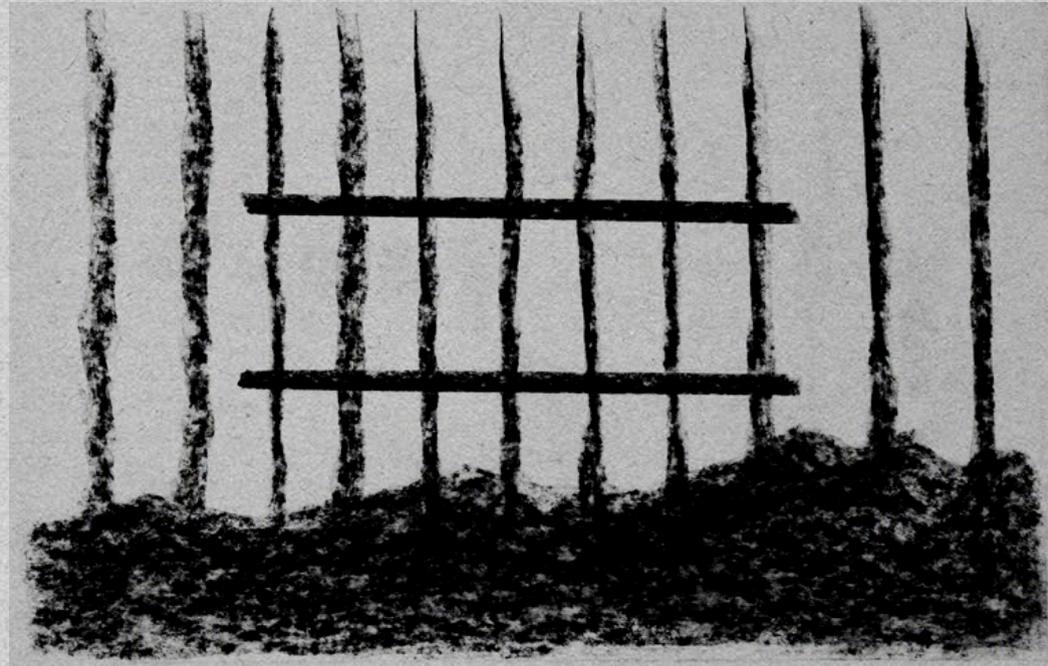
adv 4: a museum portal to the spirit world
studio critic: Robert Marino
collaborators: Asher McGlothlin, Cara DePippo

Known as the “Keepers of the Pass,” the Ramapough Lenape have had a profound connection to the sacred earth since time immemorial. However, this connection has been violated by various entities, including the European colonists, mining and fossil fuel industries, as well as the popular media today. Split Rock Museum, located in Mahwah, NJ at the site of the sacred Split Rock, thus proposes a set of four structures—three “shelters” and one “marker”—that exhibit both the celebratory and tragic elements of the Ramapough Lenape history and culture. The three shelters, which hold artifacts and objects of the tribe, are built using open, lightweight wood frame construction and adorned with fabric. The materials and construction method are both accessible and affordable for the community, while the structures themselves have minimal footprint on the landscape, reinforcing the sacredness of the land.

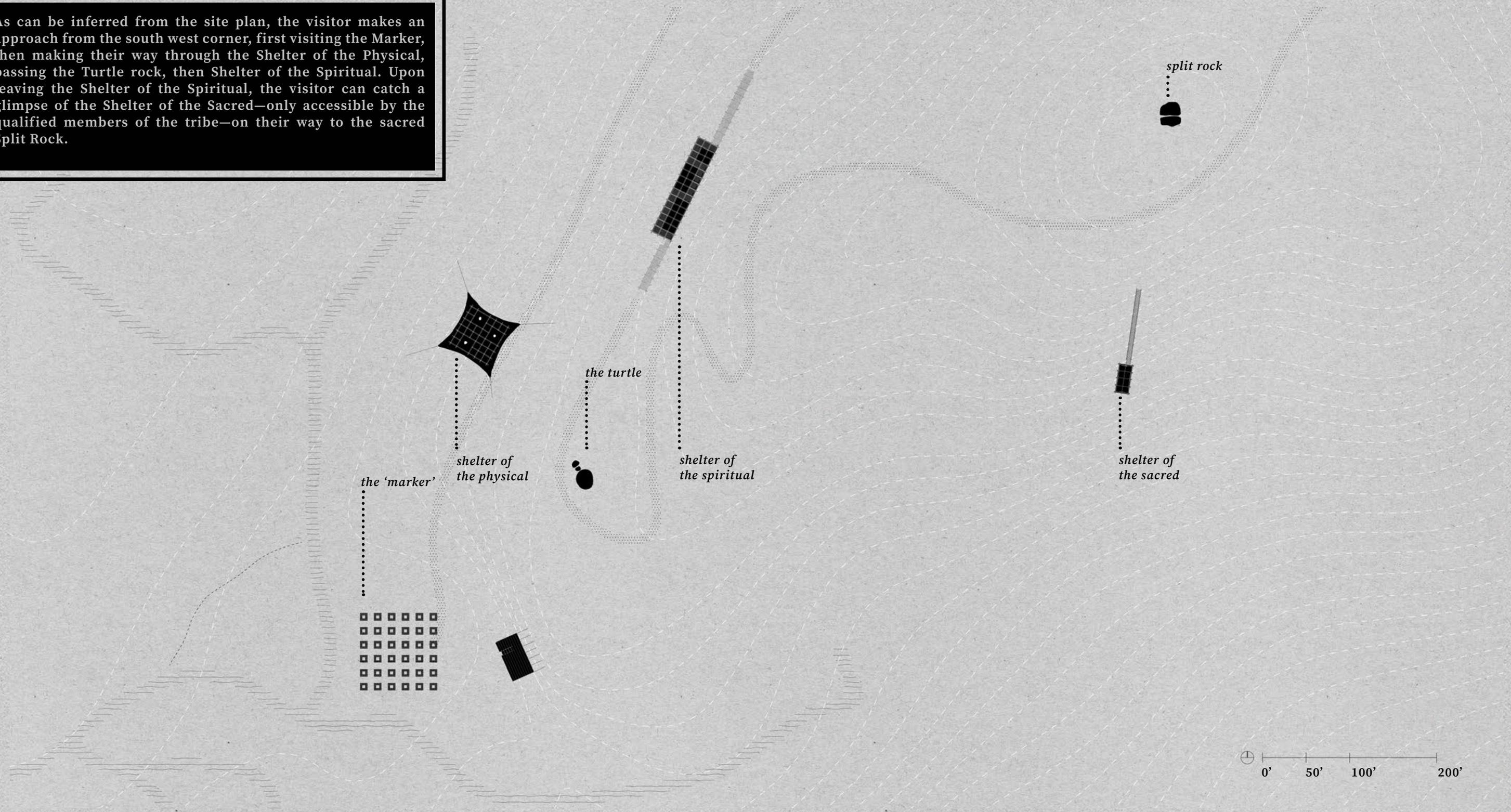


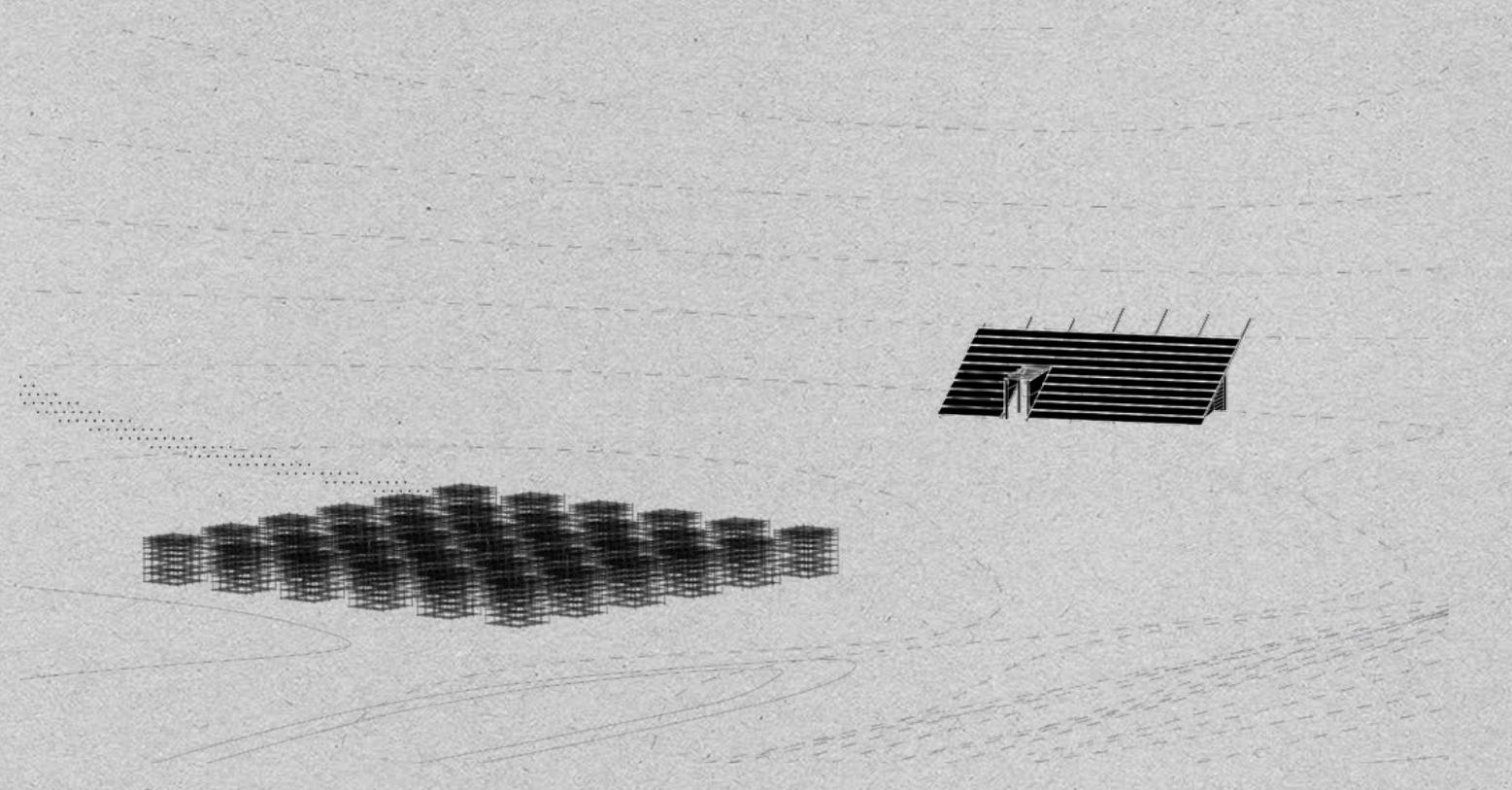
The project began with a site visit to the sacred Split Rock, where a Ramapough Lenape community leader, Two Clouds, guided the studio through the mountains.

The following design process then entailed trying to better understand the spatial relationship and character of the site, which existed on a rocky hill filled with a dense forest. Through abstract drawings we studied what and how each part of the museum would be situated within the context, and from each other.



As can be inferred from the site plan, the visitor makes an approach from the south west corner, first visiting the Marker, then making their way through the Shelter of the Physical, passing the Turtle rock, then Shelter of the Spiritual. Upon leaving the Shelter of the Spiritual, the visitor can catch a glimpse of the Shelter of the Sacred—only accessible by the qualified members of the tribe—on their way to the sacred Split Rock.



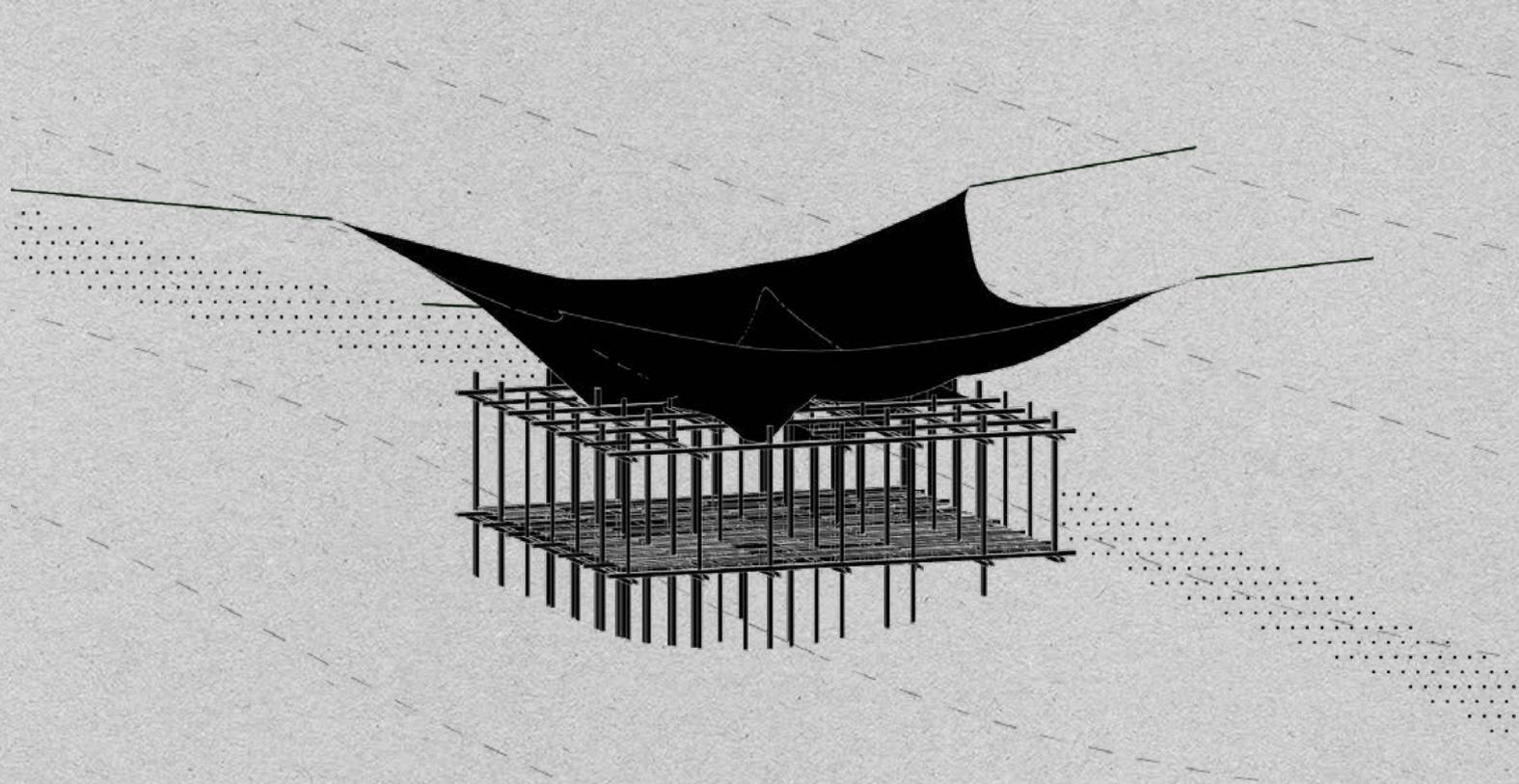


The Marker is a set of 36 cubes—correlating with the 36 sub-clans of the Lenape—laid at the entry, marking the temporal and spatial existence of the Ramapough Lenape tribe today.



The Marker also serves as a marker for the shelters and their relation to the sacred Split Rock as well. Whereas Split Rock sits at the northeastern-most, highest point of the site, the Marker sits at the southwestern-most, lowest point of the site, acting as a kind of counterpart to the sacred rock. The visitors to the museum—both tribespersons and non-tribespersons—are invited to lay a small rock onto one of the cubes upon their visit. Therefore the Marker's ongoing form is developed by the tribespersons and their neighbors. Much like the cairns that left by the ancestors, the Marker would survive long after the current generation has passed.

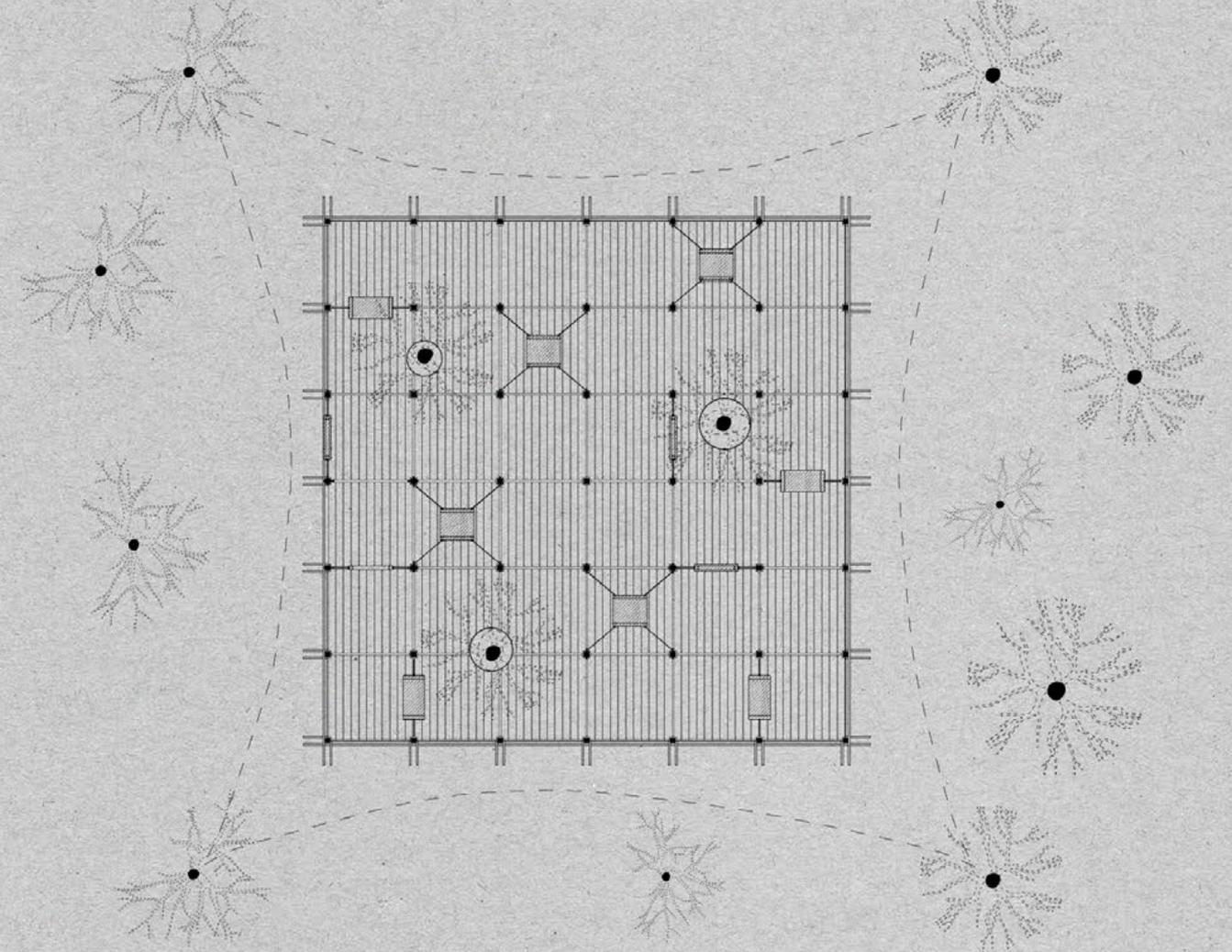


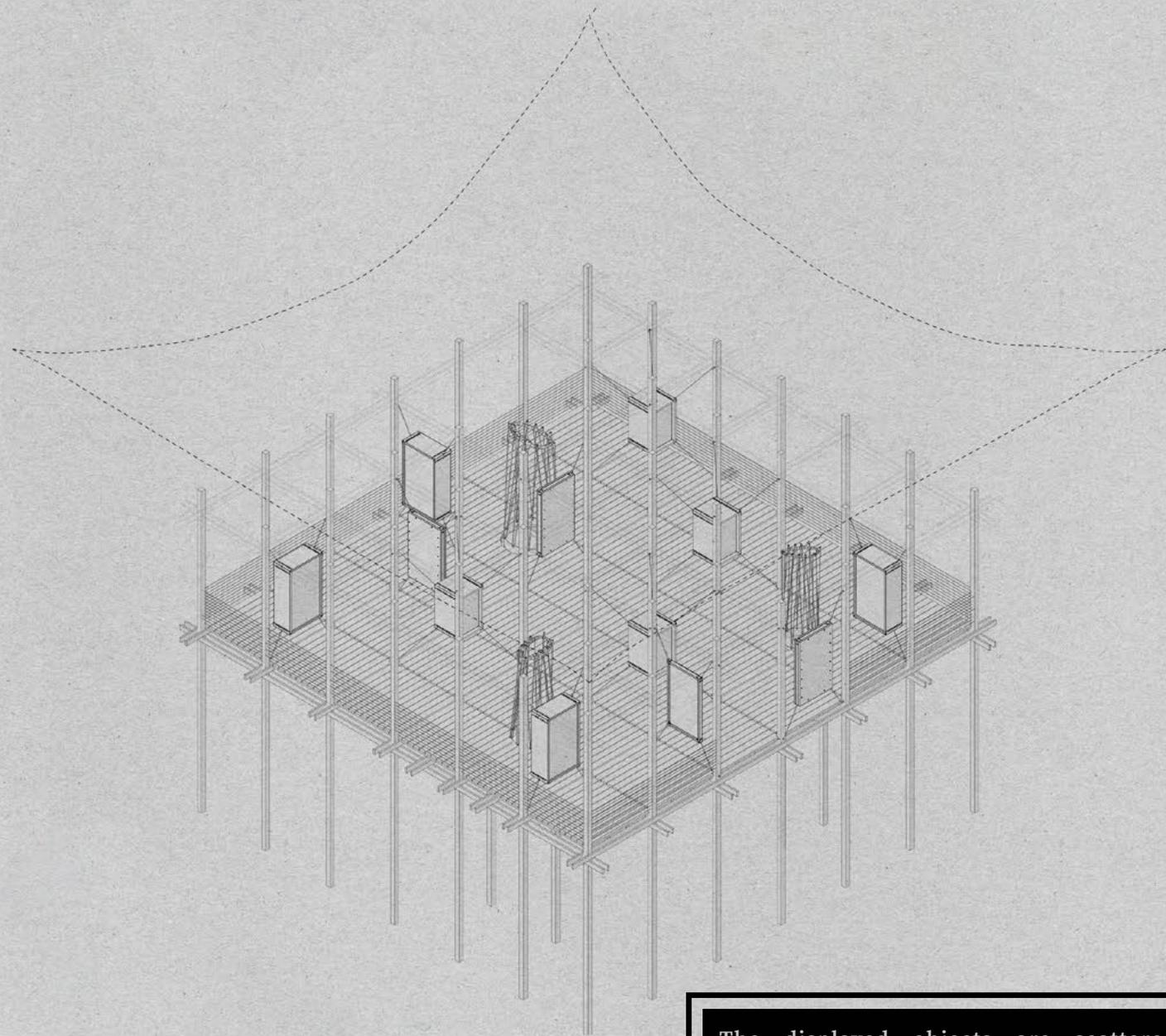


Sitting low to the ground, the Shelter of the Physical is much like a two dimensional plane: direction-less, and wide open to the elements to the side, both visually and physically.



The Shelter of the Physical houses cultural and historical artifacts that the tribe wishes to share with the rest of the world.

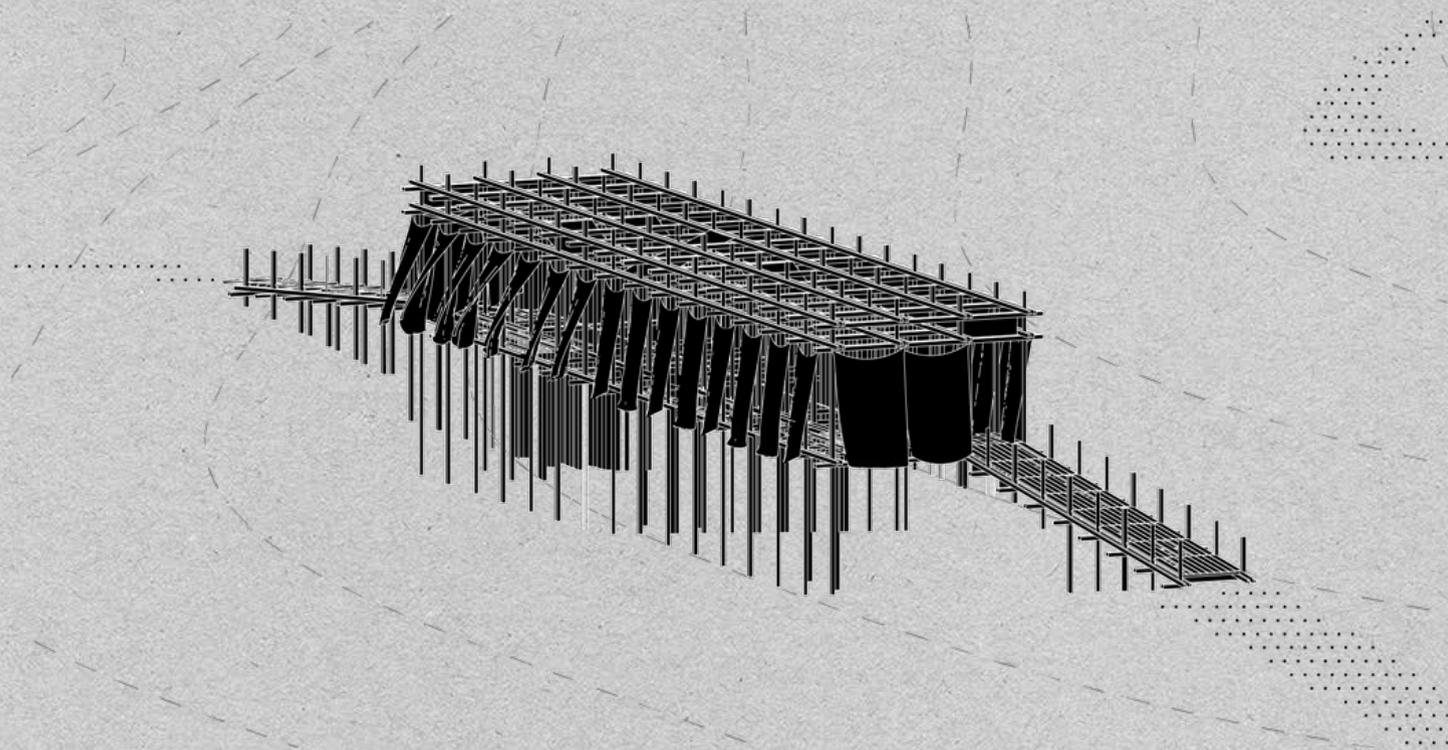




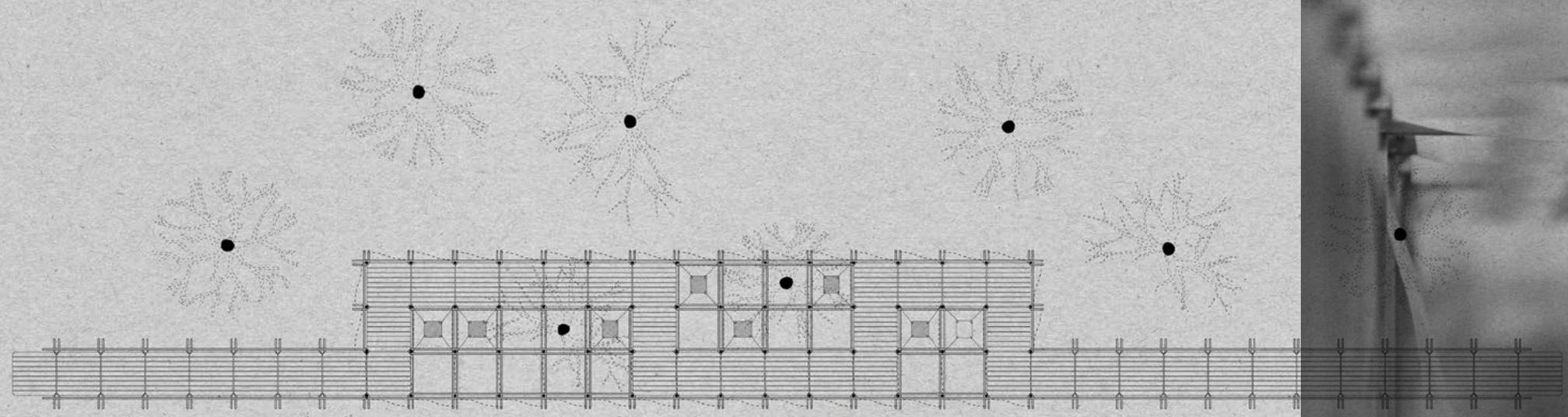
The displayed objects are scattered throughout the plane, which is punctuated by three existing trees that rise through the fabric roof.





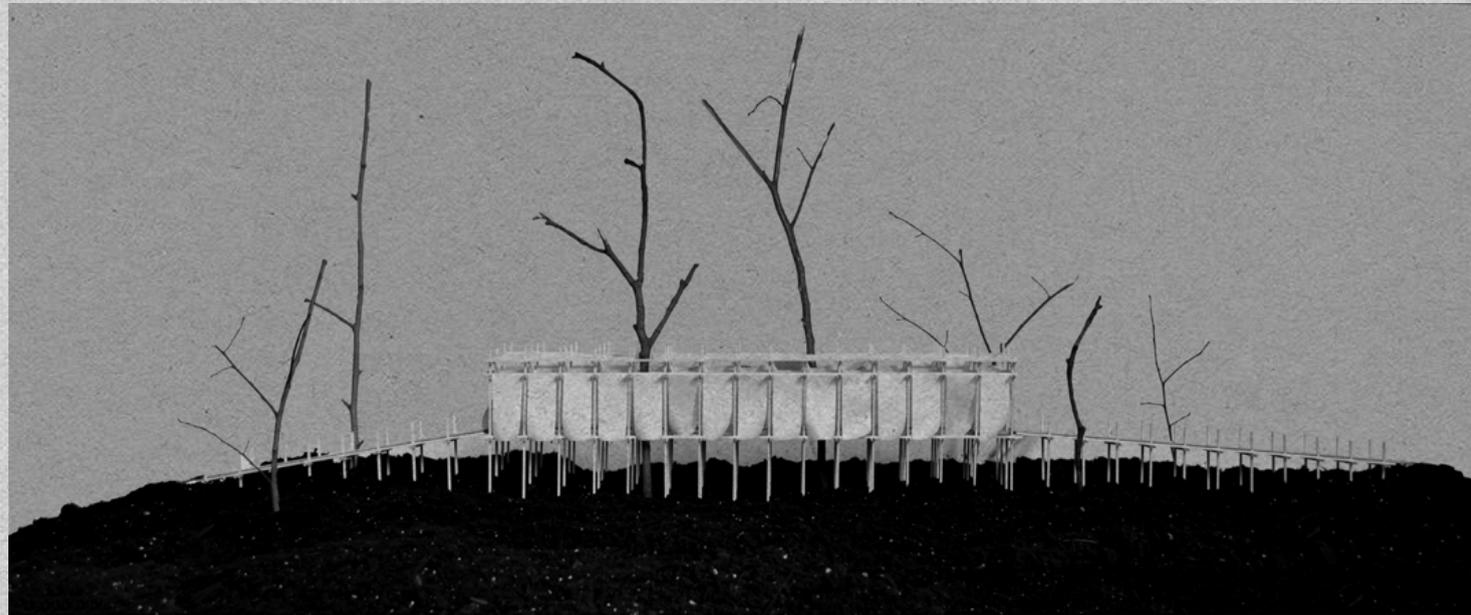


The visitors will then end up at the Shelter of the Spiritual, a one-dimensional line on the landscape.

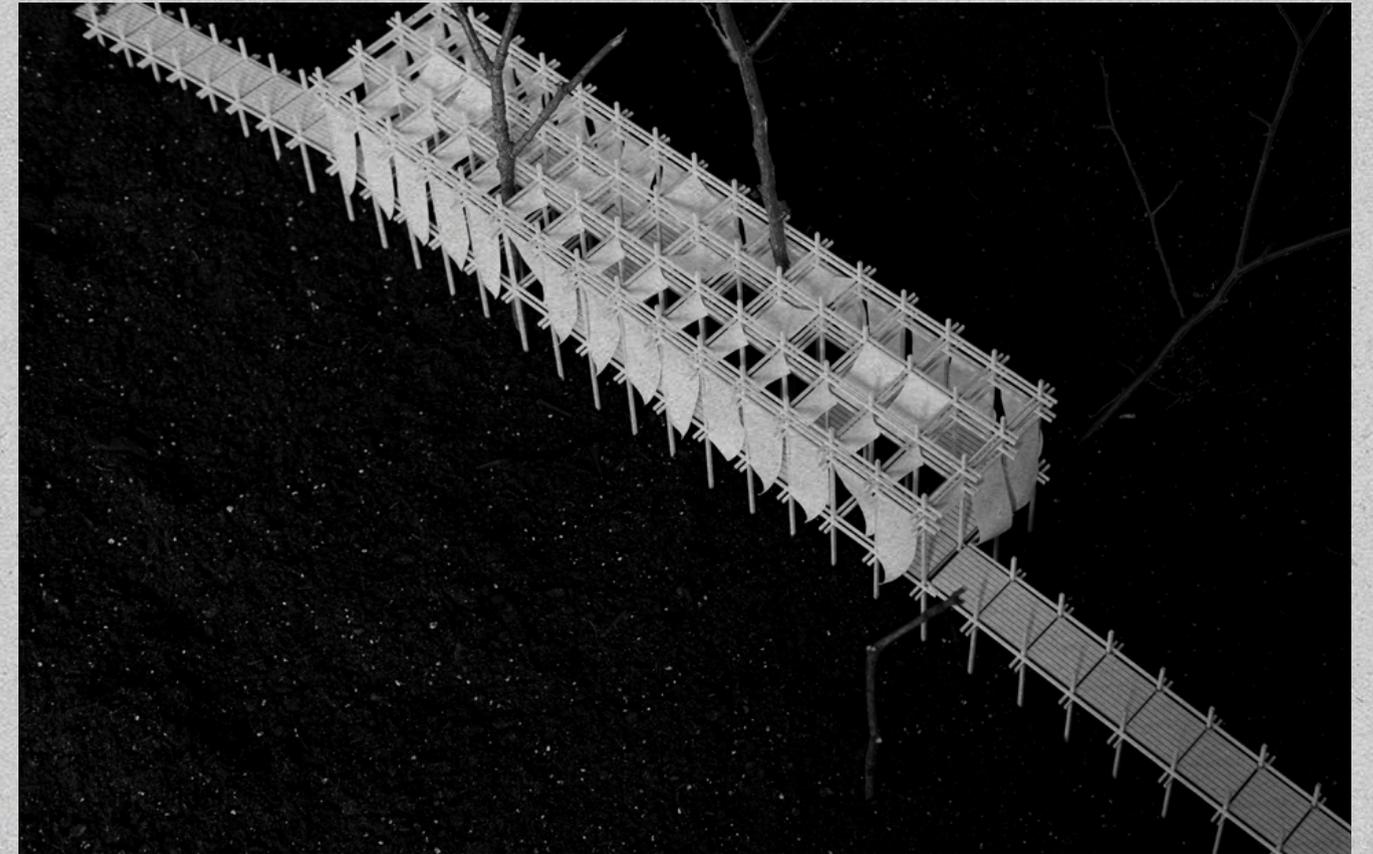


The Shelter of the Spiritual holds ceremonial objects of both the past and the present. As the objects inside this shelter are more revered in their nature, the shelter sits higher above the ground, and its walls are obscured by flowing fabric.





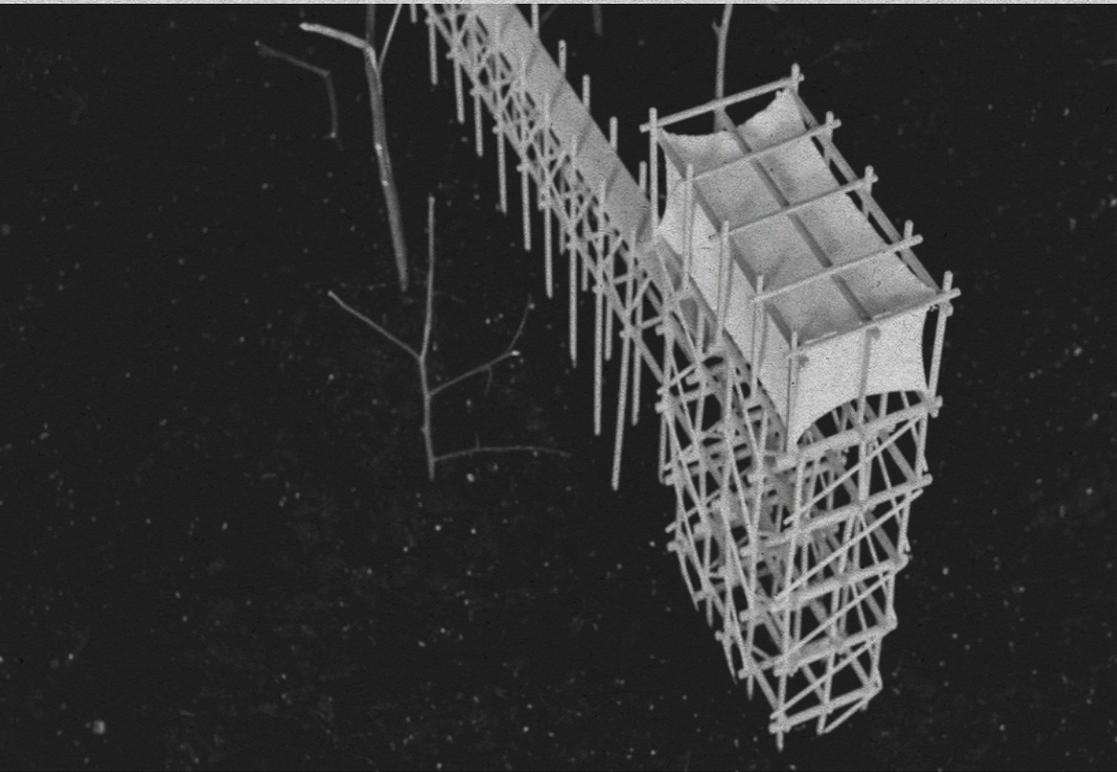
As the visitor walks through and experiences the spiritual objects, the interior of the shelter is intended to evoke lightness and transience as the hanging fabric waves by the whim of the wind.







Finally, the visitor will make their way towards Split Rock, the final destination of the museum. However, on the way to Split Rock, the visitor will notice at a distance a white dot peaking above the trees: the Shelter of the Sacred.



With an opening oriented directly at Split Rock, the Shelter of the Sacred sits high off the ground level, and is the third shelter that holds the most revered and sacred objects from the Ramapough Lenape tribe. To revere the sacredness of Split Rock, however, the Shelter of the Sacred sits slightly lower in altitude than the Split Rock.

Situated away from the path and approached by a bridge and a set of stairs, the access to the Shelter of the Sacred is prohibited to the general public, as only certain senior members of the tribe are allowed.





ramapough lenape heritage shelters
advanced 4 studio

unconditioned art space

adv 6: afterimages

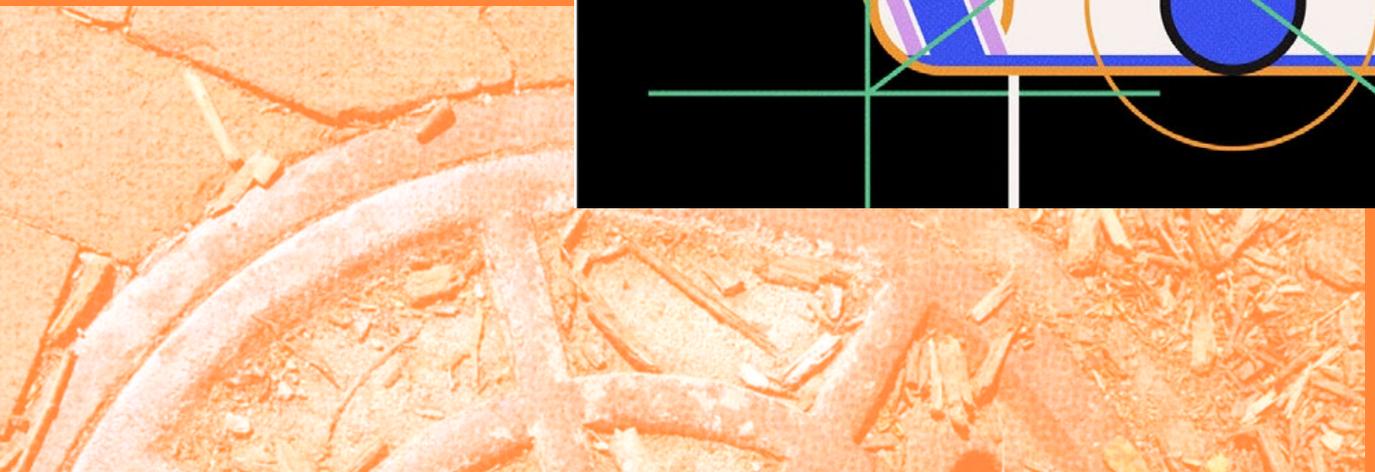
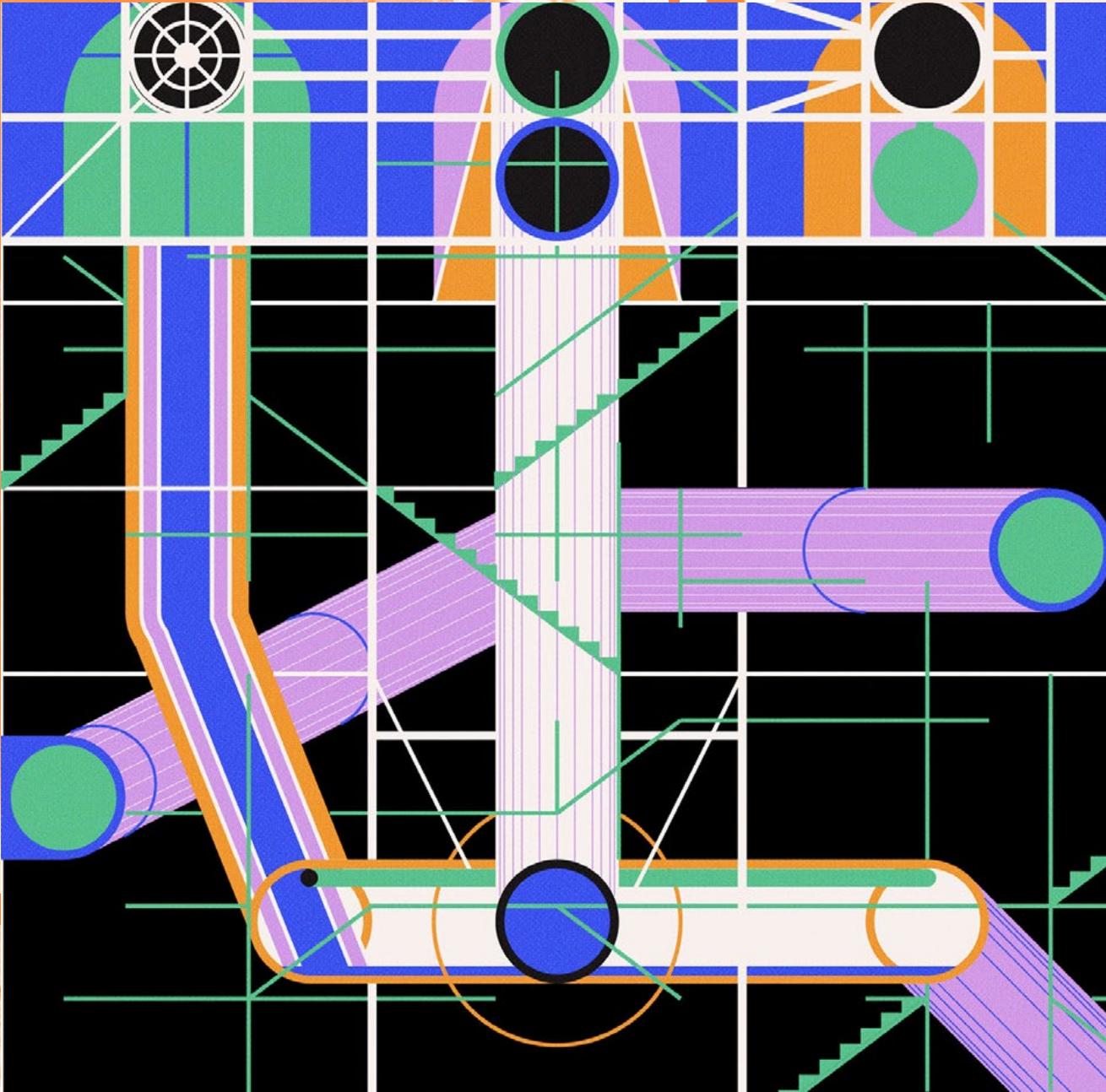
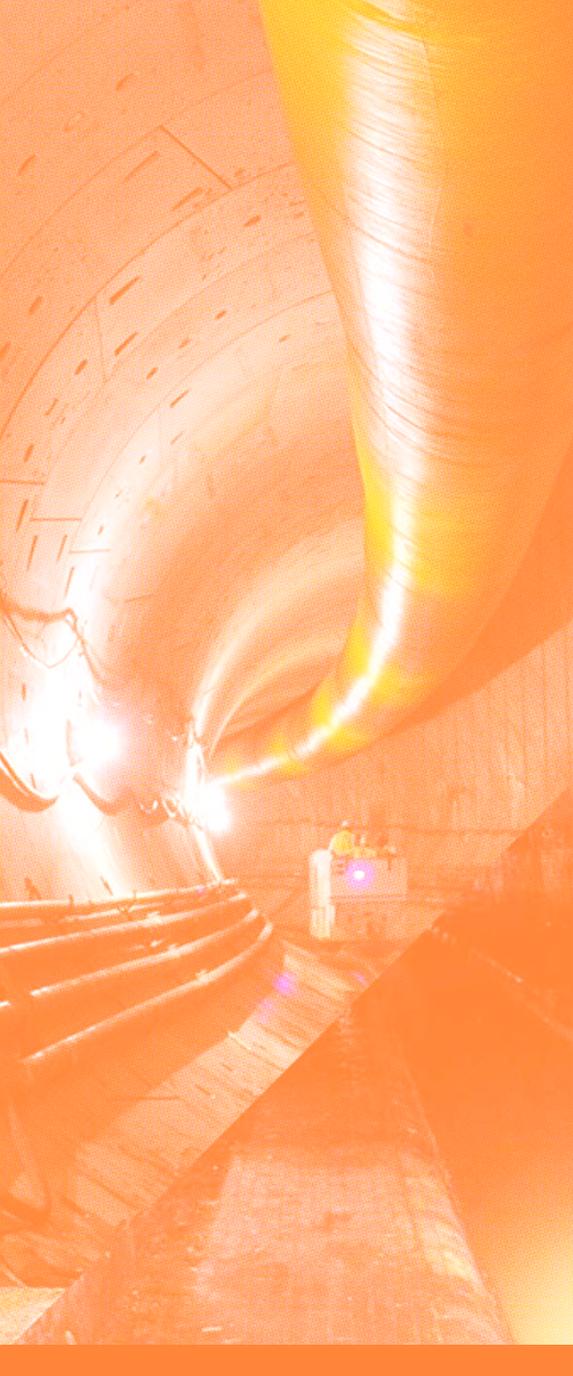
studio critic: Emanuel Admassu

collaborator: Kylie Walker

Within the politically and culturally charged landscape of the National Mall, its museums, and their institutional practices, the discourse around restitution—especially of the looted objects from the African continent—is especially salient.

In addressing the hierarchical power structure that exists both physically on site, as well as institutionally in the Western Museums, the Unconditioned Art Space proposes “restitutive making”—where the collaborative art and culture making practices can take place for and by the African diasporic communities in DC. Reimagining the National Museum of African Art (NMAfA) in DC, the art space rejects the obsession with preservation by the Western Museum’s institutional practice and welcomes the multiplicity of autonomies—of not only the artists, but also the artifacts, the architecture, the flora, the fauna, the humidity, the temperature, and all else. Through this multiplicity and collectivity of voices, the space becomes a site of *unconditioning*—an act of freeing from the tight grip of the Western Museum.





The area now known as Washington DC and the National Mall was largely composed of creeks, marshes, and swamps before its designation as the capital of the United States. Following this designation, however, much of these wetlands were dredged and filled in order to construct the monolithic, neoclassical image of the nation's new capital.

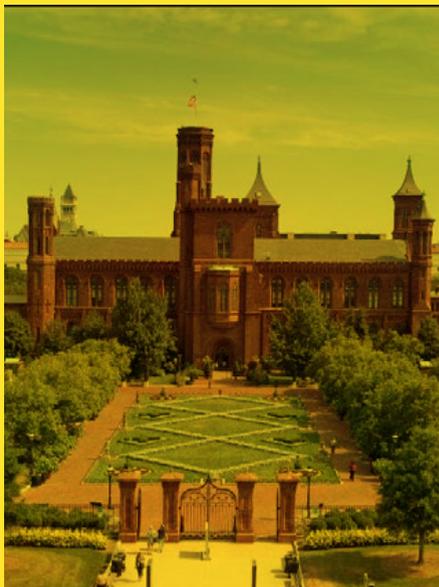
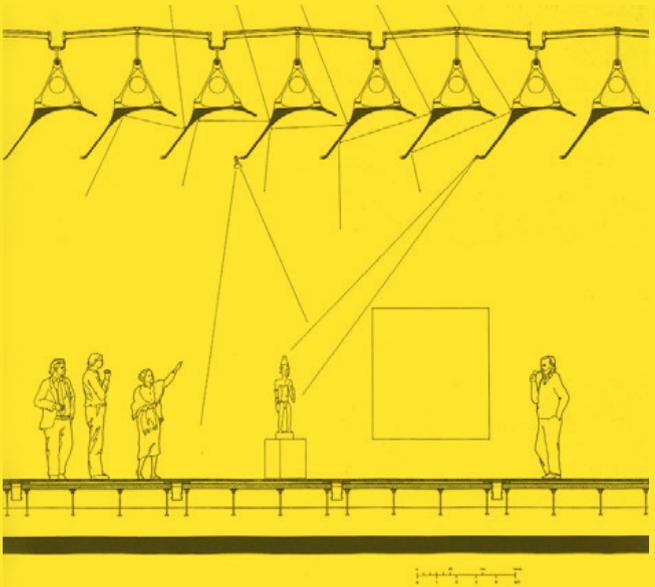
In doing so, miles and miles of pipe and tunnel infrastructure were laid underground, while above, L'Enfant's design of the streets and avenues were composed to control and contain the urban context of the nation's capital.

In this process, there is a hierarchical dichotomy between the ornamental face, or the image, of the National Mall and DC, and the infrastructure that necessarily remains hidden in order to contain, condition, and preserve that very image.



This hierarchy not only exists at the scale of the site, but also in the sphere of the Western Museum. The Western Museum, as an institutional practice, is primarily dictated by the conditioning, preservation, and containment of the objects it has under its collection, which serves to maintain the monopolistic authority and autonomy of the museum. Therefore, its architecture—the white walls, the thick floors, the glass boxes, the precise temperature and humidity control systems—is part and parcel with the maintenance of the museum's monopoly.

Considering the Western Museum's collection of artifacts from the African continent, which are spoils of colonial expansion, this implies that the practice of containing and eternizing these artifacts go hand-in-hand with the maintenance and eternizing of the material and relational consequences of colonialism. Even within the conversation around the restitution of these artifacts, we see the troublesome continuation of the Western Museum's authority. When we consider the complexities surrounding restitution—such as the cross-cultural, cross-continental, cosmopolitan histories of the different African nations, and the consequences of the forced displacements and the diaspora of people and culture from the continent—the perspectives should be anything but singular.



In recognizing these complexities, we must also acknowledge that restitution is not only about the return of artifacts back to the continent. We also ask what restitution means for the people, art, artifacts, and cultures of the different diasporic communities that remain. If, as scholars Sarr and Savoy insist that cultural artifacts can be forces of germination in their rightful communities, the artifacts that remain in the United States can propagate similar generative and creative cultural practices by and for the communities in the diaspora.

In this pretext of the autonomy of the Western Museum, the hierarchical dynamics present institutionally and on site at the National mall, the Unconditioned Art Space proposes to engage the issue of restitution collectively with the diasporic communities in DC through “restitutive making”—in which rituals, performances, and making can take place as a way to reconnect and re-imagine the cultural identities and heritages of the diasporic communities in the future.

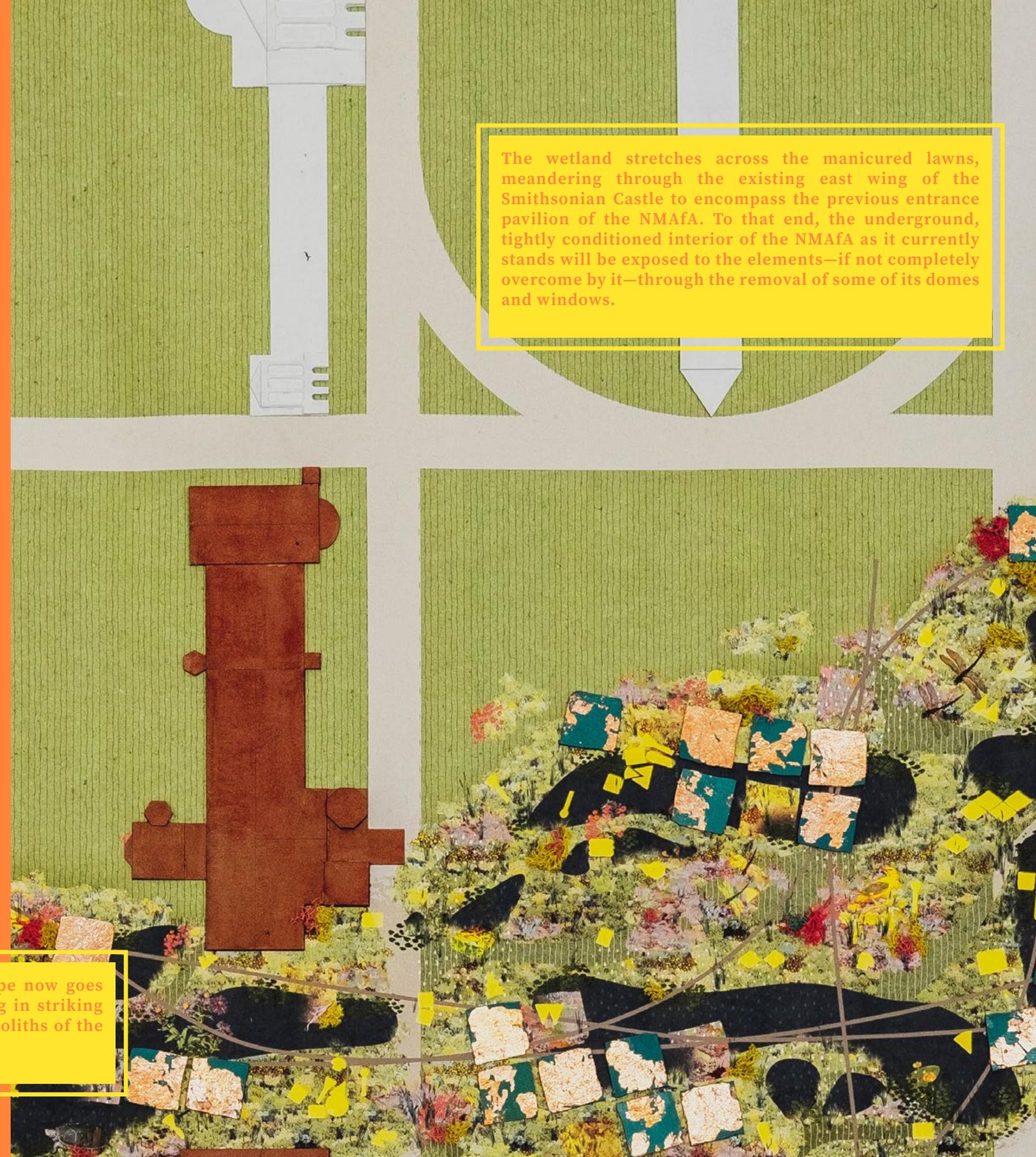
In this space there will be a relinquishing of control to the people, the objects, and the environment.

The story that the National Mall tells in reference to the NMAfA is then that of the incommensurate relationship between the Western empires and the African continent—the racialized spatial and power regimes that shaped it. In order to disrupt this manicured and tightly conditioned hierarchical site, the project proposes to restore the wetland that once harbored—as it would in the future—a wide range of biodiversity that begins to bring in a greater multiplicity of authorship for the flora and fauna in shaping the spatial narrative.



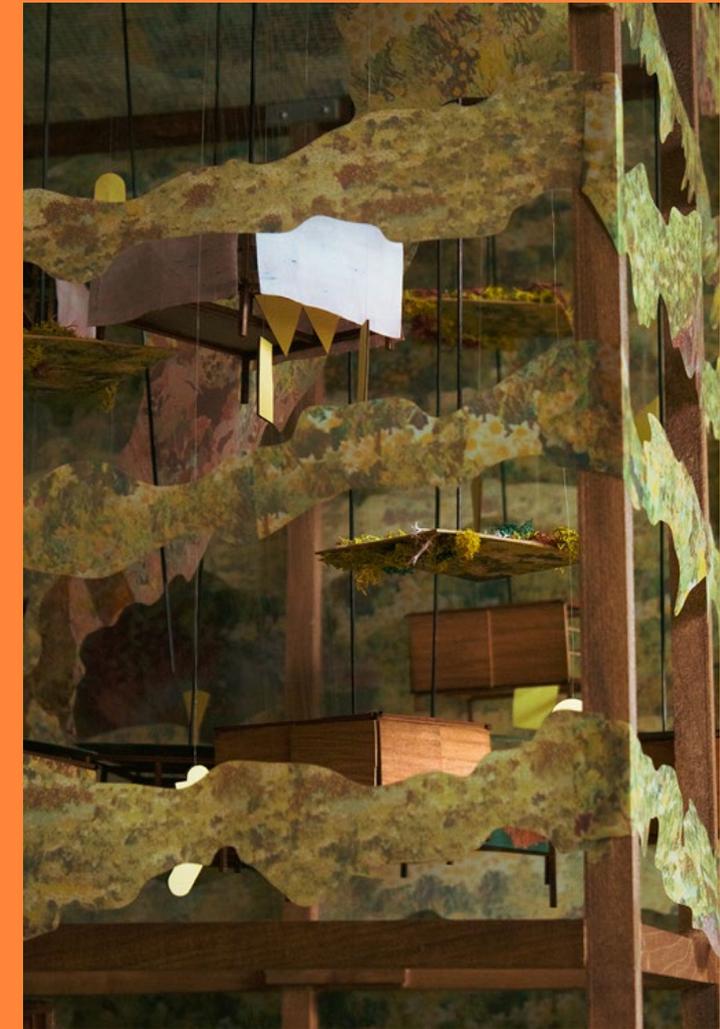
The previously conditioned and hyper maintained landscape now goes untouched, free to return to its more natural state, existing in striking contrast to the layout of L'Enfant's master plan and the monoliths of the National Mall.

The wetland stretches across the manicured lawns, meandering through the existing east wing of the Smithsonian Castle to encompass the previous entrance pavilion of the NMAfA. To that end, the underground, tightly conditioned interior of the NMAfA as it currently stands will be exposed to the elements—if not completely overcome by it—through the removal of some of its domes and windows.





The Unconditioned Art Space is reconfigured into clusters of forty small pavilions, which are intertwined with the flora, fauna, the water, and all else in the wetland against the singular monoliths of the National Mall. Directly against the sterile, controlled architecture of the Western Museum, the pavilions are constructed as a basic 18' by 18' wooden frame that are open to the elements. As they are allowed to let be, they will be existing on their own autonomy, in their own life, their own timeline, their own being.



Therefore, some pavilions may have walls, some may not, some have copper panels, some have wood, some may have roofs, some may not, some may have floors, some may not. We propose through the minimal architectural intervention a potential for maximum amount of collective authorship for restitutive making between the makers and artists, the artifacts, the art, the flora, the fauna, the water, the humidity, the temperature, and otherwise.



The makers and artists of the diaspora will be able to directly intervene on the artifacts, the art, the architecture, the flora—as these would on the makers and artists—in a process of restitutive making, where they are able to reconnect with the cultural heritages of the continent, while re-imagining the future cultural identities of the diaspora by engaging in creative practices that involve the various forms of rituals, performances, making, and iterative caring of the flora, the fauna, and the artifacts.



Through these interactions and intermingling, all of the elements mentioned above will find refuge in each other, and find transformative properties in each other: spaces of refuge are found in the interstices of different opacities, and the art, artifact, and architecture and everything else obtain their ambiance through the environment in which they are interwoven.



unconditioned art space
advanced 6 studio

thank you.

