

Speculations and Design

Sanober Khan

M.S.AAD '22

This is a story of my interests at GSAPP.

I did my first studio located in New York, while being in New Delhi. This particular duality of locations informs the pattern of my work at GSAPP, where I continue to explore New York design studios while bringing my research interests from India to other classes.

You will find recurring themes of coloniality and decoloniality, ecologies, subversion, and the problematics of institutions.

! Hyper-Ecologies of the Wildest Cemetery

Summer 2021 Studio | Go Wild

- Welcome to Grant gardens

Fall 2021 Studio | Post Plantation Futures

“ Tawaifs, Feminism, and Their Fall From Grace

Fall 2021 Elective | Kitchenless Stories

/ Hein and Sani’s Rotating Wall of Fun

Fall 2021 Elective | 1:1 Crafting and Fabrication Details

? Reimagining the Justice System at Grassroots Level

Spring 2022 Studio | Urban Exostructures

; Irani Cafés, Authenticity and The Cultural Landscape of Mumbai

Fall 2021 Elective | Feasting + Fasting



Hyper-Ecologies of the Wildest Cemetery

**Can cemeteries and
graveyards in cities be
reimagined?**

Public spaces?

Green oases?

**What could they offer
for non-humans?**

**Natural or synthetic/
both?**



Part 1



Project Structure

Part 1: Age of Reptiles

Art interpretation exercise- interpreting a segment of the mural (pictured on cover page) into a 3D object.

Part 2: Macy's Day Parade

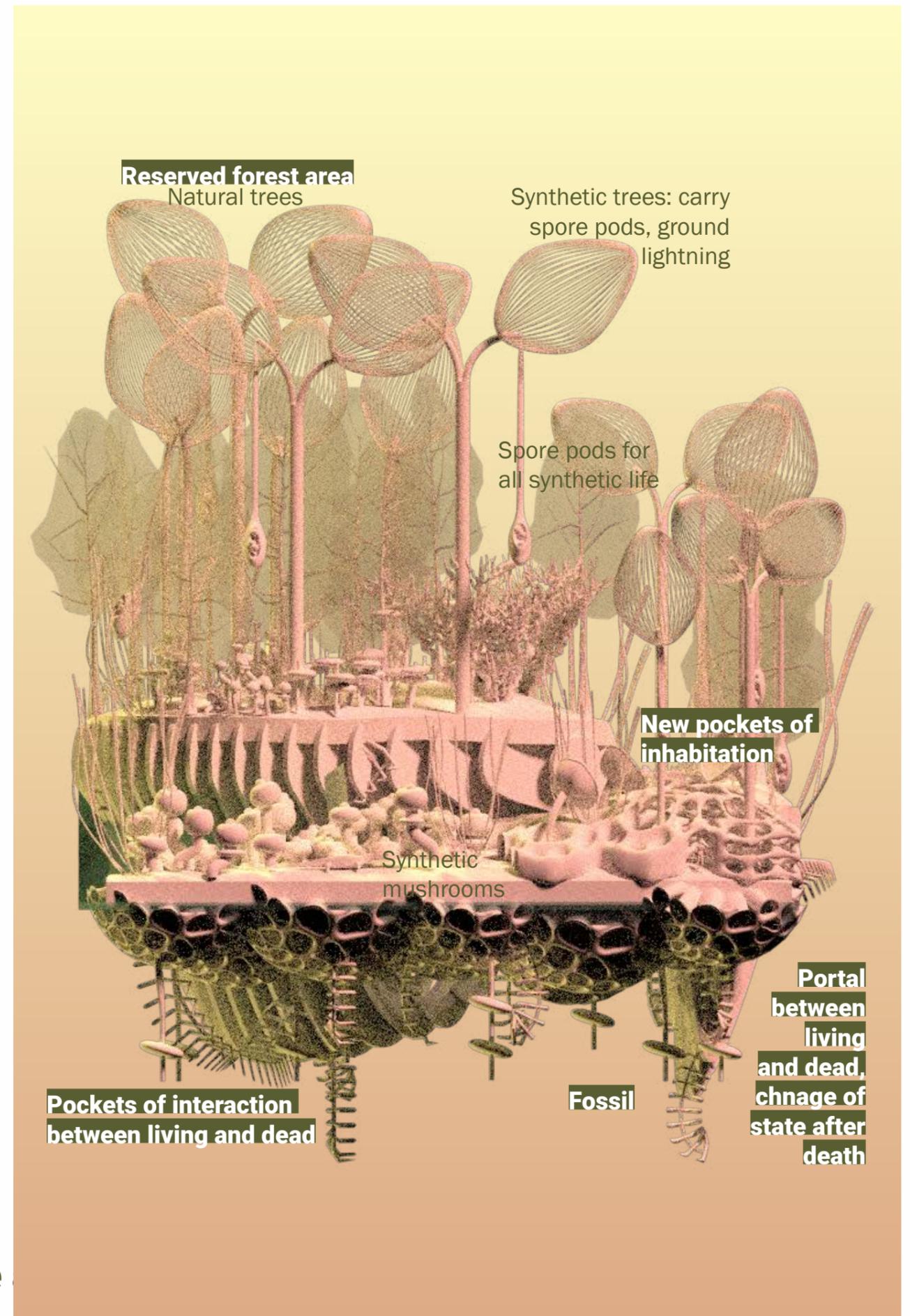
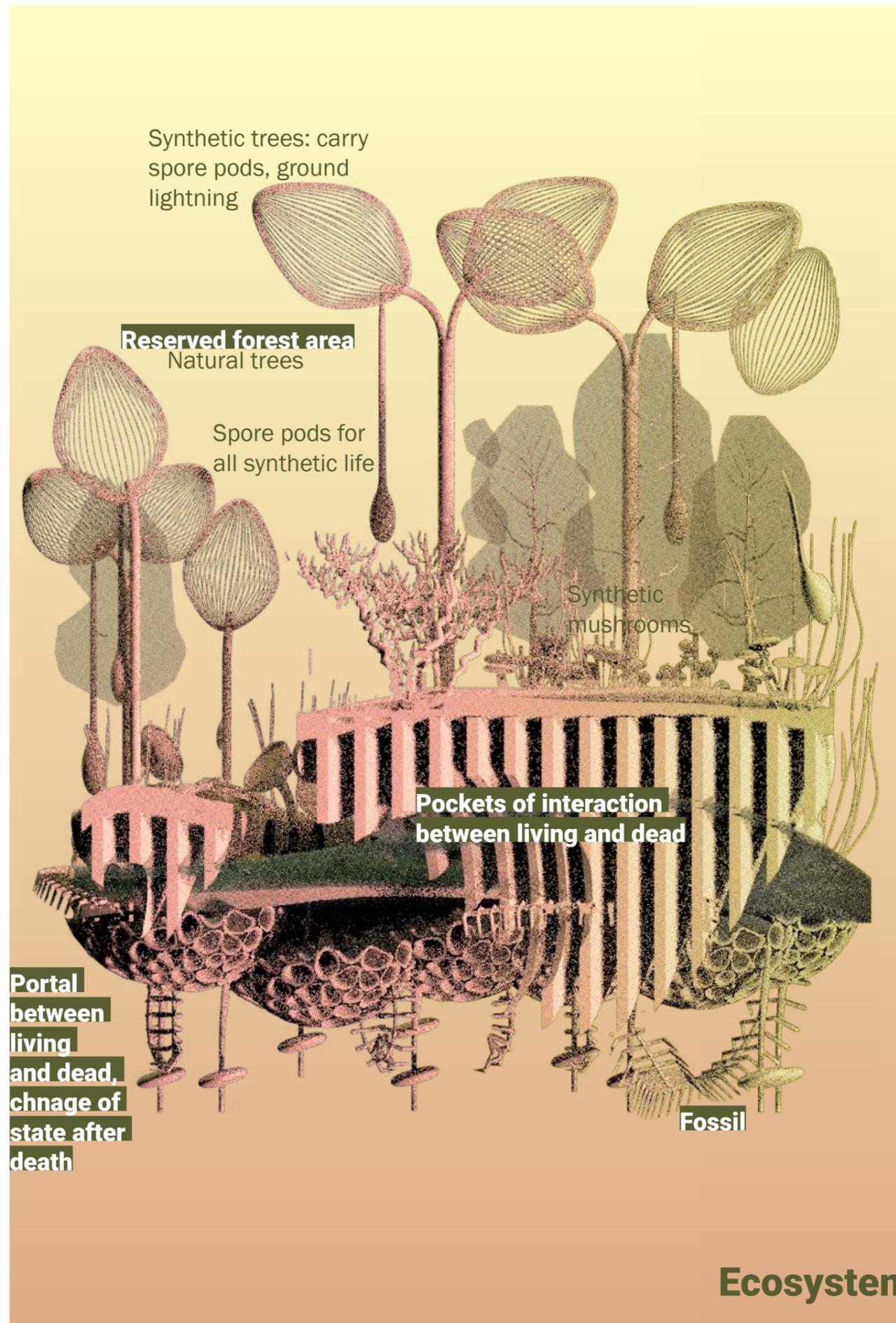
World making and alternative ecologies
Merging ecologies with neighbors

Part 3: Go Wild

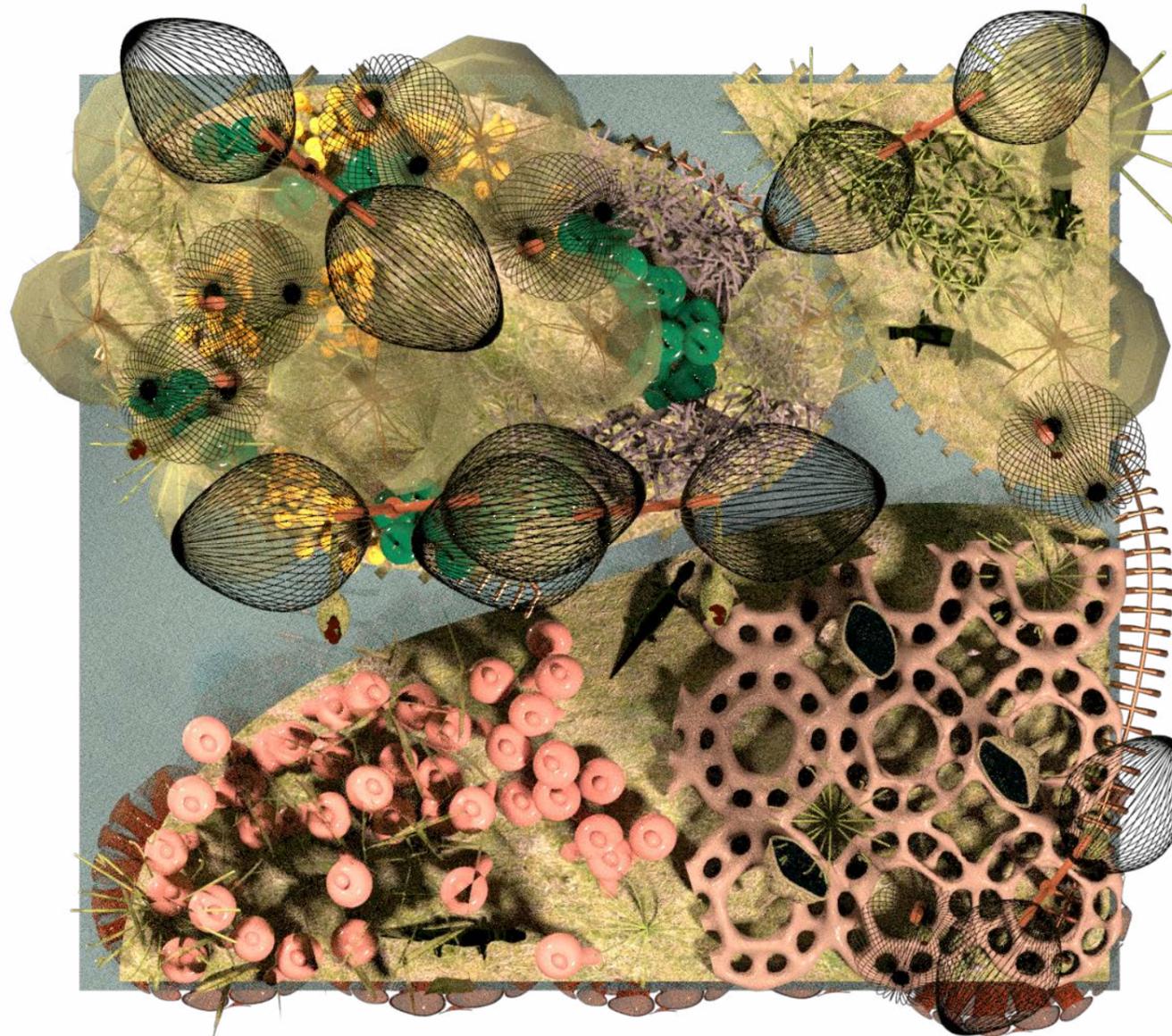
Cumulative design, situated in New York City



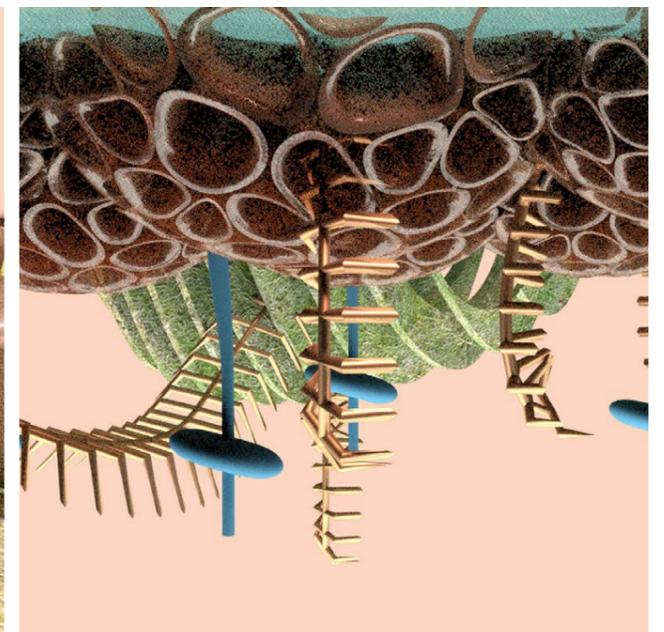
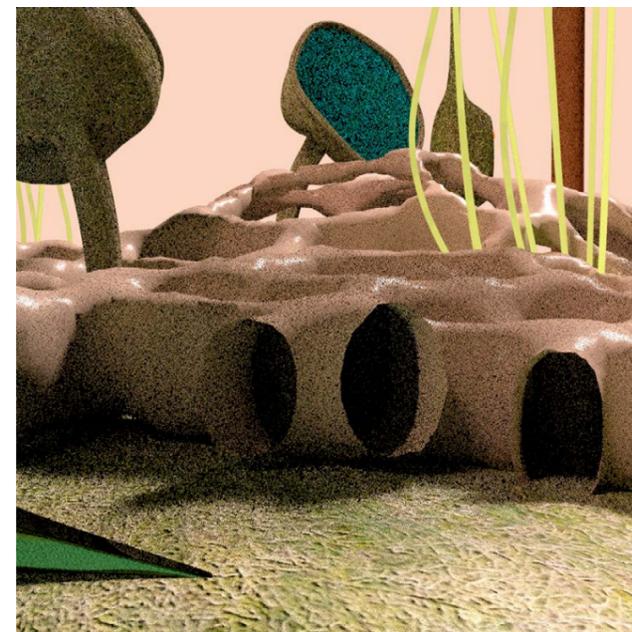
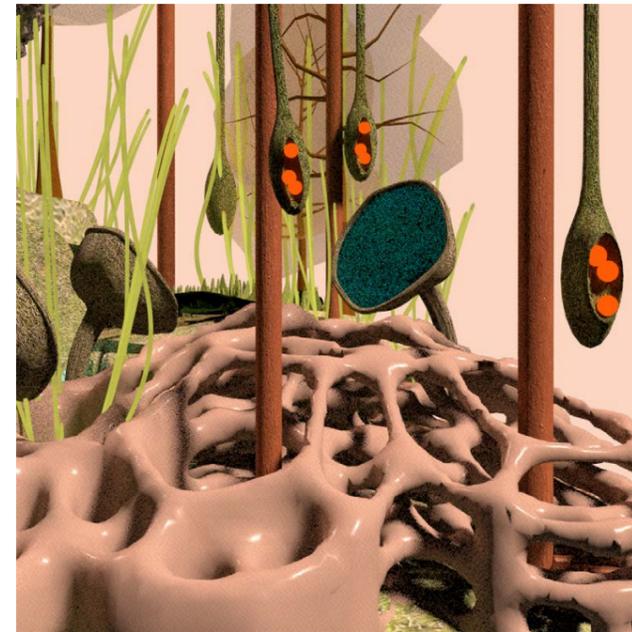
Part 2



Part 2



Top view



Vignettes

Part 3

The Design

The proposal is an attempt to rethink cemeteries and graveyards in cities, such that they move away from the typology of gated spaces designated solely for the dead and instead begin to act as public spaces too. Taking urban forests as the starting point, the design creates two smaller ecosystems within a larger one i.e., above and below the ground. Above ground, one would enter the site into a forest like environment with natural trees that already start interacting with the streetscape outside and the user before entry. Walking further into the site would bring them to the burial site, surrounded by and merging into these natural trees. The design employs the practice of natural burials and human composting, in consideration of the carbon footprint that is largely reduced. The burial site itself is a series of earth mounds piled on top of each other and held together as well as to the ground by synthetic trees. These mounds are dotted with spore pods on the exterior that support synthetic life on the site. While the interior of the mounds forms a large meditative space, the foliage of the synthetic trees inside this space form burial chambers, within which are burial pods for the bodies. These pods become the entry point into the ecosystem below the ground, imagined as a network of mushroom skin pipes, almost like intestines, that take the bodies to their resting places within this network. With every body buried, the spore pods on top give birth to one synthetic plant on top of the mounds, imagined as large and luminous forms. The idea is to replace tombstones with these plants while retaining the element of remembrance. The resting places are designed so as to increase the rate of decay and release nutrients into the soil. The same underground network reintroduces the mineral remains of bones into the environment above as calcified organic forms that occupy the backside and the in between of the mounds and also become spaces that invite other forms of biodiversity. These elements combined start defining the spatial as well as temporal qualities of the site. Overall, the site operates at various levels of access in the form of the forested area outside, leading into either the meditative spaces inside and further into the burial chambers, or on top of the mounds. The cemetery itself is like a green oasis, like a synthetic forest within a natural forest. The proposal aims to blur the boundaries between site and street, life and decay, natural and synthetic, public and private. The site, imagined as a rich, fantastical and lively space is rooted in real issues related to cities and how we design for the dead, the environmental implications of burial practices like cremation and embalming fluids, the increasing lack of space in cities like New York and how addressing death changed in the face of the pandemic, urban forests, micro-climates and inviting biodiversity.



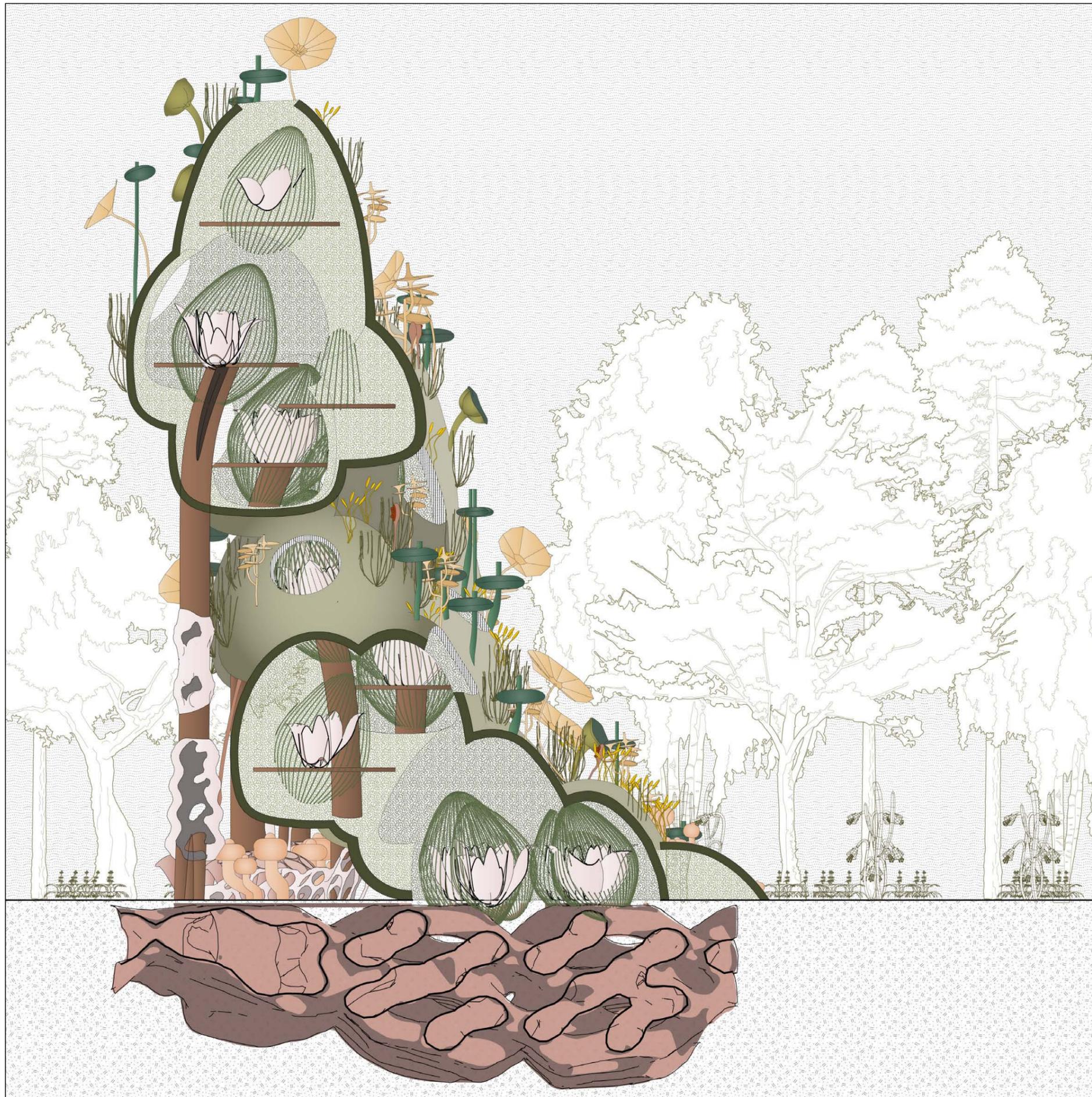
The forest surrounding the burial mounds is imagined as a public space, hence attracting the most footfall.

The area inside the mounds are only visited by people who want to either perform last rites or are seeking a meditative space.

The burial chambers are only entered by people close to the person being buried.

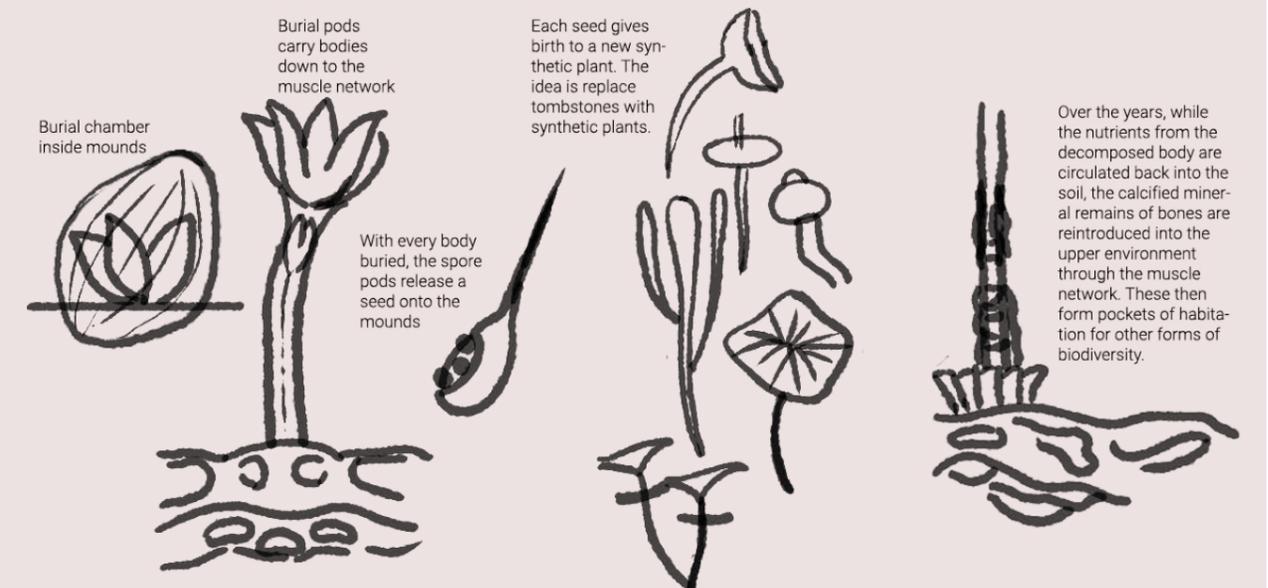
Plan

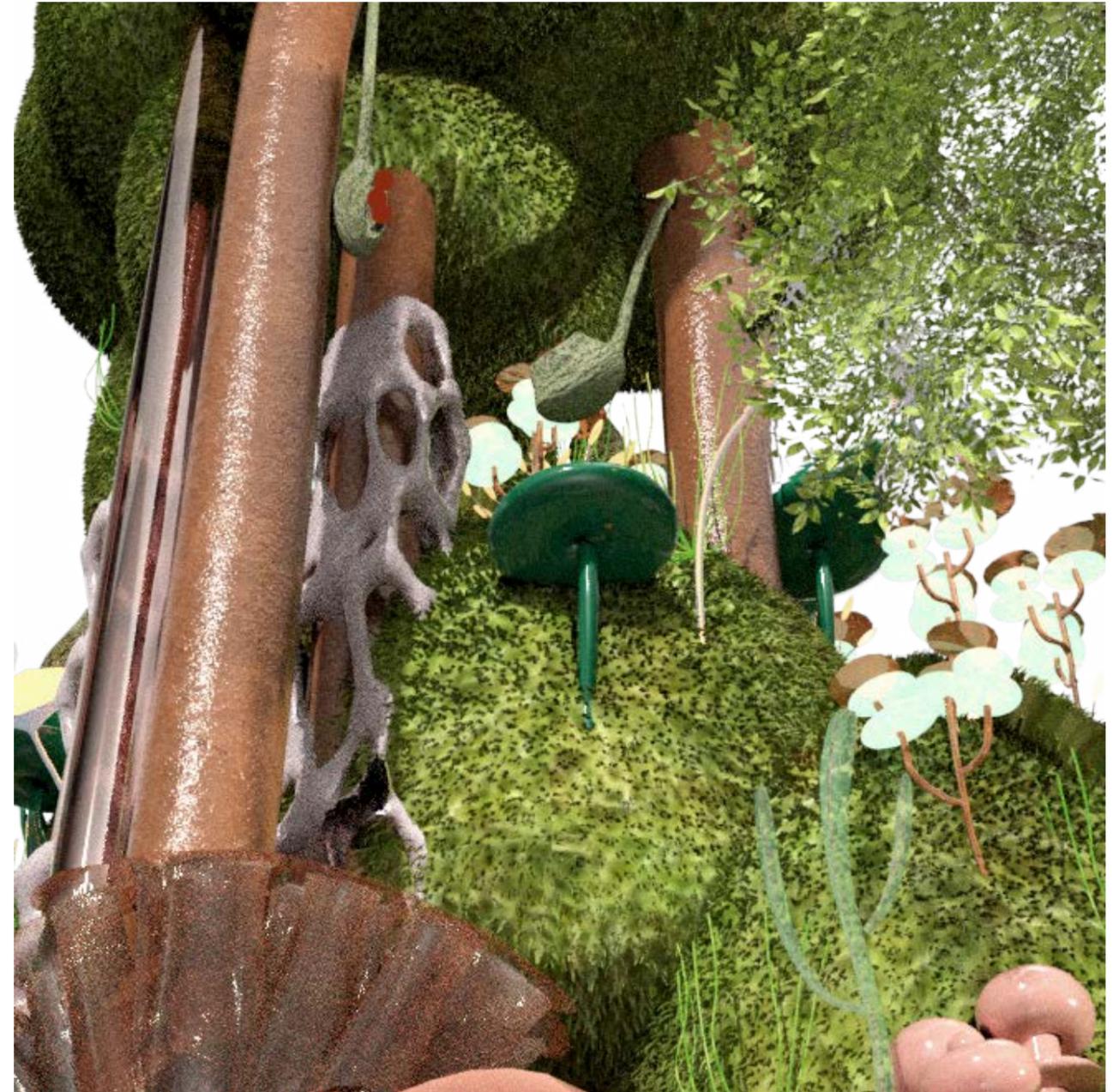






Elevation



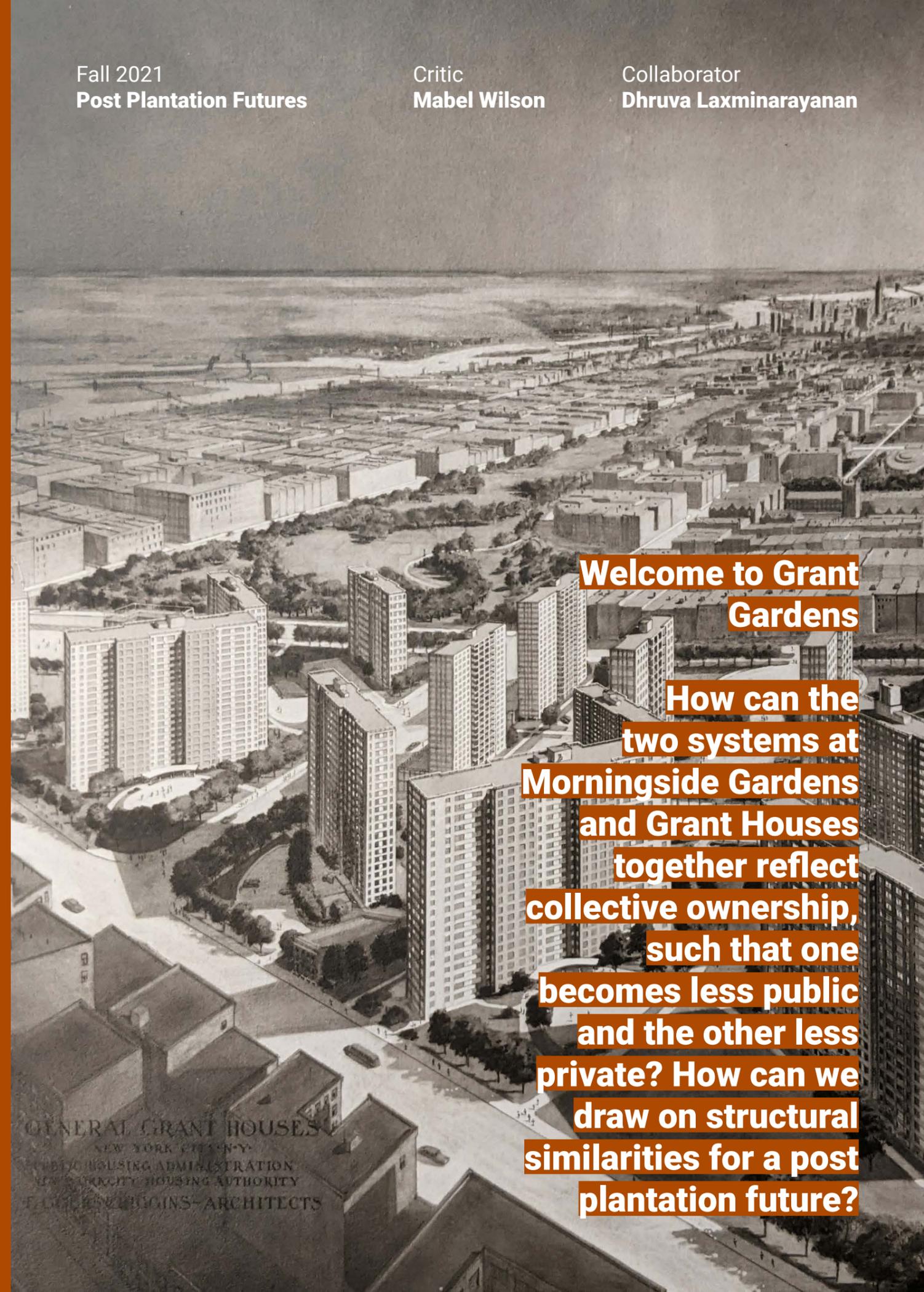




Fall 2021
Post Plantation Futures

Critic
Mabel Wilson

Collaborator
Dhruva Laxminarayanan



**Welcome to Grant
Gardens**

**How can the
two systems at
Morningside Gardens
and Grant Houses
together reflect
collective ownership,
such that one
becomes less public
and the other less
private? How can we
draw on structural
similarities for a post
plantation future?**

GENERAL GRANT HOUSES
NEW YORK CITY N.Y.
PUBLIC HOUSING ADMINISTRATION
NEW YORK CITY HOUSING AUTHORITY
FRANK L. PHILLIPS ARCHITECTS

(DIS)POSSESSION

Dispossession: The act of depriving someone, or a group of people, of land, property and other possessions, including the self. Enslaved populations in plantations were physically and emotionally claimed and controlled by slave owners and their successors continue to exist in a state of dispossession.

CULTIVATION

Cultivation: The improvement of land, culture, and soil, which in a capitalist state, further improves value and worth. When it came to land management, the agricultural plantation logic was in contrast to the beliefs and practices of indigenous cultures.

LANDSCAPE

Landscape: The visible and perceived features of a physical or conceptual territory. Physically, the plantation landscape consisted of rolling hills, expansive farmland, and strategically placed architecture; conceptually, the landscape was contested being described as picturesque as well as a space of fear.

ARTICULATION

Articulation: A dominant theory that looks at how political and cultural economies are inscribed into ways of domination over classes. Plantation logic is a complex model of thought used to minimize and disconnect into various aspects of society, from property, to politics, to social relations.

LABOR

Labor: The exertion of physical or mental energy by a working group to produce profits for an employer or institution. Slave Owners accrued profits from the services rendered by plantation workers, who were often coerced or exploited.

SURVEY MAPPING

Survey Mapping: The art of "delineating" the boundaries between nations, states and plots, thereby measuring the distances, directions, and connections between them. Survey mapping was a necessary tool to reduce and dispossess land, which allowed it to be enclosed into plantation properties, creating an unrivaled system of value, speculation and commerce.

PLANTATION ARCHITECTURE

Plantation Architecture: An enclosed space on which crops are cultivated by paid and/or enslaved labor. Common architectural attributes include: 1. Big House: The domestic living space for slave owners that would contain service domains for slave activity to take place, such as kitchens, washing areas, etc. 2. Provision Grounds: Unsuitable plots of farmland where slaves were allowed to cultivate for their own consumption and possible revenue. 3. Slave Village: Collection of houses inhabited by slaves. This was a space of surveillance, as the buildings were uniformly distributed with unobstructed sightlines.

POWER

Power: The institutionalization of control and influence over people and things that creates a hierarchy; techniques of influence manifest through surveillance and punishment. Slavery perpetuated a regime of racial hierarchy, where "compliant" slaveowners and institutions constrained slaves' movement and autonomy. 2. Oppression: The use of power to maintain a hierarchy and discriminate against entities pressured inferior. 3. Downpression: Understood as an antonym to "up-pressure", a conscious play subverting the power of the word and transforming it into an agent for uplifting. This term is derived from the Rastafarian dialect, a religious and political movement originated in Jamaica in the 1930s.

MOVEMENT

Movement: The act of changing one's own body or property from one place to another. Limitations on disenfranchised populations were imposed by authorities by means of physical restrictions, identity documents (passbooks, cards), and legal impediments. 2. Migration: The movement of entities across landscapes with or without their consent. The Transatlantic Slave Trade exemplified this phenomenon. 3. (Semi)Nomadism: A way of life in which an individual, or a group of individuals do not reside in a fixed place, but move around within a certain territory. Under Euro-centric subjectivity, which has a much narrower definition for a "fixed place". The term has been used to undermine the territorial claim of indigenous populations.

ENCLOSURE

Enclosure: An area that is sealed off and claimed with a physical or representational barrier that is artificial or natural. The plantation enclosure keeps objects or people within or outside of the boundaries, creating a state of being isolated or excluded through means of materials, zoning and architecture.

PROPERTY

Property: Something or someone under the ownership and at the disposal of a person or a group of persons, often through legal title. Used primarily for goods and land, the world extended to slaves as commodities in plantation history where they were not given the right to be in possession of their own selves. Moreover, natural resources were claimed as properties for plantations.

PLANTATION

Plantation: A complex, proto-industrial system that brings together machinery and exploited or coerced labor to produce goods for the global trade network.

DIAGRAM KEY: Person, enclosure, property/thing, physical trait, conceptual trait, authority, hierarchy, physical, conceptual.

PLANTATION LOGIC

Plantation Logic: An assumed mindset that establishes hierarchical social relations between dominant and marginalized communities. The plantation logic persists today as a structure related to service, city organization, and the value of people in society. It continues to have consequences for marginalized communities, as the logic of possession, out-of-place-ness and assumed authority still enforce a hierarchy of social order.

COLONIALISM

Colonialism: A practice in which one group of people dominates and subjugates another, requiring assimilation, inflicting displacement and forcing extraction. Settler colonialism of the Americas shipped indigenous peoples of their lands and exploited slaves through a capitalist mode of production.

SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance: The freedom to maintain and benefit from one's autonomy; the freedom from subjugation, the legal ability to act and obtain commodities within society. Slave Owners and legal institutions denied autonomy to enslaved populations, reducing them to objects only valued for their labor.

ABOLITION

Abolition: The act of officially ending a complex system of discrimination. The legal prohibition of slavery was an initial step in reversing institutional racism, but was not successful in eradicating the rippling impacts of racial injustice still prevailing in contemporary times.

CHATTEL SLAVERY

Chattel Slavery: The ownership of another human being as property for the duration of their lifetime, which includes extends to their offspring. The commodification of these humans played a key role in the complex, colonial economy and the transatlantic slave trade: ships, warehouses, markets, traders, and plantations all contributed to the development of racial hierarchy.

RACE

Race: The categorization of humans into many groups on the basis of physical characteristics and shared ancestry. In the wake of western European colonialism beginning in the 15th century, the transatlantic slave trade is believed to have been critical to the invention of racial hierarchies. Alternatively, research has shown that all humans are genetically the same for the most part, proving that race was socially constructed to justify continued hierarchies. 2. Miscegenation: A mixture of races, usually constructed through marriage, cohabitation, or sexual intercourse between a white person and a member of another race.

WHITE SUPREMACY

White Supremacy: The ideology that white people exercise a dominant status in society, simultaneously creating a hierarchy to the detriment of black populations and other marginalized groups. This belief system was created to justify the subjugation of others, permeating into the plantation logic and modern society.

GLOBAL TRADE NETWORK

Global Trade Network: A complex system in which actors engage in trade via private ownership, accumulation, production, and consumption of capital goods in a free market. It typically involves the exploitation of labor, a need for continual growth, and a lack of regulation. In economies with plantation logics and demand, singular crops were cultivated then shipped globally to maximize profits.

RIGHTS

Rights: The freedom to maintain and benefit from one's autonomy; the freedom from subjugation, the legal ability to act and obtain commodities within society. Slave Owners and legal institutions denied autonomy to enslaved populations, reducing them to objects only valued for their labor.

POLICING

Policing: A system that protects and maintains a conceived social order, via tactics of violence and surveillance, that relies on racial hierarchies, class differences, gender inequalities, and other inequities, initially created with the employment of special forces in order to maintain systems of chattel slavery, this system was used to protect interests of the wealthy while elite by enforcing their claims to private property, including humans.

REFUSAL

Refusal: The act of refusing holistic subjugation ranging from minor, individualized acts of refusing appropriation to outward, collective rebellion against oppressors. Slaves actively resisted their state of possession and oppression in many forms; refusing to complete tasks, maintaining their cultural practices, and attacking oppressors are all ways in which slaves rebelled against their physical and mental state of existence.

THINGIFICATION

Thingification: From thing + -fication. The process of degrading an entity, including a human, into a thing. The commodified ownership of slaves induced the thingification of black people, bounding them to an existence of enclosure and surveillance.

INDIGENOUS

Indigenous: People who are the original inhabitants of a geographic region. Indigenous populations face strong racial discrimination as their rights and properties of have been encroached by colonial settlers.

CAPITALISM

Capitalism: An economic system that structures society via private ownership, accumulation, production, and consumption of capital goods in a free market. It typically involves the exploitation of labor, a need for continual growth, and a lack of regulation. In economies with plantation logics and demand, singular crops were cultivated then shipped globally to maximize profits.

LAW

Law: A framework for interpreting and enforcing the legal system through procedures or processes focused on centralizing power and creating hierarchies. Through this framework, embedded inequality and human perpetration can be established and enforced, as seen in the earliest American laws.

VIOLENCE

Violence: The act of physical or emotional force by an individual or system towards another entity. Continued notions of superiority enabled slave owners and other white people to inflict harm on individuals they considered inferior, especially women and people of color. 2. Punishment: The imposition of harsh treatment on an individual, with the intent of causing harm, injury and invoking submission. Physical violence, the threat of violence, and surveillance were most commonly utilized on enslaved plantation workers to combat resistance and insubordination.

RESISTANCE

Resistance: The act of refusing holistic subjugation ranging from minor, individualized acts of refusing appropriation to outward, collective rebellion against oppressors. Slaves actively resisted their state of possession and oppression in many forms; refusing to complete tasks, maintaining their cultural practices, and attacking oppressors are all ways in which slaves rebelled against their physical and mental state of existence.

ASSIMILATION

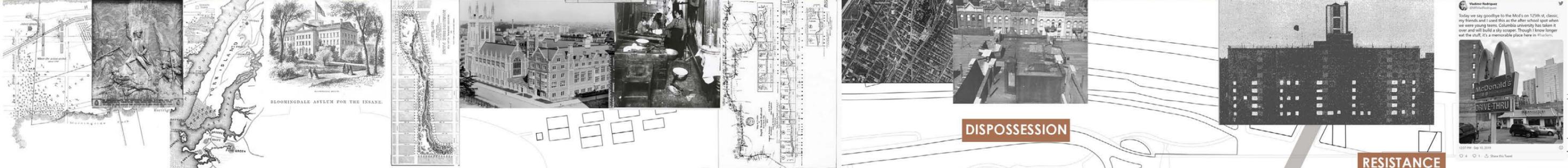
Assimilation: The act of forced absorption of a group into the cultural tradition of a dominating institution. In the case of colonialism, the indigenous people and enslaved populations were required to adapt to prevent social norms of the colonizer.

APPROPRIATE & EXPROPRIATE

Appropriation: The utilization of something without authority or right granted by the original users. Indigenous land was commodified and monetized by colonial settlers to be turned into plantations. More definitions, etc. if required, make headings bold. 2. Expropriation: The act of dispossessing someone of property or assets by the state or figure of authority for public use or benefit. Enslaved Domains was one of the earliest forms within the United States and continues to displace communities even today.

INDIGENOUS

1626 "Purchase" of Manna hatta
 1776 Battle of Harlem Heights
 1811 Increased fortifications post war
 1821-1831 Establishment of first institutions
 1865 Morningside and Riverside parks commissioned
 1870 Establishment of new institutions
 1896 First tenements in Morningside Heights
 1904 Introduction of subway network
 1930s The Great Depression
 1947 Establishment of Morningside Heights, inc.
 1949 National Housing Act
 1951 Title I project and Grant Houses announced
 1955 Morningside Gardens groundbreaking ceremony
 1956 Grant Houses opening
 1968 Columbia student uprising
 2010 Columbia expansion



DISPOSSESSION

RESISTANCE

RACE



CAPITALISM

MOVEMENT

PROPERTY

LANDSCAPE

Morningside Gardens' original stockholders was 75% white, 20% black, 4% Asian, and 1% Puerto Rican. These proportions were regarded at the time as promising for the achievement of interracial housing. Experts tended to believe that there had to be a certain balance, in which not more than 25% were black and Puerto Rican.

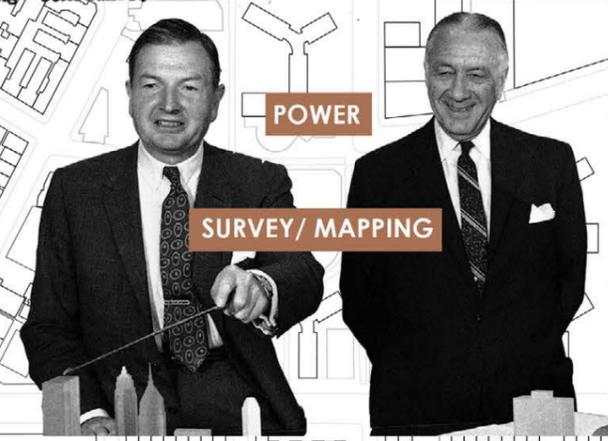
Map: COVID-19 Death Rate In NYCHA Developments Far Outpaces That Of NYC
 Of all the NYCHA developments, Grant Houses in Harlem logged the most deaths, with 22 tenants succumbing to the virus. Following it was Bronx River Houses, which had 21 reported COVID-19 deaths.

While our arrangements to store reinforcing steel have permitted work with no interruption so far, the continued steel strike and governmental freezing of warehouse stocks forbids making an August forecast. The interruption in supply of essential items could be costly in terms of meeting schedules.



POWER

SURVEY/ MAPPING



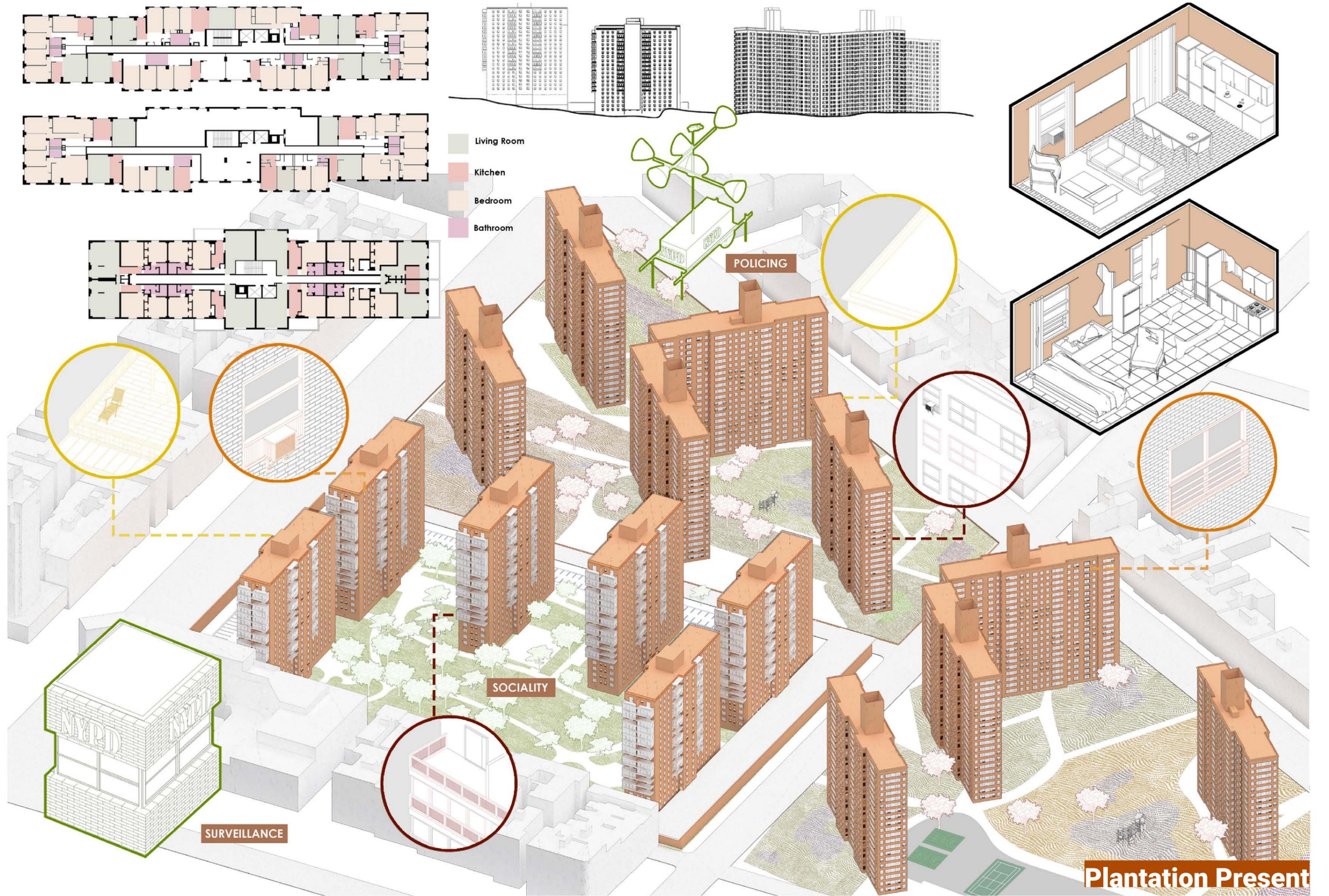
SLUMS ENGULFING COLUMBIA SECTION
\$8,946,458 GRANTED FOR HOUSING BY U. S.
HOUSING UNIT AIMS TO LOCK OUT CRIME

Blight Resists Campaign by Educational and Religious Units to Halt Its March
 Cultural Activity Hit
 Vice and Violence Despoil Scholastic Atmosphere—Officials Are Apathetic
 By WAYNE PHILLIPS

Morningside - Manhattanville and Columbus Circle Slum Clearances Are Assisted
 Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

City to Issue Keys for Hall Doors at Harlem Project
 By RONALD SULLIVAN
 The New York City Housing Authority announced yesterday that it would try locking vestibule doors at night in its low-rent projects in an effort to reduce crime and violence.

Plantation Present

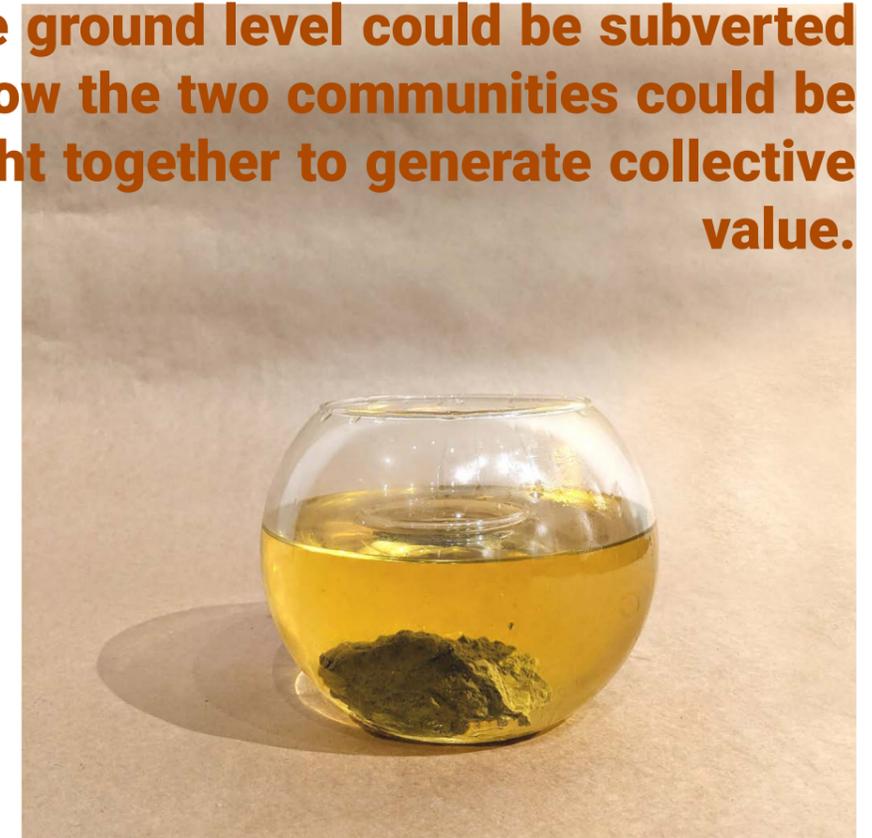
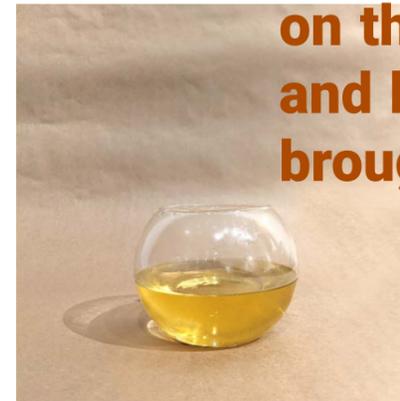




Unpacking perceived differences

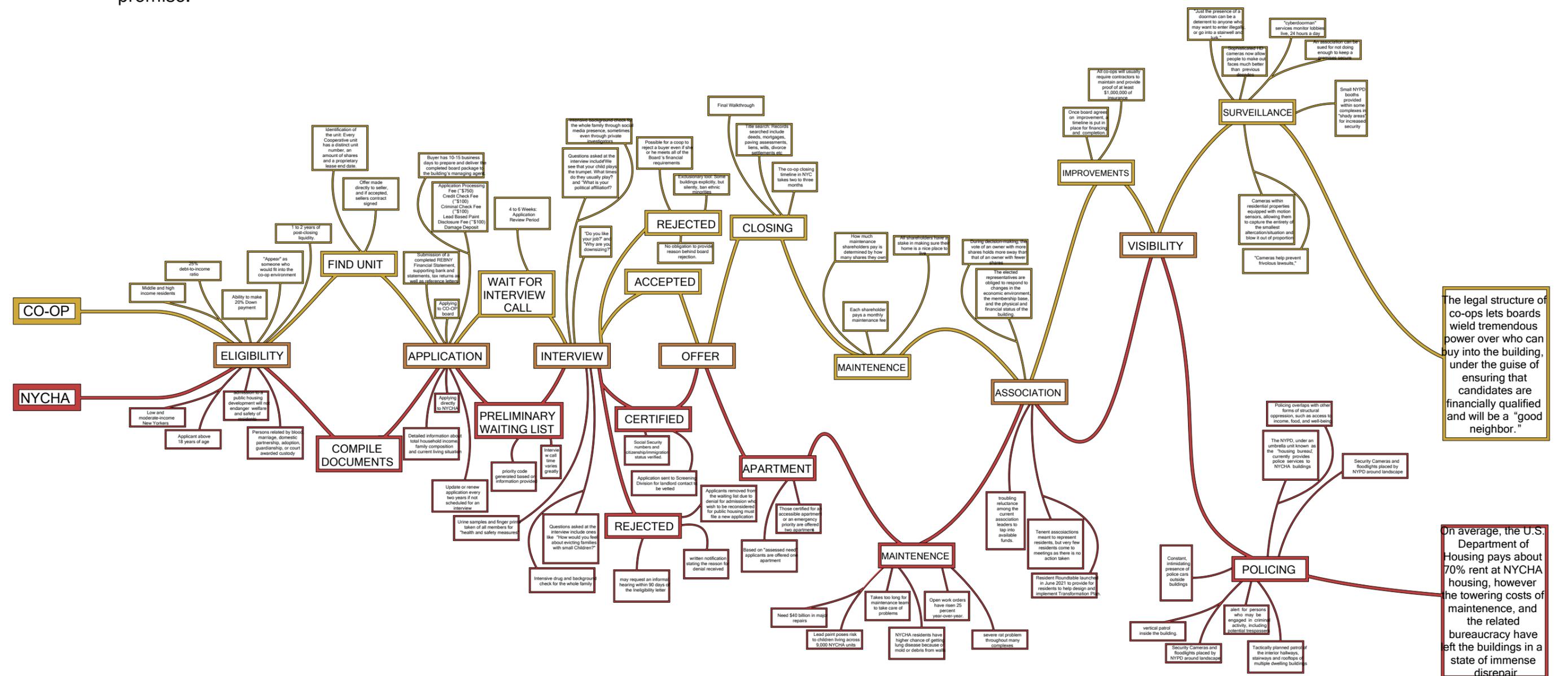
To demonstrate the forces at play within and around the site, we used glass and vegetable oil, which by virtue of their identical refractive indices create an illusion of camouflage and disappearance. This helped us represent how the identities of the two projects get absorbed into one another in popular perception. However, just like closer inspection made the differences clearly visible, there are moments here when the glass is too thick at the base that one starts noticing the difference.

The project attempts to understand the similarities and differences between the two projects and infer the opportunities for intervention. Our first observation on site was that the double agents of decoy and doubling start becoming apparent at the ground level of the projects. We took this as the starting point of our design, asking how these systems of control on the ground level could be subverted and how the two communities could be brought together to generate collective value.



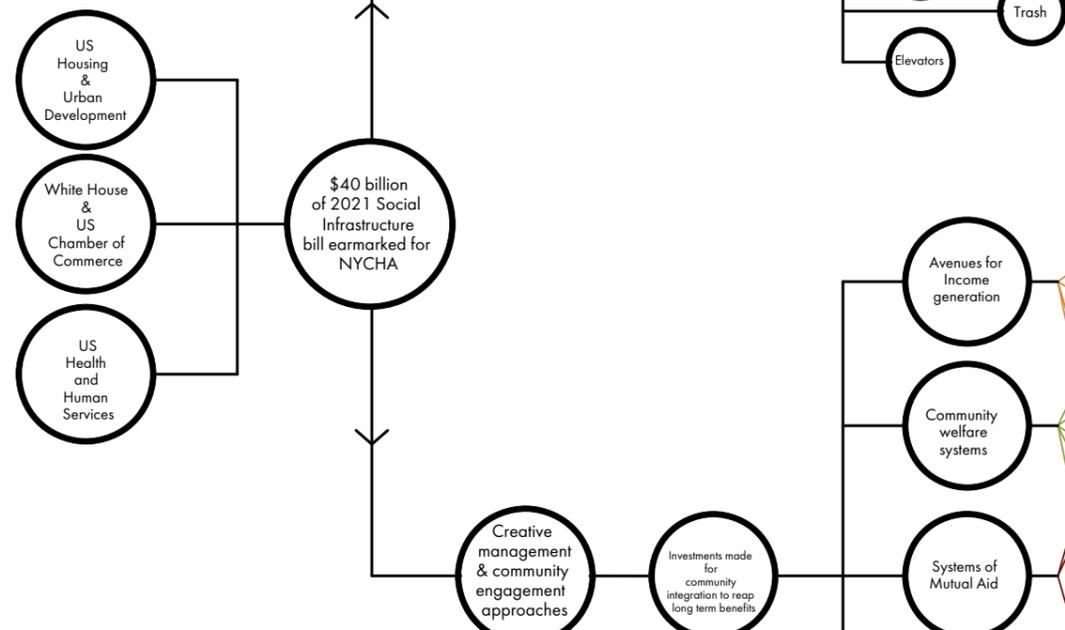
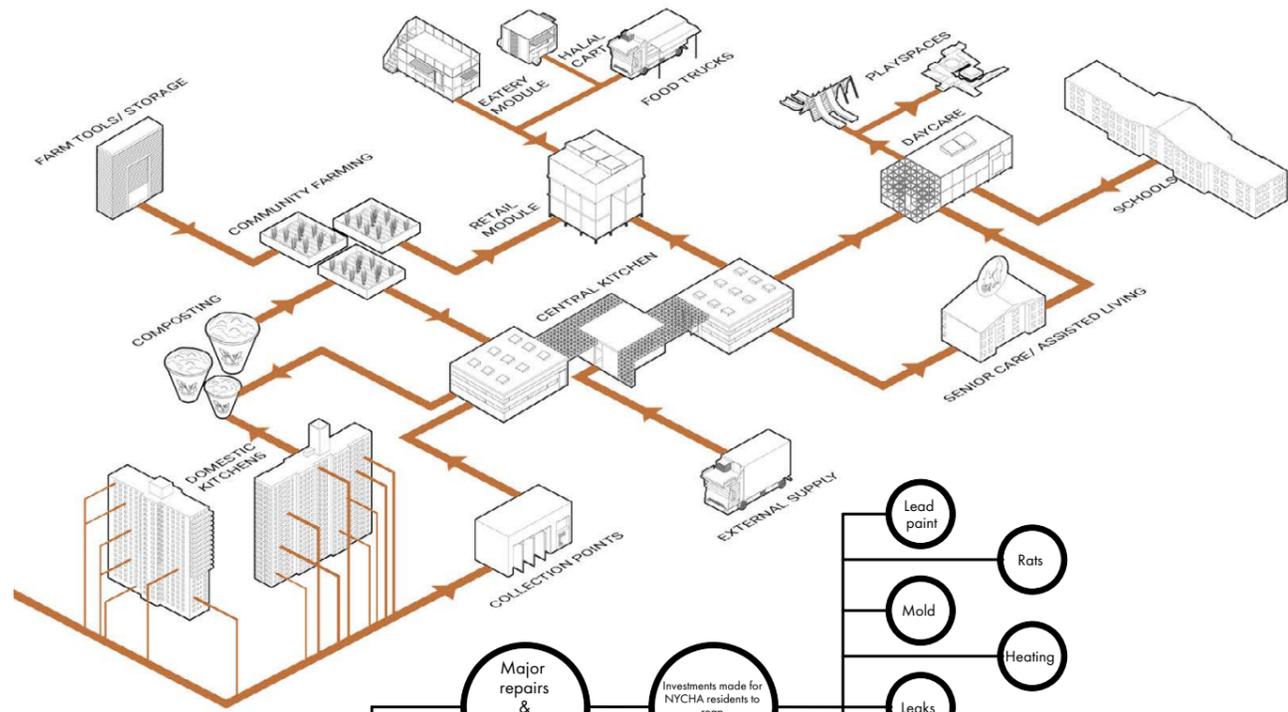
Unpacking structural differences

While a lot of the broader application steps are similar between the two, both being extremely rigorous, intrusive and grueling, they vary significantly in level of maintenance, formation and power of residents' associations and, most importantly, in patterns of visibility. While surveillance and protection is requested by residents at the co-op, policing at NYCHA is mandated by the state, evidenced by their constant watching presence in and around the premise.

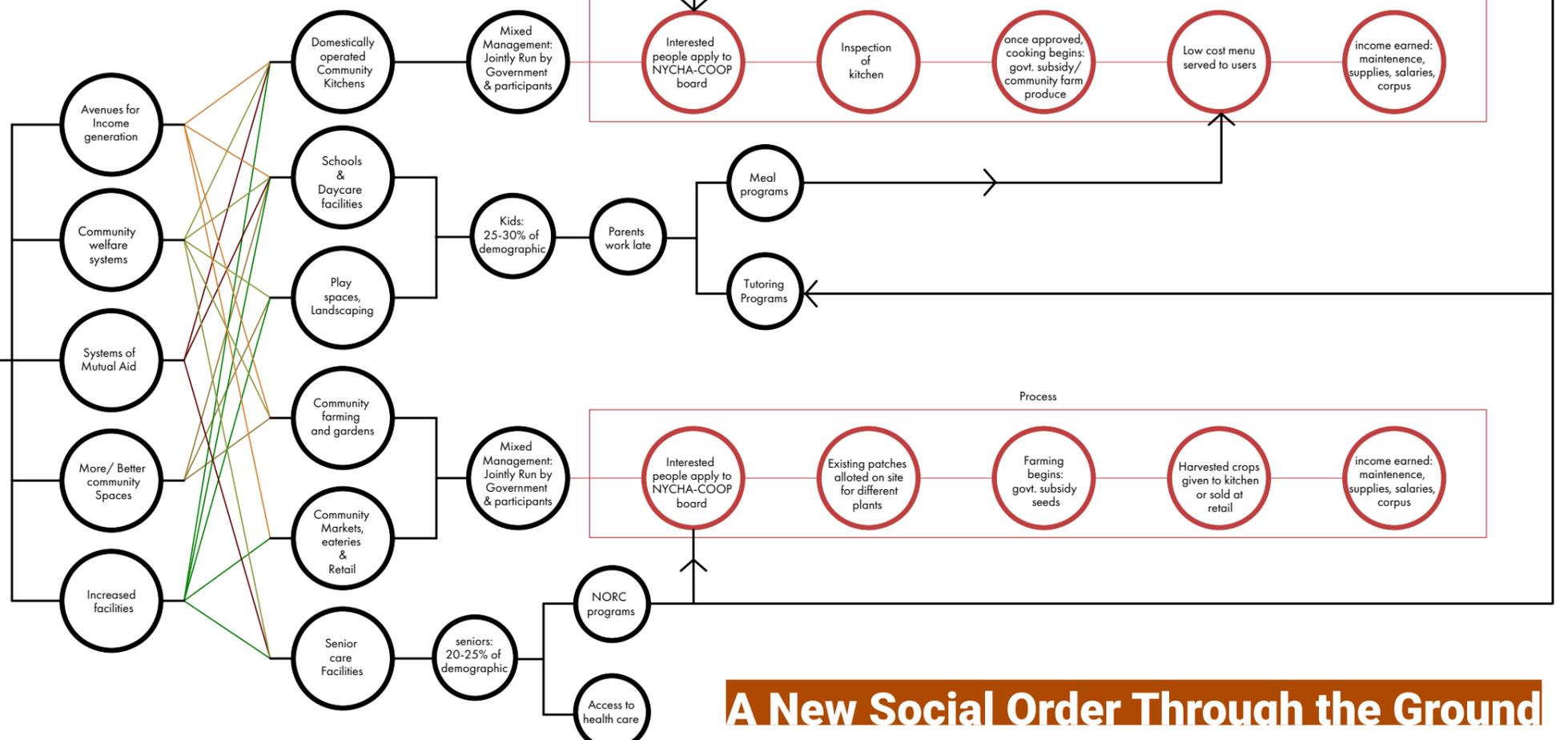


The legal structure of co-ops lets boards wield tremendous power over who can buy into the building, under the guise of ensuring that candidates are financially qualified and will be a "good neighbor."

On average, the U.S. Department of Housing pays about 70% rent at NYCHA housing, however the towering costs of maintenance, and the related bureaucracy have left the buildings in a state of immense disrepair



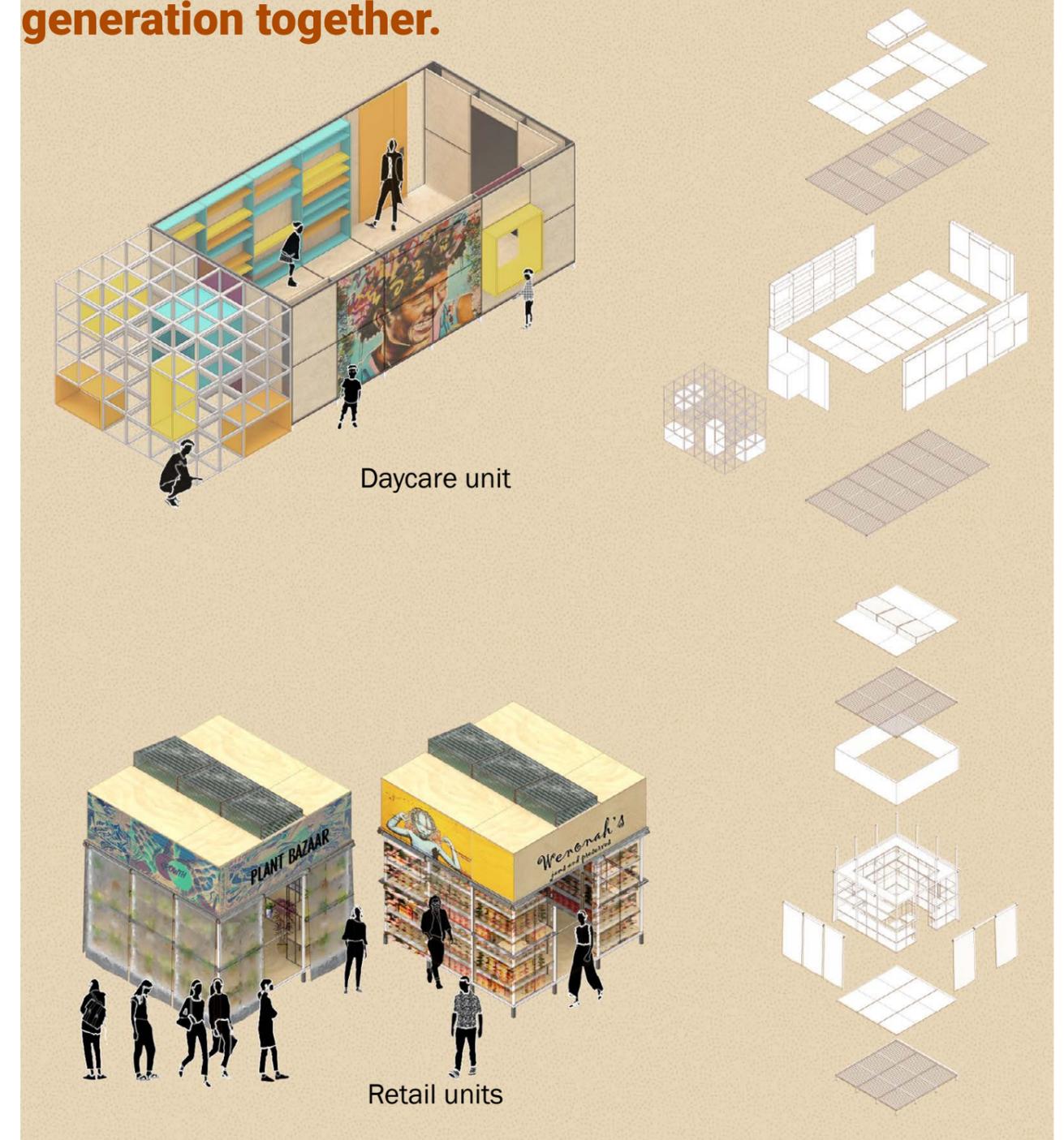
The new system operates through networks that support each other, like community kitchens, farms, retail spaces and eateries that weave into public as well as domestic spaces.



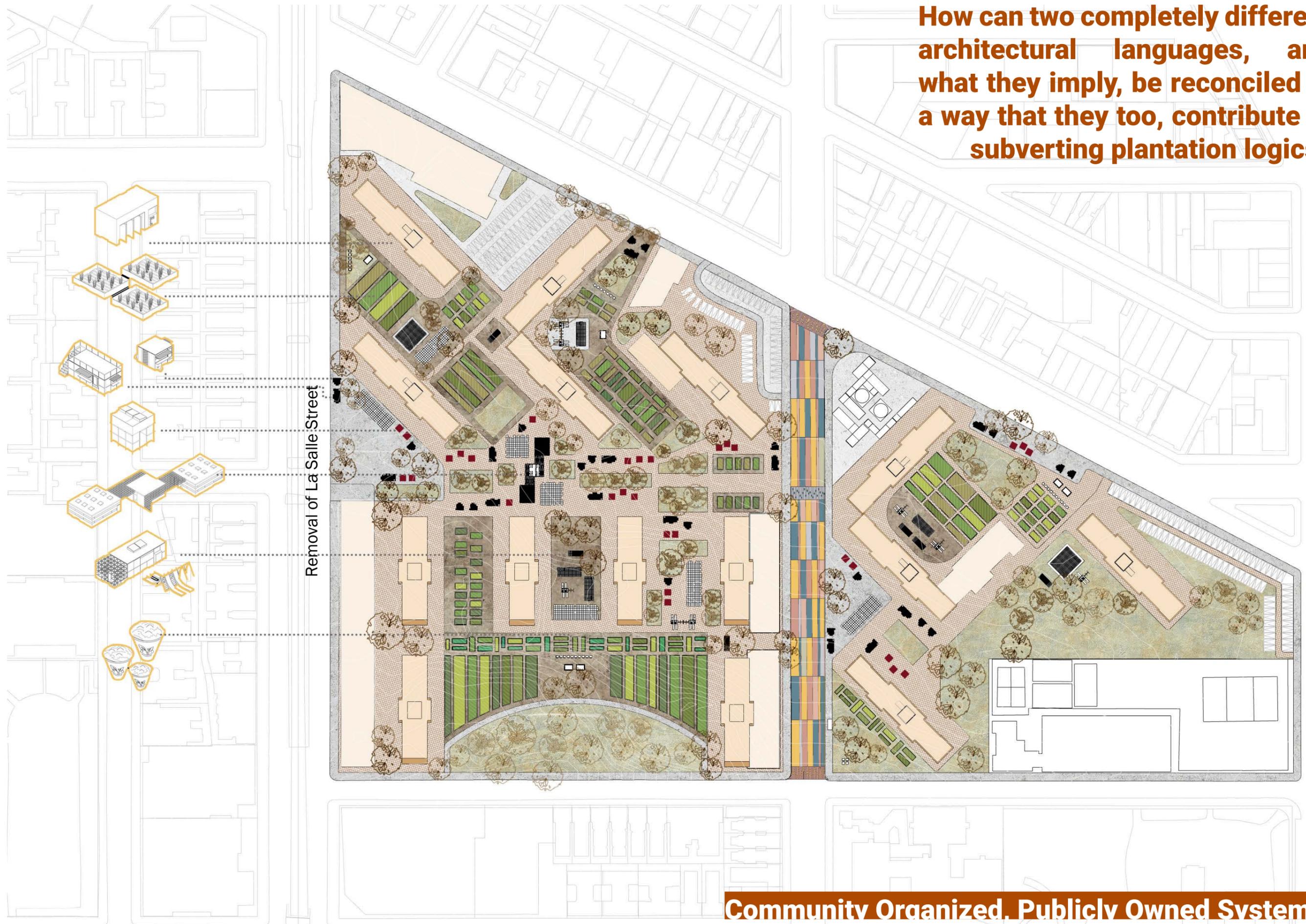
A New Social Order Through the Ground



Architectural as well as placemaking devices have been employed to work toward the new order, including ways for children to interact, depending on the lack of direct biases in their lived experience to try and bring one generation together.

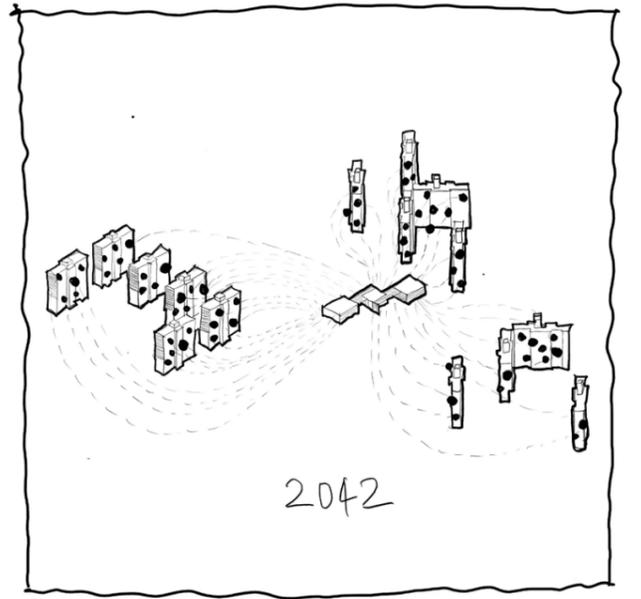
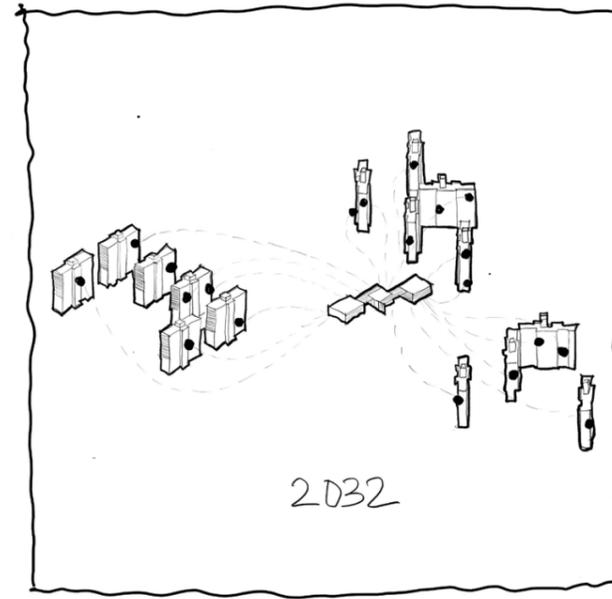
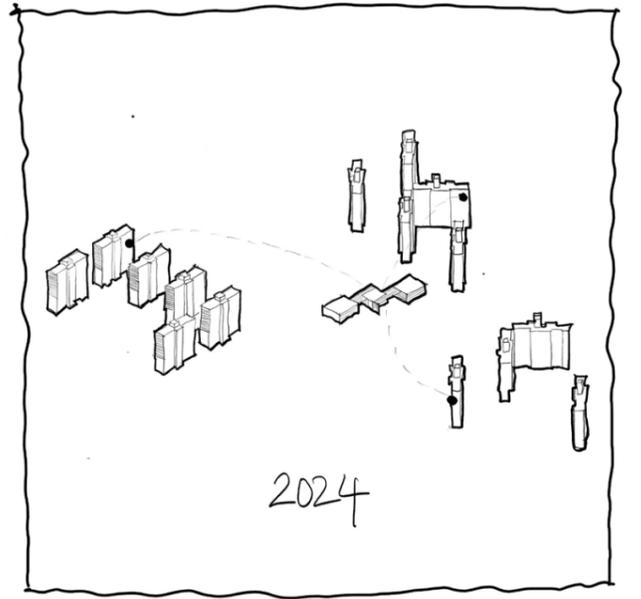
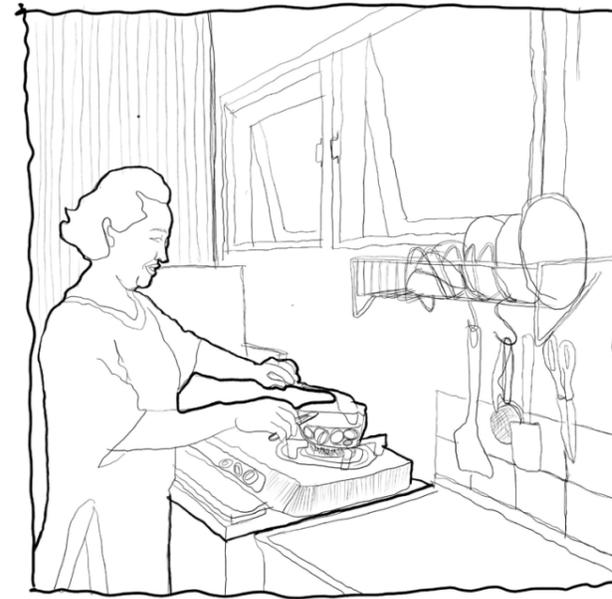


How can two completely different architectural languages, and what they imply, be reconciled in a way that they too, contribute to subverting plantation logics?



Removal of La Salle Street

Community Organized, Publicly Owned Systems





Tawaifs, Feminism and Their Fall From Grace



This paper attempts to chronicle the profession of tawaifs, or courtesans, in its cultural and political contexts, explore the feminism that these women defined on their own terms at a time when the idea of a respectable woman existed within the sphere of the home. Tawaifs had their own ideas about marriage, domestic work, business and sexual relationships. They peaked during the Mughal period in pre-colonial India, following which their profession, institutions, image and societal standing rapidly degraded due to the British colonial rule and rising religious and nationalistic sentiments in the Indian society. The tawaif culture is currently non-existent, its connotations have been twisted over time and only whispers of these institutions in their true form remain in modern day India. What caused these women to fall from their position in society? What were the tools used to make this happen? How does the tawaif, the woman, provide a glimpse into the political evolution of a nation?

Central to tawaif culture in North India were the women, the courtesans, who were given the name as a term of respect because they were skilled musicians, singers and dancers who entertained a private audience of men belonging to high stature in society. They were skilled in many Indian forms of performing arts such as kathak, dadra, ghazal and thumri. Their courts were cultural hubs of the time. The institutions called 'kothas' (singular: kotha), run by these women were matriarchal, and the tawaifs defined their own form of feminism at a time when a woman was viewed as a mother, a sister, a daughter or the 'other'.

Gauhar Jaan. Source: Firstpost

The word tawaif, literally translating to courtesan, comes from the word "tauf", which means to go round and round. Interestingly, this is also the origin of the word tawwaf, the circumambulation of the Holy Kaaba in Mecca.¹ The word 'tawaf' also connotes frequent visits to the place of the beloved.²

In the **Mughal era**, the tawaif was considered the benchmark of etiquette and mannerisms, and enjoyed many freedoms like education, income, right to property and an elevated status in society. In this respect, they shared characteristics with other Asian cultures like the Geishas of Japan. The tawaifs employed musicians and teachers for dance, music and Urdu, the primary language of their poetry. Often, the people employed by the tawaifs were men, which was not common for women in society unless they were royalty.³

Derawali tawaifs, according to historian Mahmood Farooqui, were the ones who associated themselves with an establishment, while kanchanis were tawaifs who were standalone. The girls were trained in dance and music from an early age of about five years old, and as they turned ten or twelve, they would start accompanying older girls in small gatherings.⁴

Derawali tawaifs in the 19th century, if they chose, would get physically involved with one person while continuing to perform for others as well. The patron then usually looked after the whole family. Unlike popular belief, these institutions did not employ pimps to bring them clients or partners. It was the charm of the tawaifs combined with their knowledge in the arts that seduced men from rich and noble families. Many tawaifs pride themselves in being 'khandani' or pedigreed derawalis and kanchanis.⁵

The training process for tawaifs involved long hours of rigorous practice and rehearsals. A very important aspect of training was developing skills of conversation full of wit, flirtatious banter and the appropriate use of the language Urdu, especially with the male clients. Tantalizing, coquetry, blandishments and coy smiles, all while giving the impression of indifference were important tools of the allure and seduction. The tawaif was to stand out with not only her performance but with her personality.

¹ Rana Safvi, "How Tawaifs Fell From Grace And Came To Be Known As Prostitutes", Dailyo.In, 2018, <https://www.dailyo.in/arts/tawaifs-courtesans-women-balakhanas-kothas-nauch-girls-awadh-prostitutes/story/1/21698.html>.

² WAHEED, SARAH. "Women of 'Ill Repute': Ethics and Urdu Literature in Colonial India." *Modern Asian Studies* 48, no. 4 (2014): 986–1023. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24494611>.

³ Debashish Das, "The 'Tawaifs' Of Shahjahanabad", *Live History India*, 2020, <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/history-daily/the-tawaifs-of-shahjahanabad/>.

⁴ Rana Safvi, "How Tawaifs Fell From Grace And Came To Be Known As Prostitutes", Dailyo.In, 2018, <https://www.dailyo.in/arts/tawaifs-courtesans-women-balakhanas-kothas-nauch-girls-awadh-prostitutes/story/1/21698.html>.

⁵ Ibid

Before the 19th century, the **East India Company** did not encourage officers to travel to India with their wives and kids. The British population that settled in India at the time mostly constituted men. In some instances of hiring for lower designations, unmarried men were preferred by the Company. In 1810, according to a writing by Captain Thomas Williamson, the ratio of British approximately 1:16.⁶



Left: Sir David Ochterlony watching a nautch in his house in Delhi (ca. 1820). Source: British Library

Top: A group of tawaifs outside their kotha. Source: chandrakantha.com



For these men to encounter tawaifs outside of the propriety of British society and its women meant the introduction of a new dynamic to the tawaif culture. The British did not truly understand this culture and institution rooted very much in India and in other iterations, Asia. They were not beyond the lure of the free-spirited tawaifs, but did not comprehend their cultural significance and role. They enjoyed the company of tawaifs and called them 'nautch' girls (from the word 'naach' meaning dance). This term of addressal, degraded the profession and started changing the associated connotations through spoken language. Often, the 'nautch' girls they engaged with were not all sophisticated tawaifs by profession, but were given the same name, hence further diluting the institution and what it meant.

In a very divided British India, the tawaifs managed to effectively blur and rupture the physical and cultural boundaries between the colonizer and the colonized. This interaction began to be seen as an act of contamination for the British society. It was spurred by the fact that many English officers are believed to have fathered children in different parts of the country with Indian women, 'nautch' girls or otherwise. Christian missionaries started exerting pressure to bring the British moral and societal values into the colony.⁷ While British art, architecture and fashion practices were established in the physical and public realm, women became an important means of civilizing the realm of the private and the household. The Company now started encouraging the wives of officers to move to India with them. Hence, women were used as a tool to subvert the increasing influence of other women.

⁶ Debashish Das, "The 'Tawaifs' Of Shahjahanabad", Live History India, 2020, <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/history-daily/the-tawaifs-of-shahjahanabad/>.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Soumya Rao, "Tawaifs: The Unsung Heroes Of India'S Freedom Struggle", DAWN.COM, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1489351>.

Due to their involvement in the uprising as well as their continuing image as the contagion to the institution of marriage and family, they fell out of favor with the British, who started confiscating their property. The palatial houses and kothas owned by the tawaifs slowly started being acquired, a process during which the British were surprised to find these women in tax records and realized that many of them fell under the highest income brackets in society then. They owned houses, orchards, and manufacturing and retail establishments.⁹

Apart from confiscating property, the tawaifs seen as the most beautiful by the British were sent to serve the British troops. The women who had been pioneers of culture and the arts, were reduced to prostitutes against their will. The British also started categorizing tawaifs as sex workers by a series of systematic legal means. Around the time of the rebellion, many British soldiers started contracting contagious sexually transmitted diseases and had to be incapacitated. The colonial government hence passed the Contagious Diseases Act in 1864, which clubbed courtesans and sex workers together and blamed them for the diseases acquired by the soldiers, and granted local municipalities the right to relocate them.¹⁰

By the late 19th century, the distinction between tawaif and prostitute became so blurred that tawaifs too became outcasts. While some of these women were executed by the British and some sent to the troops as prostitutes, others with no place to entertain and dwindling clientele, along with their descendants were sent out to areas in the outskirts of cities. In Delhi, many tawaifs were sent out to the area of Garstin Bastion outside of the walled city of Shahjahanabad, where they earlier resided.¹¹ In present day Delhi, the same locality now known as G.B. Road exists as one of the city's largest red-light districts.

This tells a tale of how red-light districts in India are a colonial construct outside of people's active memory. This also brings to light the ways in which prostitution and the idea of using a woman's virtue as a marker of their reputation, was used by colonizers to control powerful women and subvert the agency they held for decades.



⁹ Debashish Das, "The 'Tawaifs' Of Shahjahanabad", Live History India, 2020, <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/history-daily/the-tawaifs-of-shahjahanabad/>.

¹⁰ Kunal Purohit, "Chronicling Courtesans - Himat Southasian", Himat Southasian, 2020, <https://www.himalmag.com/chronicling-courtesans-tawaifnama-saba-dewan-2020/>.

¹¹ Debashish Das, "The 'Tawaifs' Of Shahjahanabad", Live History India, 2020, <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/history-daily/the-tawaifs-of-shahjahanabad/>.

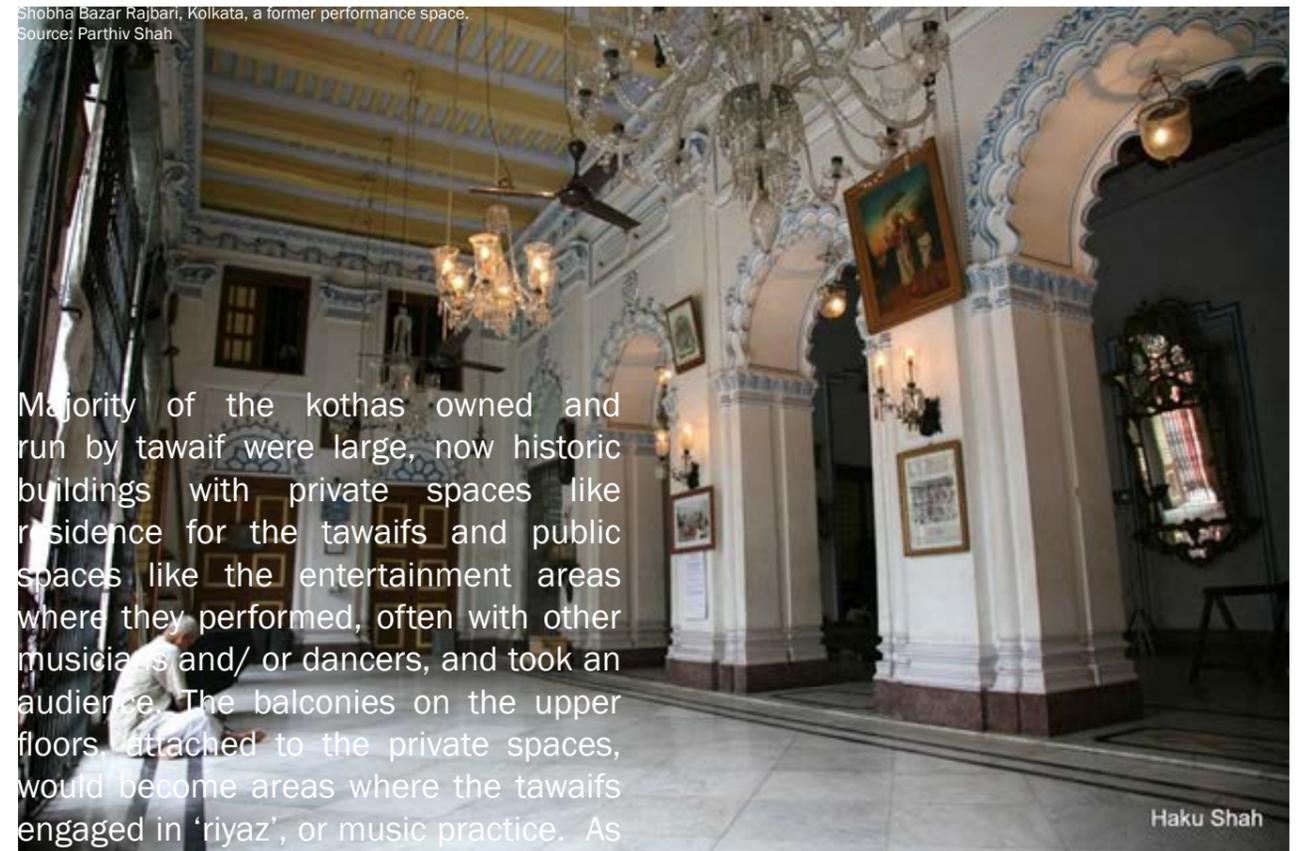
Indian society witnessed the rise of a group of reformist Hindu elites in the **aftermath of the uprising of 1857**, who believed that a moral cleansing of the Hindu society was necessary for a successful freedom struggle. In the following acts of trying to cast Urdu as a foreign language and demonizing cultures associated with the Mughal rule, the tawaifs could not go unaffected. These nationalist groups portrayed the tawaif culture as the antithesis to Indian ethos and values, and something that did not belong to India. They highlighted the tawaifs' Muslim and lower-caste backgrounds as being negative. It had been a tradition for tawaifs to perform at Hindu festivals and temples too and these groups expressed their strong opposition to it.¹² These movements had a collective impact on the tawaifs in marginalizing them further.



An old record with music by Akhtari Bai. Source: Centre for Media and Alternative Communication

Tawaifs were very popular for their singing and music before recording companies came to India. When the gramophone was introduced in the country in the early 20th century, many men who were singers and musicians at the time refused to go on record, showing an apprehension to the new technology and seeing it as an act of selling their art. The first singers to go on record were the tawaifs from different parts of India, starting with Gauhar Jan of Kolkata. In doing so, these women also contributed in conserving the rich musical heritage of India, an act that has not remained in public memory. While there is very little record of their singing during court performances, these records provide a glimpse into their talent.¹³

Most of these pioneers are believed to have come from Delhi, Kanpur, Kolkata, Varanasi and Lahore. With the advent of new technology, the status of the tawaifs who took risks raised rapidly within certain circles. The British too realized the value of these women for the technology to flourish in India, and decided to utilize this value commercially. With music becoming available to all, the tawaifs started negotiating contracts with the recording companies and also working in advertisements. Gauhar Jan even raised money for the freedom movement. Janaki Bai became the first tawaif to have contracts with recording companies.¹⁴



Majority of the kothas owned and run by tawaif were large, now historic buildings with private spaces like residence for the tawaifs and public spaces like the entertainment areas where they performed, often with other musicians and/ or dancers, and took an audience. The balconies on the upper floors attached to the private spaces, would become areas where the tawaifs engaged in 'riyaz', or music practice. As

guests started arriving in the evening, the street below the kotha would start filling up with street vendors selling 'paan' (betel leaf), often smeared with opium, as alcohol consumption was prohibited in many of these kothas.¹⁵ The entertainment spaces inside were large halls, often with characteristics of Mughal **architecture** like pillars and arches. The rooms were decorated with elaborate chandeliers and lamps that cast light on the intricate attires worn by the performers. While the performers occupied the areas in the centre, the audience occupied the perimeter on floor cushions and mattresses with bolster pillows. Every detail went toward creating the ambience, from the architecture, the lighting, the colors and furnishings and attires to the lingering smell of 'ittar', or perfume in the room. Even when they were invited to perform at the homes of patrons, the formation largely remained the same.

Women continue to be seen as the carriers of tradition and honor of a family and community. Control of a woman's sexuality become central to forming the identity of a community. Women who take control of their own sexuality and practice their own agency in the way they live find it hard to fit within society's ideals of gender roles. This stands true for many cultures across the world, and the tawaifs, the 'fallen women', were no exception.

¹² Kunal Purohit, "Chronicling Courtesans - Himal Southasian", Himal Southasian, 2020, <https://www.himalmag.com/chronicling-courtesans-tawaifnama-saba-de-wan-2020/>.

¹³ Runa Parikh, "Those Gramophone Queens: When Men Shied Away, These Women Sang", Thequint, 2018, <https://www.thequint.com/lifestyle/art-and-culture/how-women-artists-ruled-gramophone-era-over-men-20th-century>.

¹⁴ Ibid.

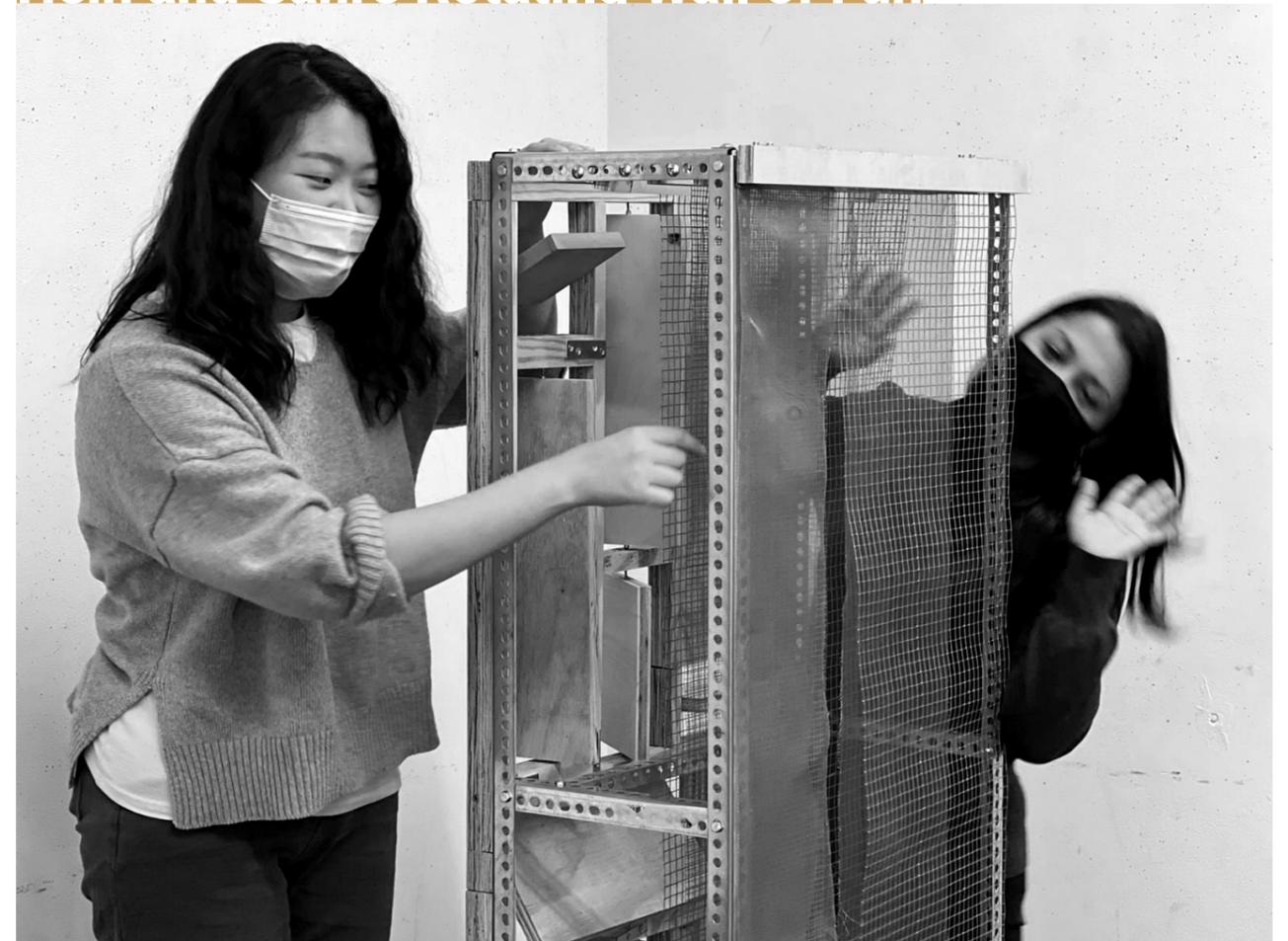
¹⁵ Debashish Das, "The 'Tawaifs' Of Shahjahanabad", Live History India, 2020, <https://www.livehistoryindia.com/story/history-daily/the-tawaifs-of-shahjahanabad/>.

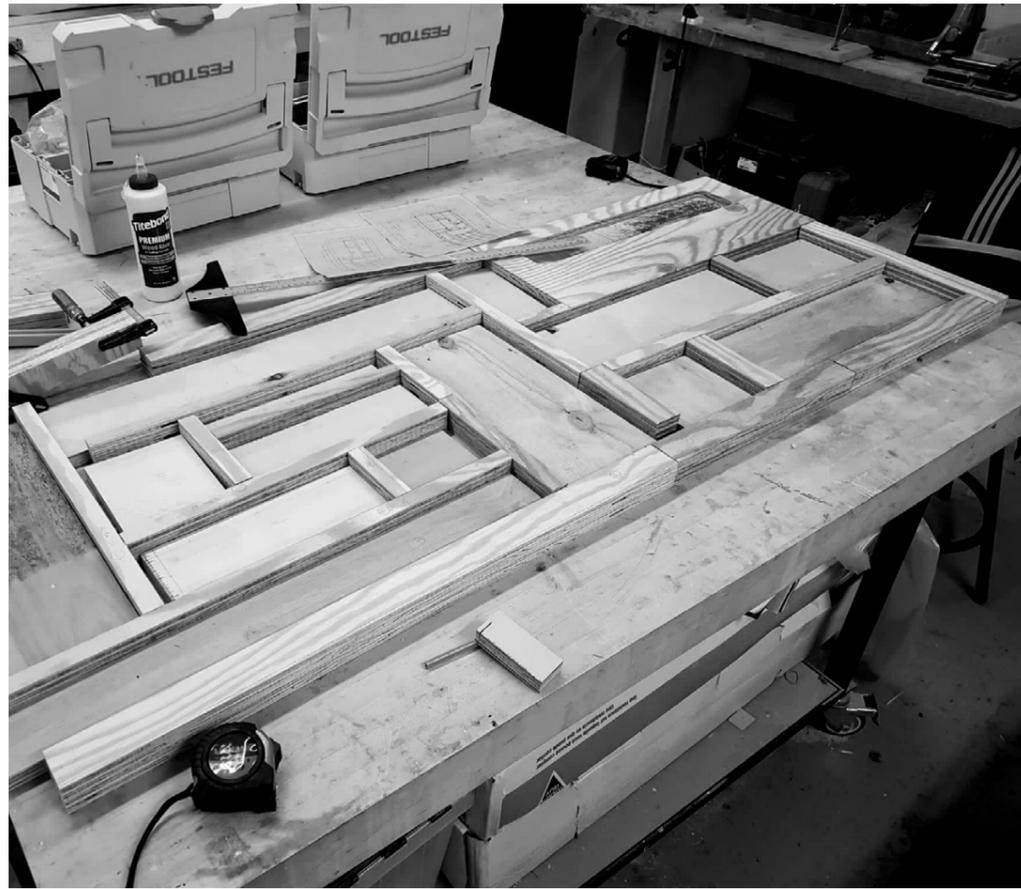
Elective
1:1 Crafting and Fabrication Detail

Critic
Zachary E. Mulitauaoepele

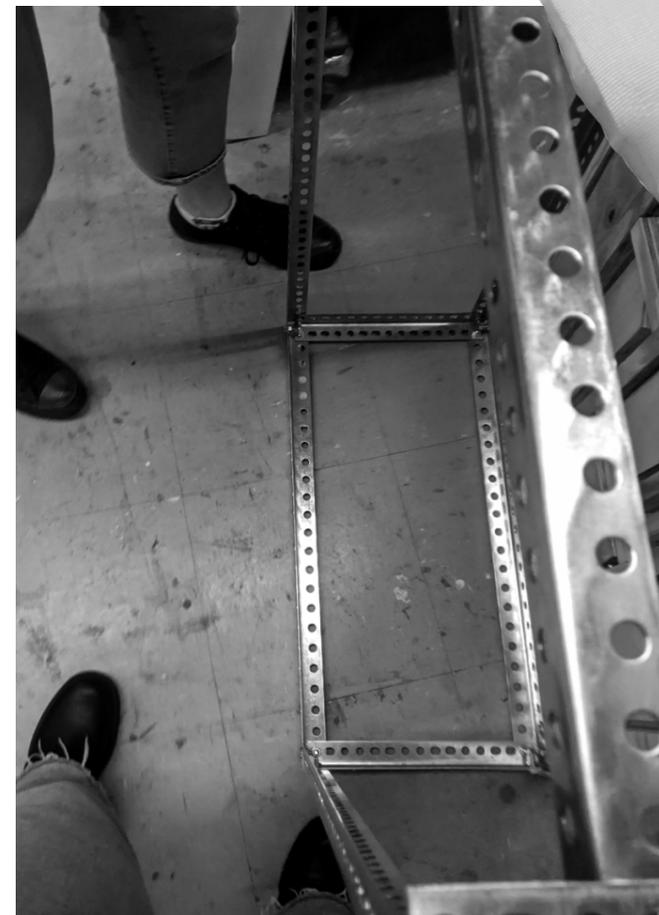
Collaborator
Hein Song

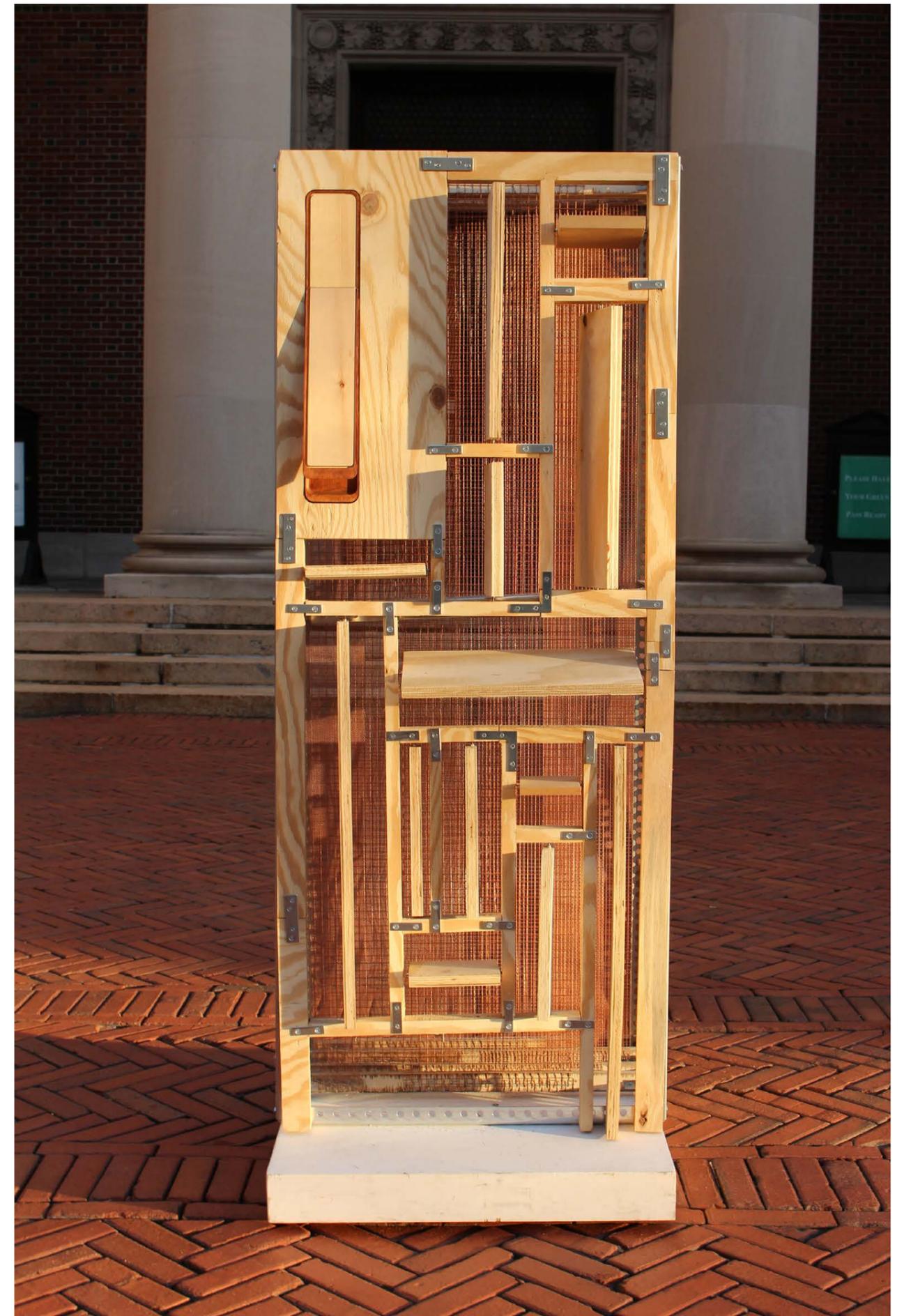
Hein and Sani's Rotating Wall of Fun

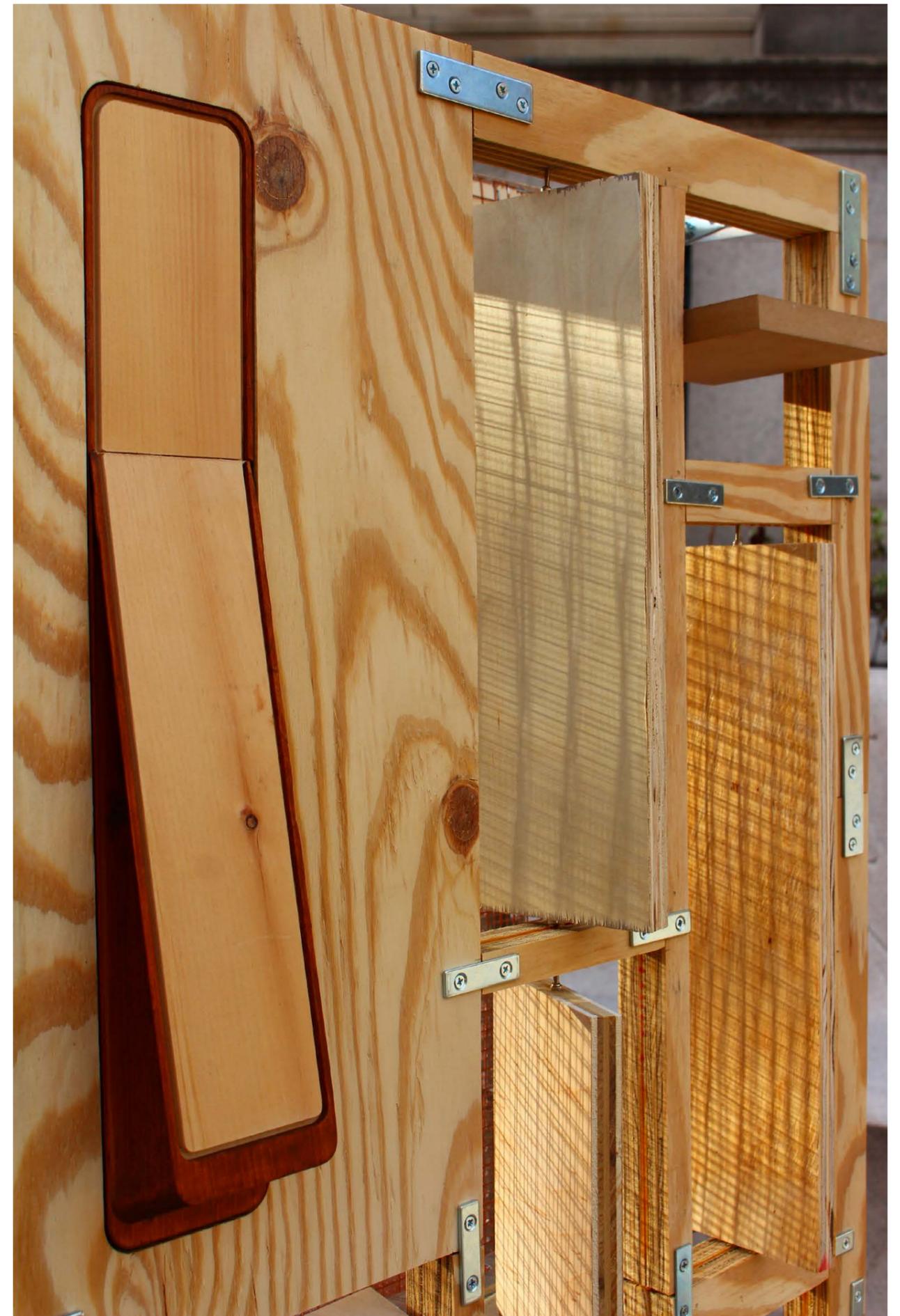




Lots of scrapwood, metal and one accident later...













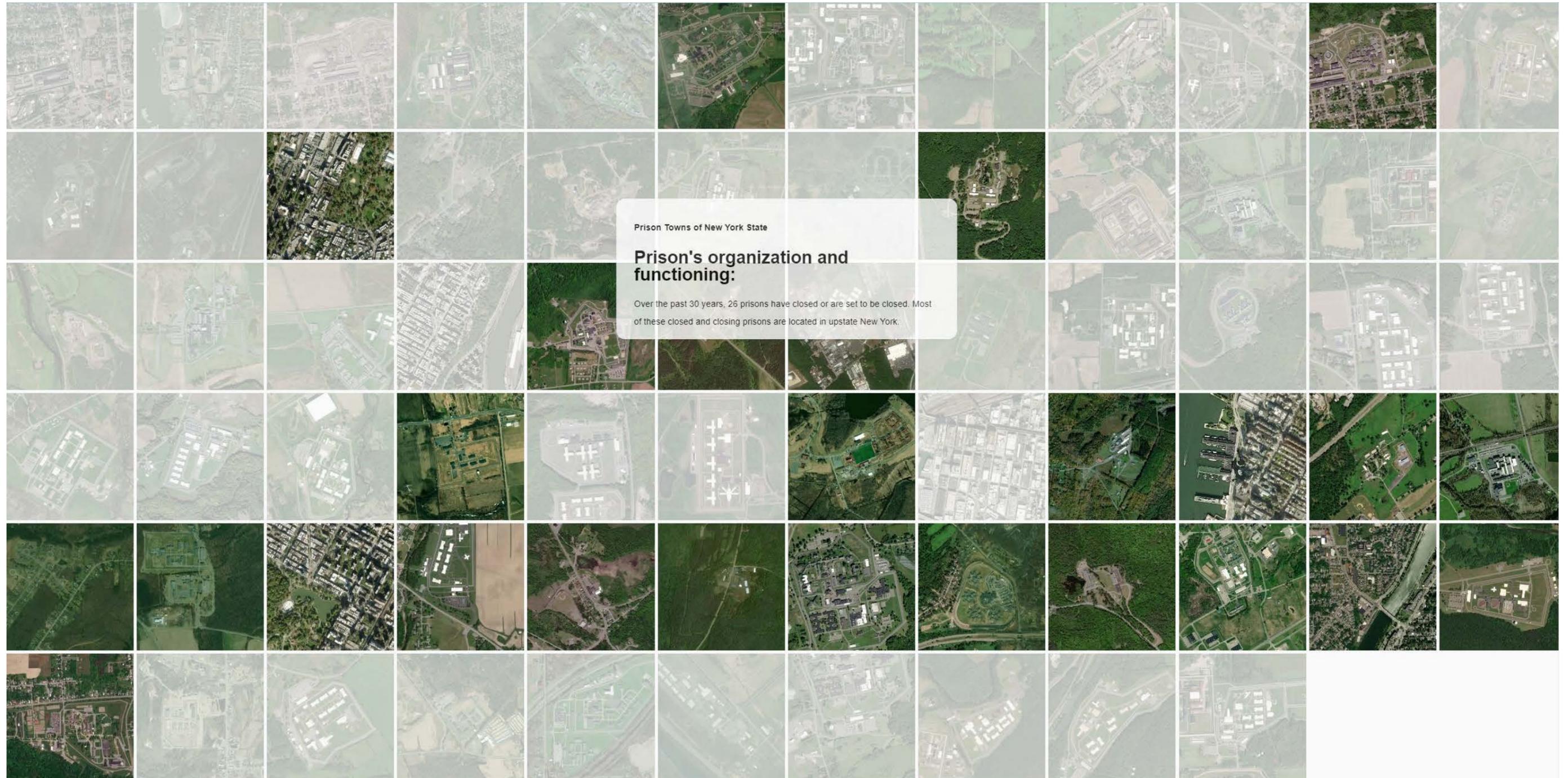


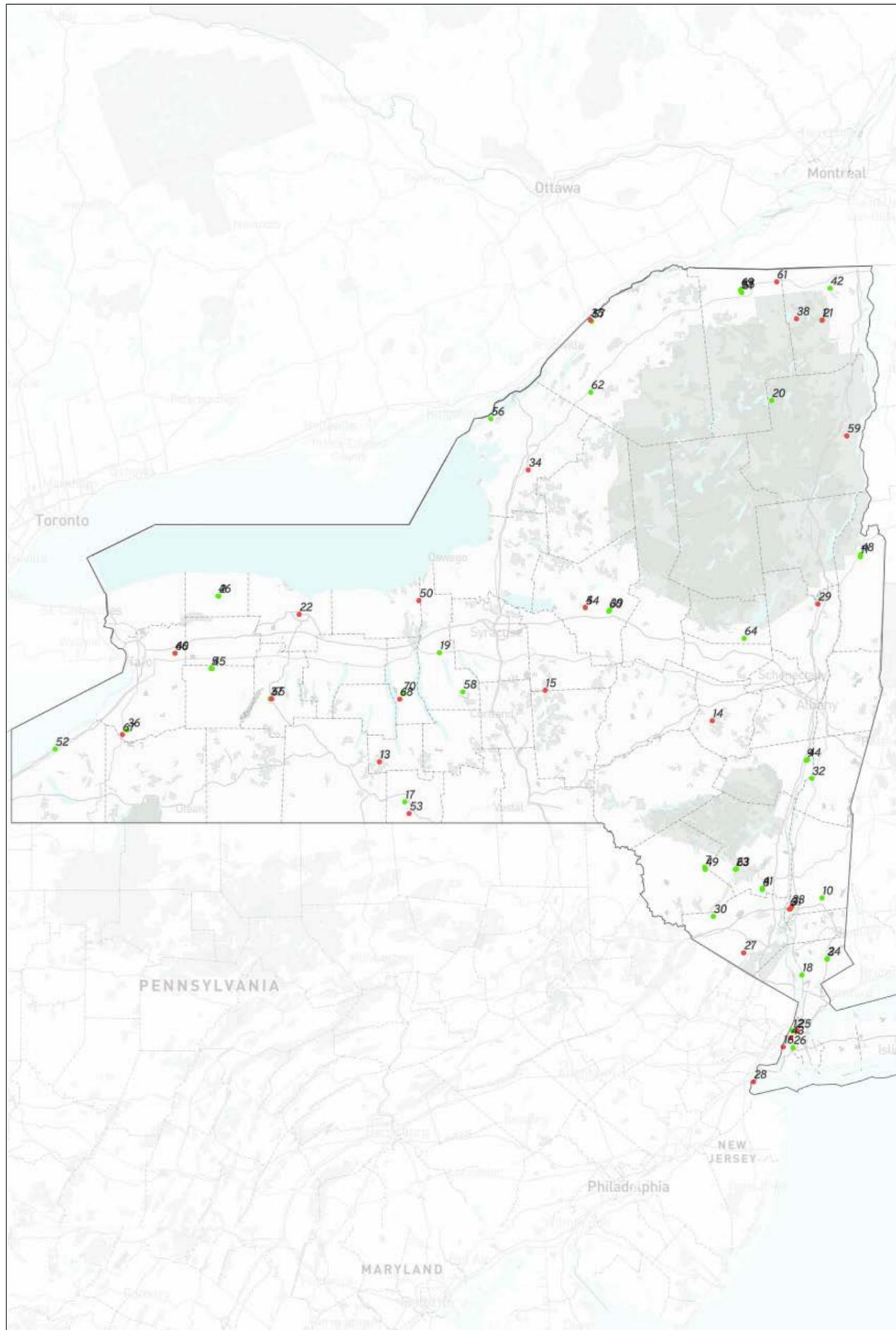
**Reimagining The
Justice System at
Grassroots Level**

**What would it mean
for our towns, cities
and institutions if we
redirected the justice
system away from
punitive measures and
towards restorative
measures?**

Part 1: Studio Group Research



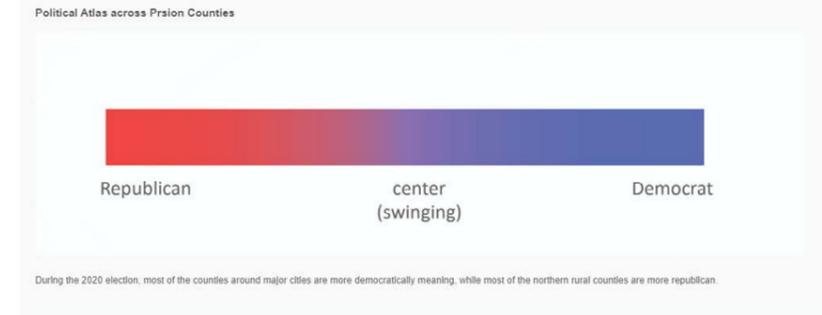
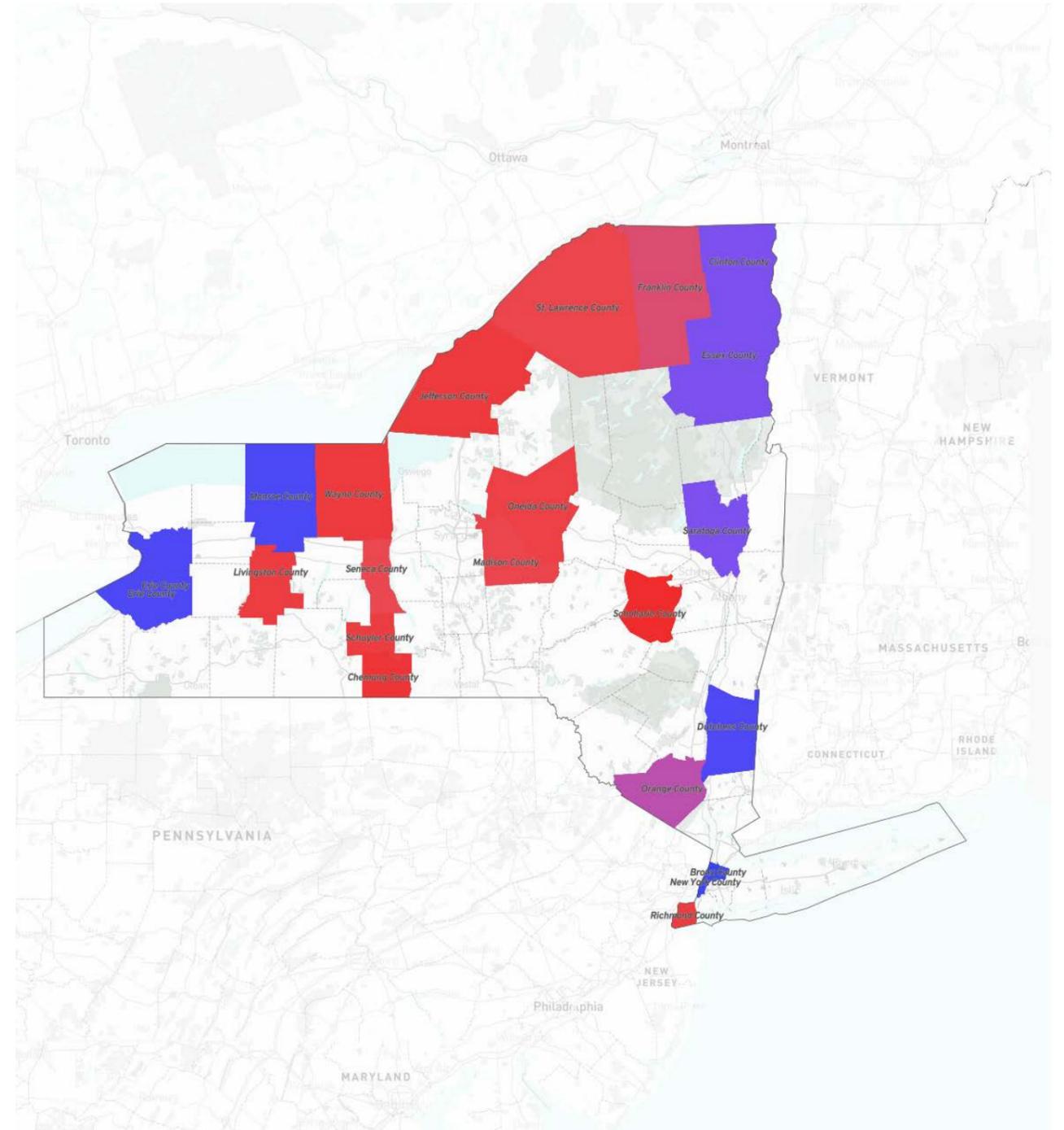
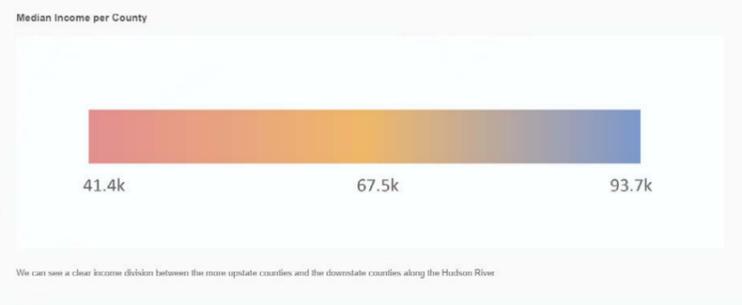
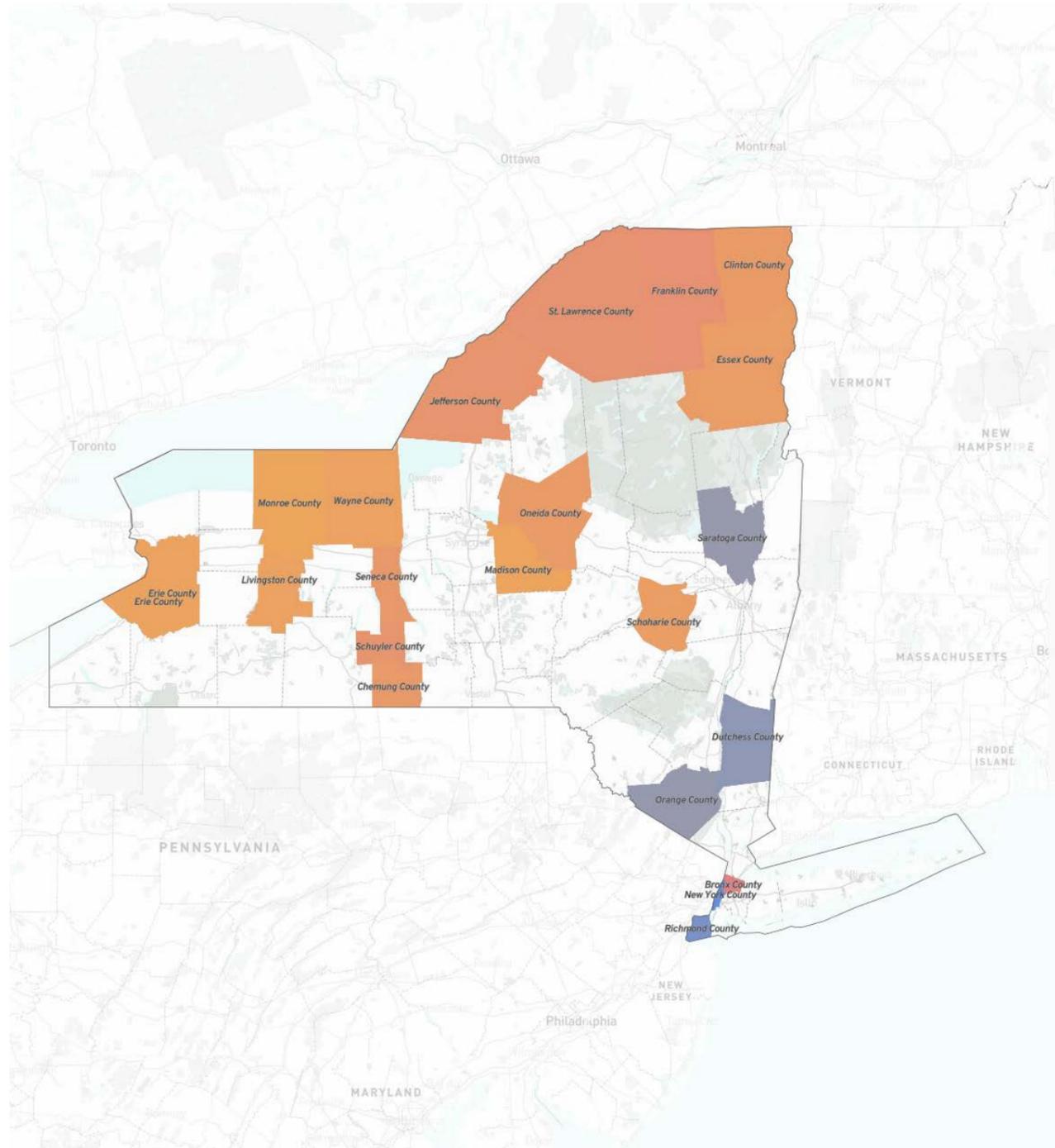


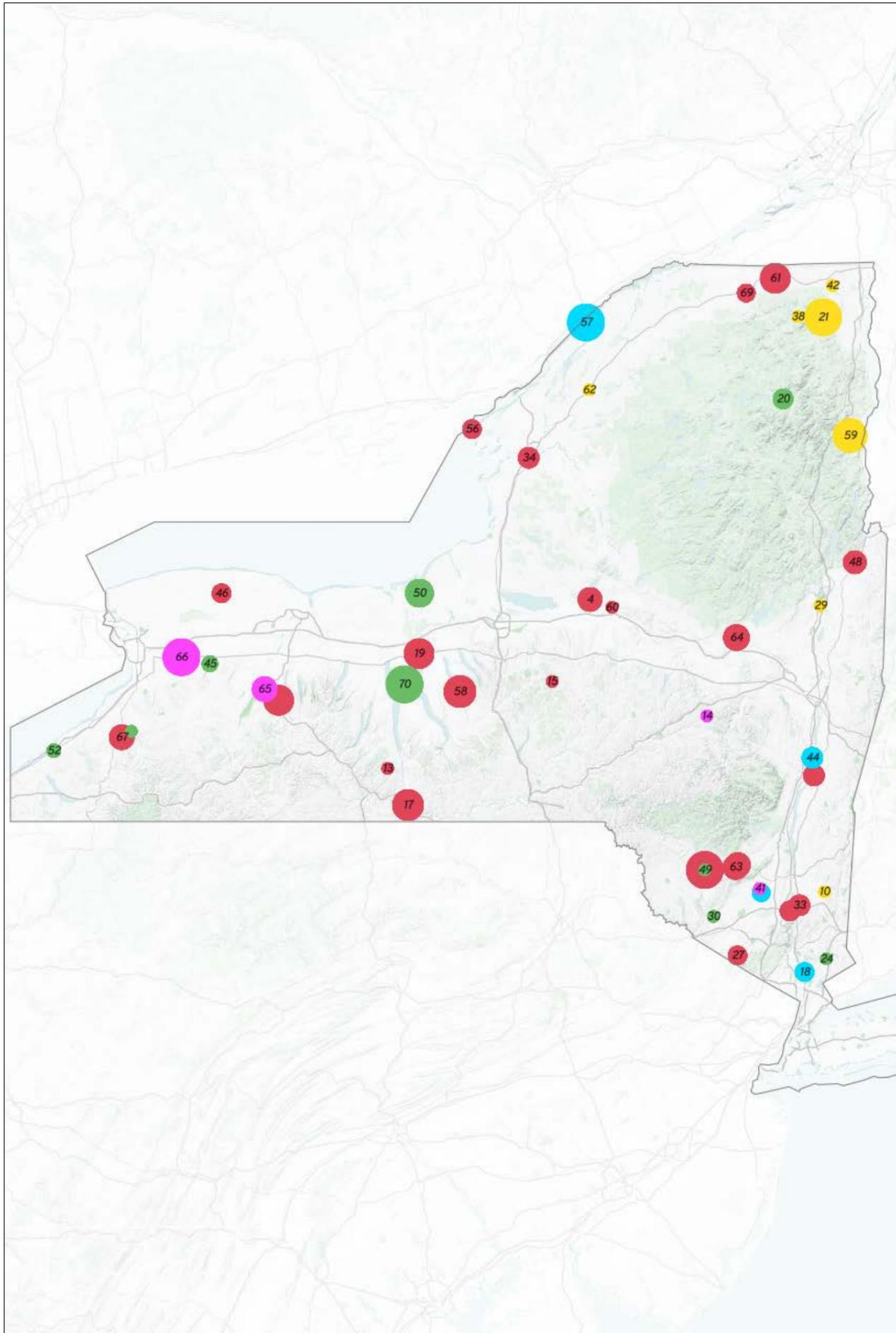


List of prisons in New York State

Name	Prison Since	Name	Prison Since
1 Clinton Correctional Facility	1844	36 Collins Correctional Facility	1982
2 Albion Correctional Facility	1894	37 Groveland Correctional Facility	1982
3 Bedford Hills Correctional Facility	1901	38 Lyon Mountain Correctional	1983
4 Oneida Correctional	1915	39 Mid-State Correctional Facility	1983
5 Attica Correctional Facility	1931	40 Wende Correctional Facility	1983
6 Beacon Correctional	1932	41 Shawangunk Correctional Facility	1983
7 Woodbourne Correctional Facility	1933	42 Altona Correctional Facility	1983
8 Walkkill Correctional Facility	1933	43 Lincoln Correctional	1984
9 Coxsackie Correctional Facility	1935	44 Greene Correctional Facility	1984
10 Green Haven Correctional Facility	1949	45 Wyoming Correctional Facility	1984
11 Great Meadow Correctional Facility	1954	46 Orleans Correctional Facility	1984
12 Edgecombe Correctional Facility	1956	47 Butler ASACT Catchment Facility	1985
13 Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional	1958	48 Washington Correctional Facility	1985
14 Summit Shock Incarceration Correctional	1960	49 Sullivan Correctional Facility	1985
15 Camp Georgetown	1961	50 Butler Correctional	1986
16 Bayview Correctional	1970	51 Franklin Correctional Facility	1986
17 Elmira Correctional Facility	1970	52 Lakeview Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility	1987
18 Sing Sing Correctional Facility	1970	53 Southport Correctional Facility	1988
19 Auburn Correctional Facility	1971	54 Mohawk Correctional Facility	1988
20 Adirondack Correctional Facility	1971	55 Bare Hill Correctional Facility	1988
21 Clinton Annex at Clinton Correctional	1972	56 Cape Vincent Correctional Facility	1988
22 Rochester Correctional Facility	1973	57 Riverview Correctional Facility	1988
23 Eastern Correctional Facility	1973	58 Cayuga Correctional Facility	1988
24 Taconic Correctional Facility	1973	59 Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional Facility	1989
25 Fulton Correctional	1975	60 Marcy Correctional Facility	1989
26 Queensboro Correctional Facility	1975	61 Chateaugay Correctional	1990
27 Mid-Orange	1976	62 Gouverneur Correctional Facility	1990
28 Arthur Kill Correctional	1976	63 Ulster Correctional Facility	1990
29 Mount McGregor Correctional	1976	64 Hale Creek Correctional Facility	1990
30 Otisville Correctional Facility	1976	65 Livingston Correctional	1991
31 Fishkill Correctional Facility	1977	66 Buffalo Correctional	1992
32 Hudson Correctional Facility	1978	67 Gowanda Correctional	1994
33 Downstate Correctional Facility	1979	68 Willard Drug Treatment Campus	1995
34 Watertown Correctional	1982	69 Upstate Correctional Facility	1998
35 Ogdensburg Correctional Facility	1982	70 Five Points Correctional Facility	2000

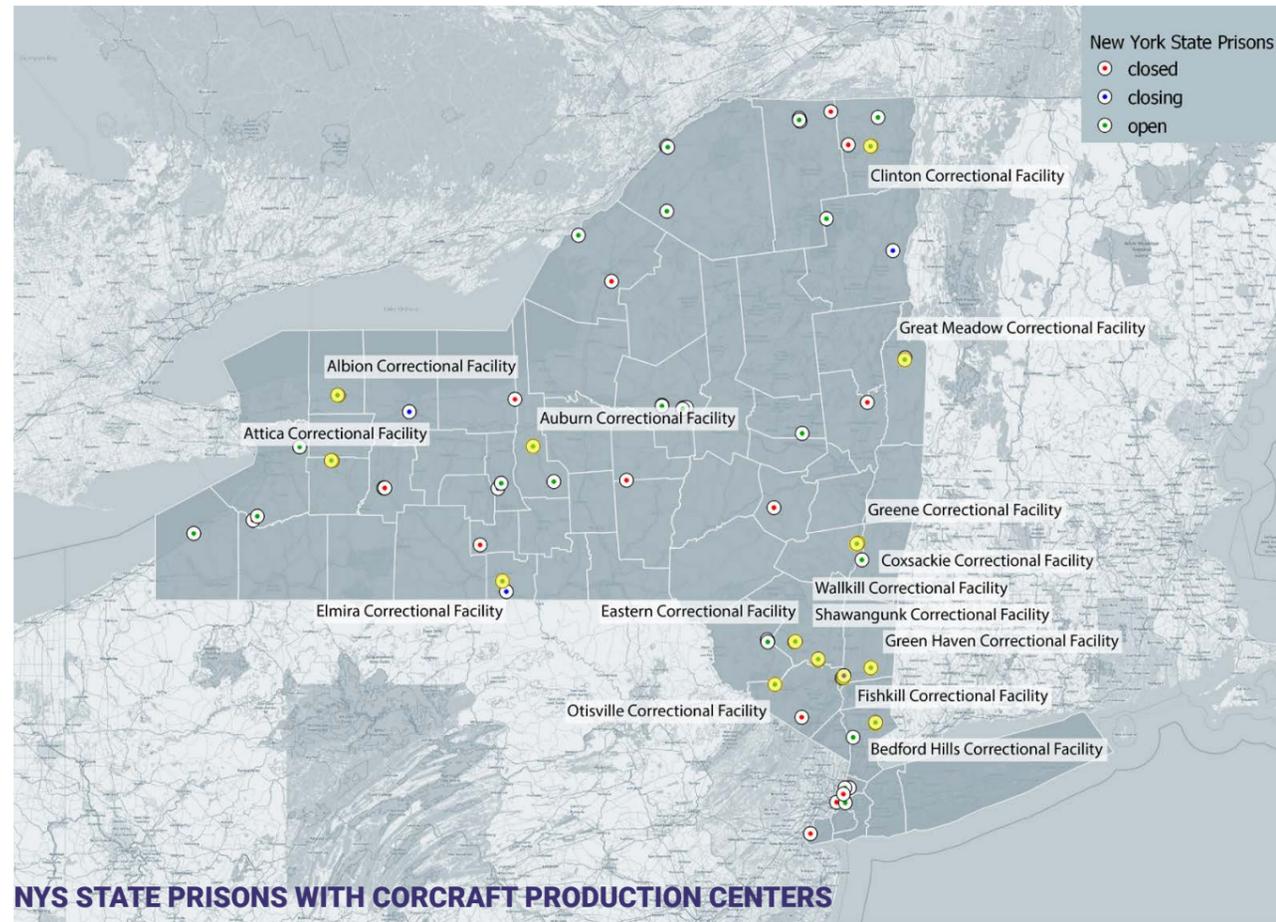
Closed prisons are notated in red





Historical Industries

name	Industry	name	Industry
1 Clinton Correctional Facility	Mining, Smelting	36 Collins Correctional Facility	Agriculture
2 Albion Correctional Facility	Lumber	37 Groveland Correctional Facility	Cottage Industry
3 Bedford Hills Correctional Facility	Dairy Farming, Agriculture	38 Lyon Mountain Correctional	Iron Mining
4 Oneida Correctional	Copper Manufacturing	39 Mid-State Correctional Facility	Glass Factory
5 Attica Correctional Facility	Farming, Agriculture	40 Wende Correctional Facility	Tourism
6 Beacon Correctional	Brick and Hat, Film	41 Shawangunk Correctional Facility	Tourism
7 Woodbourne Correctional Facility	Tanning	42 Altona Correctional Facility	Mining
8 Wallkill Correctional Facility	Trade	43 Lincoln Correctional	-
9 Cossackie Correctional Facility	Shipping Farm Goods, Ice	44 Greene Correctional Facility	Shipping Farm Goods, Ice
10 Green Haven Correctional Facility	Mining	45 Wyoming Correctional Facility	Farming, Agriculture
11 Great Meadow Correctional Facility	Manufacturing, Mill, Tannery	46 Orleans Correctional Facility	Sandstone Industry
12 Edgecombe Correctional Facility	-	47 Butler ASACT Catchment Facility	Fruit Growing, Canning, Mill
13 Monterey Shock Incarceration Correctional	Manufacturing, Coal, Trading	48 Washington Correctional Facility	Iron Manufacturing
14 Summit Shock Incarceration Correctional	Tourism, Hotel	49 Sullivan Correctional Facility	Agriculture, Saw Mill, Dairy
15 Camp Georgetown	Saw Mill, Stave Mill, Tannery	50 Butler Correctional	Fruit Growing, Canning, Mill
16 Bayview Correctional	-	51 Franklin Correctional Facility	Sawmill, Tannery, Dairy
17 Elmira Correctional Facility	Manufacturing	52 Lakeview Shock Incarceration Correctional	Fruit Growing, Sawmill, Wine
18 Sing Sing Correctional Facility	Shipping Farm Goods	53 Southport Correctional Facility	-
19 Auburn Correctional Facility	Feed, Dairy, Poultry	54 Mohawk Correctional Facility	Copper Manufacturing
20 Adirondack Correctional Facility	Agriculture	55 Bare Hill Correctional Facility	Sawmill, Tannery, Dairy
21 Clinton Annex at Clinton Correctional	Mining, Smelting	56 Cape Vincent Correctional Facility	Lumber, Ice, Seed Raising
22 Rochester Correctional Facility	-	57 Riverview Correctional Facility	Trade
23 Eastern Correctional Facility	Factory, Coal	58 Cayuga Correctional Facility	Manufacturing, Mill
24 Taconic Correctional Facility	Dairy Farming, Agriculture	59 Moriah Shock Incarceration Correctional	Iron Mining
25 Fulton Correctional	-	60 Marcy Correctional Facility	Glass Factory
26 Queensboro Correctional Facility	-	61 Chateaugay Correctional	Cheese, Farming, Tannery
27 Mid-Orange	Iron Manufacturing	62 Gouverneur Correctional Facility	Marle, Talc, Zinc Mining
28 Arthur Kill Correctional	-	63 Ulster Correctional Facility	Factory, Coal
29 Mount McGregor Correctional	Mining, Trade	64 Hale Creek Correctional Facility	Tannery, Gelatine Plant
30 Otisville Correctional Facility	Dairy Manufacturing	65 Livingston Correctional	Tourism, Agriculture
31 Fishkill Correctional Facility	Brick and Hat, Film	66 Buffalo Correctional	Tannery, Tourism
32 Hudson Correctional Facility	Manufacturing	67 Gowanda Correctional	Tannery, Glue Industry
33 Downstate Correctional Facility	Fur Trading, Printing, Wool	68 Willard Drug Treatment Campus	Agriculture
34 Watertown Correctional	Manufacturing	69 Upstate Correctional Facility	Sawmill, Tannery, Dairy
35 Ogdensburg Correctional Facility	Shipping	70 Five Points Correctional Facility	Agriculture



The 13th amendment of the constitution forbids slavery and involuntary servitude, "except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."

Division of Correctional Industries functions under the brand name of **Corcraft**. Corcraft is a \$50 million-a-year industry. Revenue from sales goes in the **state general fund**.

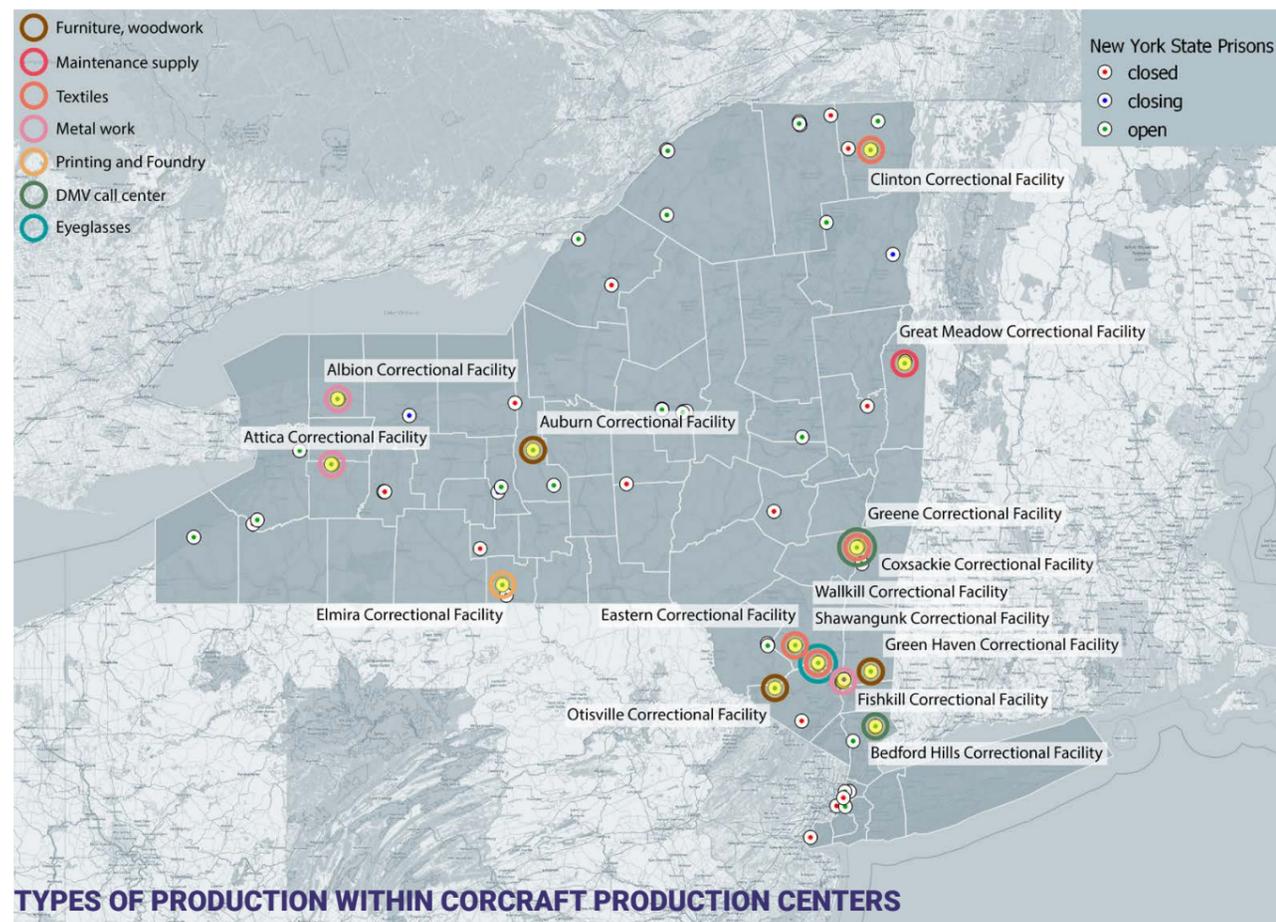
Division of Correctional Industries employs approximately **2100 prisoners, 288 civilians** across nearly **15 facilities** across New York State.

Incarcerated New Yorkers earn as little as **16 cents an hour**. The average inmate wage during **FY 15-16 was 65 cents per hour**.

State law requires local governments to purchase commodities from Corcraft if it has a product that satisfies the form, function and utility required.

The system with prisoners as its backbone has a monopoly like power over state wide municipal institution market. The law exempts Corcraft from other state laws mandating competitive bidding.

New York City is the largest purchaser of Corcraft goods. At least 26 city agencies buy from it and approximately \$15 million are spent in a fiscal year.



Hand soap dispensers in City Hall | Secure Therapy Desks | State license plates and street signs

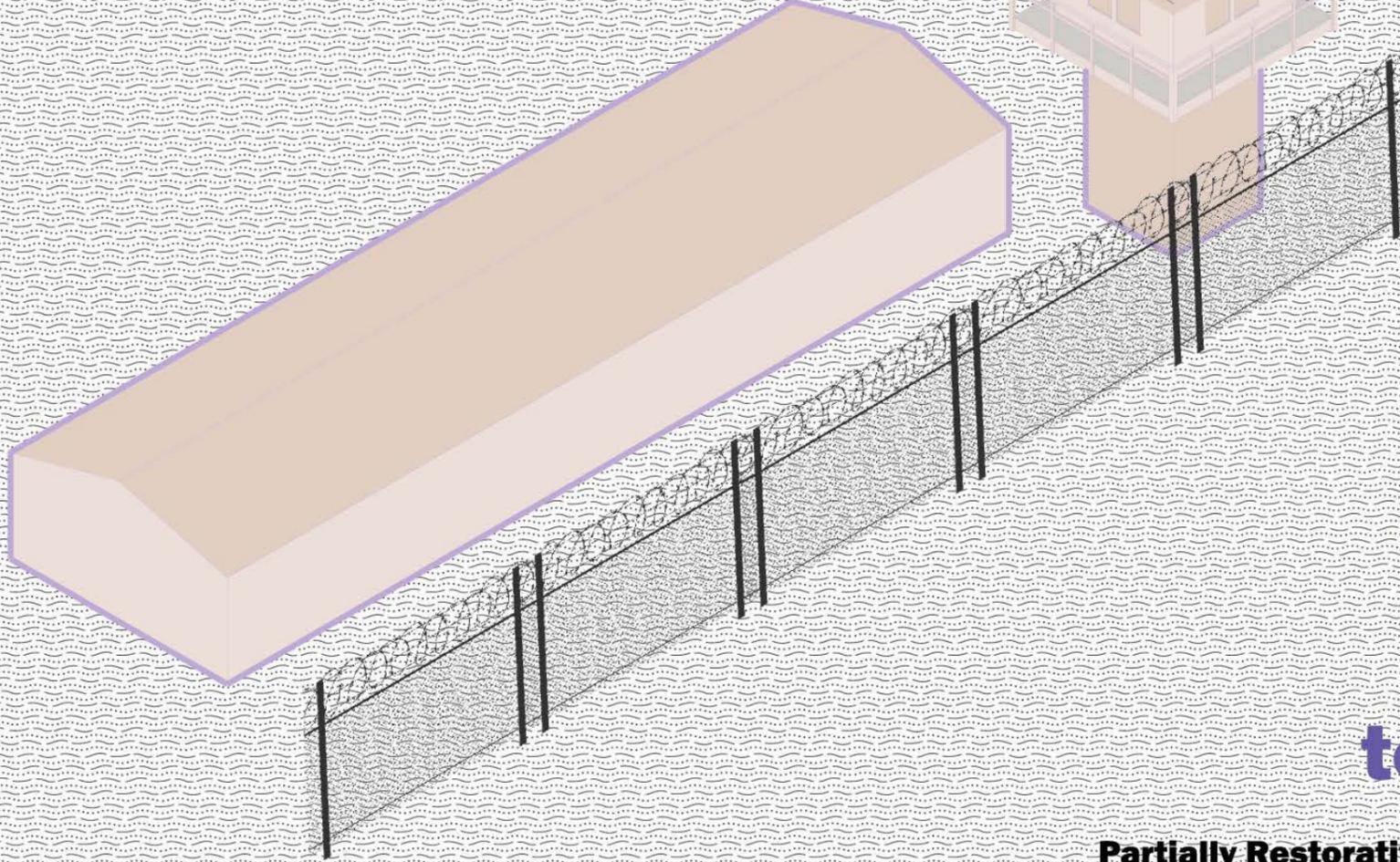
Janitorial supplies, soap | Metal crowd control barricades used by the NYPD | Wooden benches

for the state court system | Office furniture ('Attica Series Desk' was named after the prison)

File cabinets for schools | Coastal storm signs | NYS Clean hand sanitizers

Punitive Justice

Restorative Justice

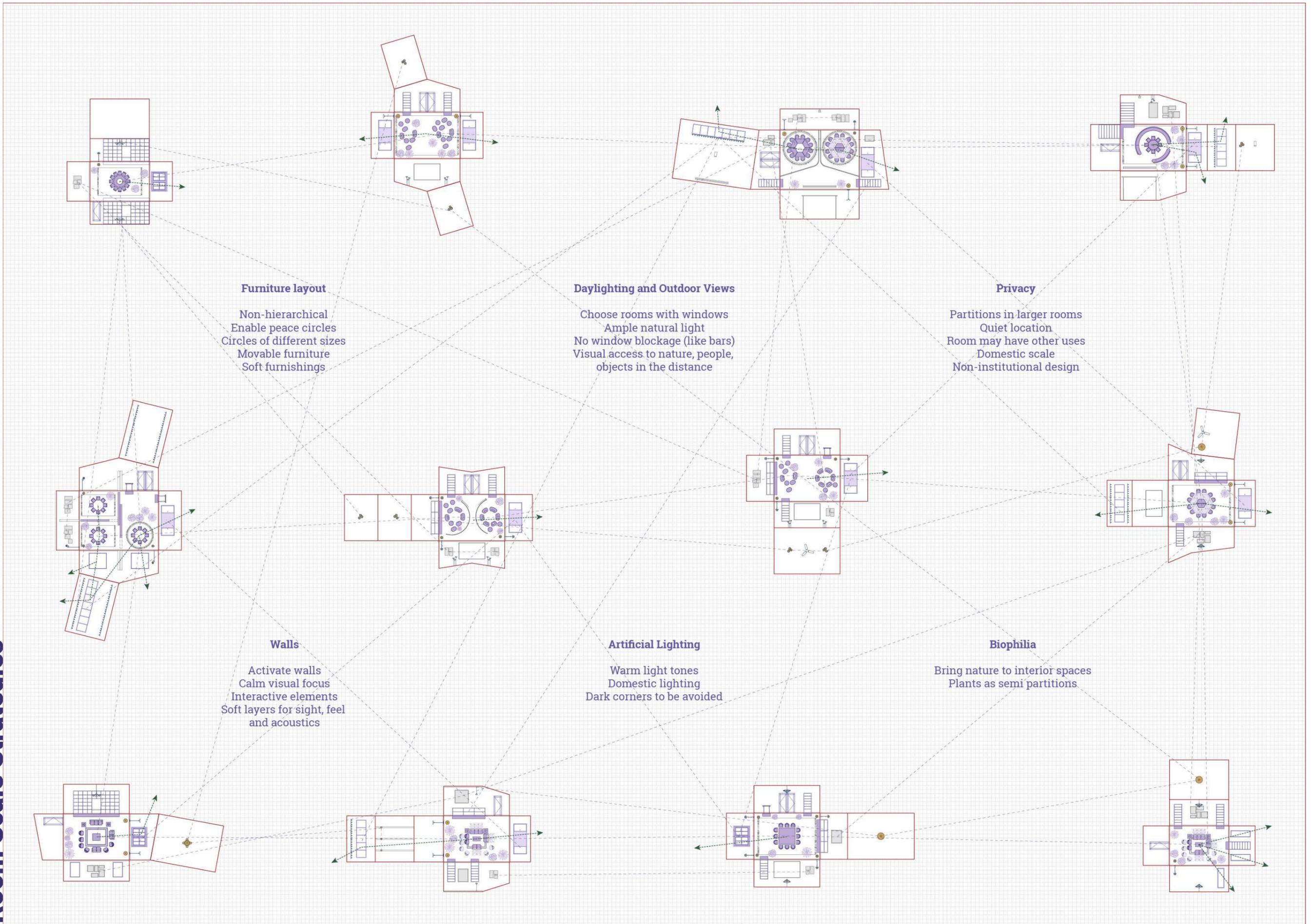


**Who has been hurt?
What are their needs?
Who is responsible
to attend those needs?**

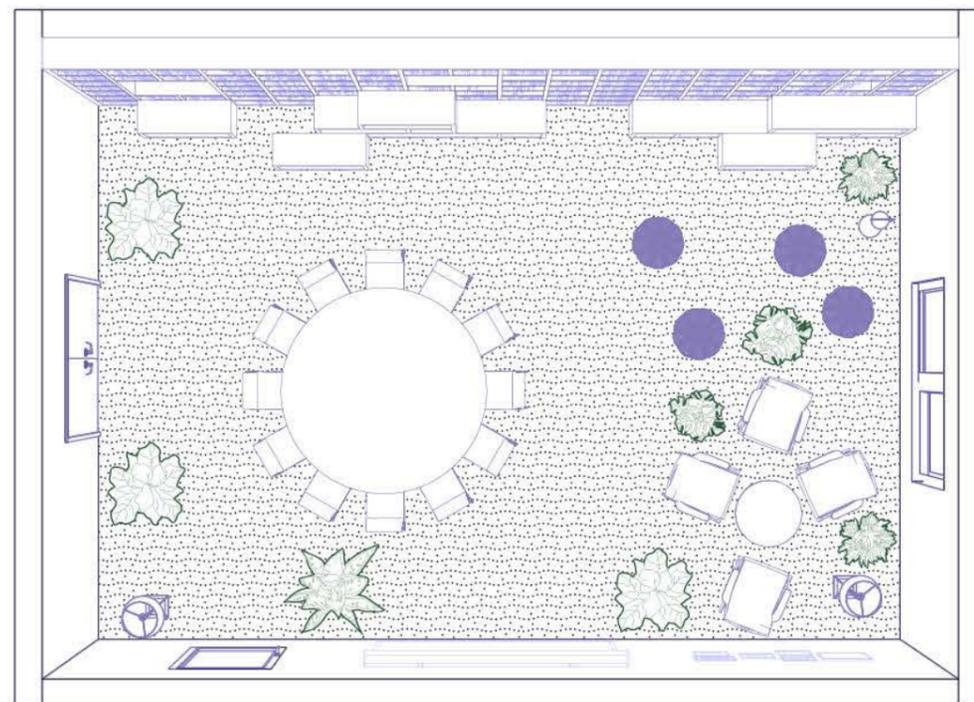
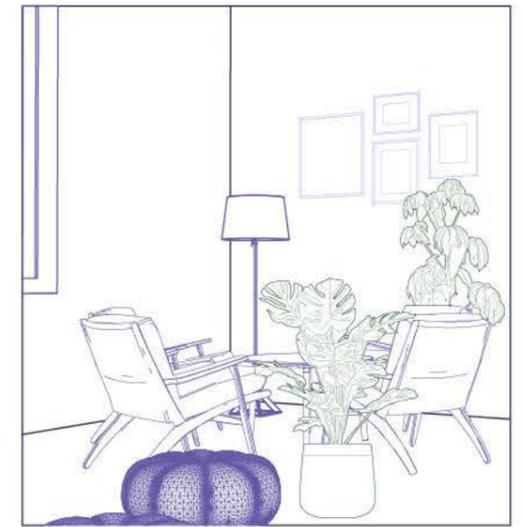
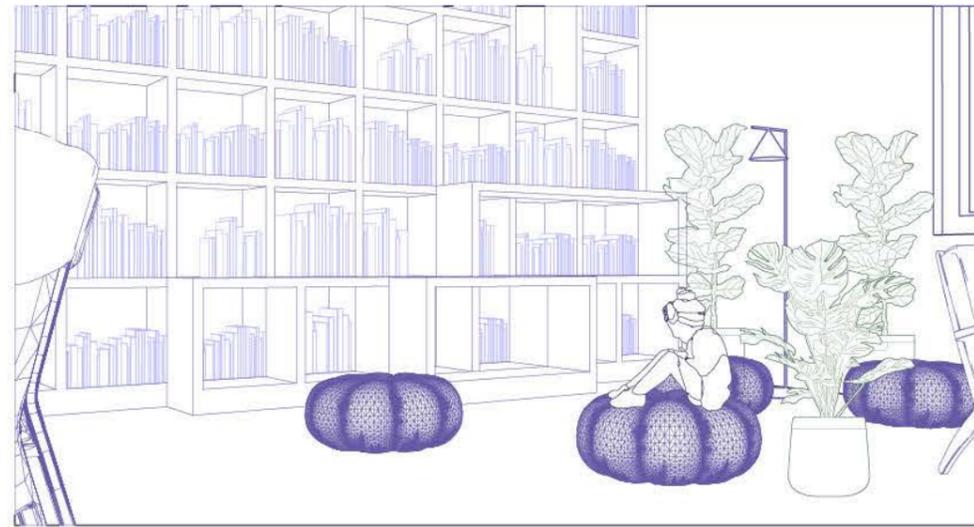
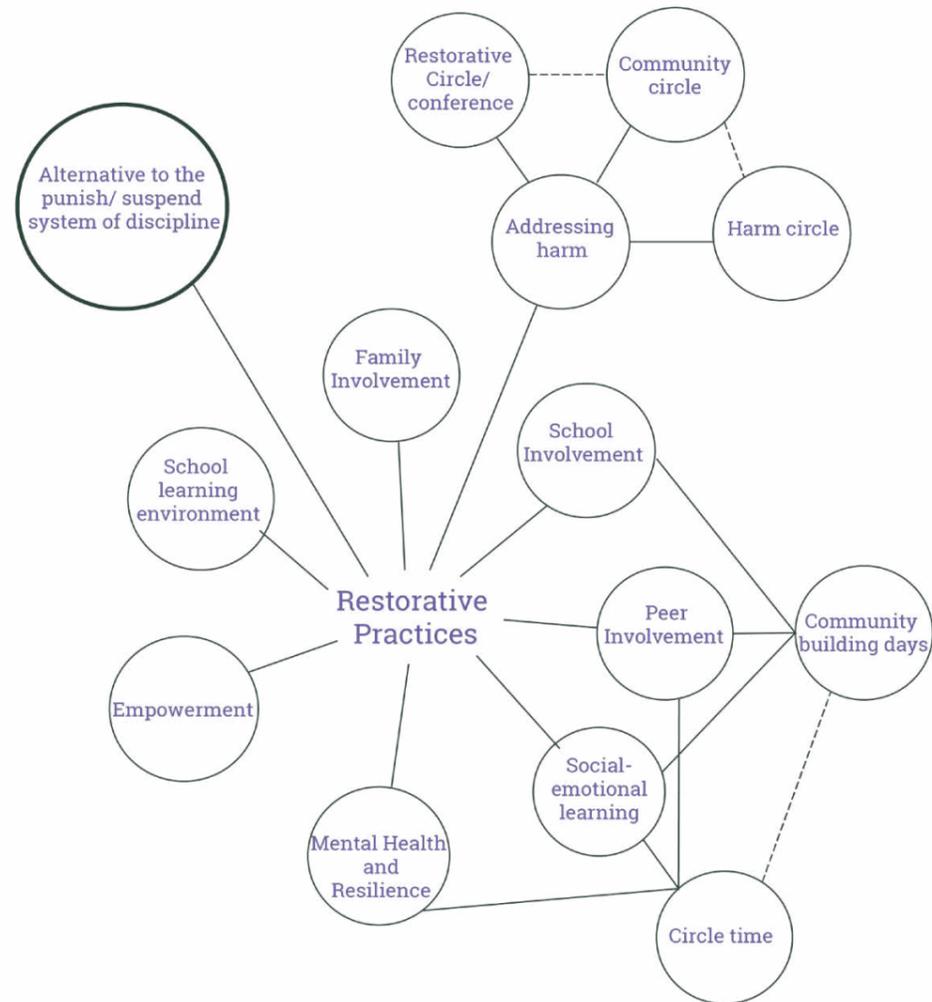
**What law was
broken?
Who is guilty?
What do they
deserve?**

	Partially Restorative	Mostly Restorative	Fully Restorative
Victim Reparation	Victim services Crime compensation	Victim support circles	Victim restitution
Communities of Care	Offender family services Family centered social work		Peace circles Family group conferecing
Offender Responsibility	Community service Youth aid panels Reparative boards Victim sensitivity training	Victim- offender mediation	Positive discipline Therapeutic community

Room Scale Strategies



Research suggests that punitive action in schools is linked to student disengagement, dropout and facilitates the school to prison pipeline. The adoption of restorative justice in the education systems suggests a paradigm shift.

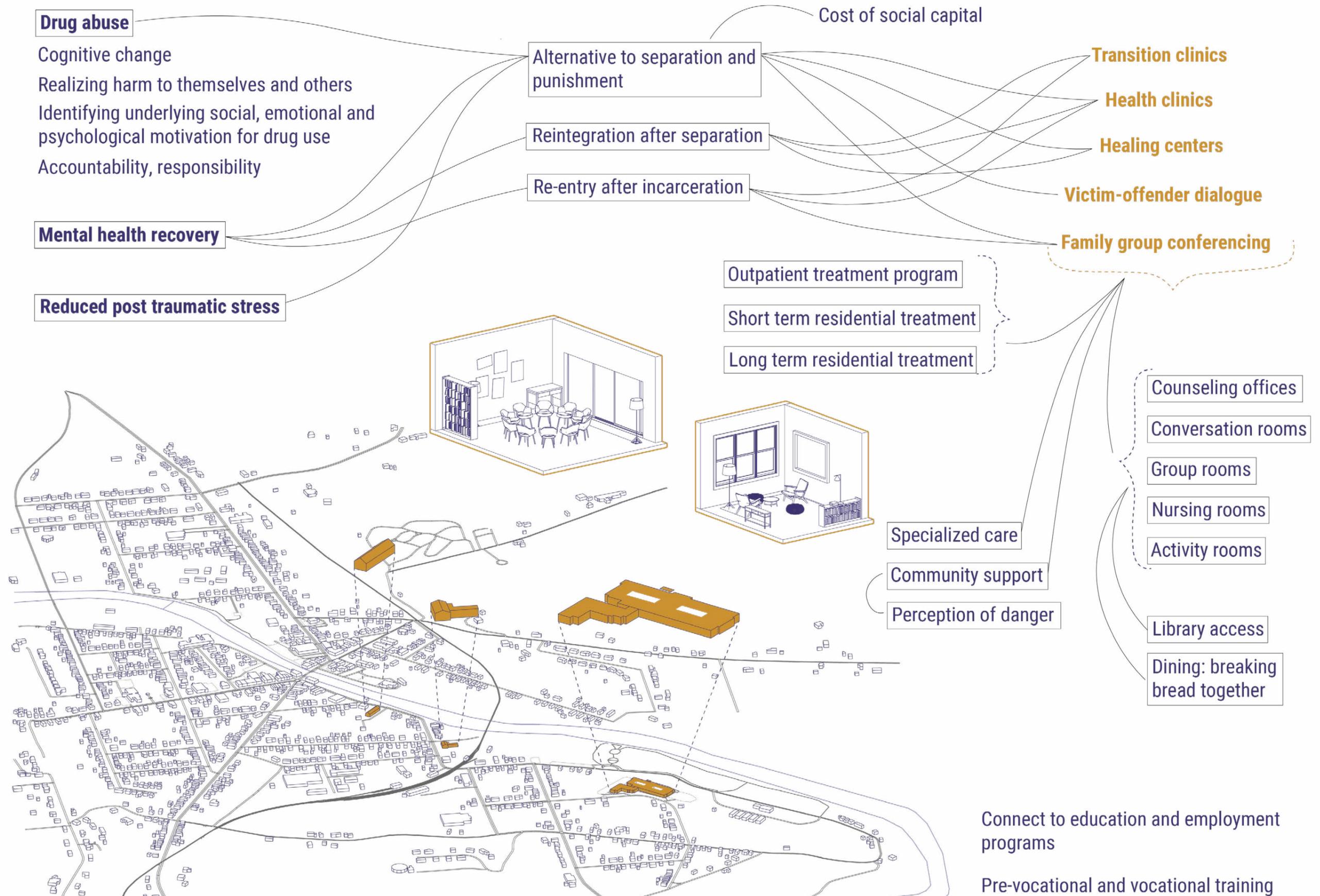


Spaces in schools for:

- Everyday circle time**
- Restorative circle**
- Restorative conference**
- Community circle**
- Harm circle**

Cool-off spaces

Restorative Justice in the Education System: Starting Early



Drug abuse

Cognitive change
Realizing harm to themselves and others
Identifying underlying social, emotional and psychological motivation for drug use
Accountability, responsibility

Mental health recovery

Reduced post traumatic stress

Alternative to separation and punishment

Reintegration after separation

Re-entry after incarceration

Cost of social capital

Transition clinics

Health clinics

Healing centers

Victim-offender dialogue

Family group conferencing

Outpatient treatment program

Short term residential treatment

Long term residential treatment

Specialized care

Community support

Perception of danger

Counseling offices

Conversation rooms

Group rooms

Nursing rooms

Activity rooms

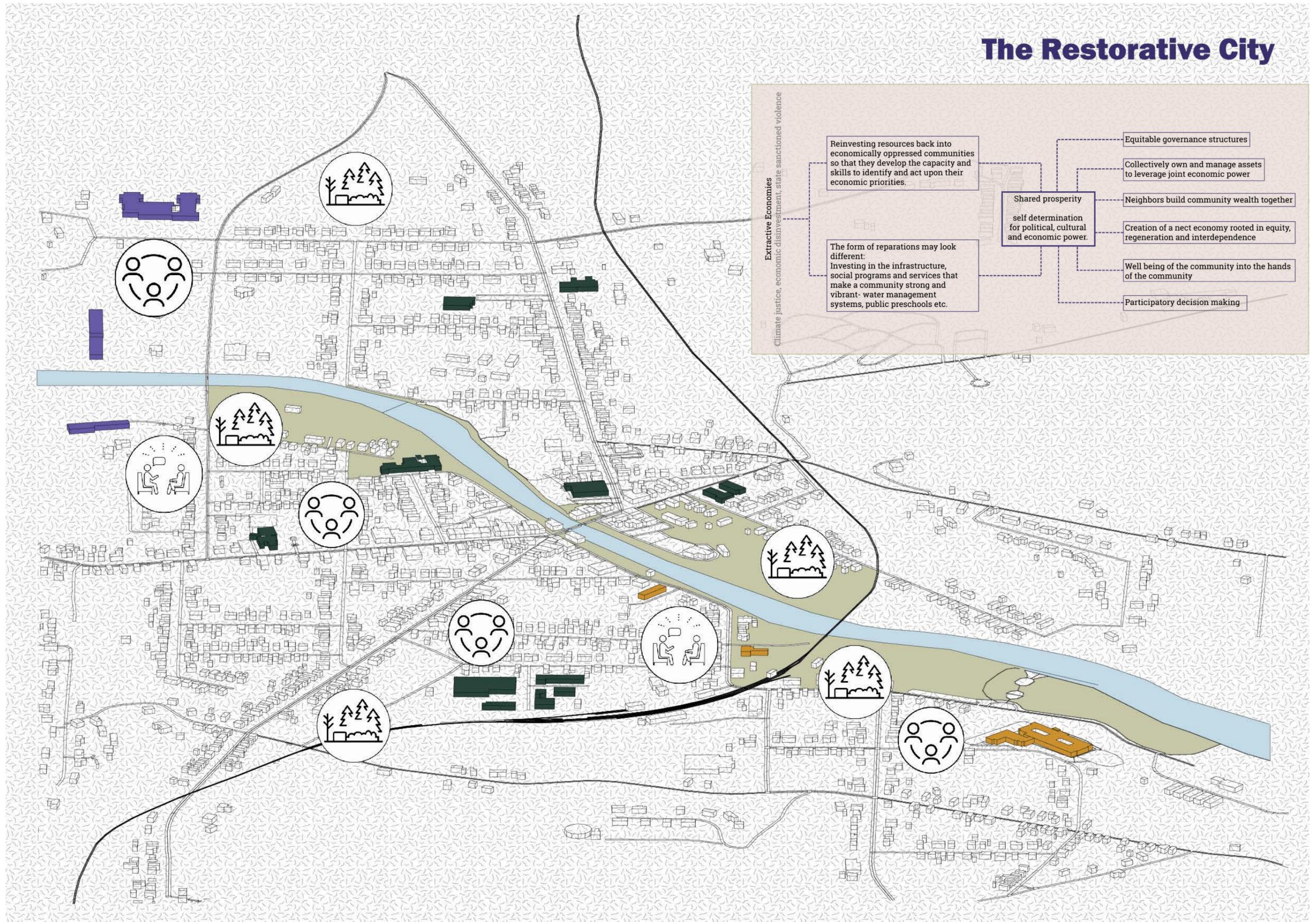
Library access

Dining: breaking bread together

Connect to education and employment programs

Pre-vocational and vocational training

Restorative Practices, Spaces and Healthcare



Irani Cafés, Authenticity and The Cultural Landscape of Mumbai

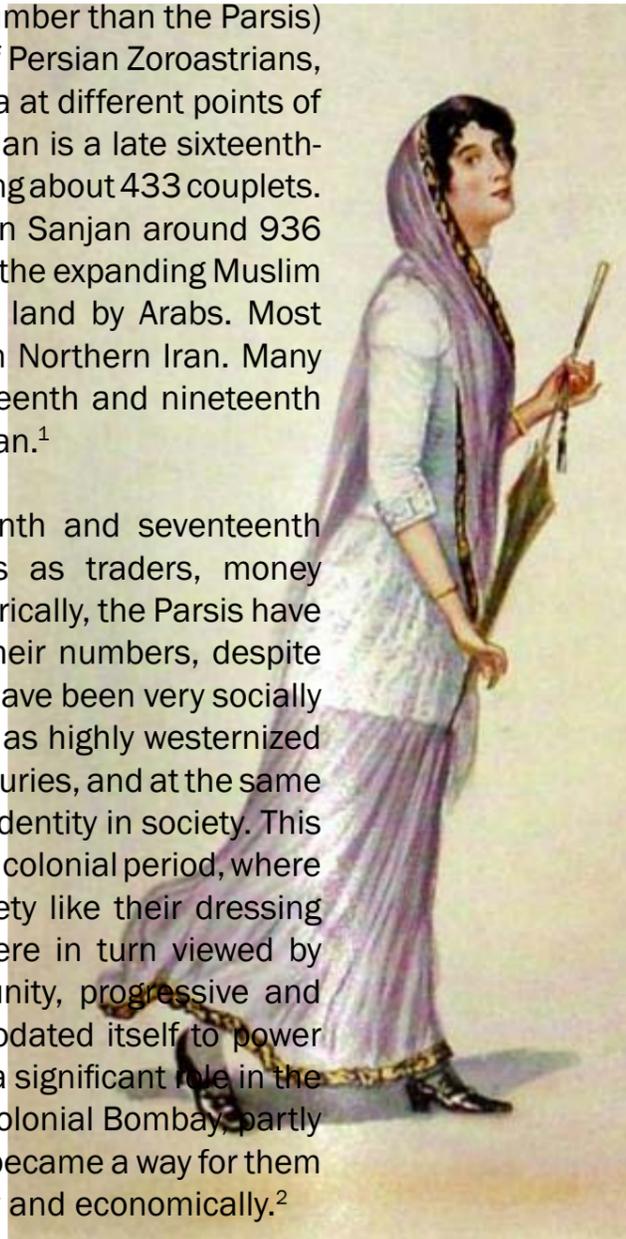
This paper chronicles the Irani community's move to India, their rootedness in their cuisine and how Irani cafes changed the cultural landscape of Mumbai in colonial and post-colonial India. The paper also explores the ideas of identity and authenticity as expressed through the cuisine, and what those mean in the context of constant evolution and adaptations within the community. I do not write this paper with the aim to have answers to the above, but rather to analyze how the Parsi community was situated within the question. From tea stalls to cafes to modern-day restaurants, the public dining scene has evolved under the influences of a migration culture, colonial urban growth, the rise of tea consumption in the Indian society under colonial rule in the late 19th century, and the changing socio-economic conditions of a community.



Parsis and other Iranis (who are fewer in number than the Parsis) in modern day Mumbai, are descendants of Persian Zoroastrians, Muslims and Baha'is, who migrated to India at different points of time throughout history. The Qesse-ye Sanjan is a late sixteenth-century Zoroastrian text in Persian, containing about 433 couplets. This text suggests that the Parsis arrived in Sanjan around 936 AD. The Zoroastrian community was fleeing the expanding Muslim caliphate following the conquering of the land by Arabs. Most of them came from a region called Pars in Northern Iran. Many other Iranis migrated to India in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries from a famine-stricken Central Iran.¹

Since the Mughal rule during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Parsis established themselves as traders, money lenders and toddy plantation owners. Historically, the Parsis have exerted influence out of proportion with their numbers, despite being a minority community in India. They have been very socially adaptive with changing regimes, emerging as highly westernized through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and at the same time managed to maintain their collective identity in society. This adaptability was also very evident during the colonial period, where they adopted the ways of the British society like their dressing style, language and mannerisms. They were in turn viewed by the British as the model civilized community, progressive and intelligent, that had successfully accommodated itself to power shifts. As a result, the Parsi society played a significant role in the cultural, civic and educational spheres of colonial Bombay, partly shaping the public culture and this agency became a way for them to maintain their identity socially, politically and economically.²

Currently however, the community which already held the status of minority is facing further dwindling numbers, owing to many factors such as mixed marriages, emigration, low fertility rate, high marital age, impoverishment of the middle class, dependency on charitable institutions and gaps between socio-economic realities and aspirations.³ As per the 2001 Census of India, the Parsi population was only 69,601, with the elderly constituting the majority of this population. This figure, with a 12% decrease rate, is expected to fall to 36,730 by 2050 and 19,382 by 2100.⁴



"A Parsi lady", water painting by Rao Bahadur and M. V. Dhurandhar, 1928. Source: Wikimedia Commons

The Parsi community's identity has remained closely associated with their cuisine, where people are proud of it and hold it close to their heart and within their families. Even as Parsi food continues to gain popularity across the country, many of them remain reserved about Parsi restaurant chains and their authenticity. The quality of adaptation, however, does not remain restricted to lifestyles but is evident in the cuisine too, which shows a clear amalgamation of Zoroastrian influence, Gujarati influence and European influence. In emulating the British trend of hiring Goan cooks for households, several Goan dishes found their way in Parsi cooking, like the prawn curry and vindaloo. The Hindu influence on the cuisine seems to be in the warm spices and seafood available on the Gujarati coast. The influence from the Muslims seems to be in embracing meat with organs like lungs and heart. The British influence is seen in the custards and souffles. The cooking remains rooted in Persian traditions, with an emphasis on the use of nuts and dried fruits, and balancing sweet and sour flavors.⁵

¹ Hinnells, John. 2007. Parsis in India and the Diaspora, 15-50. London; New York: Routledge.

² Mishra, Ashish Kumar. "COMMERCIALISING DATE PALM: PARSIS ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN WESTERN INDIA." Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 75 (2014): 672-77. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44158446>.

³ Axelrod, Paul. "Cultural and Historical Factors in the Population Decline of the Parsis of India." Population Studies 44, no. 3 (1990): 401-19. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2174460>.

⁴ RAGHAVAN, ANIRUDH, SYEDA ASIA, and VANSHIKA SINGH. "Circuits of Authenticity: Parsi Food, Identity, and Globalisation in 21st Century Mumbai." Economic and Political Weekly 50, no. 31 (2015): 69-74. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24482166>.

⁵ Ligaya Mishan, "A Bid To Maintain One Of The World'S Oldest Culinary Traditions (Published 2019)", Nytimes.Com, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/08/t-magazine/parsi-food.html>.

By the end of the nineteenth century, a new Bombay Parsi cuisine had emerged, embodying all the cultural and religious influences and consisting of dishes rich in milk, sugar, cardamom, saffron, vanilla, nuts and meat, giving it the connotation of being rich food.

Many Irani cafes began as tea stalls which sometimes also sold snacks like Persian bread and sweets. Many second and third generation Irani café owners recount their predecessors as having set up tea stalls in Bombay after fleeing from Persia.⁶ This was perhaps because in India they found as much of a market for tea as there was in Iran, tea being a prominent part of both cultures. This was likely backed by the fact that many of the immigrants weren't educated enough or did not have enough resources in the country to do much else initially. It is important to note that large-scale tea cultivation was an essential part of the East India Company's mission in India in order for them to maintain their monopoly on trade.



Irani cafes came up at a strategic time of development in the city. Bombay was still recovering from the socio-economic aftermath of the plague outbreaks of 1896. The substantial rise in both economic activity and population created a new space in the market for inexpensive restaurant and dining facilities. In addition, new roads were being cut through congested parts of the city under the Bombay Improvement Trust's urban renewal activities. This created new commercial frontages which presented profitable opportunities for Irani shopkeepers.⁷

Although most of these cafes started coming up along the main roads of South Bombay, they slowly spread throughout the city. In a way, they offered a new model of public dining and sociability in Bombay, with food that was accessible to most people, although the poorest of working classes seem to have not been able to afford a meal at these cafes. However, despite a full menu, most people visited and continue to visit the establishments for tea, bun maska (buttered bun) and other snacks. The cafes also provided a feeling of eating at leisure, as opposed to most forms of public eateries where people got a sense of quick eating.⁸

At the time when Irani cafes were being set up, a lot of the owners named their restaurants after British names, for example, Britannia and Co., Café George, Café Churchill, Café General. A lot of the owners still hold a sense of pride for their cafes to have been associated with the British, and talk fondly of the time when the localities were kept clean under the British Raj. Many of the cafes also stocked up Western snacks and goods, functioning as the neighborhood general stores for the same.⁹

Over time, a lot of these cafes started incorporating "family cabins" for dining, with wood and glass partitions. The availability of these private spaces encouraged families to dine out in these cafes, including women. To some extent, this had the effect of including women in the sociability and public dining culture that the Irani cafes had created. Historically, the culture of seeking refreshments in the evenings and sometimes on holidays involved men of the working and clerical class. Given the limited time and facilities they had for leisure, for most of these men the activity was not so much about dining out as it was about sustenance.¹⁰

⁶ Wilson College, ...Aur Irani Chai, video, 2004, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez-sgYClSuo&t=57s>.

⁷ Frank Conlon, "Dining Out In Bombay", in *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture In A South Asian World* (repr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Wilson College, ...Aur Irani Chai, video, 2004, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ez-sgYClSuo&t=57s>.

¹⁰ Frank Conlon, "Dining Out In Bombay", in *Consuming Modernity: Public Culture In A South Asian World* (repr., Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

Irani cafes have developed a particular design language regardless of the café's location or clientele- high ceilings, bentwood chairs, marble-top tables, checkered table cloth, mirrors, old posters, bright lights, and a vintage, hand-written set of instructions. They sometimes sport flags of India, England and Iran side by side, like in Britannia and Co. During my own visit to the restaurant, I met the late owner Baman Kohinoor, who went around greeting all guests and taking orders personally. He carried a laminated cutout of the Queen and a photo of the time he met the duke and duchess of Cambridge, William and Kate, recounting the event fondly to his customers. Part of the attraction for people visiting these establishments is the ambience they create, for seeming like spaces frozen in time in an already historical city and invoking a sense of nostalgia.



Another key offering of these cafes are the buildings they are located in. Apart from retaining the ambience, most of the cafes have remained in buildings they were originally established in, built during the British Raj. Hence, these cafes, along with a sense of nostalgia also offer a glimpse into the material aspect of the colonial history of Mumbai. Today, the locations of many cafes are sought after prime properties in the city. At the time when Iranis established the cafes, Hindus were superstitious about building on street corners while Parsis were not, and so it was easier to acquire these spaces for the cafes without intolerance from either community.

