

A CONSTANT  
QUESTIONING  
OF URBAN  
LANDSCAPES,  
CRISIS,  
HOUSING,  
SACREDNESS,  
DISSENT,  
IDENTITY,  
REPRESENTATION,  
POLITICS,  
AGENCY.

# AYA ABDALLAH

Portfolio  
M.Arch GSAPP Columbia 2022

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# WHAT'S BEYOND?

My GSAPP experience starts after 3 years of professional work, where I learned many things - **building a building** was not one of them. I was searching for something more. What was I looking for? What did I want to do? Hopefully GSAPP could answer these questions for me. Three years. Maybe too much. But maybe it's worth it. Now looking back, why did I put so much pressure into finding **the right answer**?

A lot has happened in three years - the biggest Lebanese revolution ever, a pandemic that abruptly paused our lives indefinitely, an explosion that destroyed half my city and big parts of me, my parents' divorce, hybrid learning, wearing masks for 12 hours in a row, my last day of being a student.

Of course GSAPP played a role in **shaping** me during this time, and that is evident in this portfolio. But many other factors were involved that cannot necessarily be translated into a book. I was **looking for answers** inside the classroom but (un)consciously **creating them outside** - through the GSAPP Collective for Beirut and Masaha, but also through hallway discussions, peeking into other final reviews, applying for fellowships and competitions and grabbing coffee with professors.

What I now realize is that all I wanted deep down was a physical space for **my curiosity to flourish**, for **my questions to be asked** but not necessarily fully answered. I was craving a social place to share with like minded individuals, for a community to run with, for friends to spend nights making models with, for conversations to keep going to the depth of the night. I was looking to be **challenged**, to always be **tested** and **contradicted**, to have emotional debates and to hear my heart pounding in my chest. I was looking for a place to **search for my identity**, as a woman, an arab, a designer, a student, a friend, a partner, a human.

I have discovered more personalities and sides of me than I could have ever imagined and I know the list doesn't stop here and now. As I continue towards the next chapter of my life, I continue to grow and learn more about myself, who I am and who I can become.

A work in progress. **A constant questioning.**

As you turn the pages and enter my GSAPP endeavor, I hope you feel at your fingertips the **multiplicity of roles** I had taken on, **the curiosity** that brews every project, and **the passion** that brings every semester to an end.

I am categorizing this body of work as '**Portfolio +**', as it goes beyond my design work and showcases who I am as a whole. I am **constantly wondering** what is **beyond architecture**. How can I push the boundaries of a conventional definition and transform it as my own? What weight does my own definition of architecture even mean? Through my journey at GSAPP, I have learned to be **self critical** in order to achieve the best version of what I can make.

The **sum of the parts** of this portfolio constitutes my education for the last three years. A mixture of studio design, tech, visual studies, history of architecture as well as some personal projects, collectives, objects, websites I am proud of. They are organized chronologically but differ by type according to paper size and color.

The curated collection of work argues for a **multidisciplinary** approach to my career. Juggling multiple jobs at the same time comes with the territory: **designing** and **building** a site specific exhibition to bring down the monopolistic control of mega telecommunication institutions, **critiquing** a greenwashing strategy through graphic design and building, **challenging** unlivable conditions through prototyping and fabrication, **analyzing** work in the most unconventional ways, **creating** and nourishing relationships in a workplace while empowering fellow students, **orchestrating** spaces for conversations to flourish, **cultivating** interactions with strangers and fueling curiosities, **managing** and **motivating** like minded individuals to enhance identity investigations, **forming** a collective to spread awareness and bring together intellectuals from around the world, **initiating** and **producing** an archive of unsaved historical moments.

I believe I am a thinker who can connect the dots between different fields across scale and people, constantly building and cultivating long lasting relationships.

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## BIRDWAY ON BROADWAY

Winner of the Paris Buell Prize Award.

“Birdway on Broadway” is an ornithological research station that is built on one of New York’s oldest roads. The project’s aim is to create a supportive environment for breeding, feeding and sheltering of birds. It’s intended to work in tandem with a classmate’s rat habitat project, which together, enhances a “predator-prey” system. The designed system will attract and grow bird populations that have become endangered through human construction and resource extraction, specifically Red Tailed Hawks - predators that feed off rodents, reptiles and squirrels. In addition, the associated system will rebalance the rat population without the use of harmful chemicals. By creating new habitats for them along Broadway, their relationship can serve as a self-sustaining pest control system to the city.

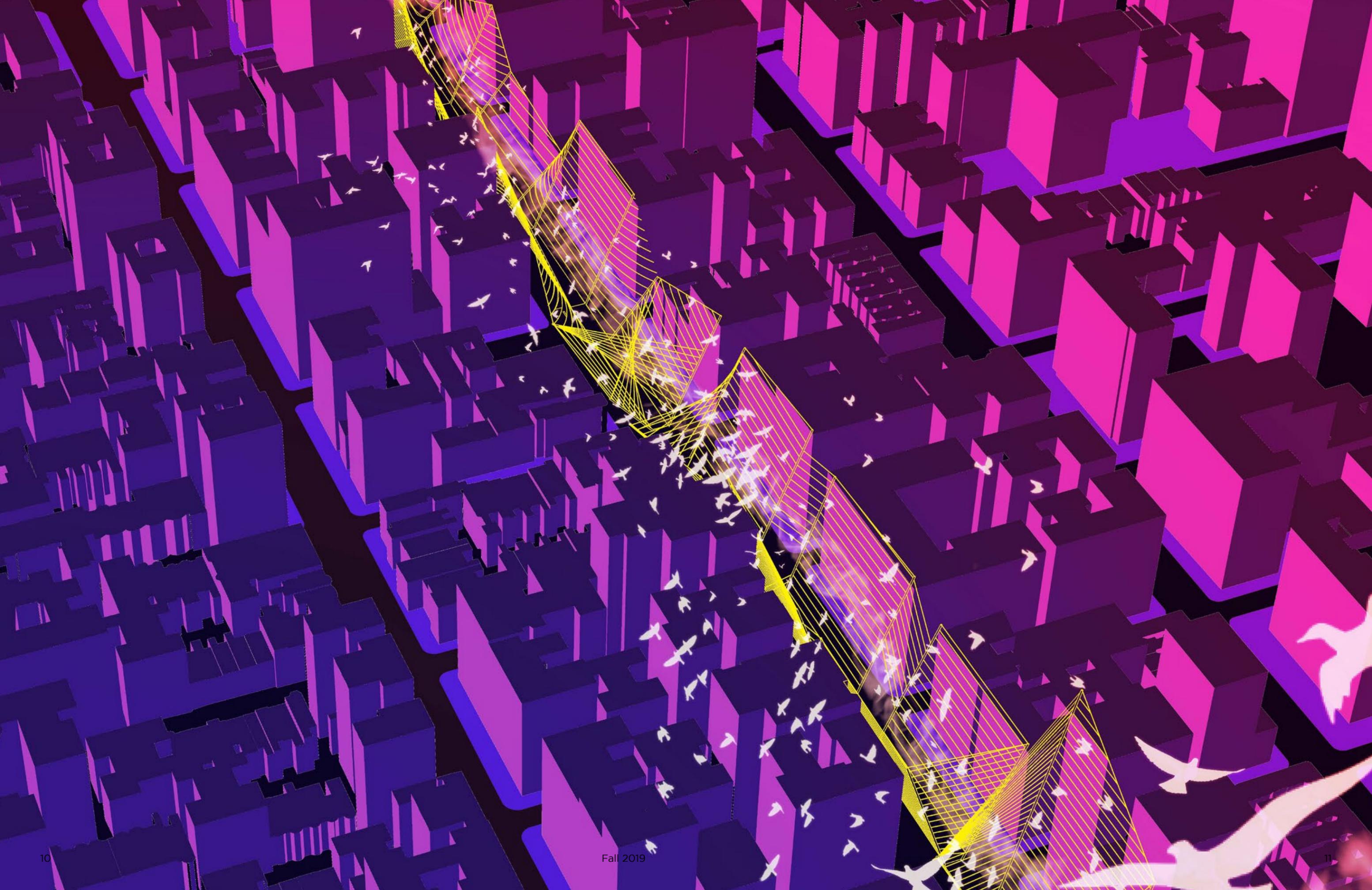
Strategically placed under key architectural details, the bird habitats create new building profiles and build a dialogue with surrounding buildings. In addition, they serve as vehicles for ornithological data collection. At the top of each arm a camera is set up so that scientists can track and observe the bird population. At the same time live video will be streamed on screens in the median to serve as an educational tool for kids and adults. It can also be streamed in private homes and serve as a bird reality TV show, an interest many already share with the Pale Male blog.

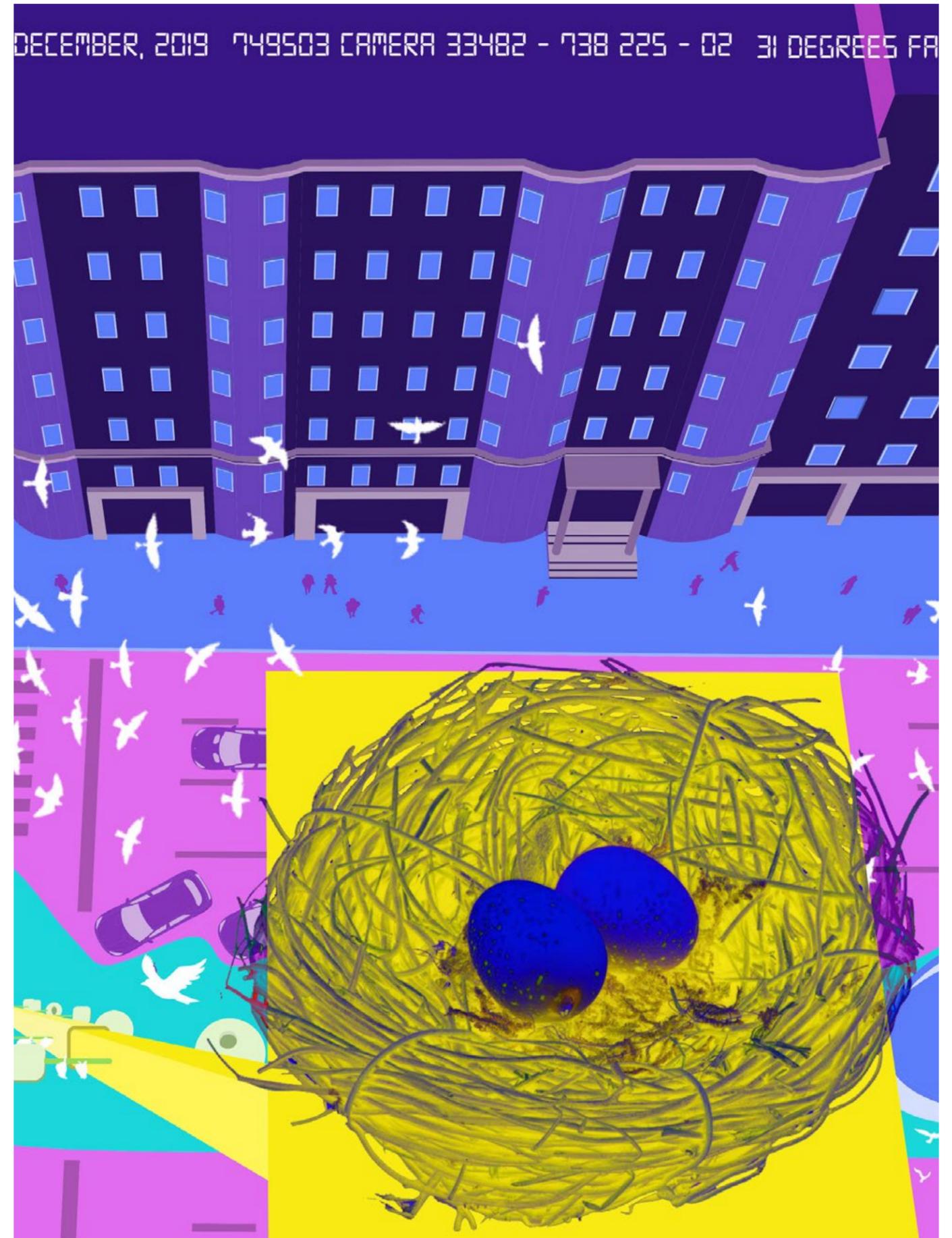
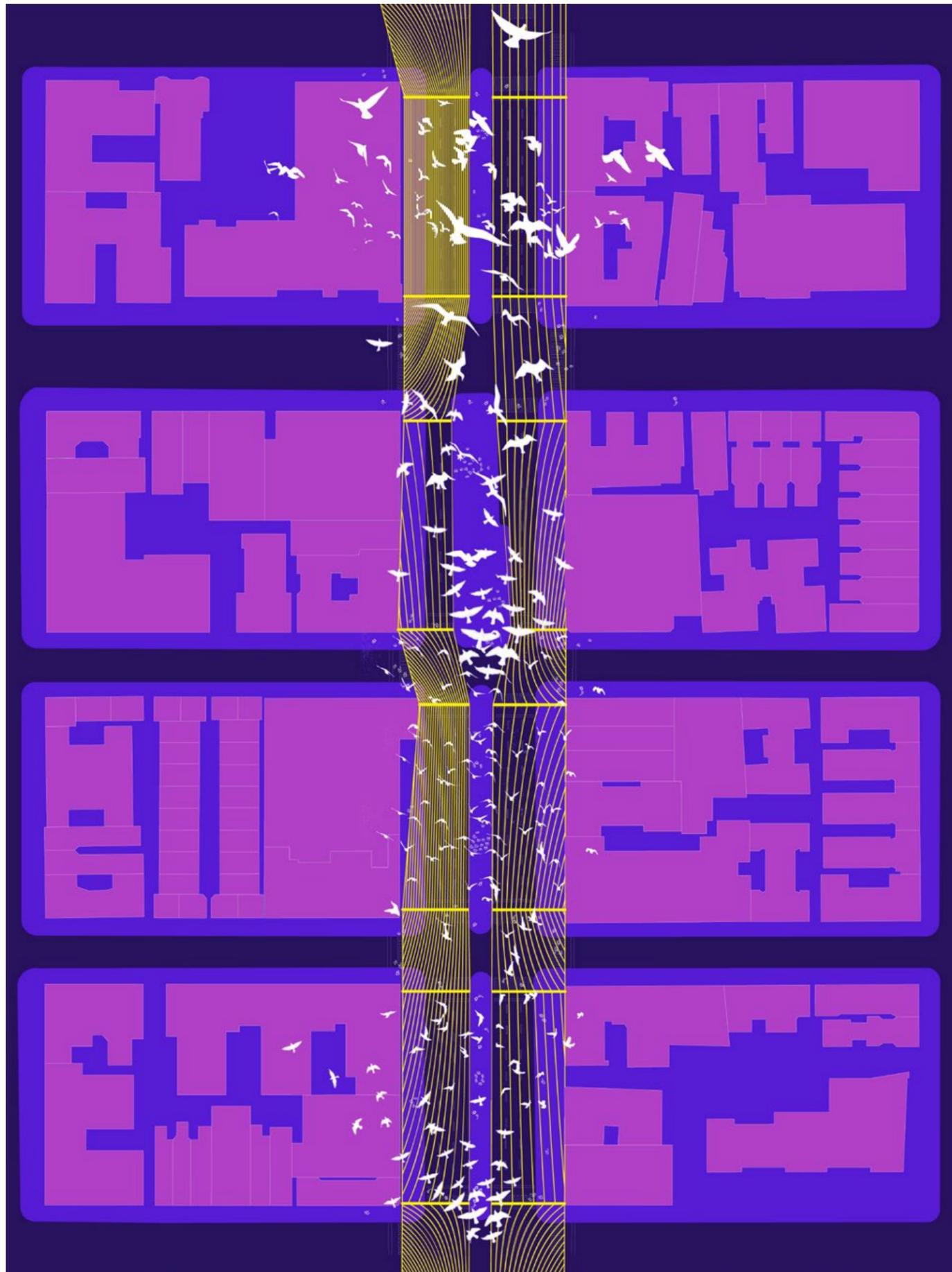
Birdway on Broadway could be an offset alternative, but instead of offsetting carbon, the designed system will offset biodiversity footprints. Direct impact of our actions on biodiversity or ecology is harder to calculate than carbon and specific metrics are more complex. This is because the tools available online are geared towards big business supply chain and production processes. By turning this assignment into a marketing fundraiser for local projects that may offset an individual’s footprint, the data collected risks not being as accurate for smaller scale interventions. This explains the flyer format of some of the drawings, to be distributed to locals around Broadway to donate and offset their biodiversity footprint by using relatable and scalable comparisons. In this case, \$30 could offset a flight from New York to San Francisco, which is the equivalent of 0.3 MSA.ha (Means Species Abundance). The flyer’s colors were selected to correspond to the ultraviolet range that is visible to birds. Yellow is the color of the bird habitat while the darker colors are used for human inhabitation.

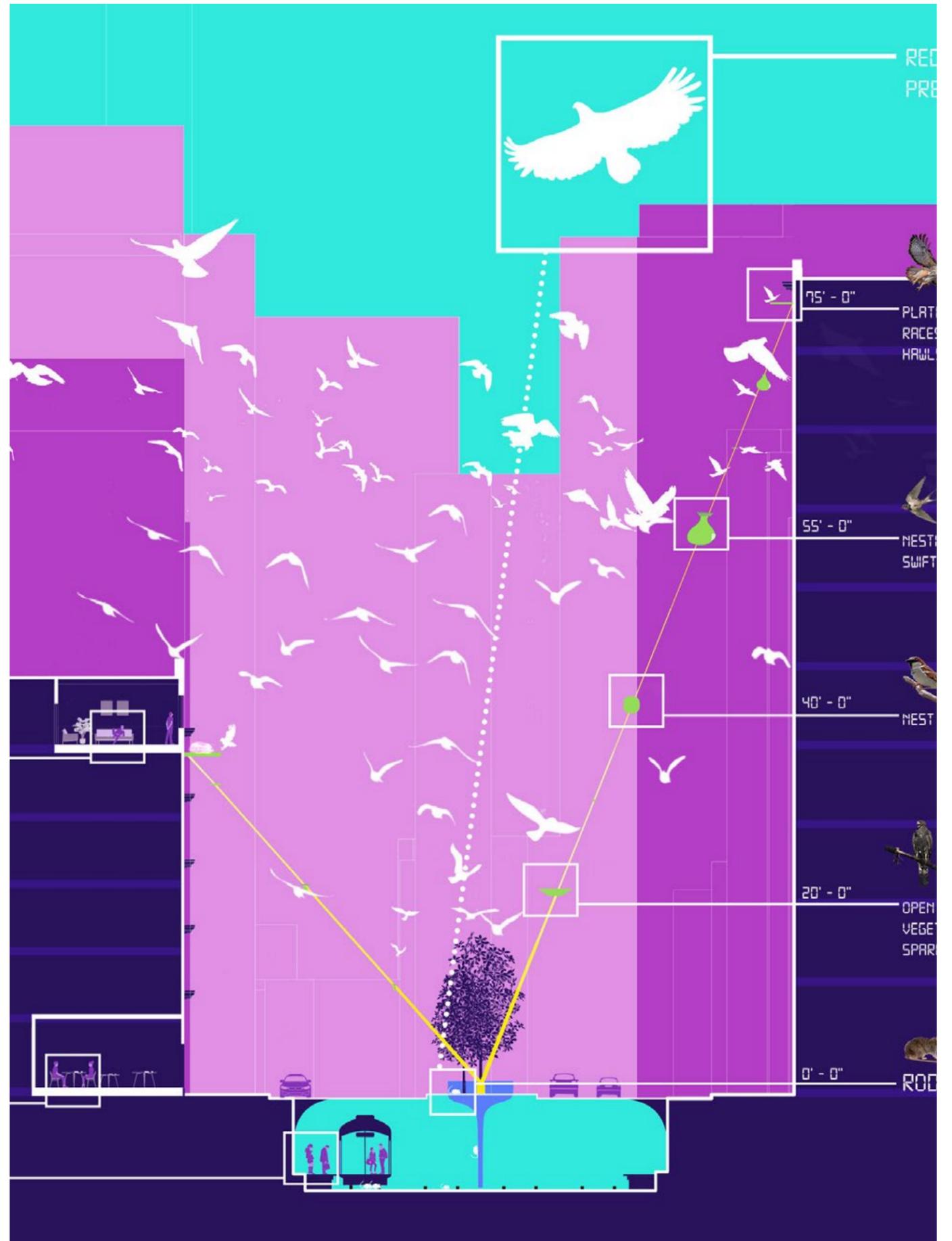
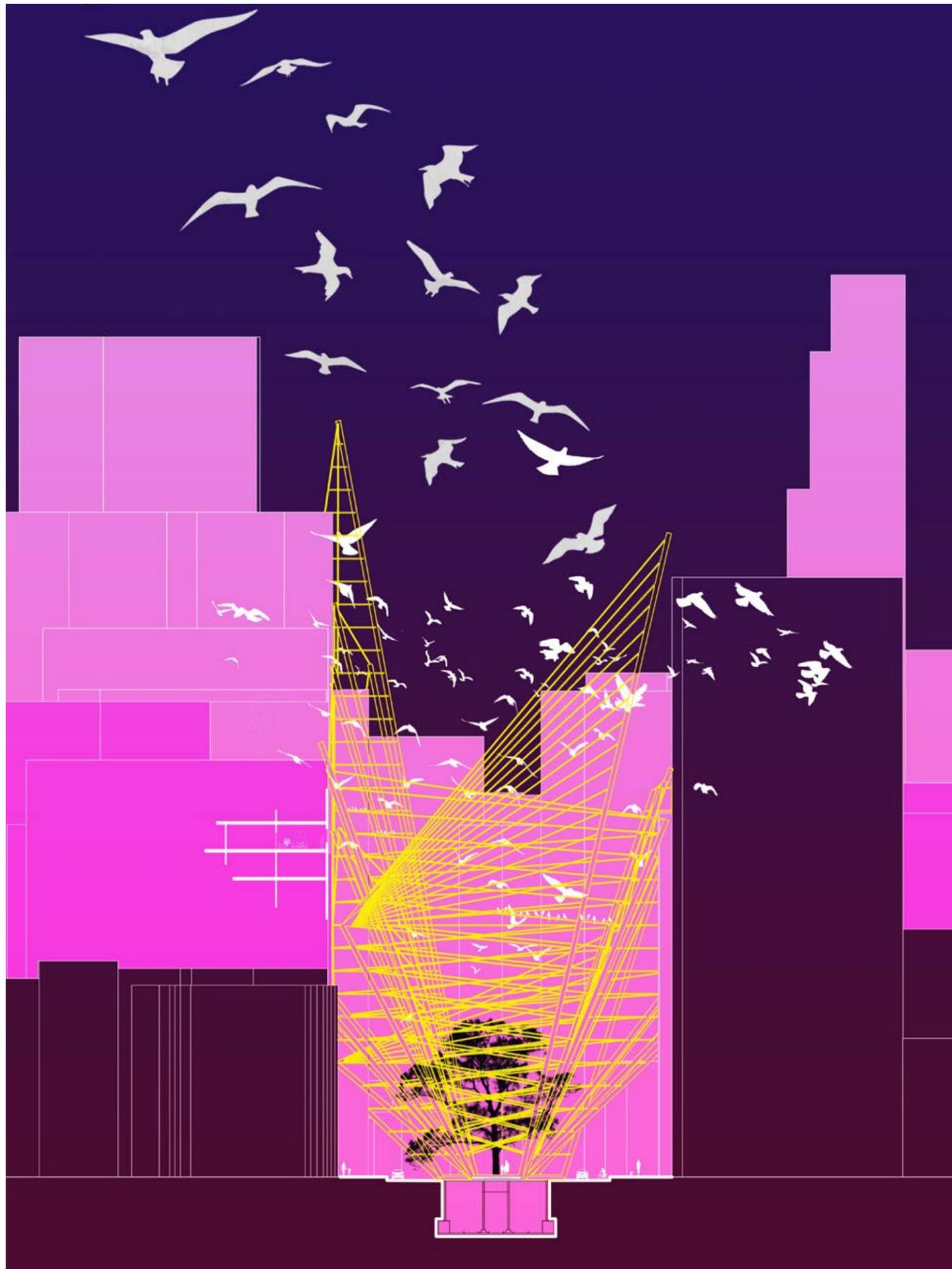
GSAPP CORE I FALL 2019

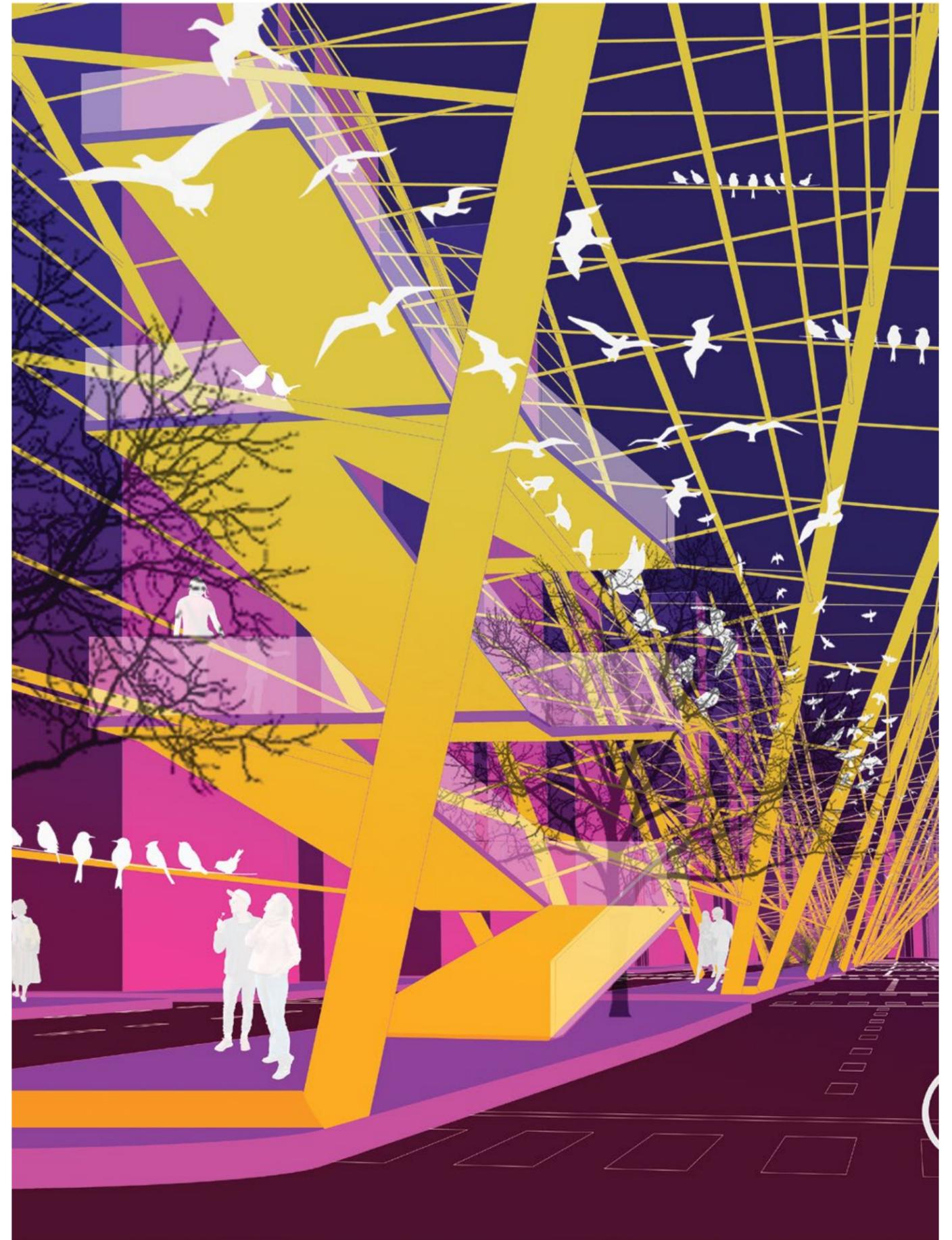
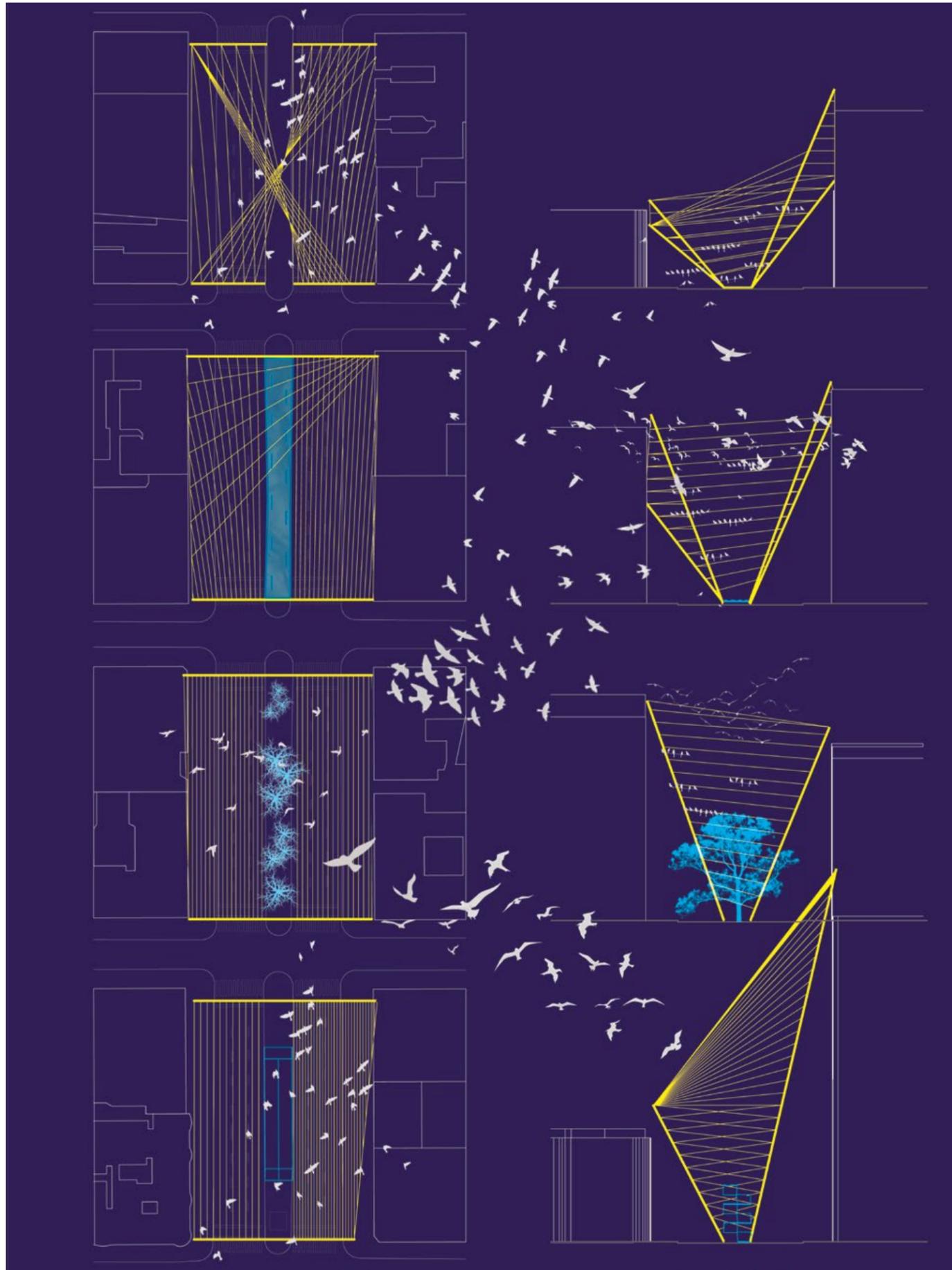
Critic - Lindy Roy

Complimentary project - Kaeli Streeter









# GIFTS OF BIODIVERSITY OFFSETS

MAKE A LOVED ONE'S HEART SOAR WITH A GIFT RIGHT UNDER THEIR WINDOW SILL

YOUR KIDS COMING TO VISIT YOU FOR THE HOLIDAYS? GIFT THEM THEIR BIODIVERSITY OFFSET

**0.8 TONNES**

AMOUNT OF CARBON DIOXIDE GENERATED BY THE AVERAGE PASSENGER FLYING ROUNDTRIP IN ECONOMY FROM NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO (ABOUT 5,160 MILES)

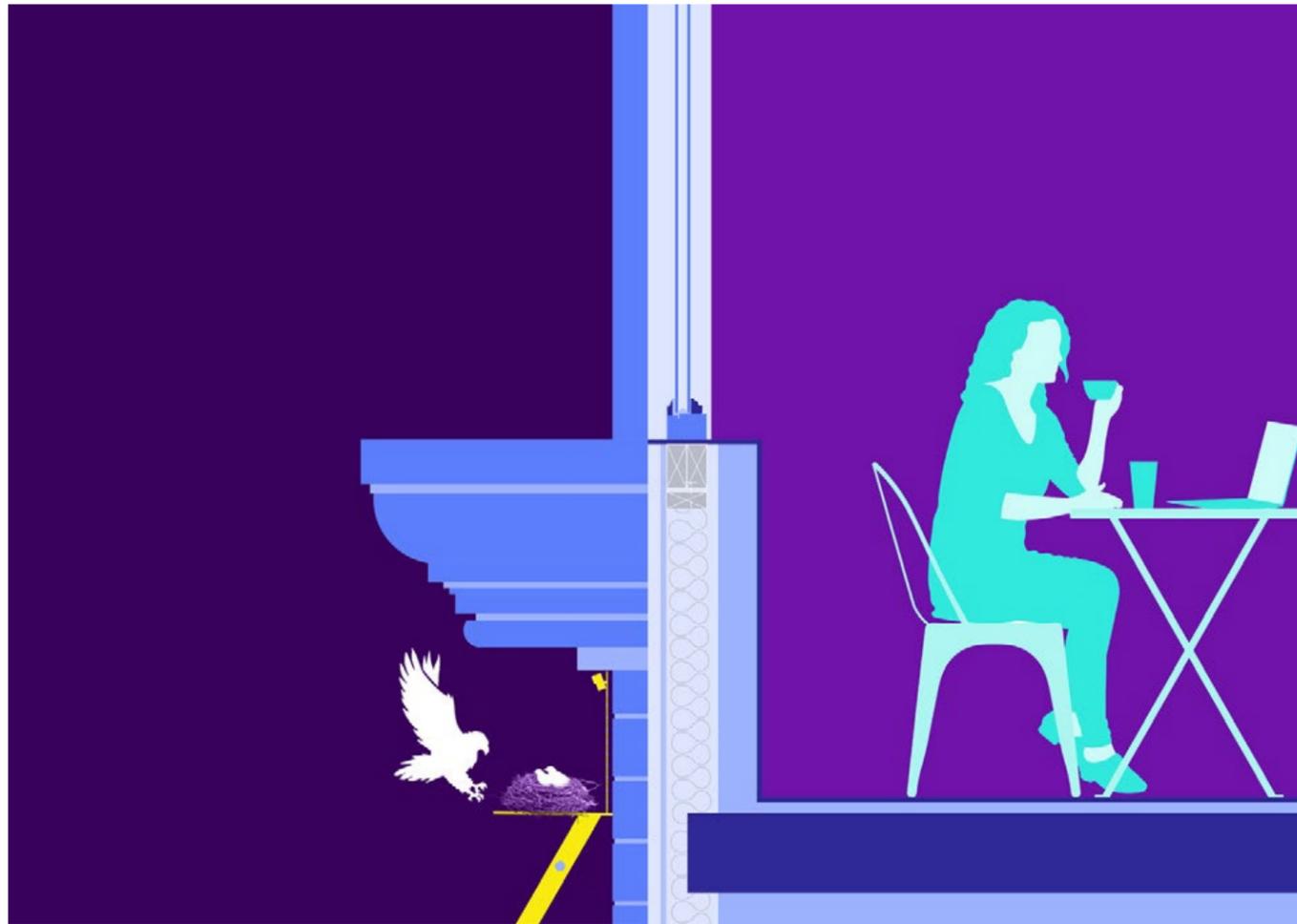
**0.3 MSA.HA**

AMOUNT OF BIODIVERSITY IMPACT BY THE AVERAGE PASSENGER FLYING ROUNDTRIP IN ECONOMY FROM NEW YORK TO SAN FRANCISCO (ABOUT 5,160 MILES)  
MSA STANDS FOR MEAN SPECIES ABUNDANCE OF ORIGINAL SPECIES, REPRESENTING THE INTACTNESS OF THE NATURE RELATIVE TO THE ORIGINAL STATE.

**\$ 30**

COST TO OFFSET THAT BIODIVERSITY IMPACT IN THE BIRDWAY ON BROADWAY PROJECT

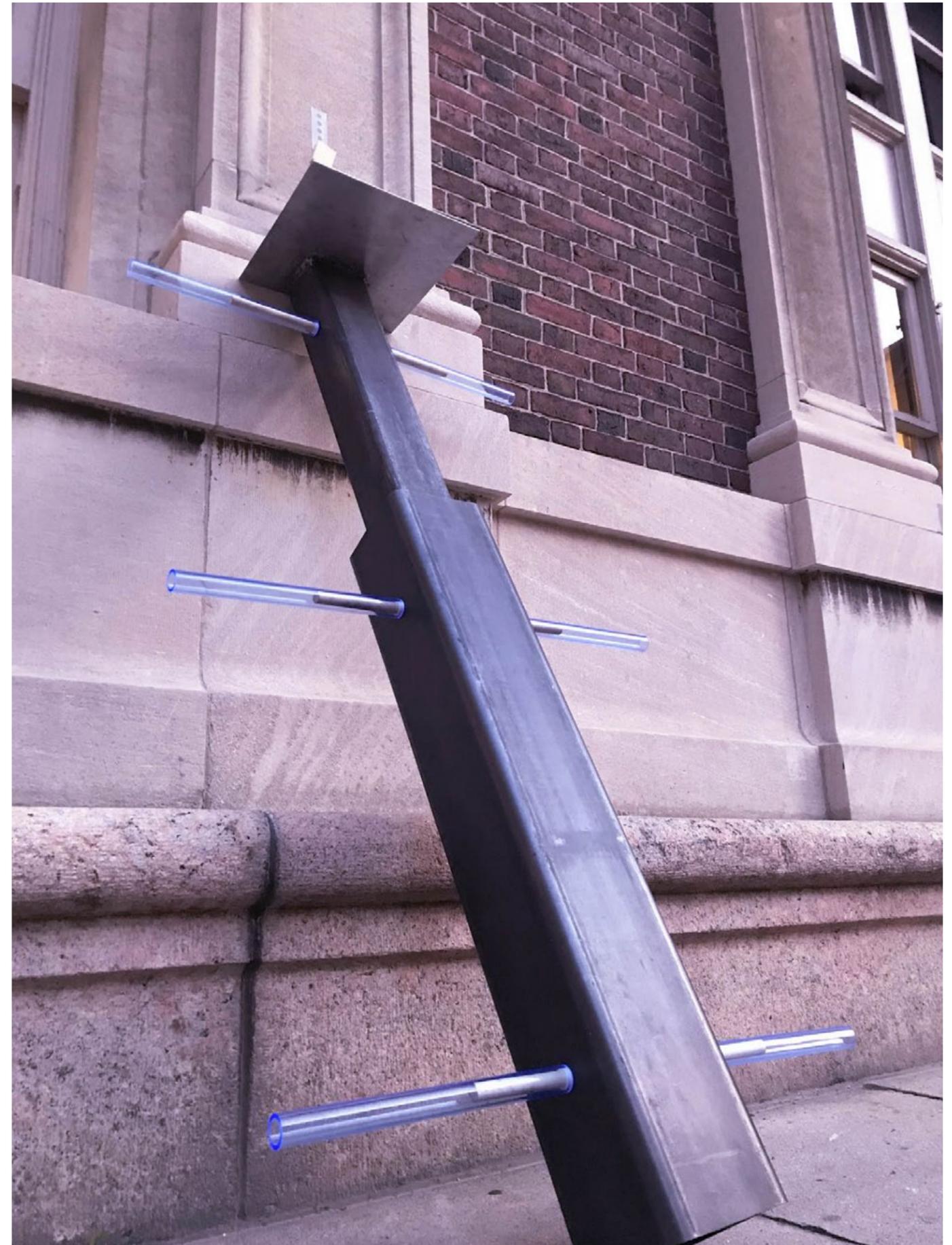
**DONATE TO 'BIRDWAY ON BROADWAY'**



The Biodiversity Footprint Tool was derived from the GLOBIO model approach, which was developed by The Netherlands Environmental Agency. The footprint method includes the impact of land use, climate change, greenhouse gases, water

extraction, and emissions to water. The biodiversity footprint is expressed in MSA.ha. MSA stands for Mean Species Abundance of original species, representing the intactness of the nature relative to the original state. The MSA value ranges

between 0 and 1; 1 indicates that the area is undisturbed, and 0 indicates a complete loss of the original biodiversity. The MSA.ha footprint shows the change of intactness within the area that is impacted for the product.



# BLUR BUILDING INTERPRETATION

In an attempt to reinterpret and revisualize the Blur Building Swiss Expo 2002 Pavilion by DS+R, questions of tensions between the ephemeral and the physical come in play. The focus of this course is a project that is generated primarily with the use of Rhinoceros and 3dsMax. After the initial development of a virtual model, we investigated tools to further the analytic and representational capacity of the data within the model. Studies are in the form of drawings, physical models, images, and animations. Each tool emphasizes a different part of the building.

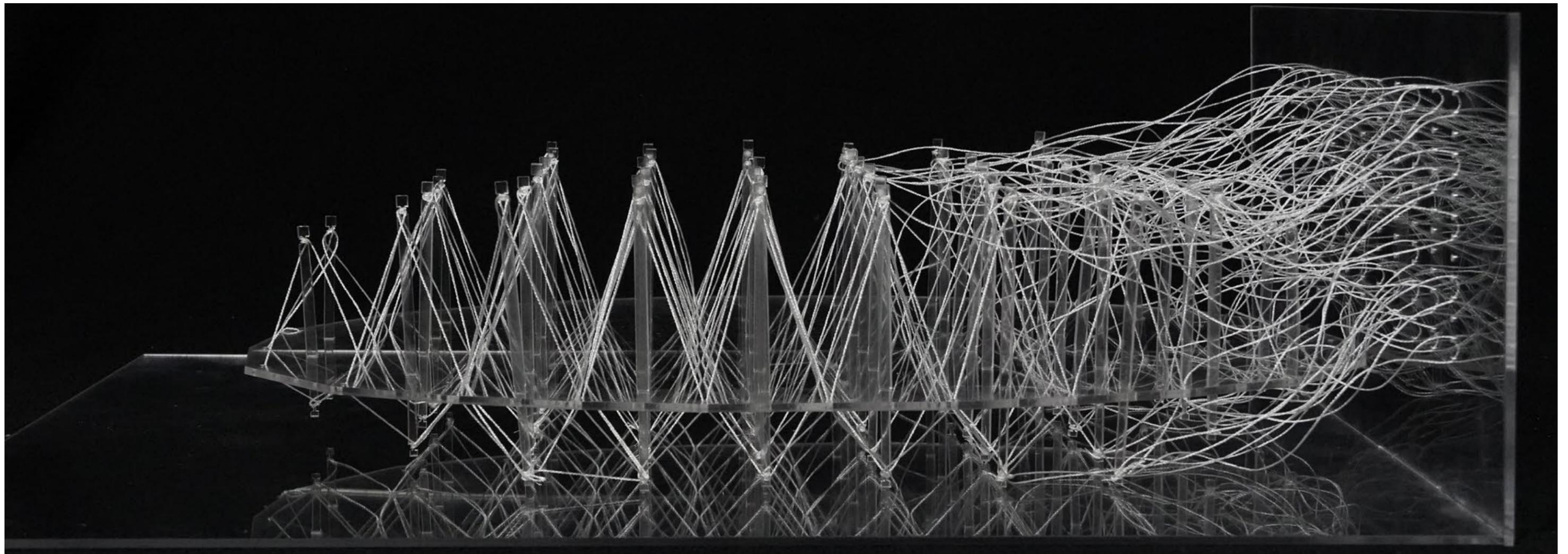
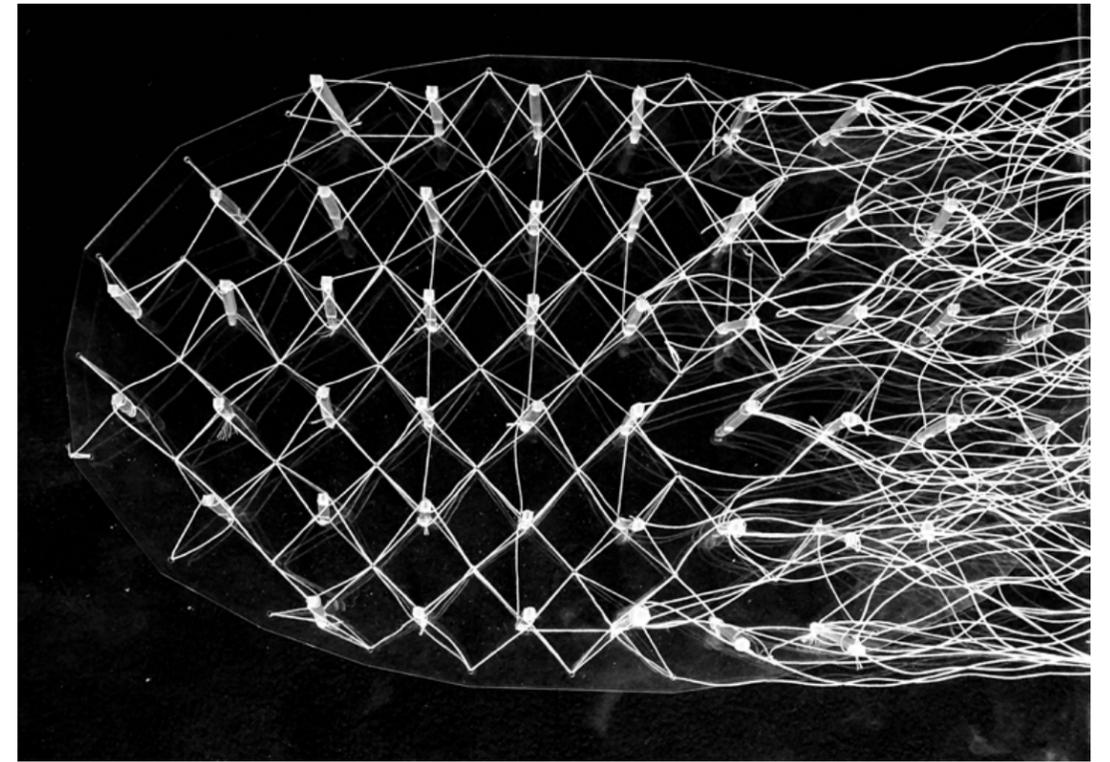
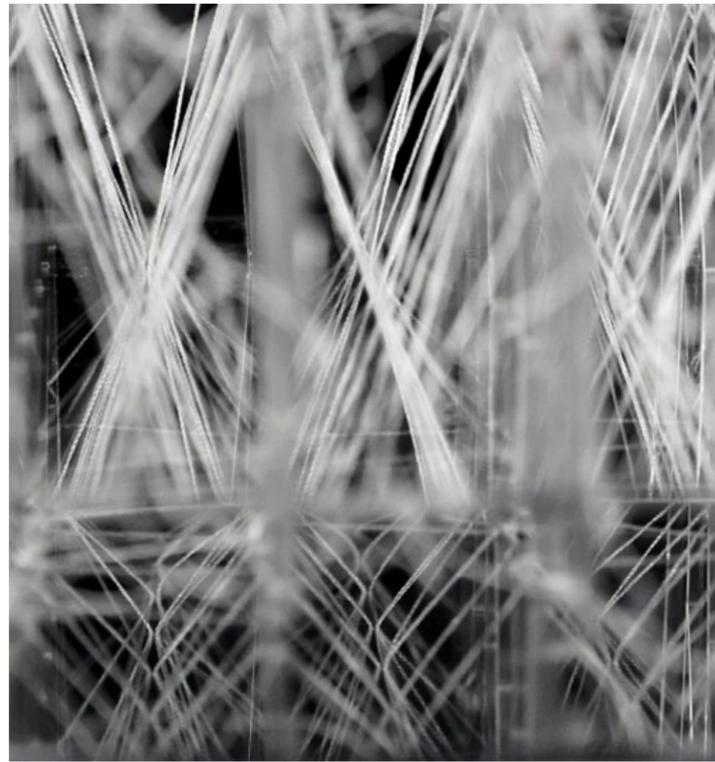
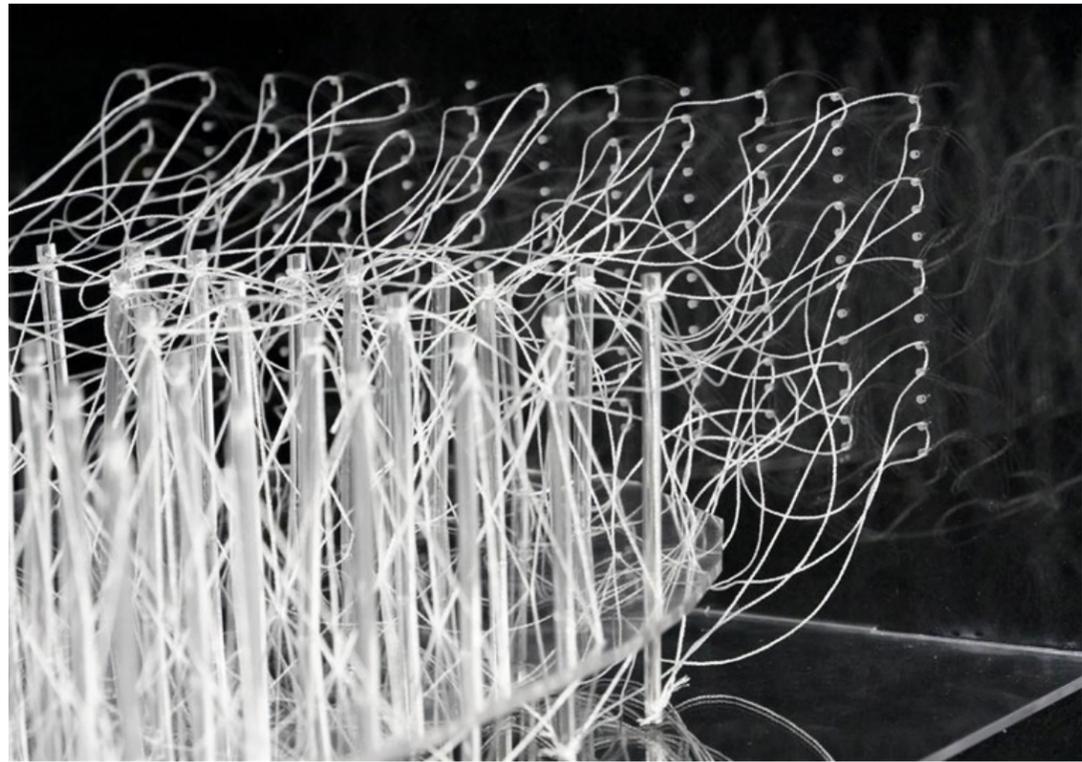
Technical drawings were largely used by DS+R. Even though the building needed to feel very ephemeral, the construction set was exhaustive and necessary, accentuating the need for material and systems to portray their disappearance. In this interpretation of the building, the nozzles that manifest the mist are represented in the same way as the mist itself, blurring the boundary between the cause and the effect - representing the nozzle as a non material object while representing the mist as a very material. If the continuous solid line represents a material object then does the dashed line show immateriality? The drawing feels suspended in time, adding to the temporal quality of the building, easily imagined at different states of existence.

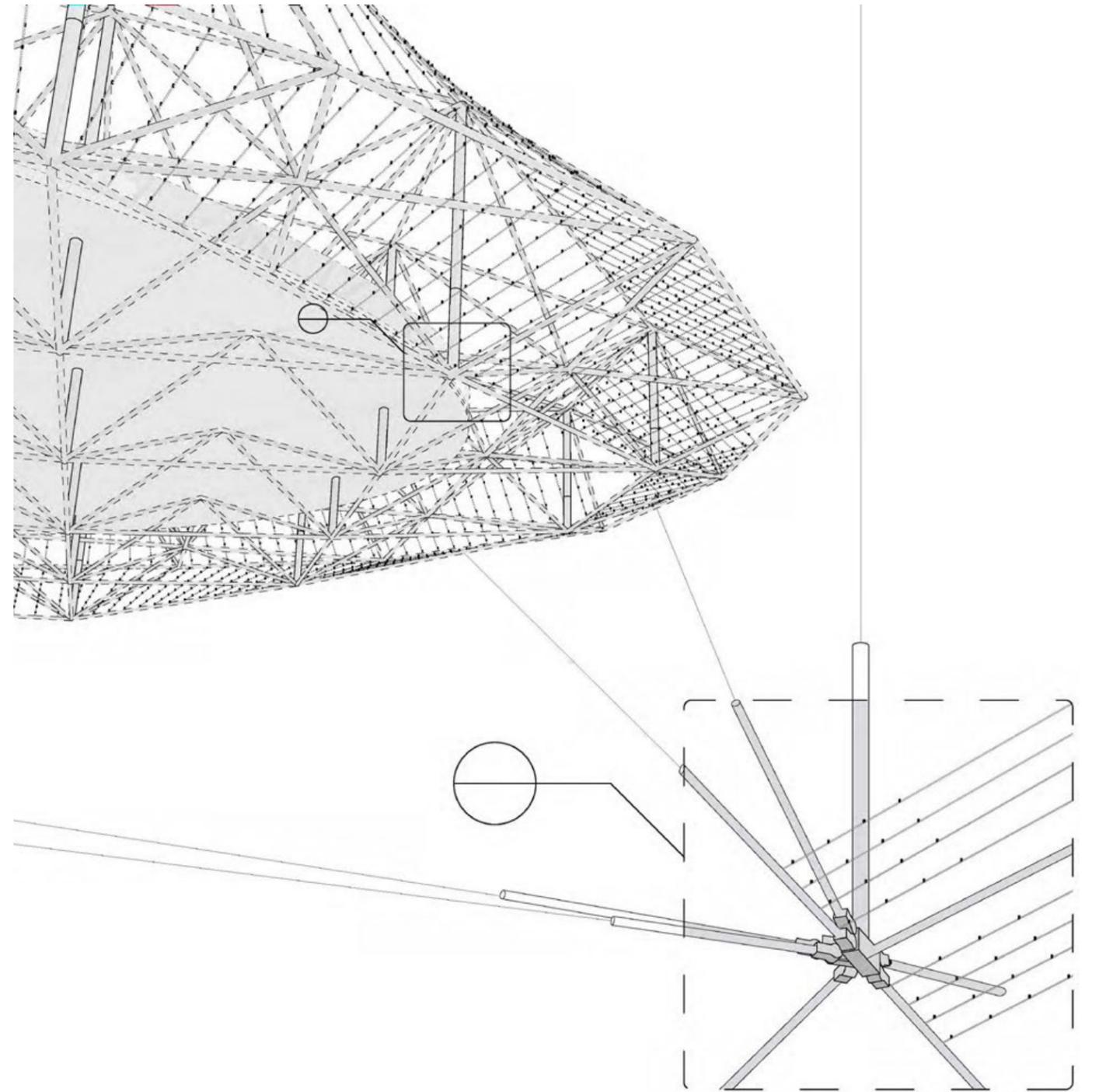
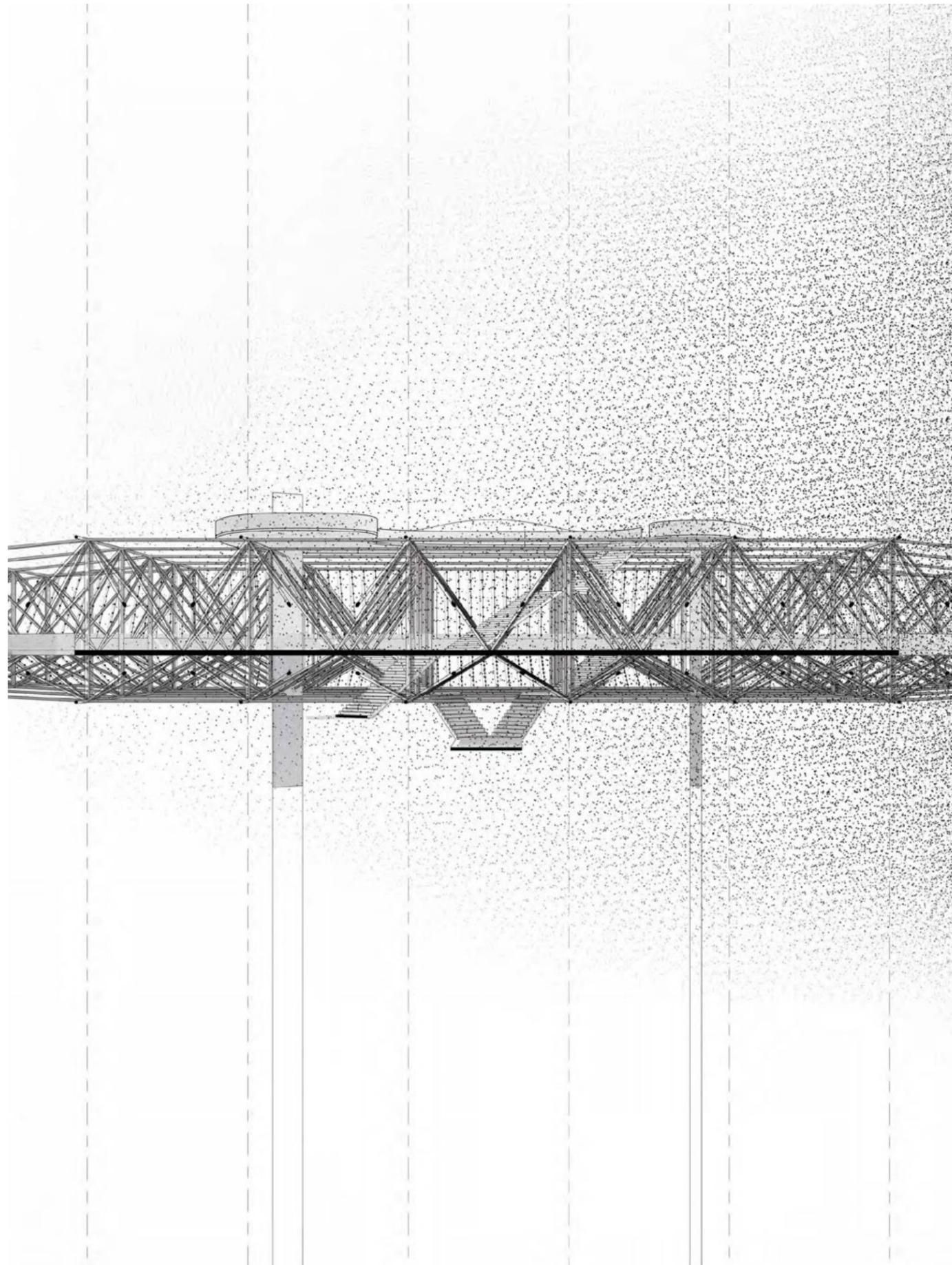
Through a similar 2D method, using the silk string as material that represents both the structure and the mist starts to disintegrate and merge both together, creating an architecture of atmosphere. What happens when two different material properties are represented in the same way? Do they merge together? Does the model become unreadable or does it on the contrary add to the effect the built building is trying to portray?

The video adds to the ambience of the built artifact, as the viewer walks through the building, the mist increases and the building slowly disappears. Following a shadow becomes the ultimate mission to find their way.

In this course, we engage the drawing's temporal nature and harness its potential. What is lost when an understanding of the constructed nature of a drawing is gone and the tools of projection are relegated to a secondary role? What can be gained through a better understanding of these tools and re-appropriating them in contemporary investigations?

GSAPP Architecture Drawing & Representation, Fall 2019  
Critic: Lexie Tsien





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## STAY SANE

In a world where we are encouraging a hyper speed of information exchange, we are taking a step back, seeing what it means to communicate with uncertain delays.

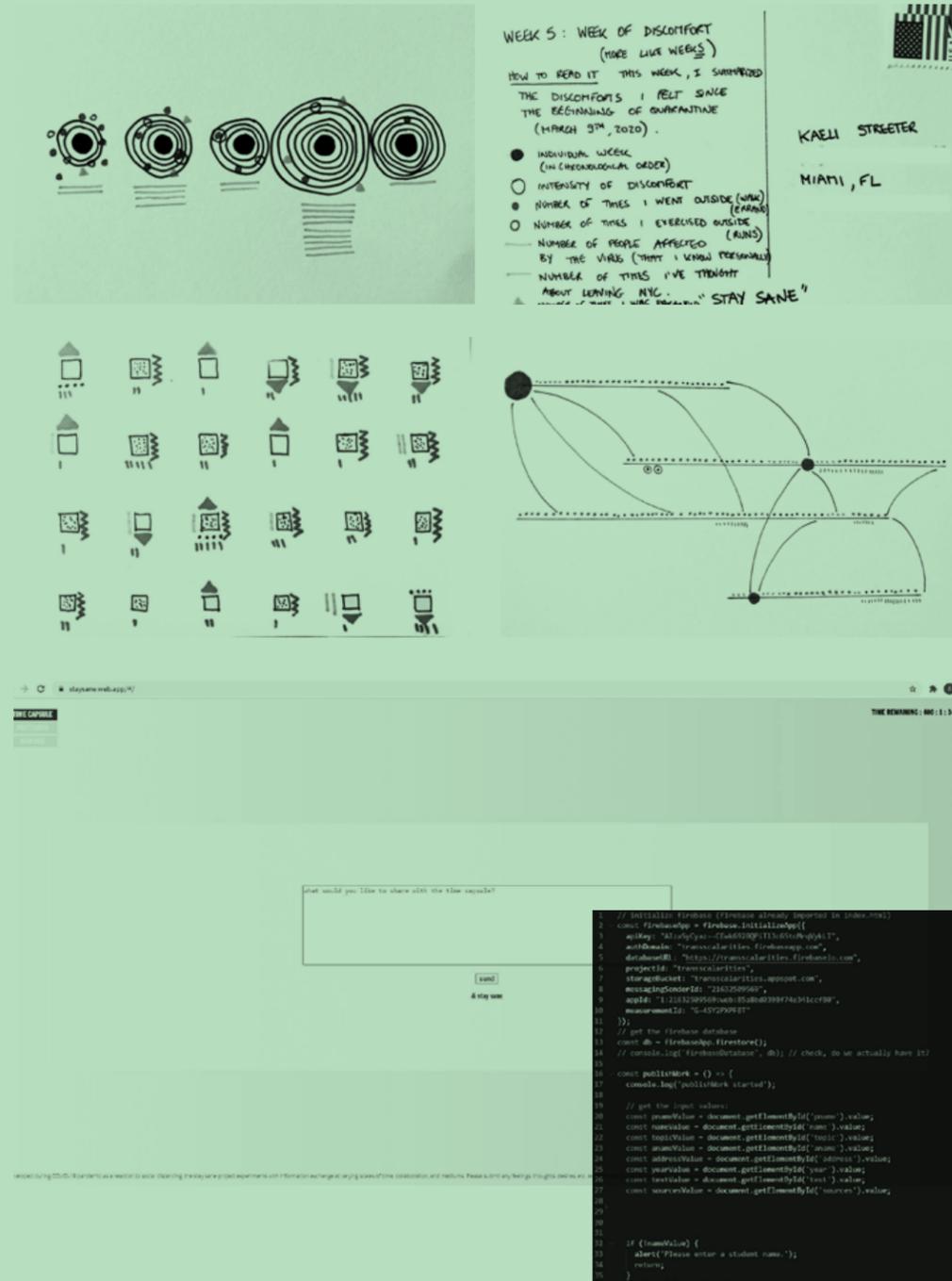
'Stay Sane' is a way to see if data can help cope human emotion and behaviour aka humanity as a reaction to disheartening times. A play between the analog and the digital comes to play with the construction of the 'Stay Sane' Website. It is built as a timecapsule where individuals can submit notes/thoughts/words and the website will reveal the messages at graduation in 2022. The website was built using Visual Studio Code, Git Hub and Firebase to store the information.

Staying Sane to survive

Staying Sane to communicate

Staying Sane to be human

Website for Architectural Drawing and Representation course, GSAPP  
<https://staysane.web.app>



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## **DISPLACED TOGETHER - PARALLEL EXISTENCE**

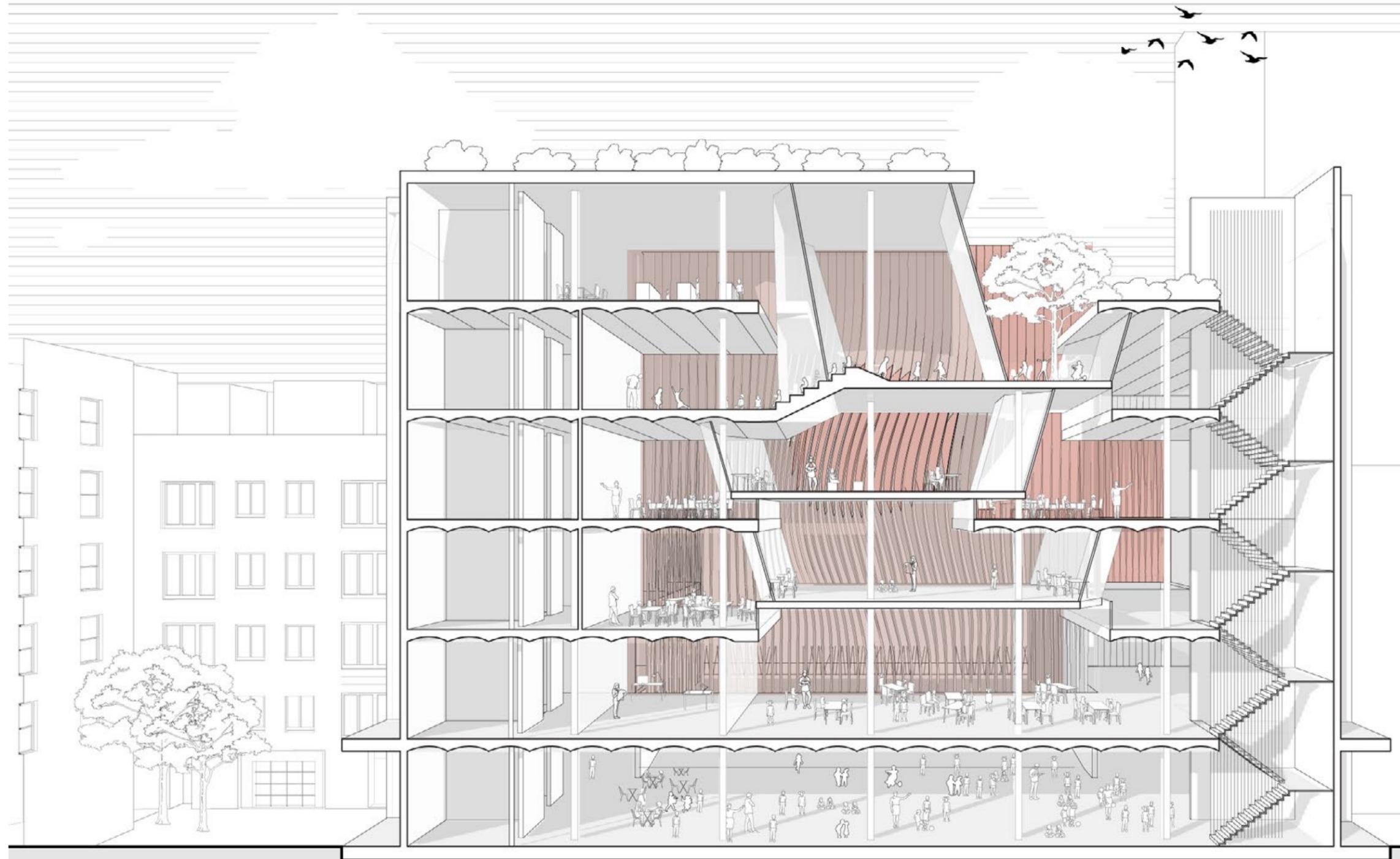
Displacement is the moving of a body from one place to another which could lead to both removal or replacement. It is the occupation by a submerged body of a volume which would otherwise be occupied by a fluid. It also can be the unconscious transfer of an intense emotion from its original object to another. In a building, each of these definitions can be applied. Architecture engages displacement of building materials, program, volume, circulation and even people. In an alternate near future, I imagine a world where displacement will become part of our daily life; where isolation is a must and terms like “social distancing” are no longer part of a temporary phase but of a more permanent one.

“Displaced together” is a school which brings two populations of kids together, healthy and sick, and allows an uninterrupted course of education for both simultaneously. The architecture of the building enhances a parallel existence that keeps everyone safe and educated. The “parallel” school (as opposed to the general “normative” school) is inserted in the middle of the building. It is physically disconnected from the rest of the school and yet allows visual and social connections between both populations.

The material displacement of the brick around the new program emphasizes the parallel learning space. By re-adapting the existing material, the facade signals a smooth yet strong tension between both infrastructures. Time displaces as well. Over the years, vegetation will grow on the façade eloquently redefining the boundaries between indoors and out, solid and void, contained and open. Change also happens seasonally throughout the building as spaces are activated and sheltered in dialogue with the weather. Movement across scales, speeds, and duration creates a blur between the immobile and the mobile, the clustered and the dispersed, the permanent and the temporary. I imagine a world where episodic displacement will become part of our daily life, where isolation is a must and terms like “social distancing” regularly merge with our previous life.

Spaces of learning have the utmost opportunity and responsibility to inspire and enlighten. ‘Buildings’ will be understood through material and spatial agency encompassing nuanced gradients of hard-, soft- and water-scapes, intertwined to support education, community and regenerative legacy. Architecture and garden will be interdependent and associative; healthy and resilient spatial-scapes experienced temporally through the changes of seasons, and interacting with sunlight and moon-shadow.

GSAPP CORE II, Spring 2020  
Critic - Karla Rothstein

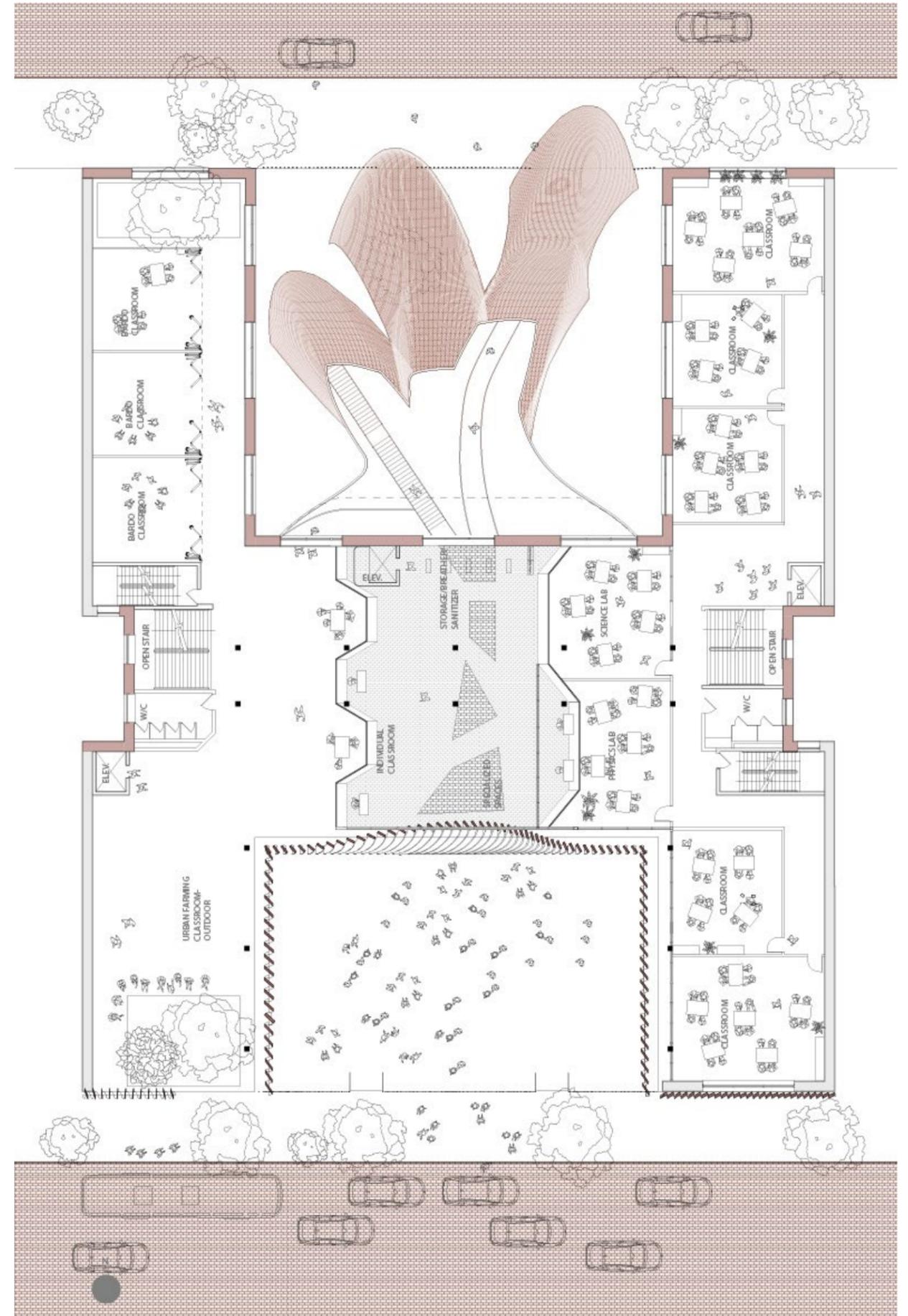


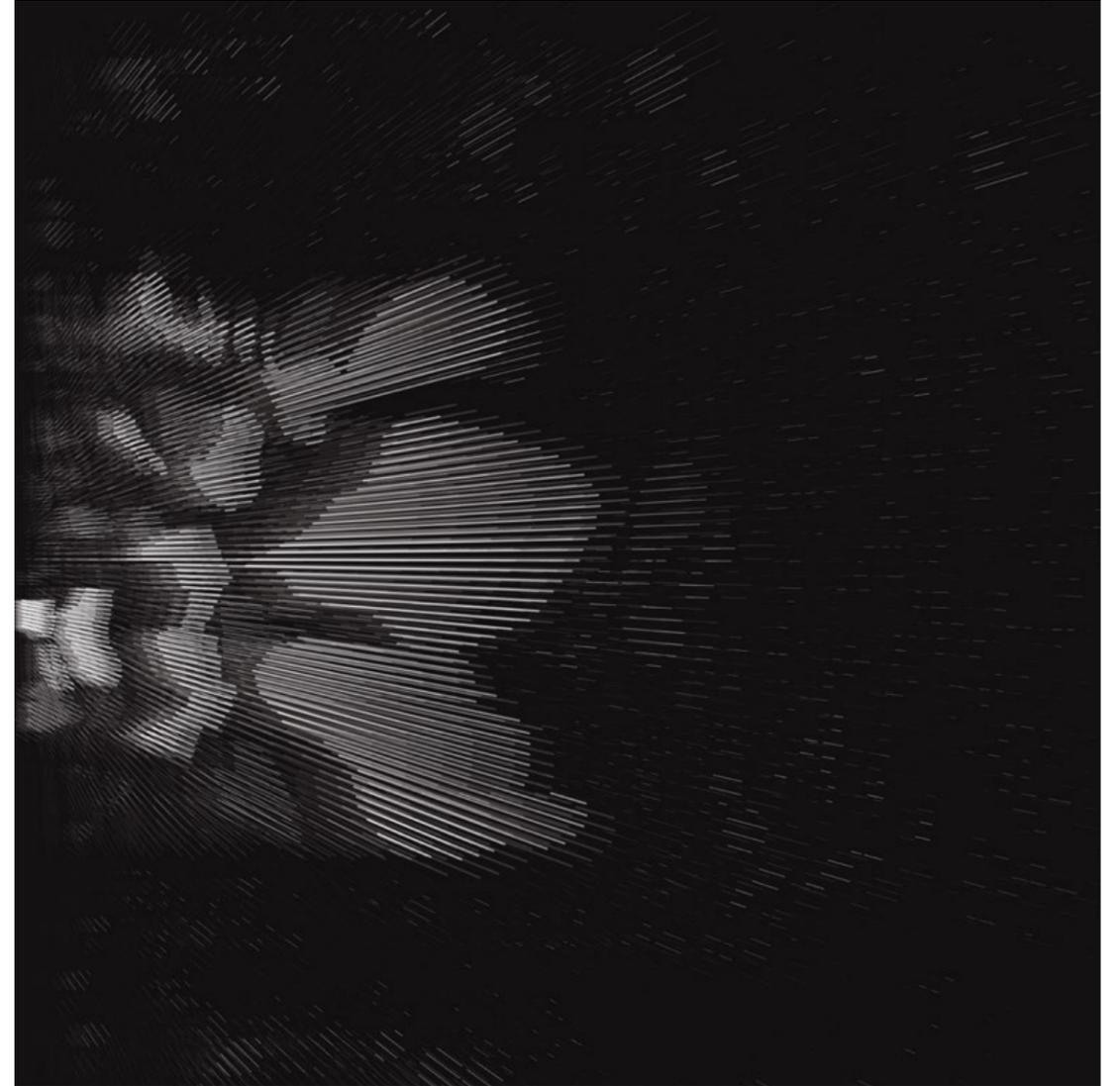


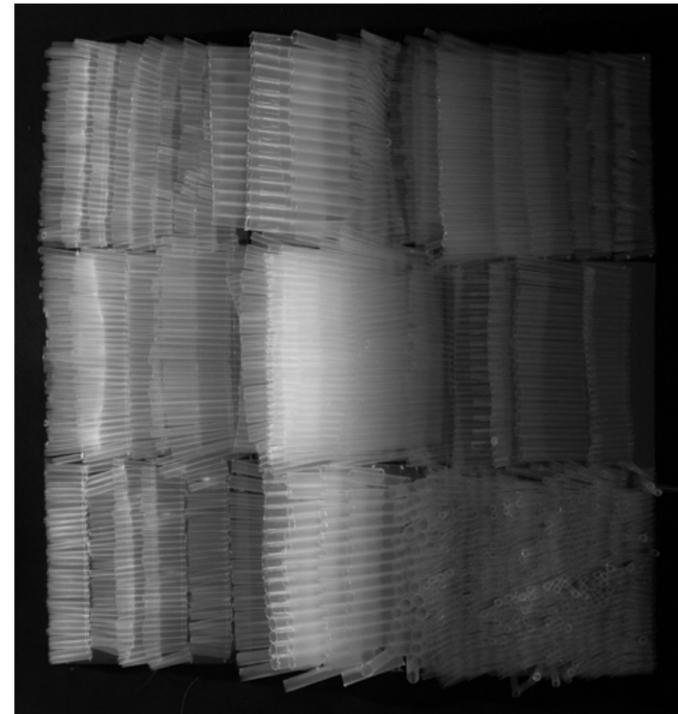
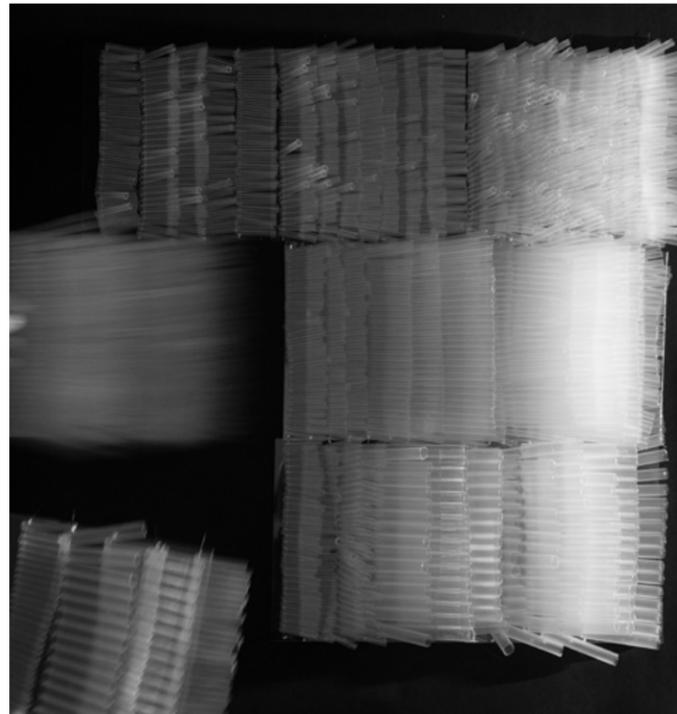
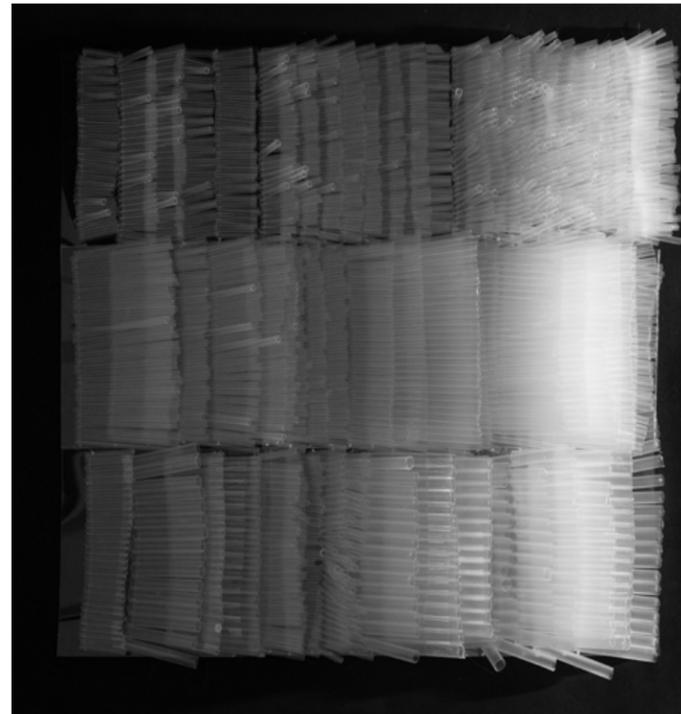
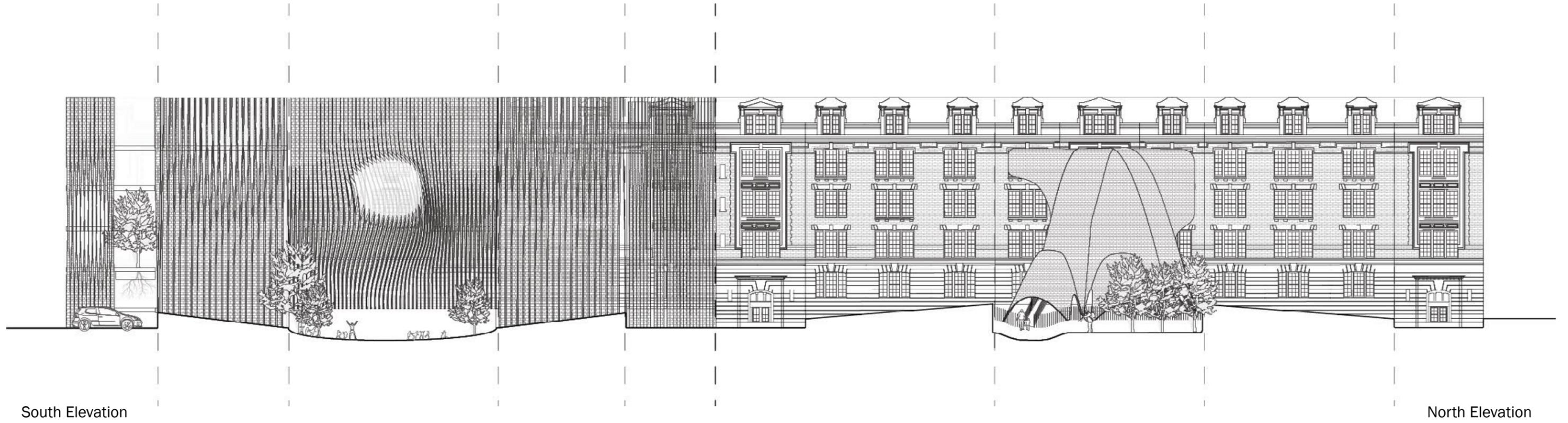
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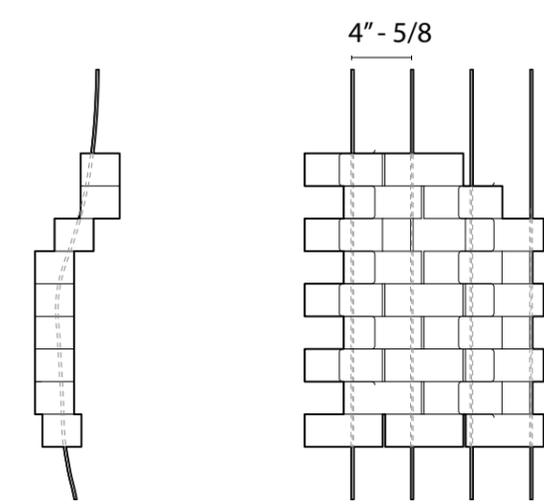
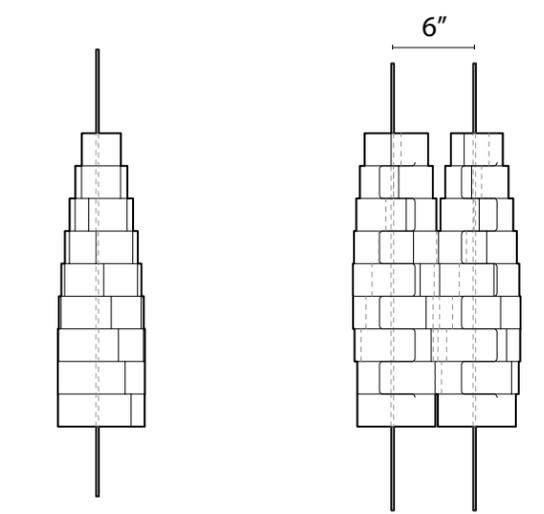
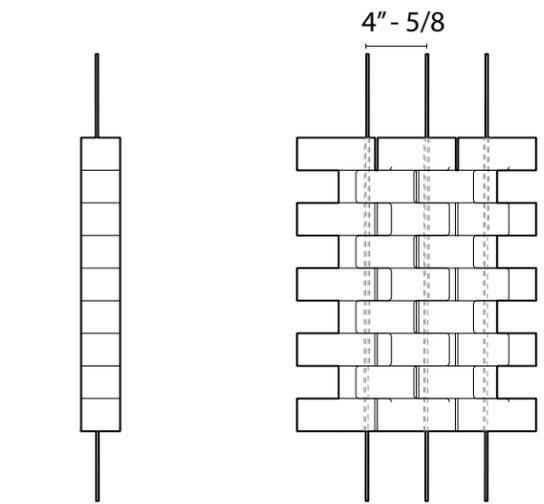
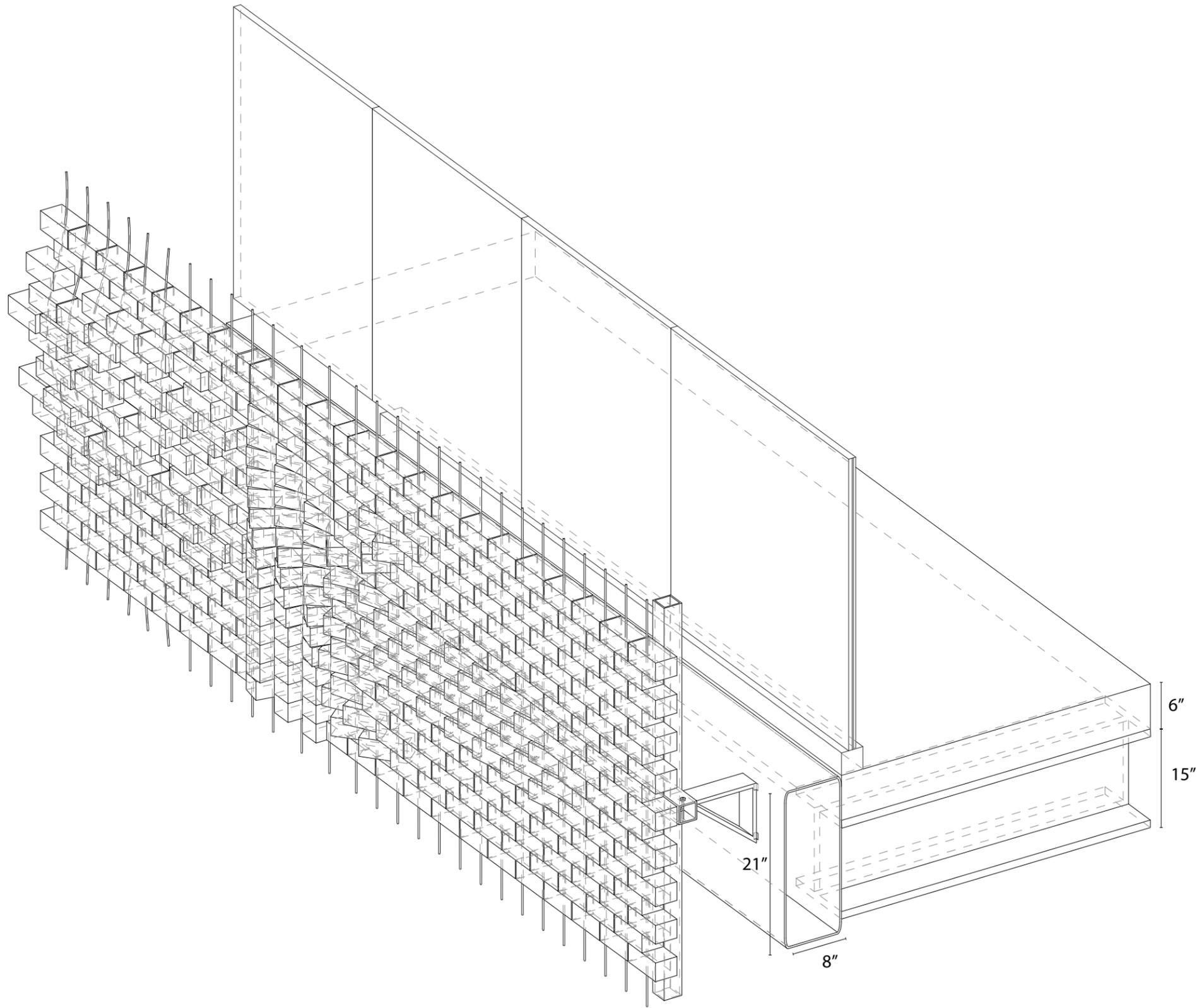
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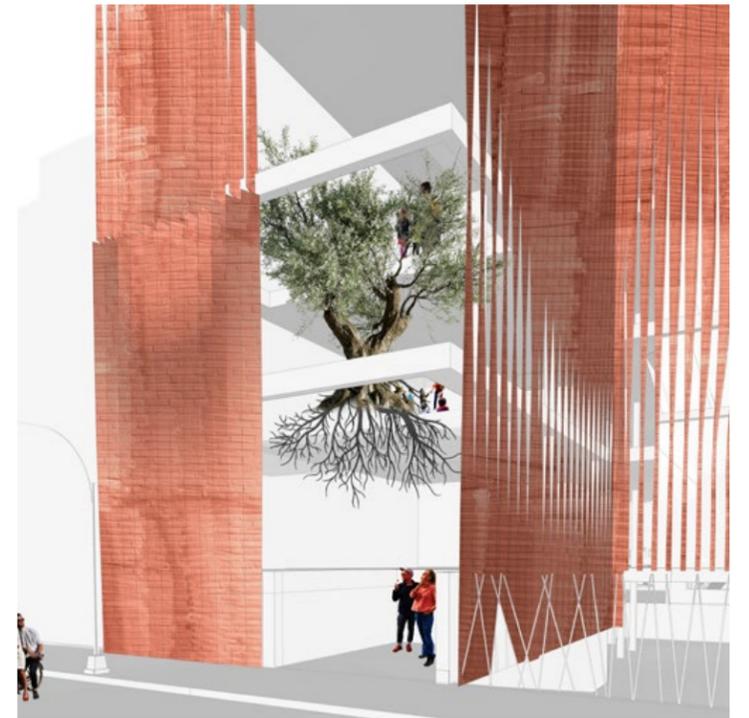
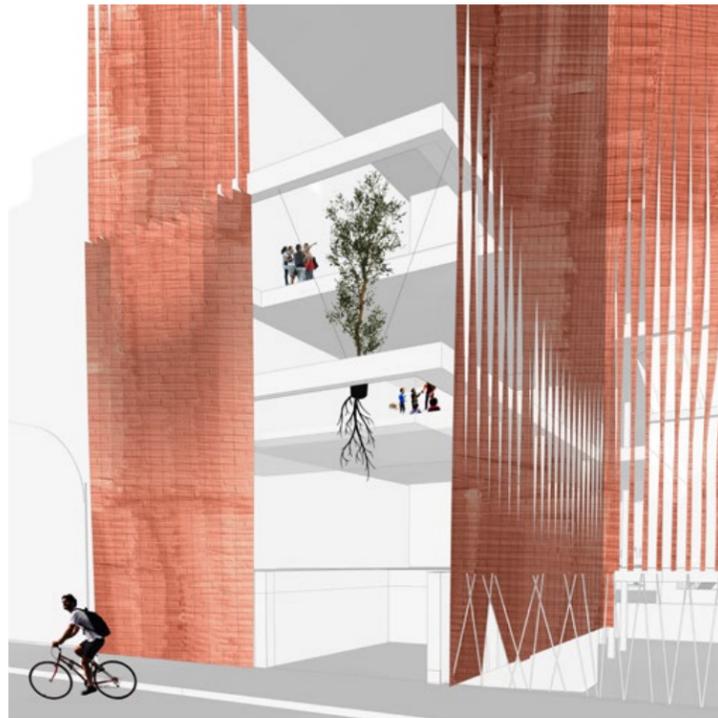
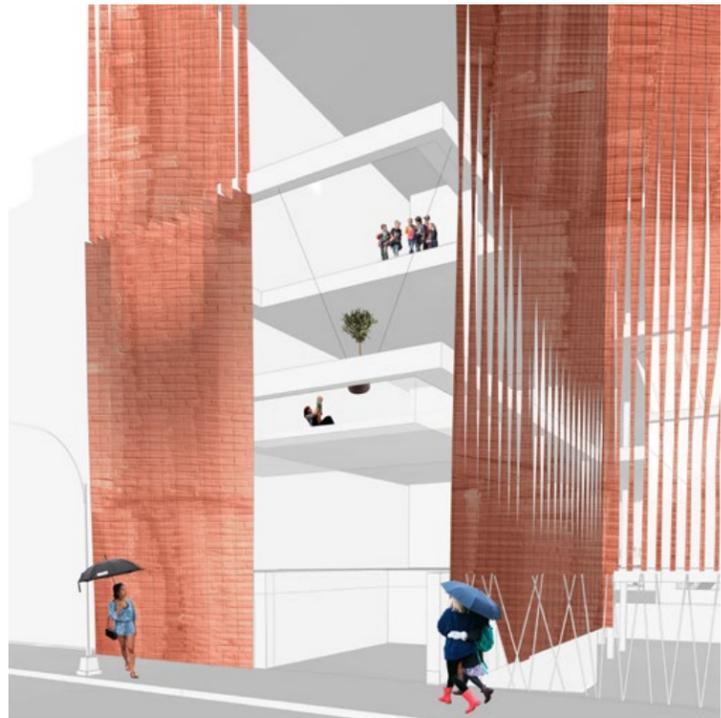






Side view

Front view



# BYO-SUBWAY POLE

This is a making class that moved remotely in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. Material Things turned immaterial in the light of a sudden shut down in the middle of a spring semester.

We want to imagine an artifact, an ostensibly “useful” object, liberated from its “intended” use and instead constructed around the opportunities of image, detail, and form rather than the constraints of just functional purpose. What terms of the conversation about form and function can be dictated or illustrated by materiality, shape, and signification? Your artifact may still in some sense be “useful.” What’s more important is that it demonstrates a creative approach to the relationship between form and function. We will place ourselves in the role of a future (circa 2620 CE) archaeologist, designer, and/or historian who is examining your artifact and needs to construe some meaningful description of its history and/or purpose. This will take the form of a short text as if would appear with your artifact in a museum. We will in some sense be telling a story of both the present and future, but take care not to draw the line too straight. Consider the idea of “uselessness” as having just as much power.

The theme of the assignment is the theme of our lives in 2020: social distance. Consider for a moment this term in a broader sense: the literal and figurative space between people. One of the recurring themes of “modernity” since the 20th century is isolation, alienation... or with a more aspirational tone, autonomy, individuality, and creative genius. The artifacts of our era will likely tell a story of social distance or social closeness, even without a pandemic to articulate it literally. Modern artifacts and objects have grown around these social functions, and have informed them as well. How could a future object with forgotten origins demonstrate, embody, or tell the story of social distance?

A fear of touching any surface had suddenly emerged at the beginning of the 21st century. Humans were riding dirty subway carts for transportation that were never cleaned, most often delayed or slow. This gadget was proven to be an object humans carried with them during their commute to avoid touching the subway pole.

GSAPP Material Things, Spring 2020  
Critic - Joshua Jordan





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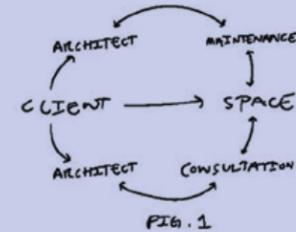
# MANIFESTO

In the context of the ongoing pandemic—in which so many of the lines that define architecture are being exposed, underlined or redrawn—this seminar will challenge the generic idea that the human is the client of architecture. More precisely, it will try to undo the interlaced concepts of human and architecture by exploring the multitude of organisms that inhabit, construct, and sustain both bodies and buildings. What if architecture is, almost always, really a matter of microbes? Architectural discourse about comfort, security, whiteness, stability, cleanliness, health, purity and norm is classically mobilized against disintegration, contamination, contagion, infection, blackness, dirt, disease, porosity, confusion and exception but this inevitably violent mobilization is undone by the interactions of the unseen organisms that might be the real clients of architecture.

Extreme Design - Fall 2020  
 Critic: Mark Wigley  
 Partner: Gene Han

→ POSTCOVIDISM  
 The Postmodern Manifesto  
 By Jacques Derrida  
 AYA ABDALAH + GENE HAN

- The ~~art~~ of the past is past. What was true of ~~the~~ yesterday is false today.  
 ↳ HEALTH ↳ HEALTH
- The Postmodern art of today is defined and determined, not by artists, but by a new generation of curators, philosophers and intellectuals ignorant of the past and able to ignore it.
- Postmodernism is a political ~~undertaking~~, Marxist and Freudian.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM ↳ AWAKENING. IT SHEDS LIGHT ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SPATIAL AND ECONOMIC INEQUITIES.
- Postmodernism is a new cultural condition.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM ↳ IT IS NOT A UNIVERSAL CULTURAL CONDITION. IT WILL DENOUNCE THE SACRILEGIOUS COMPLEX.
- Postmodernism is democratic and allied to popular culture.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM IS CREATING A SUSTAINABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CLIENT AND TENDING TO THE DESIGNED SP. CURRENT PROCESS: CLIENT → ARCHITECT → DESIGN → CONTRACTOR → PRODUCT  
 POSTCOVIDISM: FIG. 1
- Postmodernism denies the possibility of High Art.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM ↳ EPHEMERALLY AND INFORMALITY
- Postmodernism deconstructs works of High Art to undermine them.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM ↳ THE IDEA OF LUXURY. ADVOCACY FOR LOCAL LABOR AND RESOURCES THROUGH DESIGN MAKES FOR A COMMUNAL CLOSED ECONOMY.
- Postmodernism is subversive, seditiously resembling the precedents it mimics.
- Postmodern art is pastiche, parody, irony, ironic conflict and paradox.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM IS PRECISE, PRAGMATIC, PROGRAMMATIC, SENSITIVE, AND EMPATHETIC
- Postmodern art is self-consciously shallow, stylistically hybrid, ambiguous, provocative and endlessly repeatable.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM IS INTIMATE, PERSONALLY PROFOUND, INCLUSIVE, ACCOUNTABLE, AND TRANSPARENT.
- Postmodernism is anti-elitist, but must protect its own elitism.  
 ↳ POSTCOVIDISM ↳ AND PRO-PUBLIC. IT PRACTICES COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE THROUGH A BOTTOM UP APPROACH.
- To the Postmodernist every work of art is a text, even if it employs no words and has no title, to be curatorially interpreted. Art cannot exist before it is interpreted.
- Postmodernist interpretation depends on coining new words unknown and unknowable to the masses, on developing a critical jargon of impenetrable profundity, and on a quagmire of theory with which to reinforce endowed significance. Vive le Néologisme!



WHERE DOES POSTCOVIDISM SITUATE ITSELF (FIG. 2)  
 IN TERMS OF A  
 RESPONSIVE AND/OR PREVENTATIVE ARCHITECTURE???



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AGENCY.

## GRADIENTS OF SPACE

The Bronx, has the highest concentration of immigrants in NYC and released prisoners. This housing community facilitates the integration and reintegration of these marginalized communities into society. One's journey to reintegration can vary drastically from one person to another, some people feeling much more comfortable being in large crowds while other preferring more private spaces.

Thinking of a gradient of spaces, from indoor to outdoor, interactive to individual, open to intimate/safe, the project offers a variety of spaces in the housing and amenities strategies. Even the ground floor is pushed and pulled to create new ways of thinking about a space, thickening the ground. Similarly, a play with levels on the roofscape creates a thickening of the roof, as an extension of the ground floor.

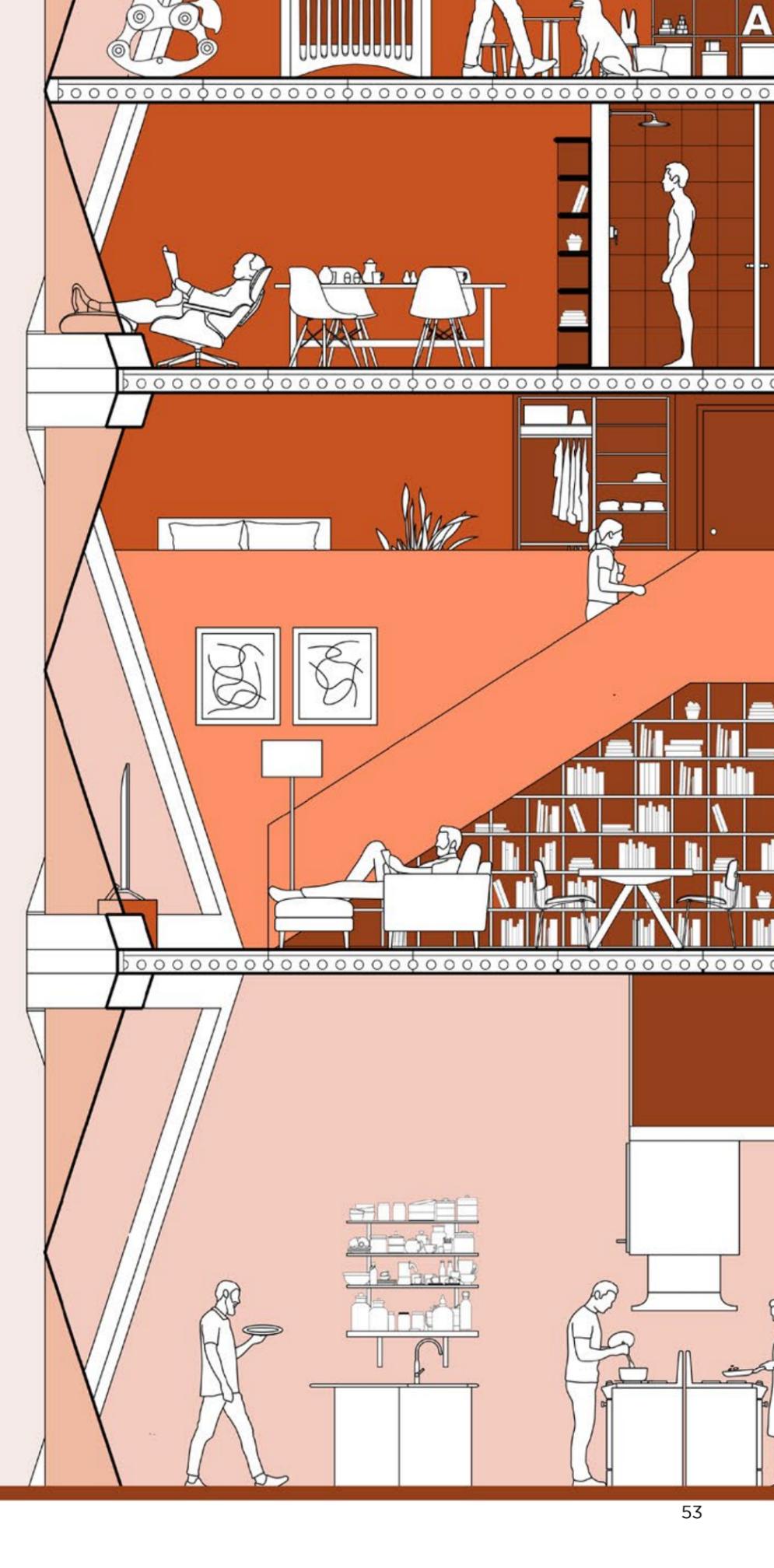
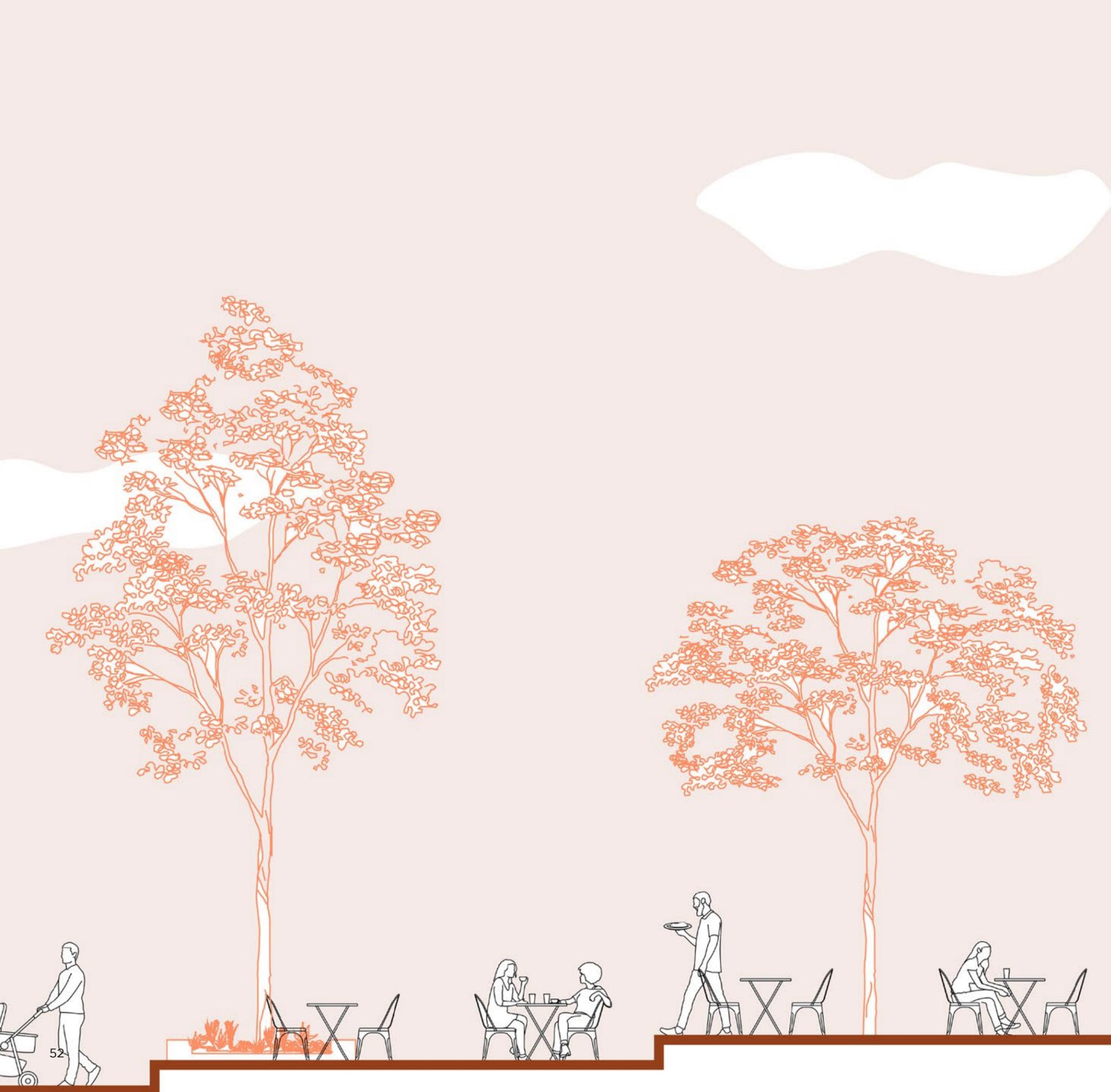
The idea of a gradient can be applied to many aspects as well, from more physical elements such as privacy, programs, thresholds, envelopes and access, to more abstract concepts such as interactions, inclusivity, integration, stability and even feelings, creating a matrix of gradients that can be applied in a multitude of ways.

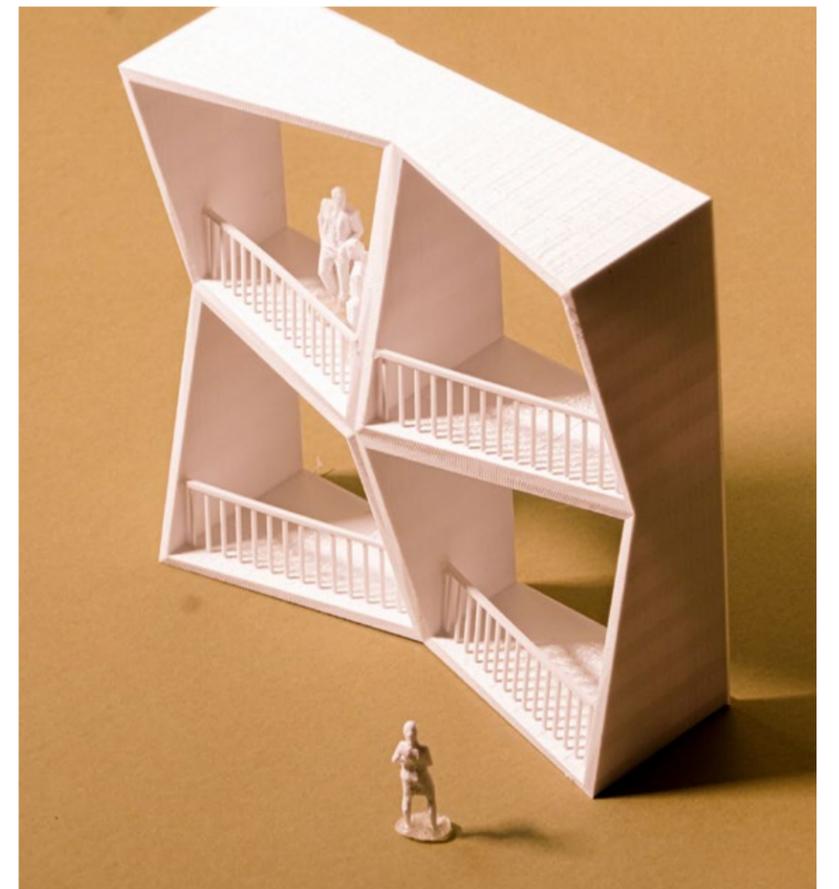
The gradient of earth materials, terracotta as a strength, color, chemistry is appropriate for this project. The matrix also applies as a site strategy, where there is a gradient of indoor to outdoor spaces bleeding into each other but responding to the surrounding, some looking inward, and some outward.

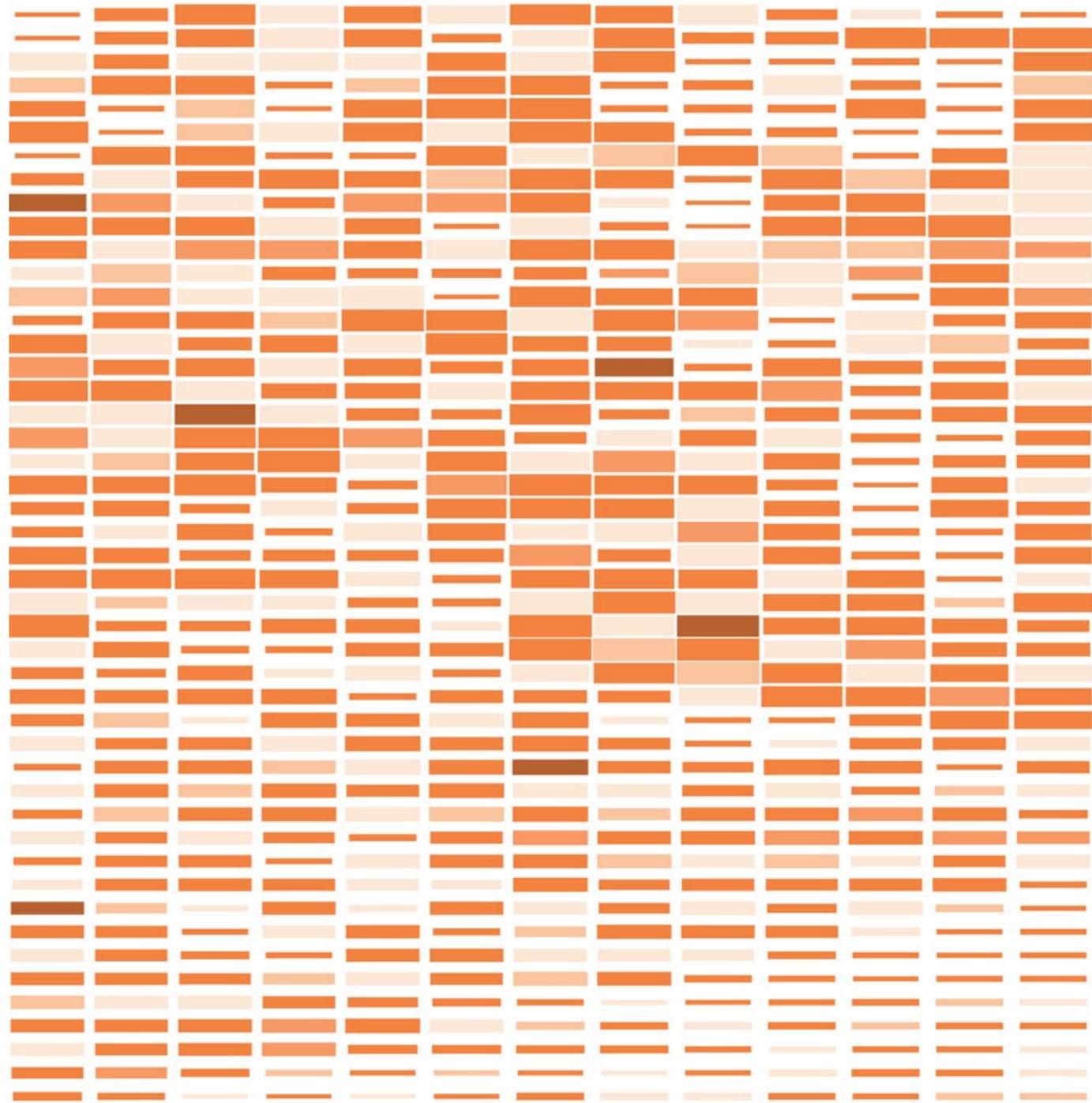
At the building scale, the gradient is applied to the facade, where each North and South facades are treated differently. Even as a stackable module vertically and horizontally, the outcome serves many different gradients, creating double height apartments at times, offering a multitude of typologies. The South facing facades have balconies to both take advantage of the direct sunlight and shade the interiors. It also provides a direct connection to the courtyards below. The North units have full bay windows creating a pleasant indoor space.

Housing Sharing Again. Everything has changed. And, it will change again. After tuberculosis, rooms became whiter, furniture lighter, windows bigger, and people kissed again. After polio, changing rooms got cleaner, drainage got sorted out, and kids bathe in pools again. After AIDS, boutique hotels proliferated, music bathe every lobby and people had sex again. After 9/11, skyscrapers got built again. More skyscrapers were built after 2001 than ever before.

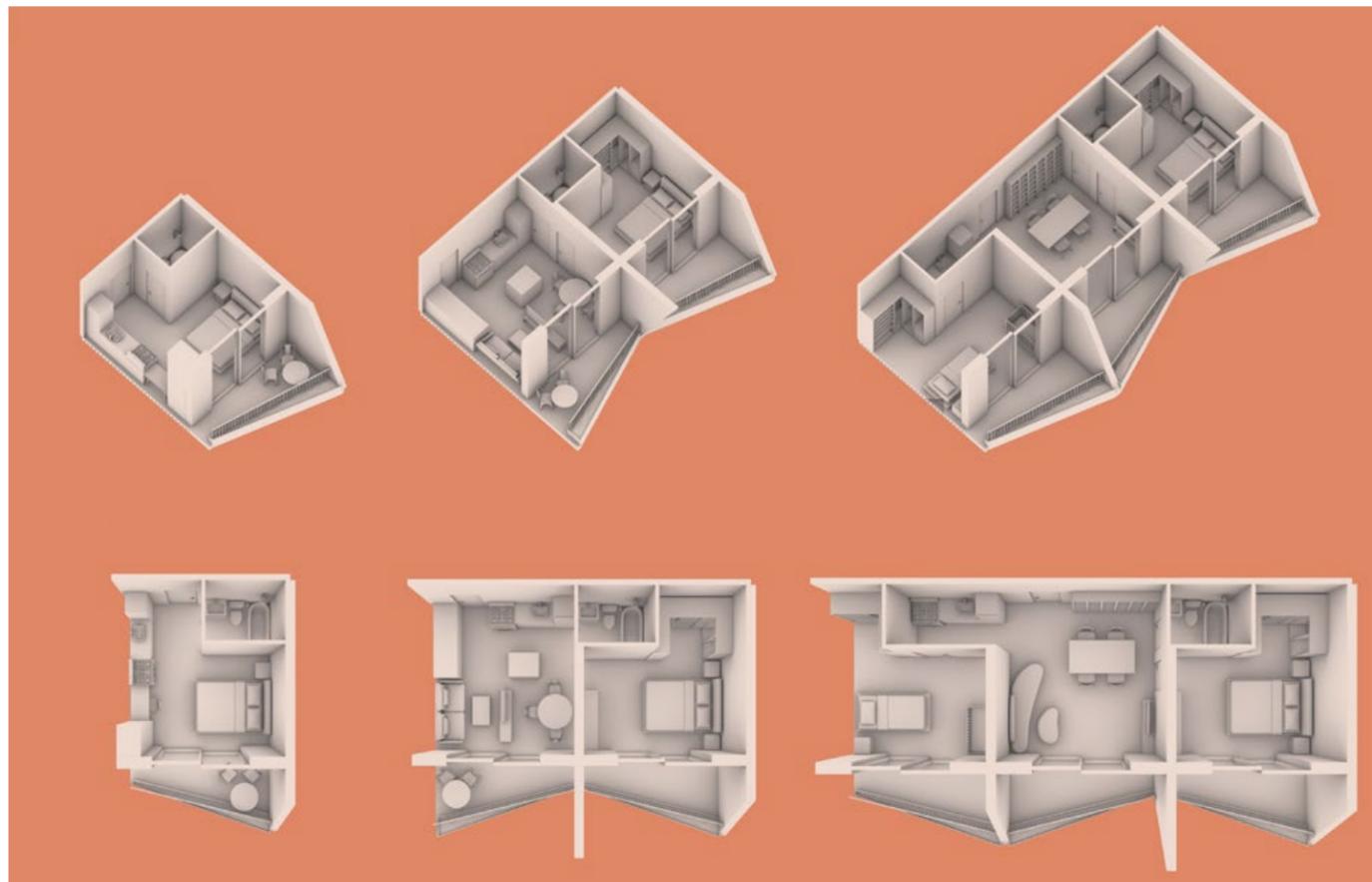
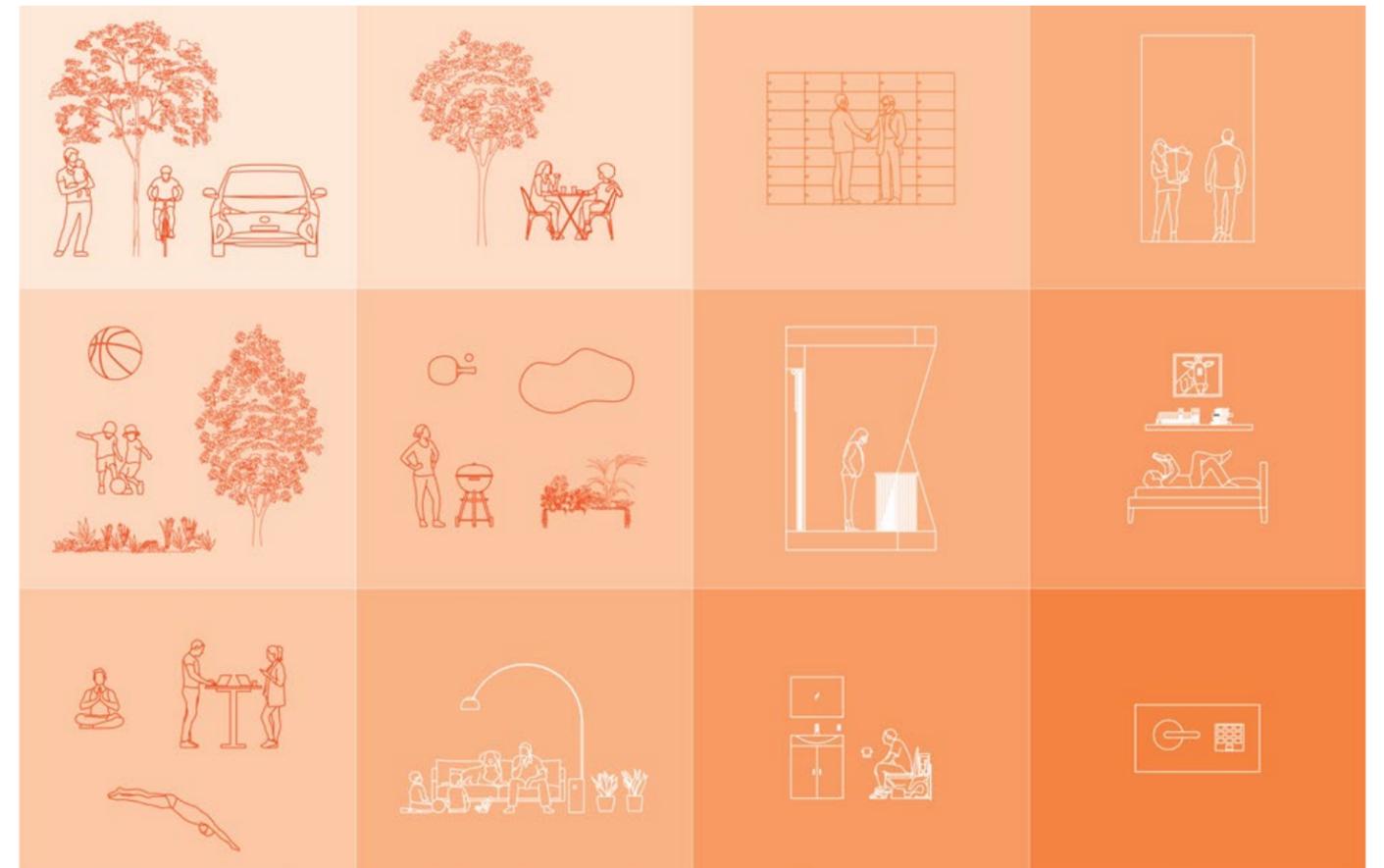
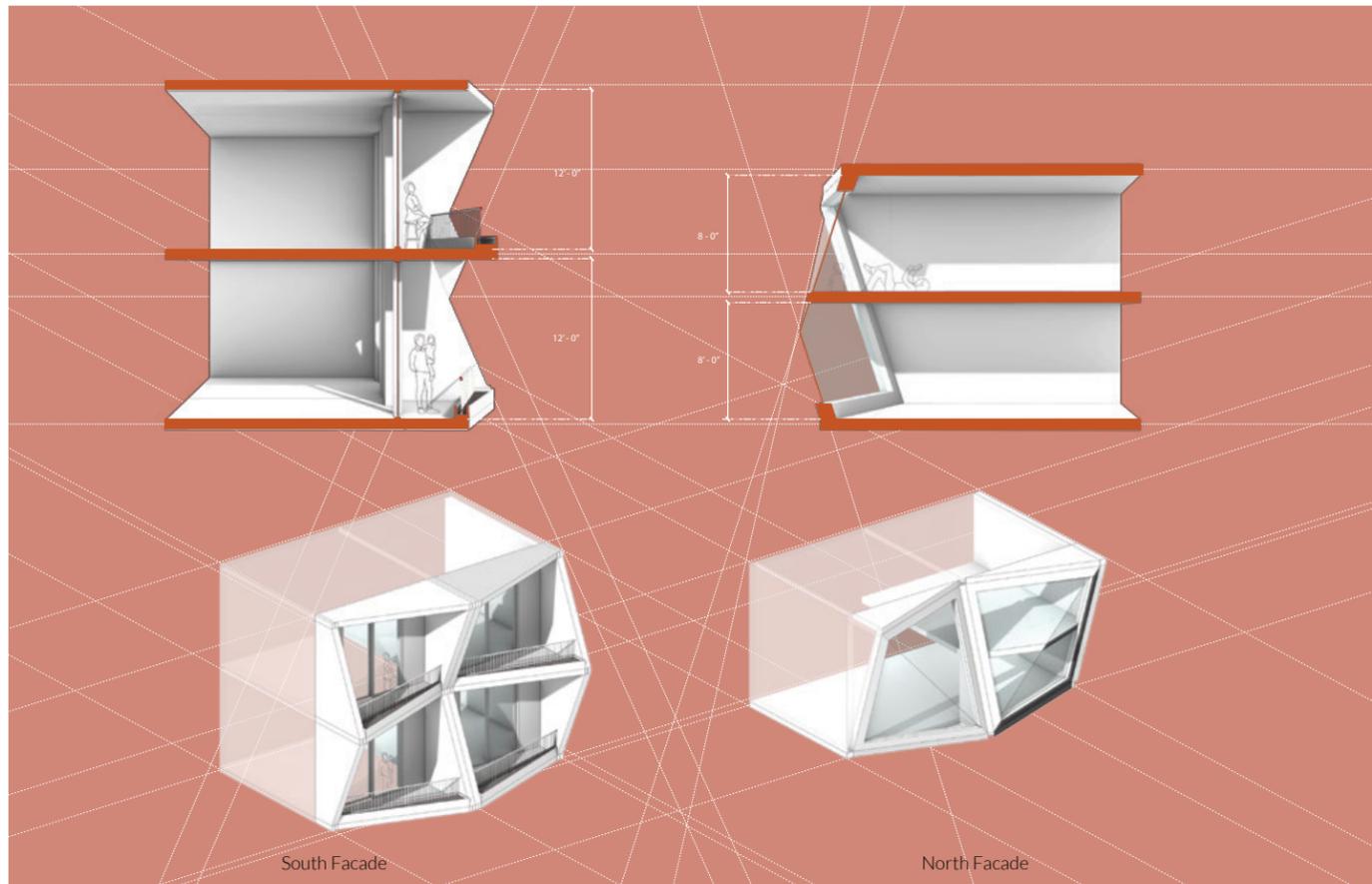
GSAPP CORE III Fall 2020  
Critic - Galia Solomonoff  
Partner - Mickaella Pharaon

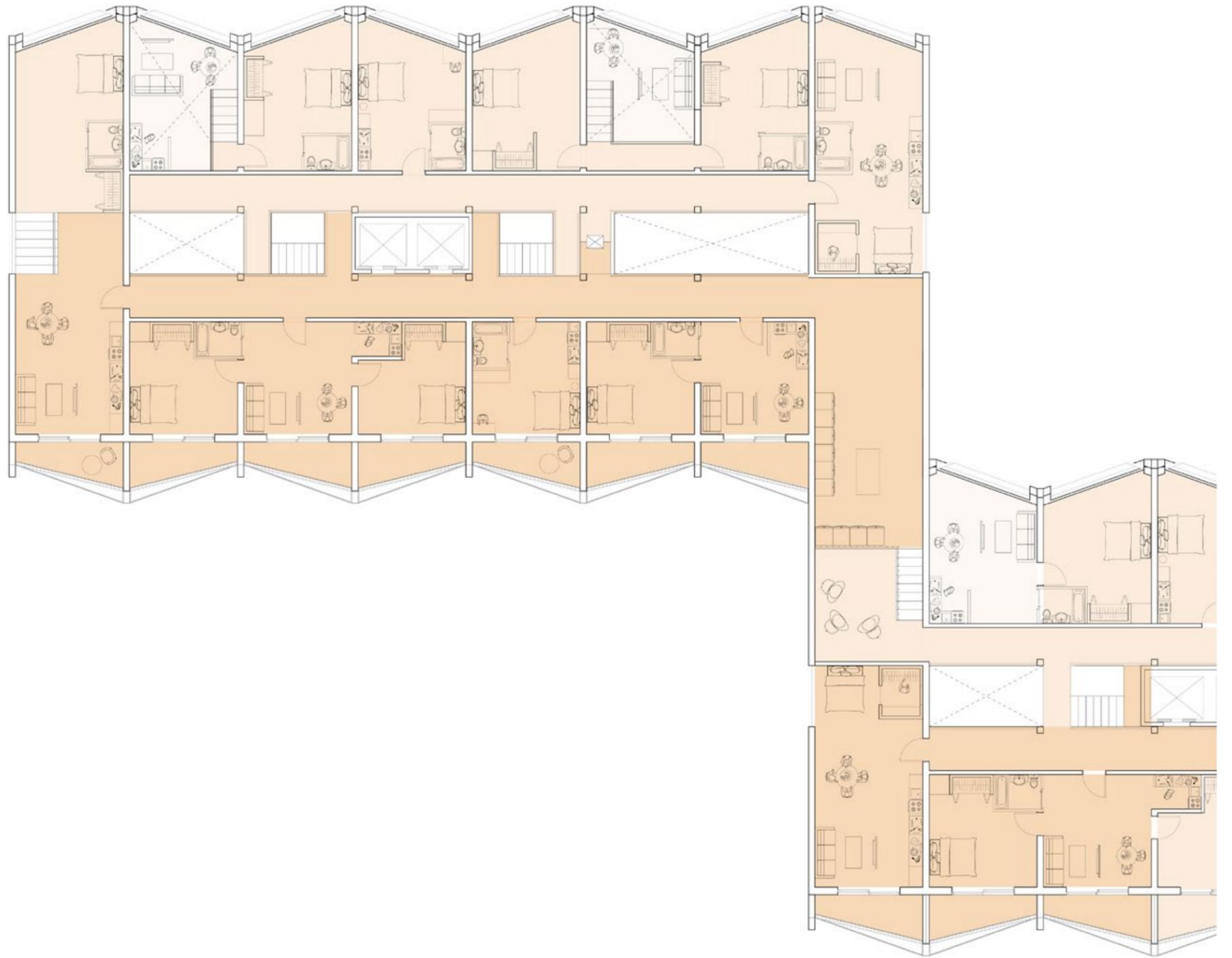


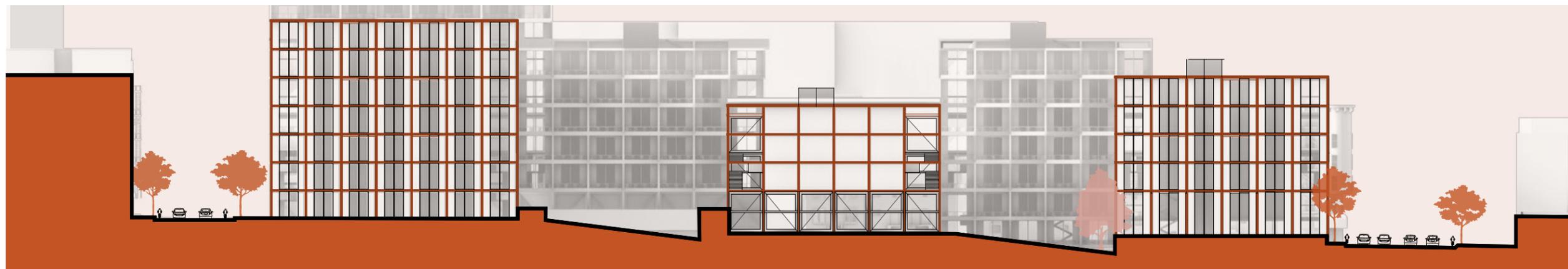


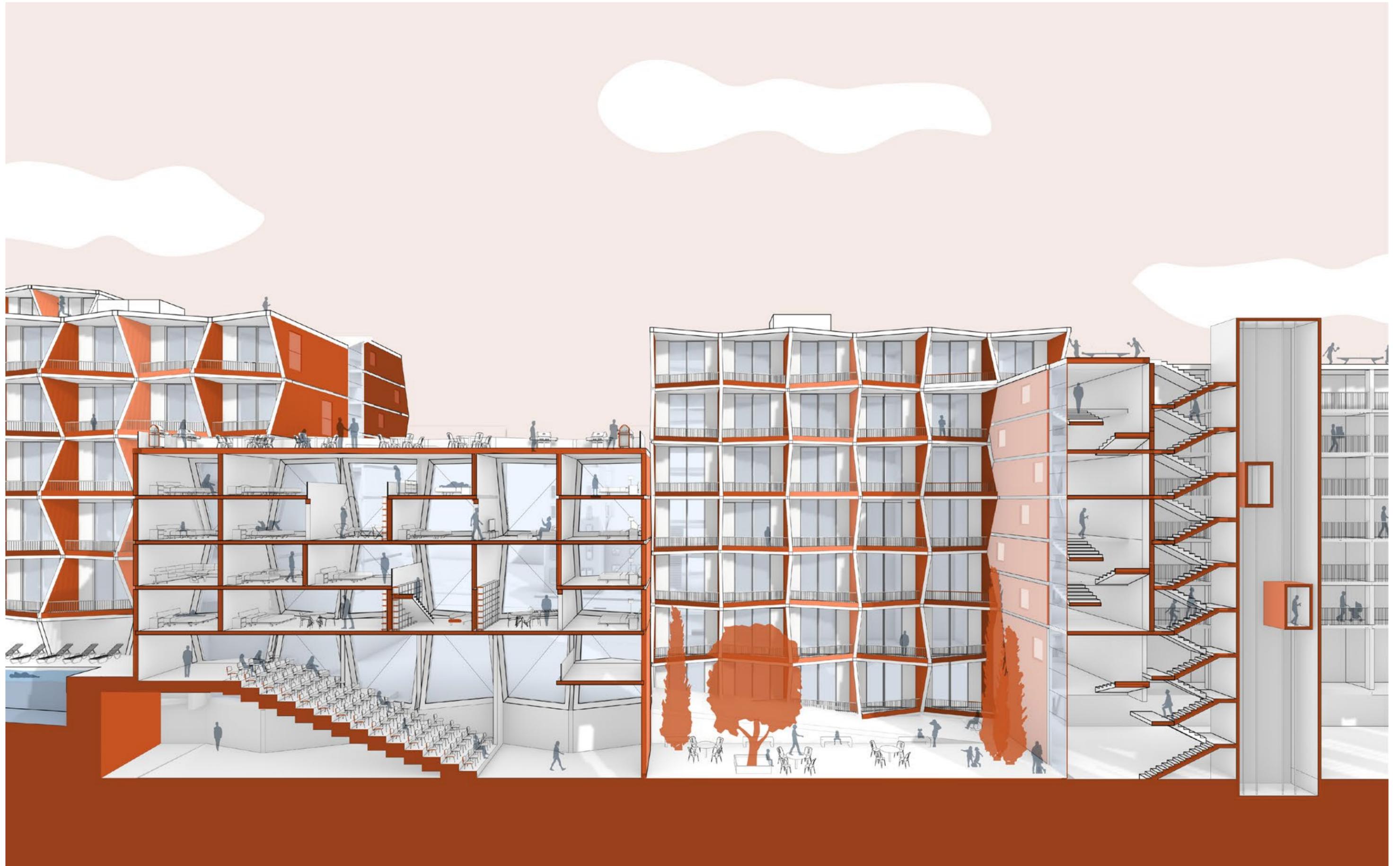












# PALIMPSET

The origin of the word Palimpsest is used for something reused or altered but still bearing visible traces of its earlier form. It can be used for material documents as well as larger scale urban landscapes.

"Palimpsest", introduces a prototype that encourages communities to share their moments and their local history. The act of sharing memories allows for connections to be drawn between community members and creates a sense of belonging and unity within the neighborhood. The content is moderated by the community and aims to increase the historical archives of the town. The project acts as a bridge between the physical and the digital, lost historical data and community members by allowing them to share archival pictures on the platform.

Website for Public Interest Technology. The website was built using Visual Studio Code, Git Hub and Firebase to store the information. with Will Cao, Pelin Cetin & Amy Huang

HOW MIGHT WE help Livingston Manor record and engage with their shared history so that community members have a greater sense of identity, belonging, and unity?

## ARCHIVE

New York City, NY  
Susan Barnes | log out

map featured about

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Drop Files to Upload  
Or, click here to browse.

Caption (200 characters)

Location

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Description or additional notes

SUBMIT FOR VERIFICATION

## ARCHIVE

New York City, NY  
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Fresh Meadow Lane, Queens

+ MORE LIKE THIS



South Ferry, Manhattan

+ MORE LIKE THIS



# OPEN BRONX

The construction of a building is essentially a part-to-whole problem. It involves the complex integration of tens of thousands of building components, systems and processes into a synthetic whole. Architects, engineers, fabricators and erectors work alongside of one another to develop each respective part. Architects also hold the key role in ensuring the successful synthesis of these multiple parts into the whole. Through a better understanding of all systems, architects are able to integrate systems more completely with greater economy, elegance and efficiency. A well-integrated building is an efficient one, a well-integrated building is an elegant one, and most importantly, a well-integrated building gets built.

The intent of the course is an intensive introduction into the application of technical systems through design, development and integration. The course objectives are to establish an understanding and experience in the construction of the technical aspects of architecture. Structural form, environmental systems, materials, construction methods and fire protection elements are developed systematically and integrated with one another. This is achieved through the development of analytic skills, basic principles and their applications.

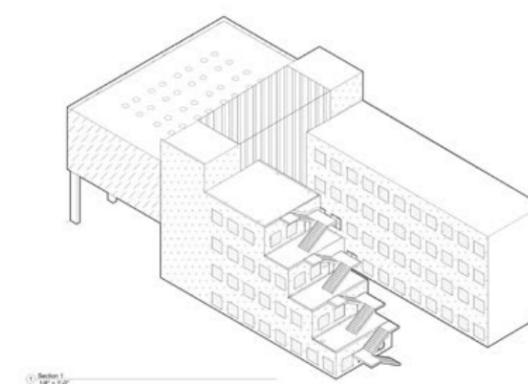
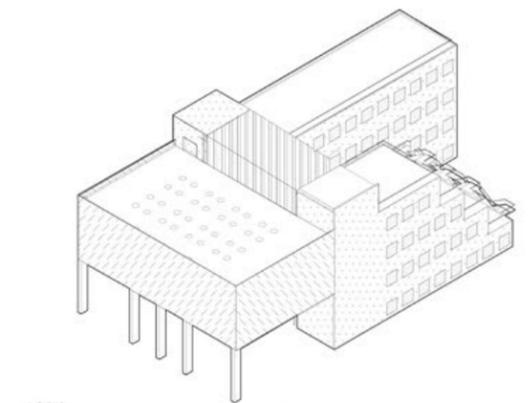
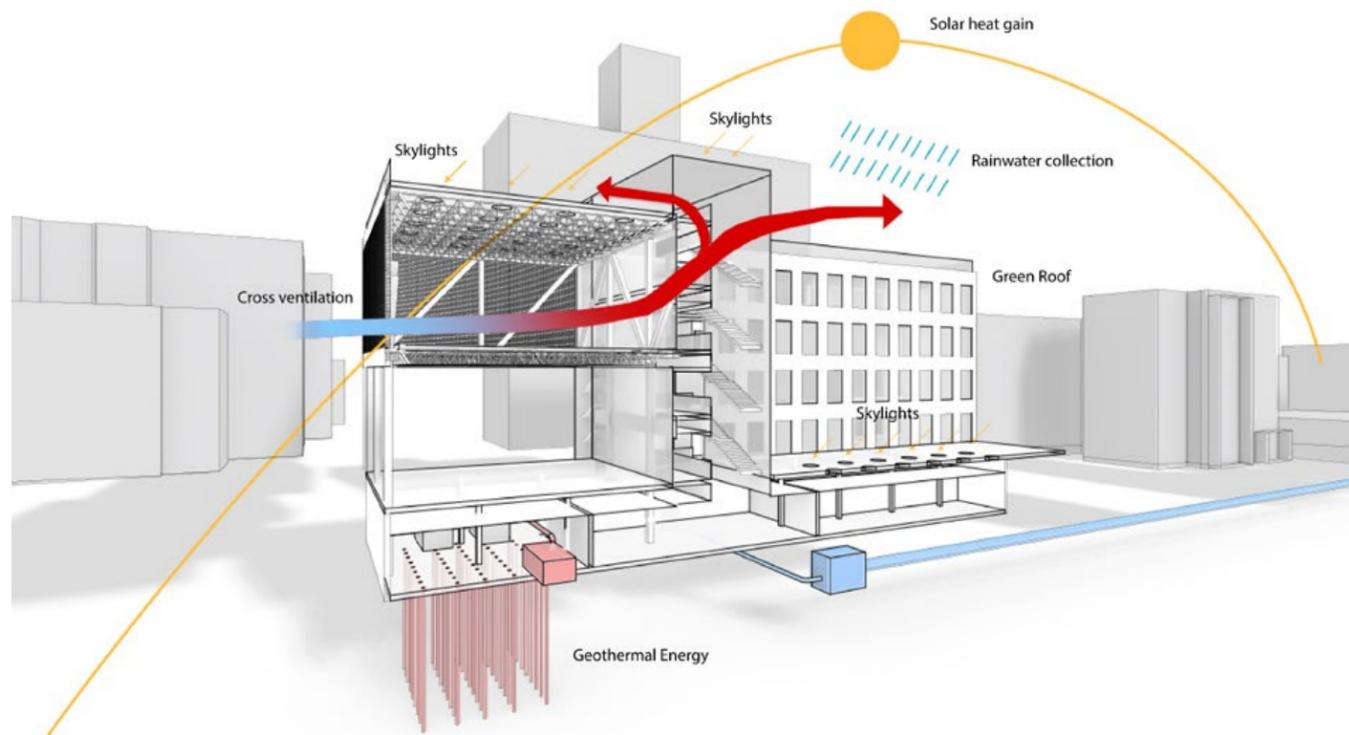
Open Bronx is a community center in the heart of the Bronx, a place for residents to call their own. It includes an athletic center, a cafeteria, a black box theater, a community program and lots of different types of outdoor spaces.

We met weekly with engineering consultants including mechanical, structural and environmental to assist us in designing a sustainable building for the Bronx. The heating and cooling happens through geothermal heat pump system, accompanied by enough air handling units to service the entire building. The facades are covered with brick to integrate the building into its surroundings. The structure is all timber frame, supporting large spans.

GSAPP AT IV Integrated Design Building - Fall 2020

Critic - Sarrah Khan

Partners - Bisher Tabbaa, Nayef Alsabhan, YongYeob Kim



- WT - 01 Brick Cladding
- WT - 02 Perforated Brick Screen
- WT - 03 Aluminum curtain wall IGU System. Vertical and Horizontal mullions attached to WT-01
- WT - 04 Punched Windows

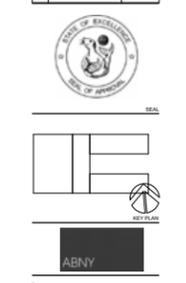
**MATERIAL SCHEDULE**

MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
MT - 01	Peterson Kolumba K21	WT - 01
MT - 02	Peterson Kolumba K21	WT - 02 Int. Basketball Court
MT - 03	Aluminum	WT - 03 Curtain Wall Atrium

**GLAZING SCHEDULE**

MATERIAL	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION
GL - 01	IGU	WT - 01 Punched Window on Brick Cladding Facade
GL - 02	IGU	WT - 03 Central Atrium Space

NO.	DESCRIPTION	DATE
01	PRELIMINARY 3D SET	02/2020
02	3D RENDERING	03/2020
03	3D RENDERING	03/2020
04	3D RENDERING	03/2020



Team:  
 GROUP  
 Architect  
 Group of Architects  
 Group of Architects  
 Group of Architects  
 Group of Architects

Architect:  
 STANLEY POTTS  
 Stanley Potts  
 Stanley Potts  
 Stanley Potts

Engineer:  
 HOK  
 HOK  
 HOK  
 HOK

Structural:  
 GATNER  
 GATNER  
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Mechanical, Electrical & Plumbing:  
 SHoP  
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**PROJECT TITLE**

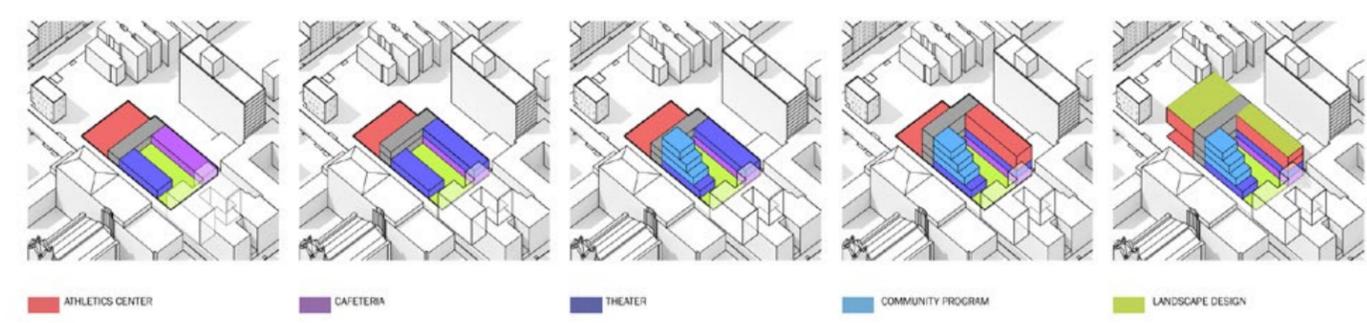
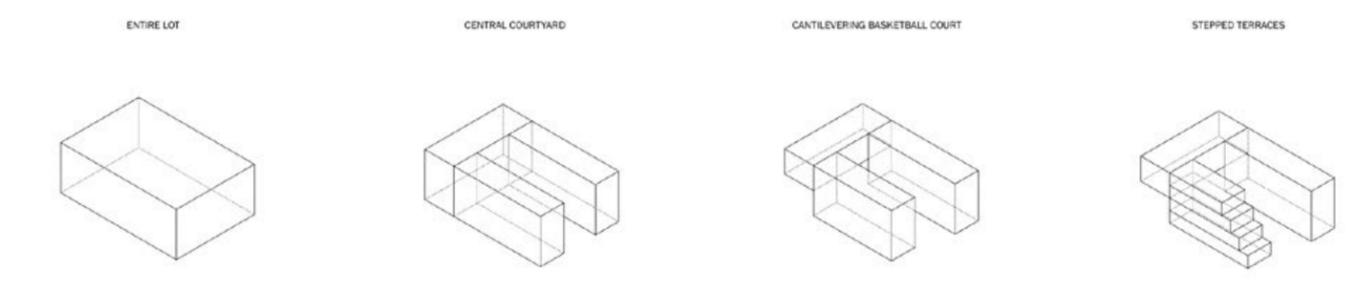
OPEN BRONX

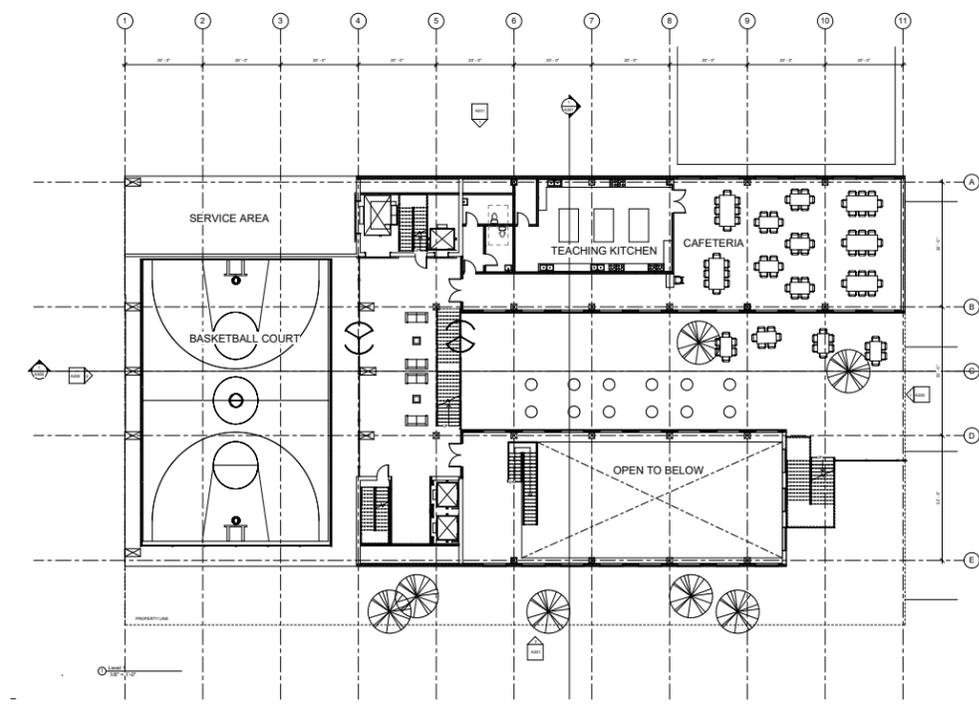
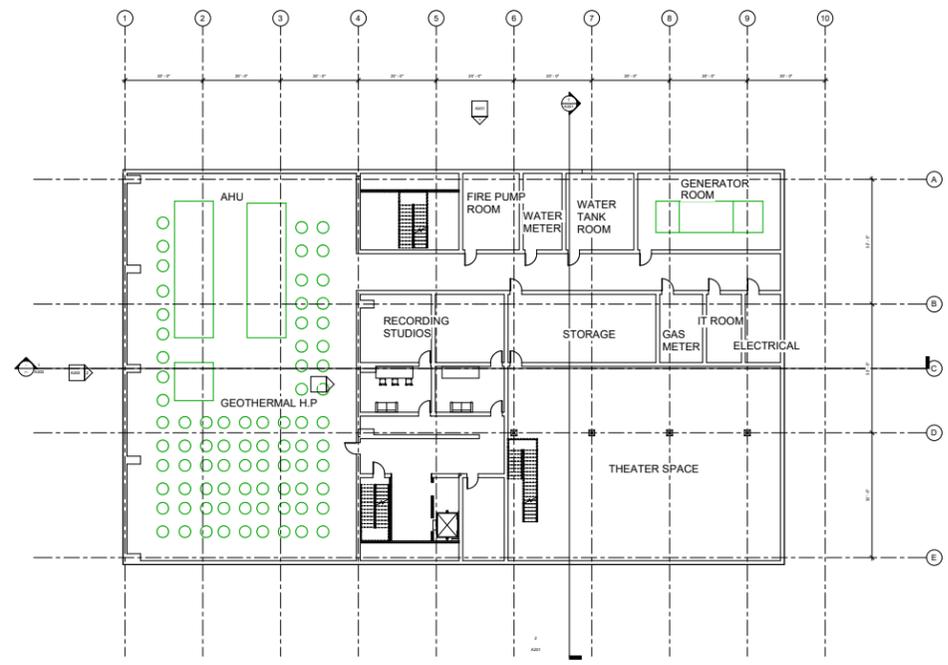
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 Bronx, NY  
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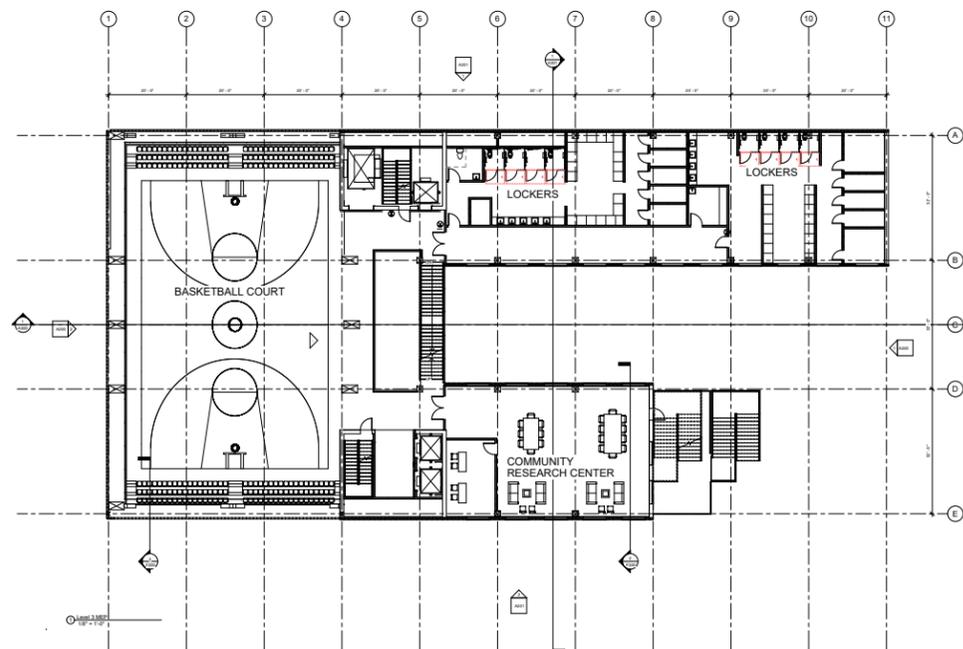
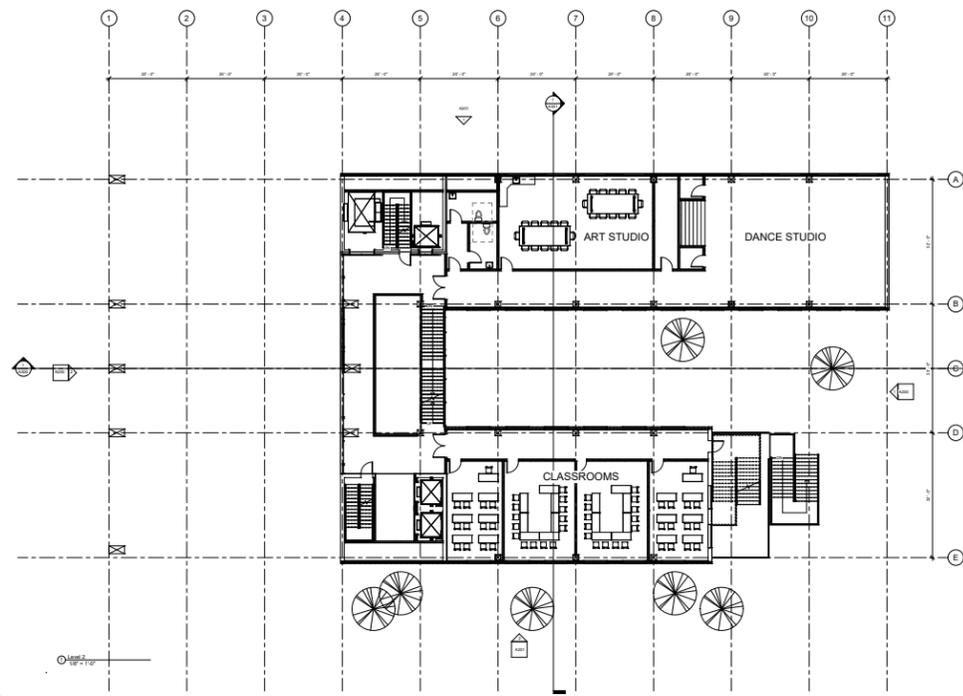
**PROJECT No. Third Floor Plan**

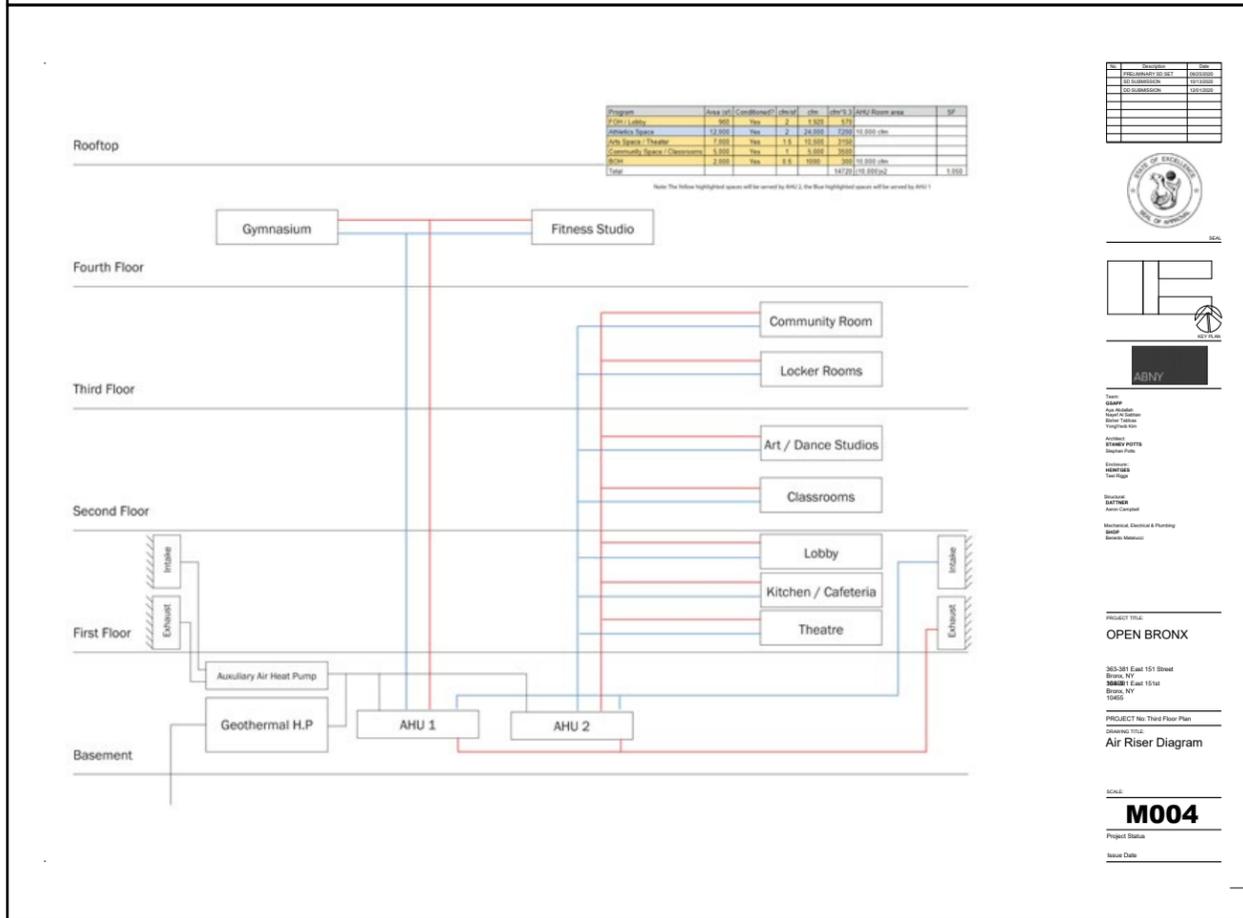
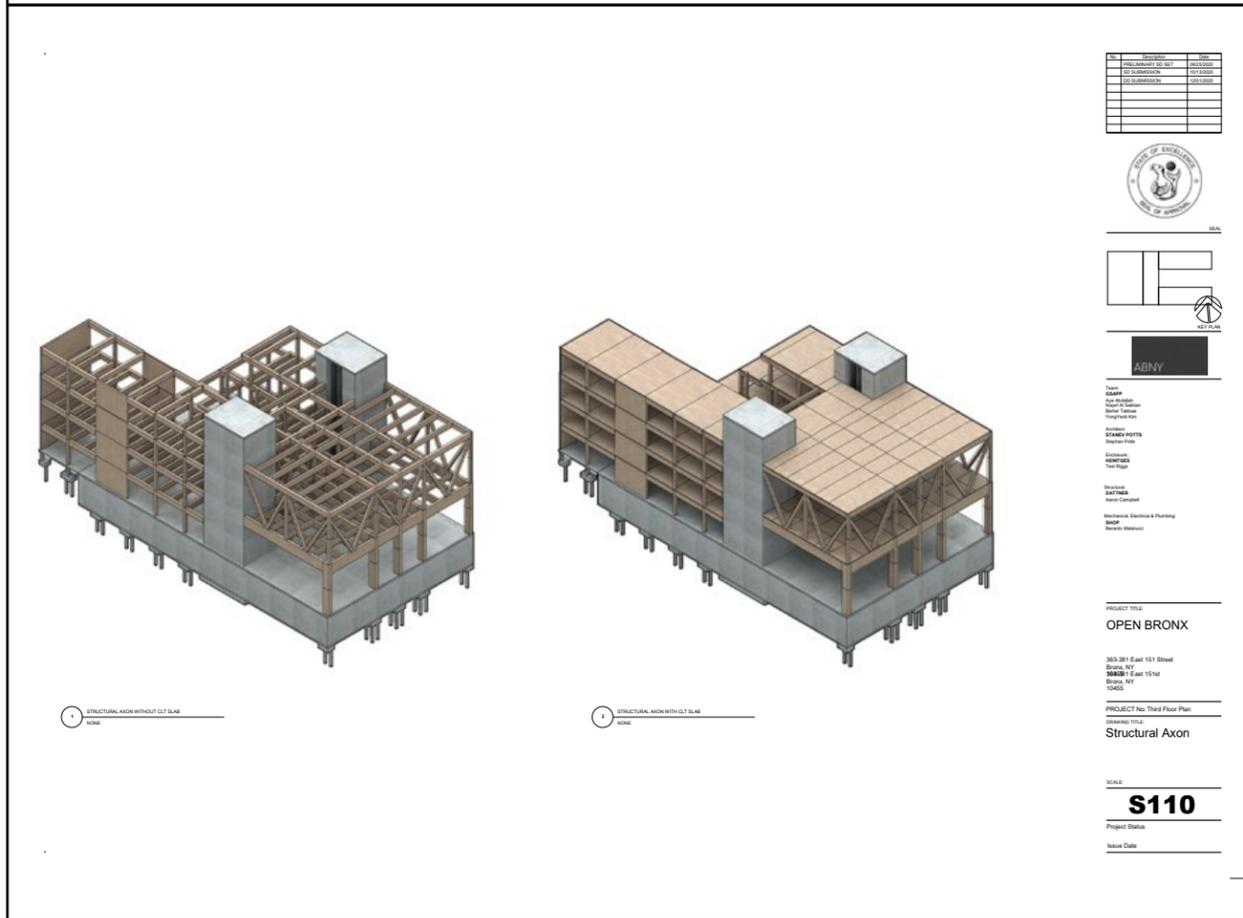
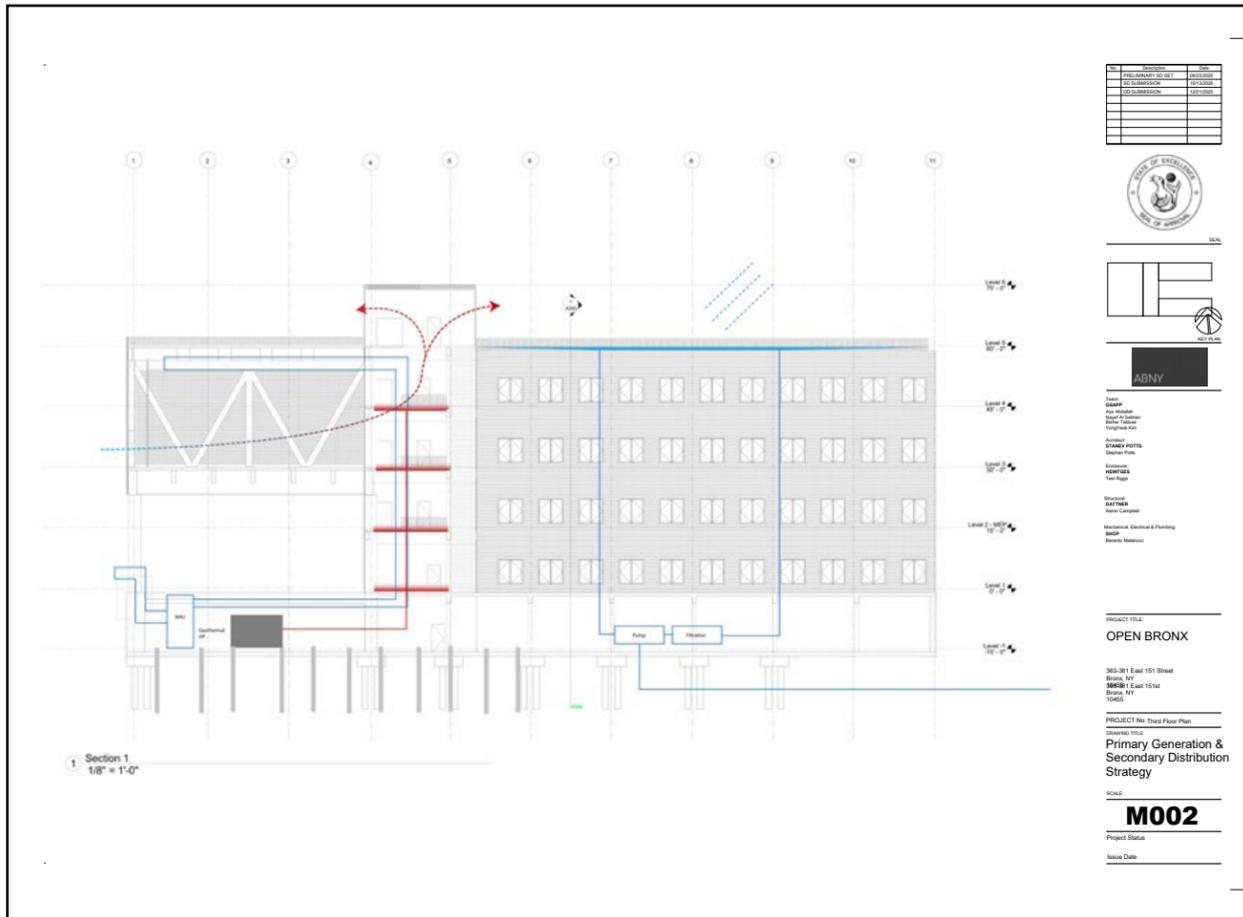
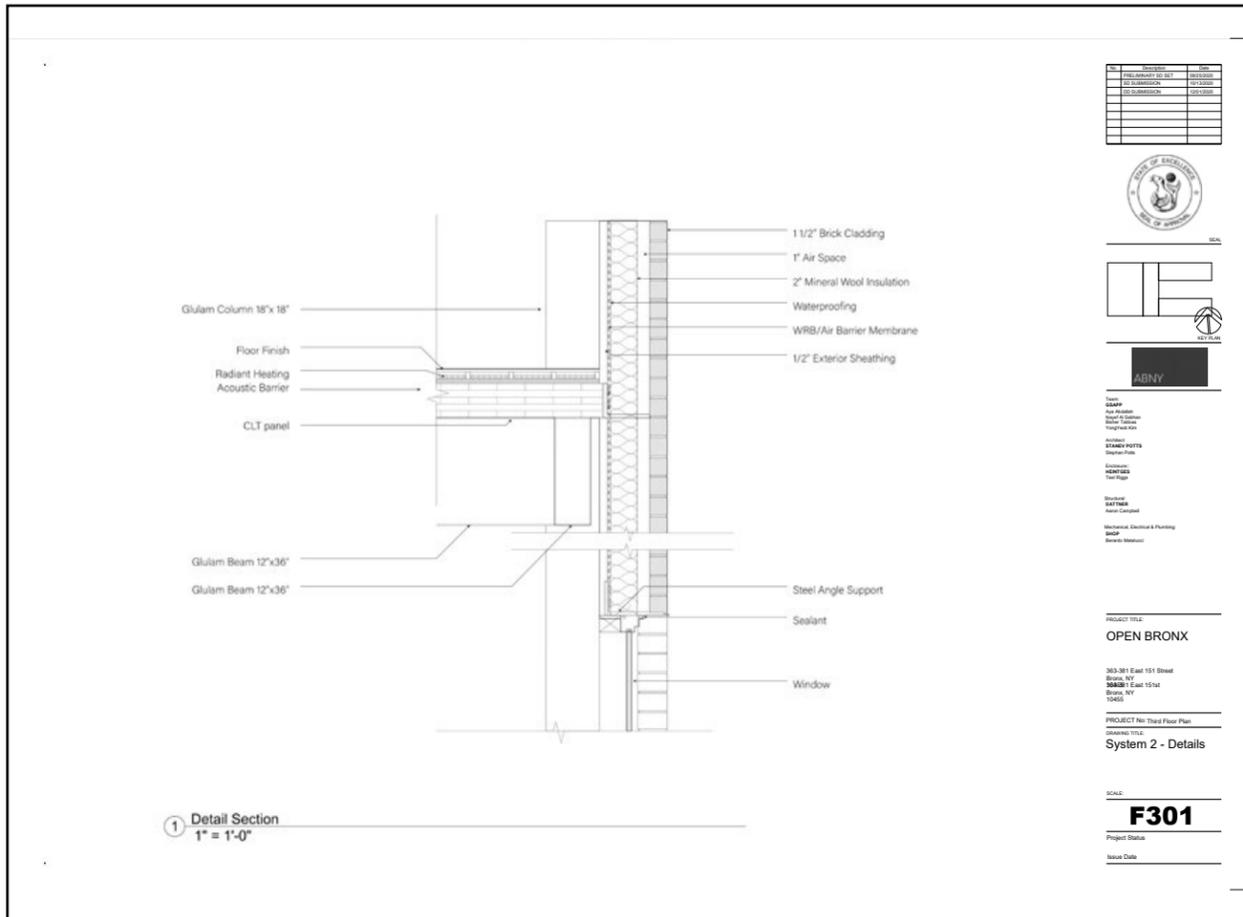
Facade System  
 Description & Diagram

SCALE:  
**F110**  
 Project Status  
 Issue Date









*“The Holiday Inn full of bullet holes tells the story of war, and the Berlin Wall, now dissipated, graphitized, remains a symbol of ideological divisions of the cold war but “The ghost of the green line remains active”*

Building of War or War of buildings?

Critic: Mark Wigley  
Spring 2020

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In the middle of the 20th century, right at the beginning of the World Wars, plans for buildings and edifices started to arise to either symbolize power and authority or lack thereof. Some buildings are preprogrammed and spend their entire lifetime fulfilling that duty. To name a few: government buildings, separating infrastructure such as the West Bank Barrier, military bases or bomb shelters. Almost in opposition to the war theme, buildings like the United Nations headquarters, symbolically representing globalization and peace, spike controversy in their design. The process was such a heavy loaded one that even architects could not agree on a specific direction. Should these buildings speak up and assume their role of high international significance or should they try to be more subtle, fit into the fabric of the city, be relatable to the rest of the population?

*“[The Holiday Inn is] “A giant tomb which remains in the center of the city like an unresolved scar”*

*“Somehow the unification of Berlin and the end of the wall granted history a premature sense of closure... “a happily ever after” that will not materialize anytime soon.”*

On the other hand, other buildings were completely appropriated during times of conflict, whether programmatically, symbolically or physically. The example of the World Trade Center Towers is one that comes to mind when thinking about more than just an office tower. It was meant to show off the new and improved American capitalistic economic system, a machine like corporate world as well as the structural and technical advances amongst many others.

This brings me to question the idea of monumentality. What makes a monument? Is it the program we assign it or how the public perceives it? After conflicts, should we get rid of the monuments that remind us of them?

To attempt to answer these questions, I will study the case of the Holiday Inn hotel in Beirut Lebanon, a building which only functioned as a hotel for one year before the civil war broke out in 1975, becoming the symbol of war without asking for it. To understand the question of monumentality and landmark, I will do a side by side comparison of the Holiday Inn to the Berlin Wall in Germany, comparing two similar but fundamentally different examples that each belong to one of the categories cited previously. The Berlin Wall, is an infrastructure that has a predetermined function in the war, looking at its physicality, symbolic effect and its afterlife. While the Holiday Inn in Beirut functioned as a hotel for a couple of months before the war broke out. Comparing these two scenarios will eventually bring us closer to the answer of monumentality and landmark. These examples span different time periods as well as varying geographical locations. They consist of edifices that have marked the history of a city and are referred to as monuments.

Looking back to the case of the Twin Towers, the collapse of the buildings proved to be an even bigger symbol than the architecture itself. Does that apply to the other buildings that we are studying? Or is their never ending life cycle emphasizing their significance?



*Entry to Beirut's Holiday Inn is forbidden to the public. The building's 24 floors are desolate. Photograph: dpa picture alliance archive/Alamy*

## I - Holiday Inn, Lebanon

### A- Historical and Political context

Moving across the Mediterranean Sea, to a further yet somehow similar place known as “The Switzerland of the Middle East”, Beirut, the capital of Lebanon, was going through a set of circumstances itself. Walking down Clemenceau Region towards the seaside Corniche, one can spot the soaring tower of the Holiday Inn, punctured, pierced, perforated, permanently telling a part of Beirut’s history. Activated just soon before the civil war broke out, its opening in 1974 symbolized an affluent time in Beirut’s economy, becoming part of a luxury development “at a time when Beirut’s banks were growing fat on deposits from the region’s petrodollars”.<sup>1</sup> It had big plans of becoming the region’s social hub, with a cinema, a nightclub, 400 rooms on 26 stories and a high tech rotating restaurant at the rooftop, overlooking the city. The construction plans began in 1971 by Lebanese developer Abdal Mohsin Kattan. It was designed by French architect André Wogenscky, working with Lebanese architect Maurice Hindié.

In Beirut, this building is still referred to as the “Holiday Inn” but it hasn’t been since the Civil War broke out in 1975. It served as an ideal sniper’s nest, dominated by

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2015/may/01/beirut-holiday-inn-civil-war-history-cities-50-buildings>

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different militia groups throughout the years. The building became an integral player in the battle of the hotels in October 1975, a major event in timeline of the civil war which lasted fifteen long and bloody years.

#### B- About the Civil War

With tensions in Beirut already building up, one major event set off one of the longest battles of the country. This timeline from the BBC clearly summarizes the major events that happened during the fifteen years that paralyzed the country.

#### “THE START OF THE WAR

1975 April - Phalangist gunmen ambush a bus in the Ayn-al-Rummanah district of Beirut, killing 27 of its mainly Palestinian passengers. The Phalangists claim that guerrillas had previously attacked a church in the same district. These clashes start the civil war.

1976 June - Syrian troops enter Lebanon to restore peace but also to curb the Palestinians, thousands of whom are killed in a siege of the Tel al-Zaatar camp by Syrian-allied Christian militias in Beirut. Arab states approve of the Syrian presence as an Arab Deterrent Force in October.

1978 - In reprisal for a Palestinian attack, Israel launches a major invasion of southern Lebanon. It withdraws from all but a narrow border strip, which it hands over not to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) but to its proxy South Lebanon Army mainly Christian militia.

#### ISRAEL INVADES

1982 June - Following the attempted assassination of the Israeli ambassador to Britain by a Palestinian splinter group, Israel launches a full-scale invasion of Lebanon.

1982 September - Pro-Israeli president-elect Bachir Gemayel is assassinated. Israel occupies West Beirut, where the Phalangist militia kills thousands of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps. Bachir's elder brother Amine is elected president. Mainly US, French and Italian peacekeeping forces arrive in Beirut.

1983 - Suicide attack on US embassy kills 63 people in April, and another in October on the headquarters of the peacekeepers kills 241 US and 58 French troops. US troops withdraw in 1984.

1985 - Most Israeli troops withdraw apart from the SLA “security zone” in the south. Two governments, one country

1988 - Outgoing President Amine Gemayel appoints an interim military government under Maronite Commander-in-Chief Michel Aoun in East Beirut when presidential elections fail to produce a successor. Prime Minister Selim el-Hoss forms a mainly Muslim rival administration in West Beirut.

1989 - Parliament meets in Taif, Saudi Arabia, to endorse a Charter of National

Reconciliation transferring much of the authority of the president to the cabinet and boosting the number of Muslim MPs.”<sup>1</sup>

The Civil war ends in 1990 when the Syrian air force attacks the Presidential Palace at Baabda and Aoun flees. All militias are to be dissipated but the South Lebanon Army (SLA) and the Hezbollah group refuse to terminate. The Civil War re-enforced a division in the capital city between the East and the West, the Maronites and the Muslim Sunnis. The Holiday Inn completed that line of division, creating a “Green Line”, prime battle grounds. In the below map, the hotel district is represented by the number 3 icon.

The following table, a page from Jon Calame's book on Divided cities illustrates clearly the different actors engaged in the civil war, the context and location of that line of divide of the city, the material etc...<sup>2</sup>

At a more global scale, once Saigon, Vietnam fell from the hands of the communist, the new war hotspot for all news reporters was the Middle East. Hotels started to fill up with foreign reporters, especially the Commodore, a safe haven in West Beirut, making the downtown hotel district a prime location.

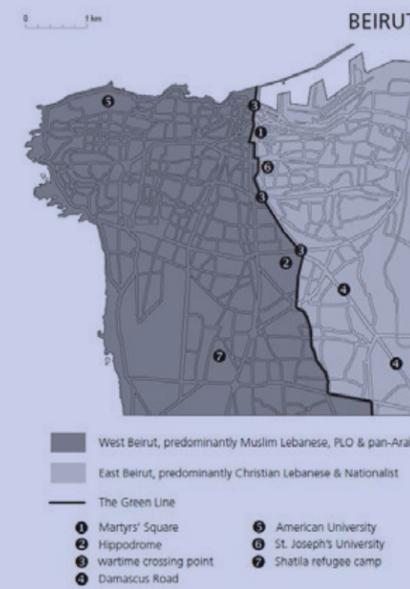


Fig. 1: Map of Beirut's partition, 1974-1990. Beirut is located at 33°33'N and 35°30'E, halfway along the western coastline in central Lebanon, which lies west of Syria and north of Israel. Byblos and Tripoli are to the North, and Sidon and Tyre are to the South. Beirut lies 585 km northeast of Cairo and 1296 km west of Baghdad.  
 Authors

1 <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-14649284>

2 Calame, Jon, Charlesworth, Esther Esther, and Lebbeus Woods. 2009. Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia. Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, p:38-39

TABLE 3.1. BASIC FACTS REGARDING THE PHYSICAL PARTITION OF BEIRUT

Antagonisms	Christian v. Muslim paramilitaries; Lebanese Front v. Lebanese National Movement; Nationalist v. Pan-Arab factions; pro-Government v. rebel factions
Names	Green Line, Damascus Road
Location	The Green Line corresponded roughly to Beirut's main north-south traffic corridor, splitting major roads and public spaces starting at the historic harbor and Martyrs' Square, then following the Damascus Road southward beyond the suburbs. In addition, numerous minor boundaries fragmented the East and West sectors created by the Green Line in accordance with ever-shifting territorial acquisitions of assorted paramilitary groups active within the city.
Context	The primary partition constituted a near perfect cross-section of the city, cutting through its historic core and the Phoenician archaeological ruins before passing through prominent commercial and residential zones and continuing through refugee camps like Shatila and semi-autonomous suburbs like Chiyah and Ghobeire.
Size	The Green Line was a fortified path approximately 9 km long and 18–90 m wide, protected on either side by solid barricades of various dimensions. Throughout the city, enclaves were likewise defined and protected by semi-permanent walls usually less than 3 m high and 1.5 m wide used to block important roads fully or partially; in addition, snipers' view sheds projected invisible 'target cones' onto the city, thus creating very effective physical obstacles to civilian movement.
Porosity	Passage of pedestrians and vehicles across the Green Line was hindered by several elements: physical barricades, checkpoints, gates, exposure to sniper fire, mines, debris, and intimidation. Three "official" crossings existed throughout the duration of the war: the Port Crossing near the old harbor and Parliament building, the Museum Crossing next to the Hippodrome and National Museum, and the Gallery Crossing nearest to the Beirut River and airport. Since paramilitary guards interested in the ethnicity of travelers controlled them, these were used mainly by paramilitary commanders, diplomats, and foreigners.
Materials	Partitions were constructed in a spontaneous manner using barbed wire, sandbags, abandoned vehicles, cement block, and nearby debris.
Status	All barricades have been dismantled along with structures associated with paramilitary activity and military occupation. The central business district is fully rehabilitated and several outlying sectors significantly reconstructed. Large sections of urban fabric remain abandoned and decrepit along with hundreds of buildings damaged or destroyed during the war that still await repair.
Actors	Paramilitary combatants were the primary builders of Beirut's partitions; based on the vicissitudes of their operations, the boundaries between ethnic enclaves were determined and fortified according to need and importance. All available materials were used with no indication of prior planning.

Beirut 39

Fig 2: Basic facts regarding the physical partition of Beirut.

C- Battle of the hotels

“Control the Holiday Inn and you control the region around.”<sup>1</sup>

From the 1950s to the early 70s, Beirut was a thriving magnet for the international elite, with its Hotel district as the center of its luxury tourism economy. Neighboring hotels such as the Saint Georges hotel and the Phoenicia, were a hub for celebrities, politicians and spies.

The Holiday Inn, being the tallest hotel in the area, happens to be the last one to open before the Civil war broke out. Despite being a “Holiday Inn”, its interiors were very lavish, covered in chrome and gold colors. It even held an international Bridge competition, explains Saleh Rifai, a photographer during the civil war, that was attended by famous people such as Omar Sharif.<sup>2</sup>



Fig 3: Postcards from Lebanon, 1974

After April 1975, the Christian Phalanges militias, based in East Beirut, gradually took control of the main Downtown streets in the West, the port and slowly the hotel district. But in October 1975, left wing Muslim militias and Palestinian Armed groups launched a massive offensive to regain control of the hotel district. That's when the battle started. The Muslims in the Saint Georges and the Hilton and the Christians in the Holiday Inn. The battle of the hotels started a battle for the control of strategic heights. Whoever could control the height, could impose the terms. The battle of the Hotels lasted a couple of months, but it has remained engraved in people's memory

1 War Hotels, Beirut Holiday Inn, a film by Abdallah Elbinni, Al Jazeera, 2018

2 War Hotels, Beirut Holiday Inn

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and in Beirut's urban typology. It was a bloody battle. The most iconic photo of that battle was the one of a rightist fighter dragged through Beirut, signaling the switch-over of dominant forces of the Holiday Inn.<sup>1</sup>

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Fig 4: Photograph taken by Saleh Rifai of Omar Sharif playing cards at the Holiday Inn in 1974.



Fig 5: The Beirut Holiday Inn rises behind the man who built it, Abdal Mabsin Kattan, in 1975. The Holiday Inn was one of the leading hotels in Beirut at a time when it was the most glamorous city in the Middle East.



1 Fordham, Alice. n.d. "Beirut's Holiday Inn: Once Chic, Then Battered, Still Contested." NPR.Org. Accessed May 8, 2020.

and in Beirut's urban typology. It was a bloody battle. The most iconic photo of that battle was the one of a rightist fighter dragged through Beirut, signaling the switch-over of dominant forces of the Holiday Inn.

## II- Parallels between the Holiday Inn and the Berlin Wall

Moving forward, I would like to study the Holiday Inn side by side with the Berlin Wall in Germany - both as war trademarks, as city dividers and both still standing today.

### A- The Berlin Wall, Germany



Fig 7: 21 March 1976 / Lebanon: Days Of Tragedy 75-87 by Joseph Chami / Self Published / 1987  
 Caption: Body of Rightist fighter dragged through Beirut (From Jallad, Mayssa's thesis)

The Berlin wall was built more than ten years before the Holiday Inn, in 1961, by the Communist government of the German Republic (GDR, or East Germany) between East and West Berlin. But its symbol remained very active until the fall of the wall in 1989. Similar to Beirut, Berlin was a divided city before the wall. So what makes it so crucial and symbolic?

After the defeat of Germany in 1945, marking the end of World War II, it was split into parts, with the Eastern part belonging to the Soviet Union and the Western part to the United States, Great Britain and France. Berlin, geographically located in the Soviet part was divided in the same way. Tensions between the Soviets and the Allies grew between 1945 and 1961, with flows of refugees increasing month by month from the East to the West. Then, in 1961, the East government finally decided to put an end to this migration and built a wall within two weeks, made of barbed wire and concrete block wall. This physical decision made it impossible and even illegal for

Germans to circulate freely from one side to the other, where they often shopped, worked and visited family.

B - A physical comparison

To start with the comparison, one must acknowledge the difference in nature of each infrastructure: one is a wall, built of concrete and barbed wire and the other is a building, also built of concrete however it was fully fitted and occupied before being transformed into a strategic war tool. They were built for different reasons - the Berlin Wall's sole purpose was to create a division in the city, and the Holiday Inn was activated, even so briefly, as a blooming luxury hotel. But they ended up serving a very similar function, a tool of war and divide.

The German tool was ordered by Nikita Khrushchev, the premier of the Soviet Union at the time, and the wall was built by the East German army, police force and volunteer construction workers, therefore it was a public governmental infrastructure. The Holiday Inn on the other hand was a privately owned building, constructed by the Lebanese developer Abdal Mohsin Kattan, The design was a collaboration process between a local and a French architect, representing the golden ages of Lebanon, flaunting foreign designers in the process. The Berlin wall's first inception took just two weeks to build while the hotel was a three-year process. The physical sizes of the two structures differ a great deal. The wall was long and thick, spanning throughout the entire city while the hotel was just a section of the invisible divide of the city, gaining popularity in height rather than in length.



In regards to the city they were each respectively in, their size was relative. Their distinct directionality is a symbol of their power: The Holiday Inn was used because of its height relative to the neighborhood it is in, being the tallest in the area, it was a perfect sniper haven, being able to overlook the Green Line and beyond. The Be-



Fig 9: A CIA map of neighborhoods in Beirut in 1986 which also shows the Green Line.



Fig 10: A cold war map showing the Berlin Wall as a bricked-up barrier and barbed wire surrounding West Berlin. Published in 1963.

lin Wall's advantage is its length, cutting through the entire city, spanning multiple neighborhoods, preventing any circulation between both parts of the city, allowing complete control of the government on its population. Their location within the cities was a strategic point. The Holiday Inn being in the hotel district became a major protagonist in the Battle of the Hotels. The German wall just cut the city in half, creating a physical boundary between both governing powers.

According to Koolhaas' interpretation of the Berlin Wall, it did not just cut the city cleanly from North to South, it encircled the city. It crosses all kinds of environmental conditions, "including lakes, forests, periphery, parts of it are intensely metropolitan, others suburban."<sup>1</sup> (Koolhaas). His description of the wall as not a single entity but more of a situation, a slow-motion evolution can also be described to the Holiday Inn. They were both regarded as an area rather than a built structure. Many of his descriptions could actually be used for both phenomena: "In spite of its apparent absence of program, the wall -in its relatively short life- had provoked and sustained an incredible number of events, behaviors and effects." (Koolhaas, p.222); "The Berlin Wall was a very graphic demonstration of the power of architecture and some of its unpleasant consequences" (Koolhaas, p.226). The Wall, at some points re-enforced by a second wall, was constantly occupied by German guards, pacing back and forth, similar to the Hotel that was constantly guarded by snipers, from either side of actors of the war.

1 Koolhaas, Rem, Bruce Mau, Jennifer Sigler, and Hans Werlemann. 1995. Small, medium, large, extra-large: Office for Metropolitan Architecture, Rem Koolhaas, and Bruce Mau. New York, N.Y.: Monacelli Press.

C- Perception and afterlife

Even though these two structures were built with very different intentions and programs from each other, they fulfilled almost a similar role. Many publications emerged of both infrastructures during and after the Cold War and the Civil War. The Berlin Wall obviously received a lot more international press coverage than the Holiday Inn.

Many projects emerged after the fall of the Berlin wall to rebuild, re-use or demolish. Soon after the fall, East German authorities started removing pieces of the wall to create more crossing points between East and West. Thousands of habitants came through to chip away pieces of the wall to take home as a dark souvenir. Just a few examples of rehabilitation projects include "The Berlin Wall Trail", a popular tourist route, renewed and barrier-free, taking visitors along a 162km trail past meadows and

Fig 13: Clipped from the New York Times, November 10, 1989



Fig 11: Clipped from Spokane Chronicle, Spokane Washington, 18 August 1961, p.2



**Workers Build Berlin Wall**  
Protected by East German police, workers erect a wall of concrete blocks today along the sector border that divides East and West Berlin. Located behind barbed-wire barricades, it presumably will help the Communists prevent East Germans from fleeing to the West by first creating an obstacle and then a "woman's land" between the two sectors. (AP wirephoto.)

Fig 14: The Economist, November 18-24, 1989, front cover



Fig 16: Advertisement for Beirut's Holiday Inn, ca 1974



Fig 15: "Around the world and now in Lebanon"; advertisement for Beirut's Holiday Inn, Al Hamadass magazine, 31 August 1973



Fig 20 : 21 March 1976 / Liban 75-78: La Guerre Des Graffiti by Maria Chakhtoura / Dar An Nabar / 1978 / also in Off The Wall by Zeina Maasri / A poster by the independent Nasserist Movement - Mourabitoun issued in 1977 to commemorate the first anniversary of the Battle Of The Hotels. Dimensions: 70x50cm.

The text reads: On 21 March 1976, the Murabitoun destroyed the symbol of fascist treason and took an oath of continuing the journey at whatever cost - Ibrahim Koleilat.

This poster represents a Nasserist fighter with an armband on which the organization's name is mentioned. He is demolishing with the butt of his gun one of the grand hotels in Beirut. This signifies for the Palestino progressist forces the destruction of capitalis, thus of the fascism against which they fight. This poster was conceived for the first anniversary of the battle of the grand hotels between the forces of the Lebanese. (description from Mayssa Jallad's thesis: Beirut's Civil war Hotel district: Preserving the world's first high rise urban battlefield, 2017)

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woodlands, telling the story of the Cold War, as well as the plan to create a wall in front of the existing wall in order to protect the original from vandalism and many others. Art and creativity play a big role in today's reconstruction of the wall. It has been demolished in some parts and reconstructed in others. In some locations, there are absolutely no present signs of the wall in others, the walls has been reconstructed to mimic the original.

In contrast, The Holiday Inn, still standing today, is just a shell of a building, soaring in the middle of a newly renovated and gutted downtown district where private real estate companies such as Solidere, have taken it upon themselves to erase parts of Beirut's history and rebuild new commercial centers and expensive residential towers. It is left to rot in one of the most beautiful parts of the city.

Shortly after the battle, scavengers entered the building and stripped it down to its bones. The hotel was then sold on the streets of Beirut: beds, silver spoons, curtains... Since then, the shareholders who own the building have been in a dispute over the fate of it. The Lebanese partners Compagnie Immobiliere Libanaise wanted to renovate the building to then rent or sell the luxury apartments. On the other hand, the Kuwaiti group that owns the other half wanted to demolish it and build a completely new tower, similar to the flashy new ones in the surrounding area. Access to this landmark today is forbidden to the public. There are talks of an auction to sell the building but nothing has been confirmed so far. Like many other abandoned buildings in the city, underground parties have taken over where in 1998, young adults drank and danced where their parents have fought merely fifteen years prior, a big symbol of an overlay of war trauma and love.

A pre-mature master plan for reconstruction in 1977 was put in place to preserve what was left of the city. The new government established the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) an independent advisory board to implement a masterplan for reconstruction and restoration of the damaged city center. New archeological Roman ruins have been found in the war rubble and that creates a whole new set of tensions within the reconstruction.

### Conclusion

Throughout this thought process, more questions keep coming to mind: Should we preserve buildings and infrastructures to memorialize the war? Even the ones that bring back horrific memories for many? Are these edifices monuments or non-monuments? Who decides what is a landmark and what is worth gutting? Are war buildings, in their decay state valuable?

*"Somehow the unification of Berlin and the end of the wall granted history a premature sense of closure... "a happily ever after" that will not materialize anytime soon."*

[The Holiday Inn is] "A giant tomb which remains in the center of the city like an unresolved scar."<sup>1</sup>

The fall of the Berlin wall marked the end of a phase. The fact that people, in 1989, were able to cut it up, climb on it, crawl under it, break it, gave them a sense of ownership, of agency more specifically. It allowed them to free themselves from that part of the history. In Lebanon, although in constant tension and war for over five decades, has no memorial of the war, has no place to remember it except for the many buildings who share a similar fate to the Holiday Inn, sprinkled around the city, who have received no love, are unwanted by some and needed by others to remember the misery that the population has gone through.



In Lebanon, we leave these buildings untouched, inaccessible, soaring in the middle of the city but no one sees them anymore. They become visibly invisible. A common writing of the history of the country is still being debated, schools have different curriculums and different versions to the same story. If we can't decide on a common history book, how will we even begin to accept and acknowledge it, memorialize it and avoid repeating it? Or even just start talking about it?

The new urban landscape of Beirut is filled with these foreign star-architects buildings such as this Herzog and DeMeuron "Beirut Terraces", sitting across the street from the Holiday Inn. In some bizarre uncomfortable way, the new building is replicating the bullet holes of its predecessor, almost mocking, trying to erase or replace the memory of what punctured buildings mean in Beirut.

<sup>1</sup> Graaf, Reinier de. "The Other Truth: As the Celebrations Memorializing the Fall of the Berlin Wall have Quieted, Architect and OMA Partner Reinier De Graaf Reflects on the Versions of History we Tell Ourselves." *Metropolis* 34, no. 7 (02, 2015): p.87.

The Holiday Inn full of bullet holes tells the story of war, and the Berlin Wall, now dissipated, graphitized, remains a symbol of ideological divisions of the cold war but “The ghost of the green line remains active”.<sup>1</sup>



<sup>1</sup> Divided Cities

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A CONSTANT  
QUESTIONING  
OF URBAN  
LANDSCAPES,  
CRISIS,  
HOUSING,  
**SACREDNESS,**  
DISSENT,  
IDENTITY,  
REPRESENTATION,  
POLITICS,  
AGENCY.

## RECENTERING REMEMBRANCE

How do we recenter remembrance? Sacredness? Rurality? Religiosity? Islamberg is a Muslim community in Upstate New York who have moved away from New York City to find peace and focus on religion. In an era where death is more incorporated in our every day lives than we ever would have imagined, we are proposing an Islamic burial site in a nearby quarry. Following Islamic burial guidelines, the relationship of the body to the soil it is in is crucial. The soil is brought in from brownfields in New York City to be remediated through a mechanical process. When it is ready to receive a body, the cemetery starts filling up. Through this process, the previously excavated and damaged land (quarry) starts to heal and gives place to an activated burial ground. Other programs grow around the cemetery such as mourning spaces as well as housing adjacent to Islamberg to accommodate the new influx of visitors.

Islamberg is located in Delaware County NY—a rural hamlet serving a primarily African American Muslim community. The 200-person hamlet could be understood as the type of religious ‘intentional community’ defined by geographer Louise Meijering: A community that purposely withdraw from mainstream society to live on its periphery, sustained and given cohesion by shared religious belief and rituals.

The studio scope consists of an investigation of the architectural and programmatic capacity of the forms of rural settlement developed by religious communities in Upstate New York. The aim is twofold:

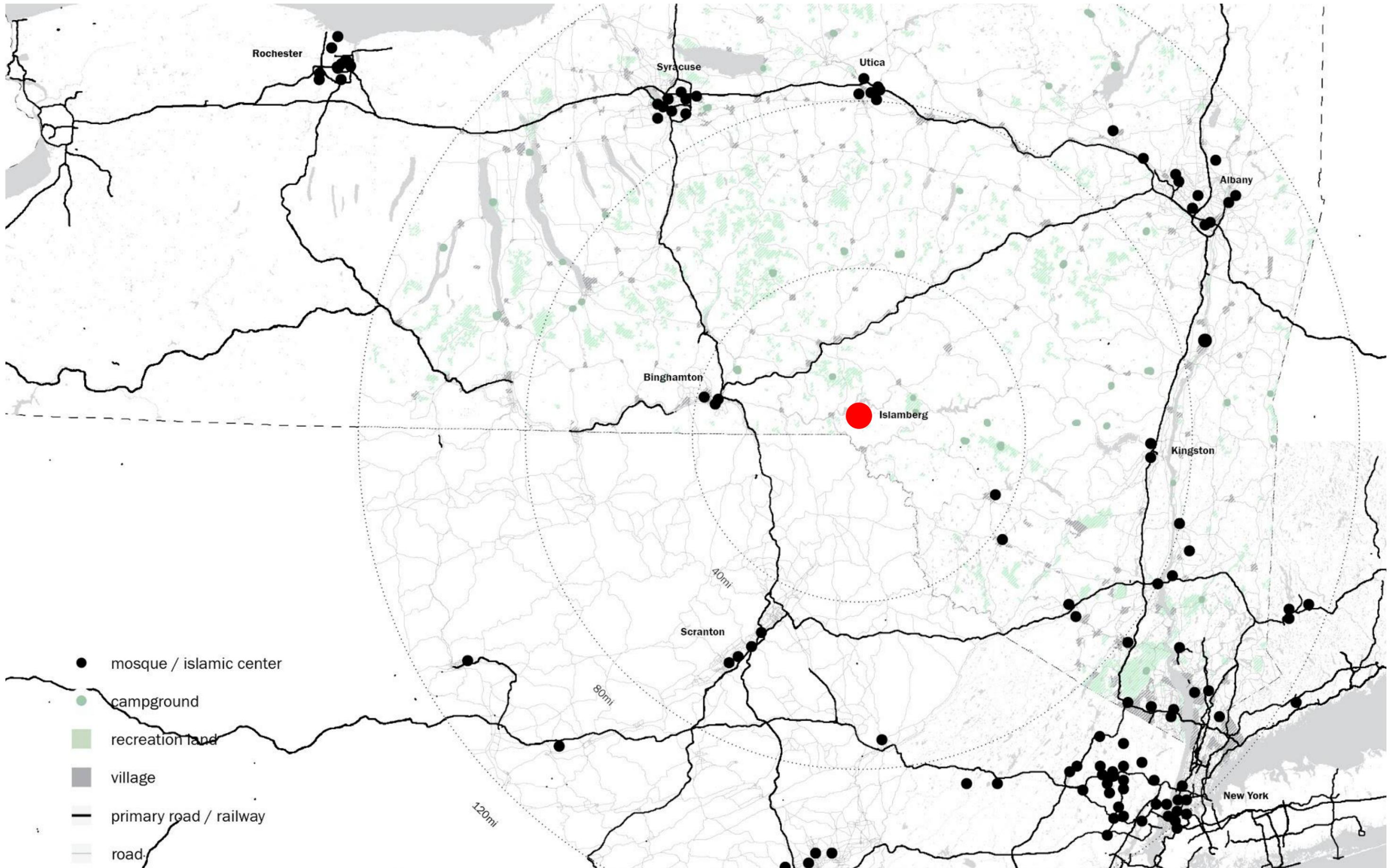
- 1.To map and study the physical architectural and territorial typologies of rural religious settlements. In the context of the studio, these settlements are understood as exemplars of a type of ‘intentional community’ and as offering a potential form of resistance to the increasingly commodified and fragmented territories of the countryside.
- 2.To identify and propose physical interventions (alter, transform, expand, re-program, etc.) for Islamberg, a specific religious Muslim community hamlet located in Upstate New York.

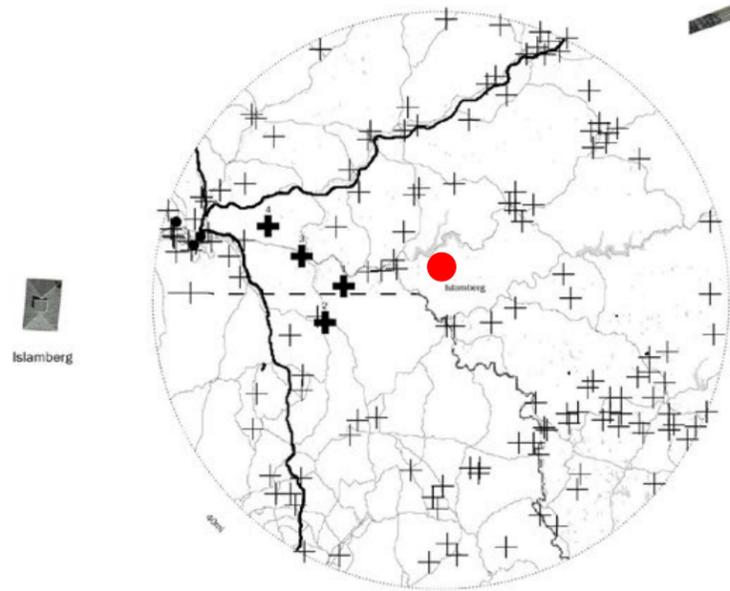
GSAPP ADV IV Spring 2021

Critic - Ziad Jamaledine

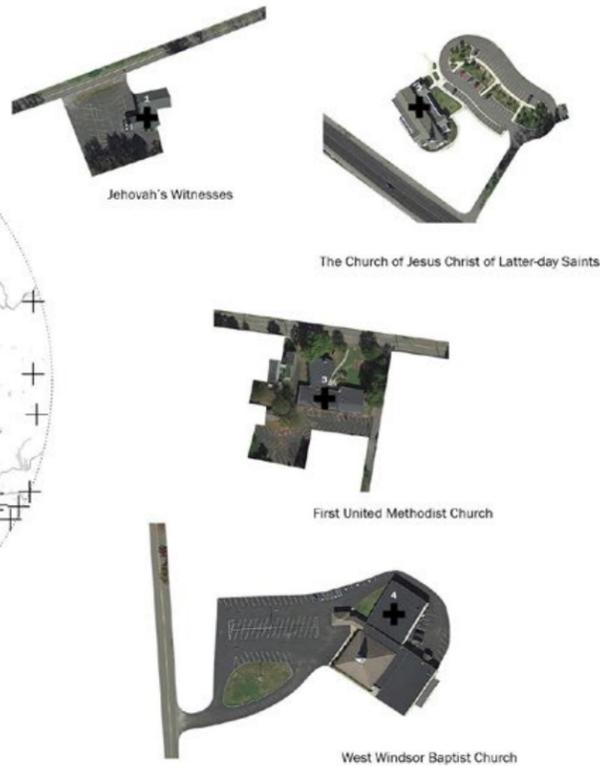
Partners - Nash Taylor & Sixuan Chen



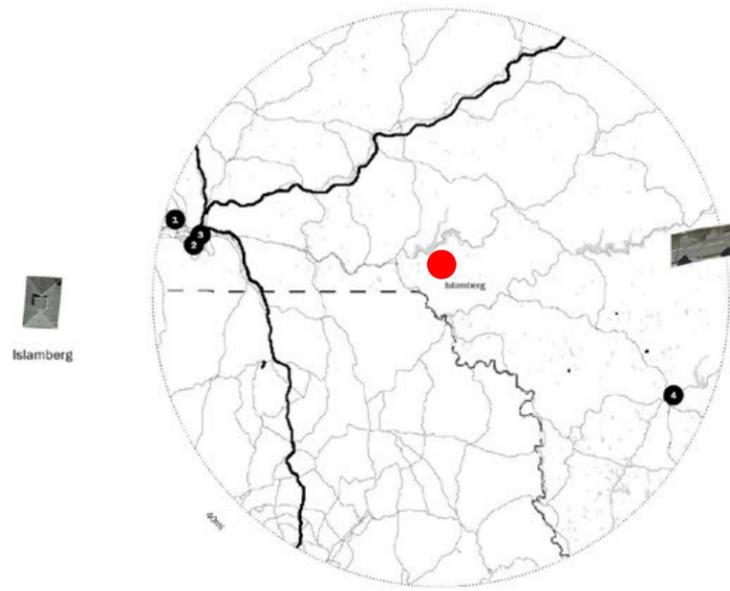




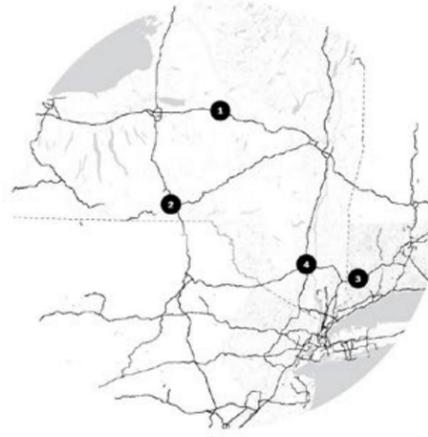
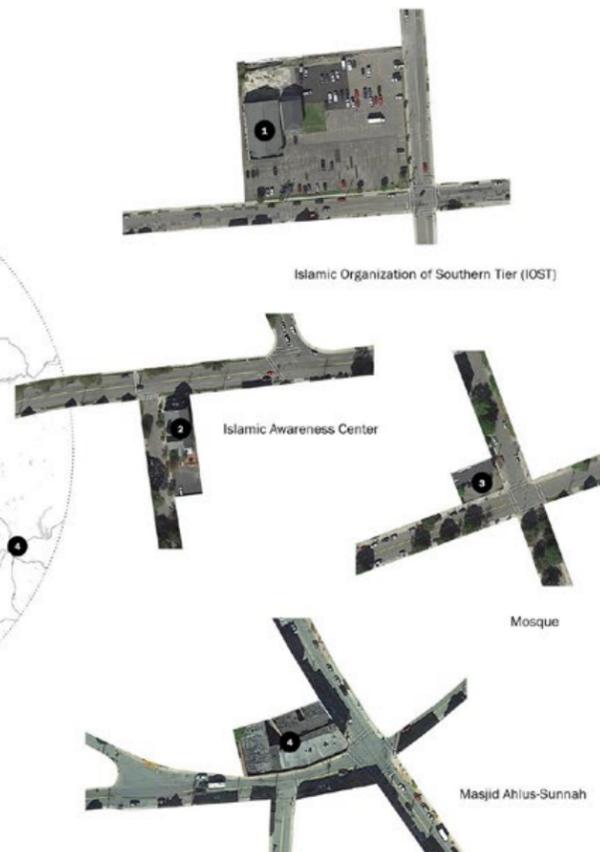
ISLAMBERG VS RURAL CHURCHES



ISLAMIC CEMETERY



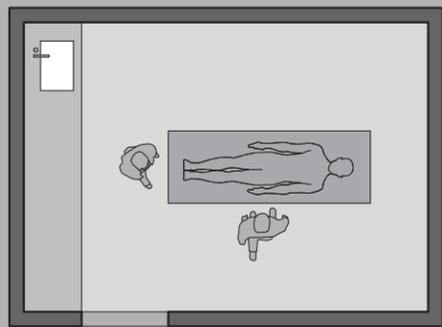
ISLAMBERG VS RURAL MOSQUES



ISLAMIC CEMETERY



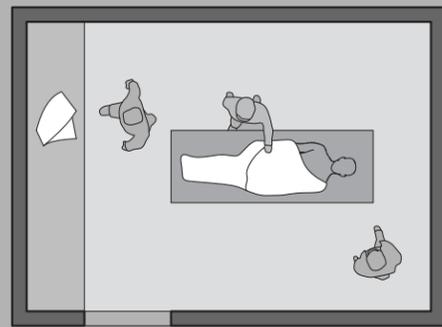
Islamic Burial Tradition 01



**Bathing**

First the body is cleansed by members of the same gender as the deceased. Using a cloth and warm water the body is washed. Ideally within Islamic tradition, the body is not embalmed but can be for logistical reasons.

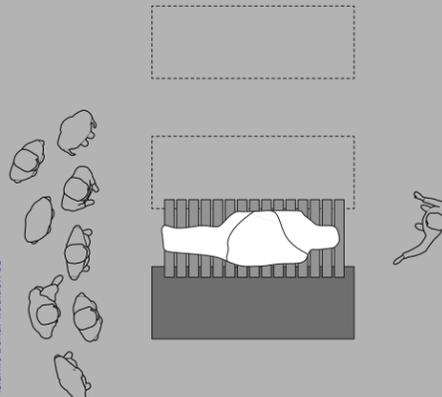
Islamic Burial Tradition 02



**Shrouding**

The body is usually covered in white cloth. Men are covered with three sheets while women are covered with five. The white sheets represent purity, honor, and humility for the deceased.

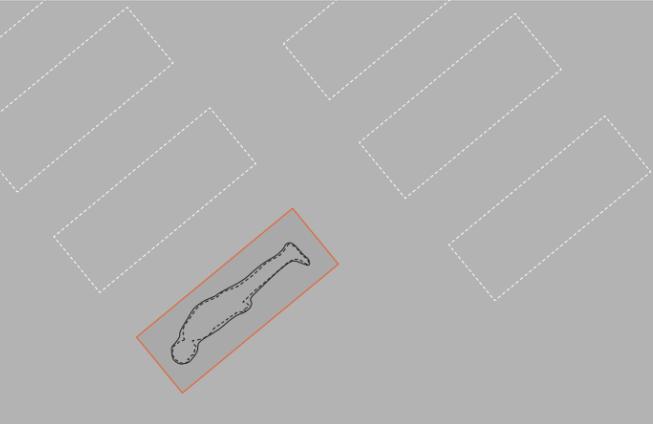
Islamic Burial Tradition 03



**Funeral Prayer**

The imam prays over the body. The body is oriented perpendicular to Mecca. The prayer can happen inside a mosque or at the burial site. There is a specific prayer said over the dead called the Salat al-Janazah.

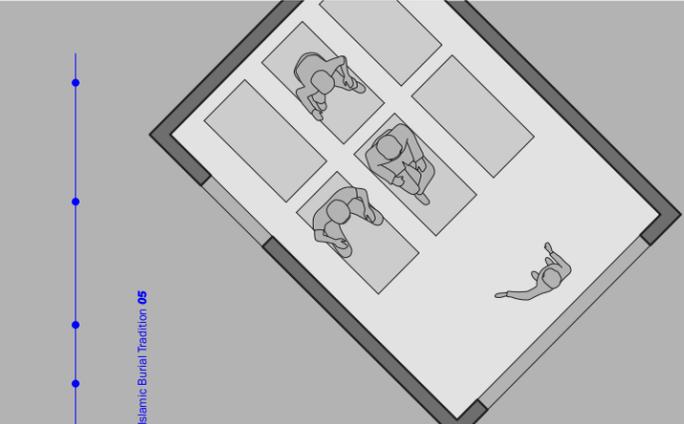
Islamic Burial Tradition 04



**Burial**

The burial of the body is necessary as cremation is prohibited. The body is ideally non-embalmed and without a casket. The body is laid perpendicular to Mecca either on its right side or with the face turned towards Mecca.

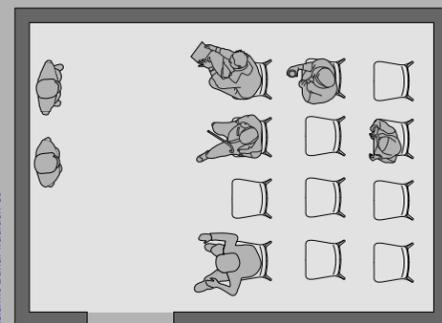
Islamic Burial Tradition 05



**Mourning**

After the dead has been buried, an Imam will generally lead the Janazah prayer. Al-Janazah is not only for the recently deceased but for all Muslims who have passed on. The prayer is performed in a community gathering.

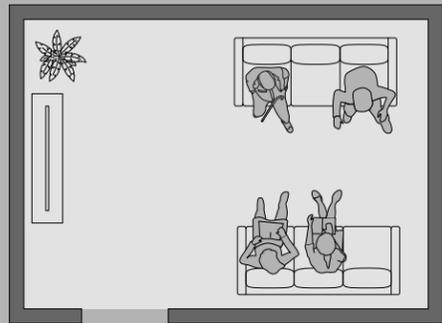
Islamic Burial Tradition 07



**Mourning**

This initial mourning period can extend to 7 days, where the family of the deceased continue to receive visitors in their home. They recite the Quran and do good deeds on behalf of the deceased.

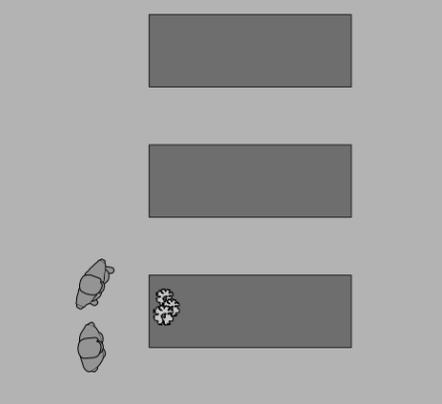
Islamic Burial Tradition 08



**Mourning**

It is told that the soul is separated from the body at death but that it may visit loved ones on the 40th day after the death as well as one year later.

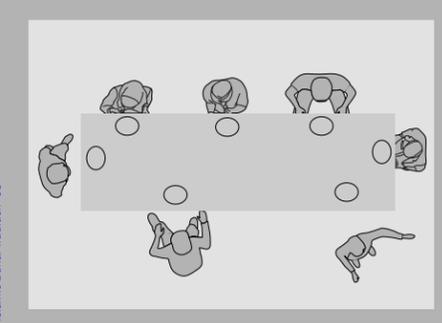
Islamic Burial Tradition 09



**Mourning**

Visiting the burial site is common after a year and usually popular during Eid.

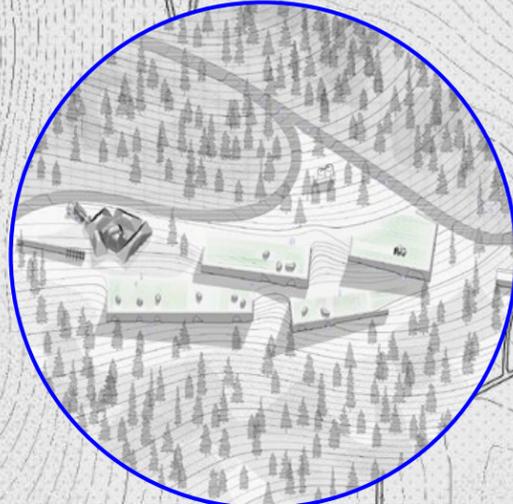
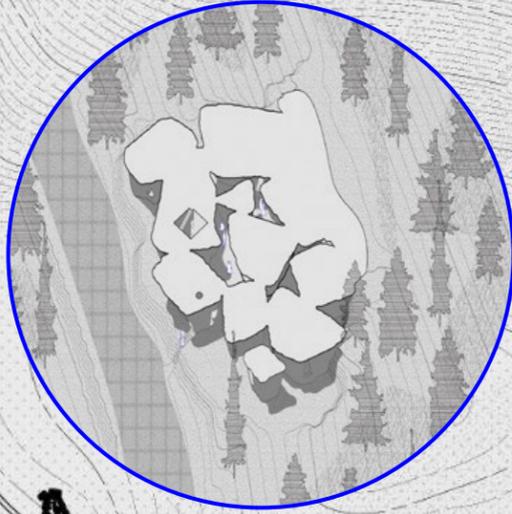
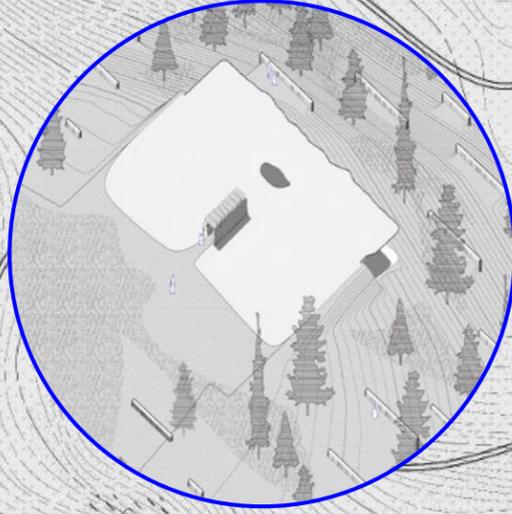
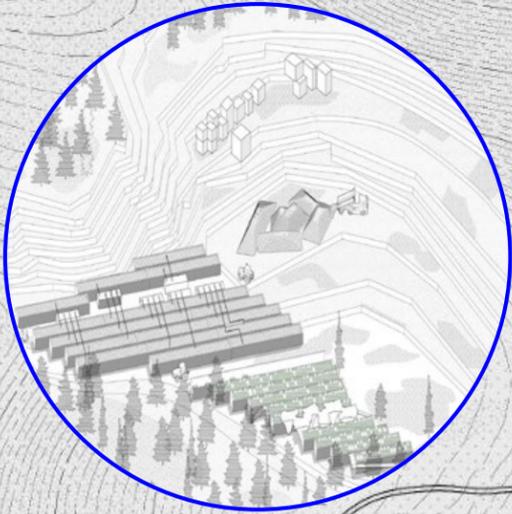
Islamic Burial Tradition 06



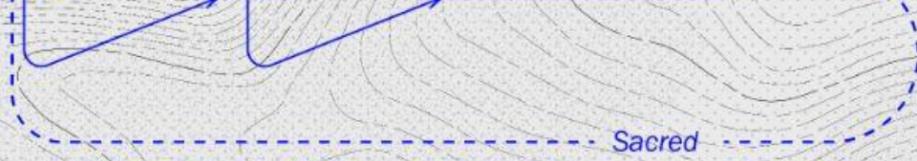
**Mourning**

Loved ones and relatives are to observe a 3-day mourning period. Islamic mourning is observed by increased devotion & receiving visitors and condolences. The community shows support by providing meals for the family.

Use as scared site



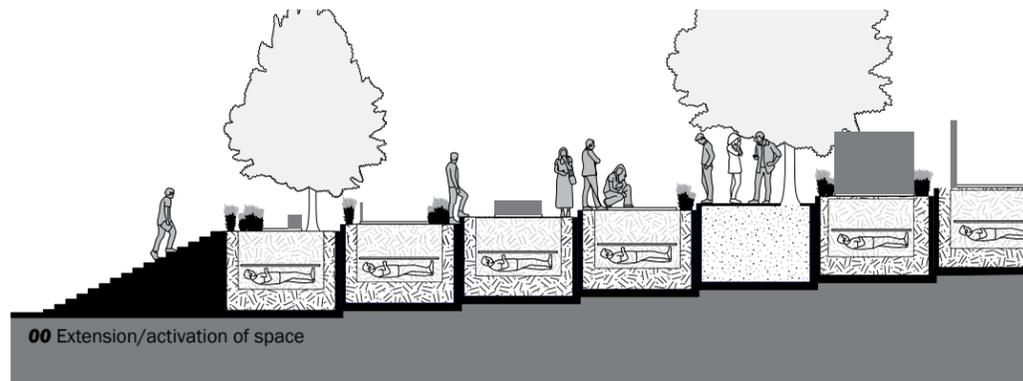
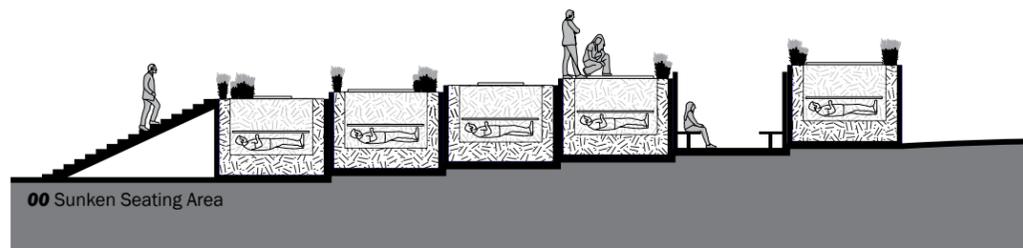
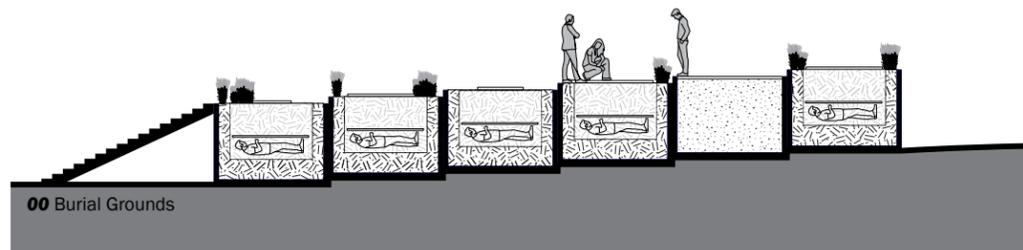
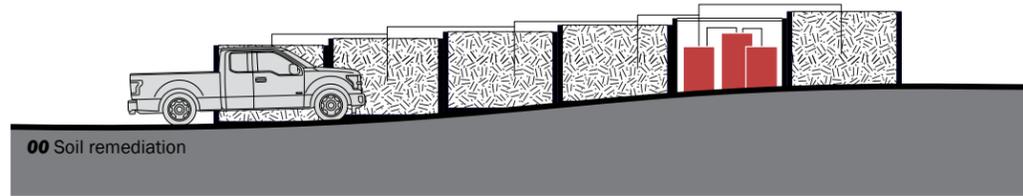
Quarry Cemetery Remediation + Regrowth



Sacred

0

Soil Remediation



2800 contaminated sites in  
New York City  
= 500 M cubic feet of soil

Distance NYC to quarry  
= 156 miles

5 acres of quarry needs  
1.5 M cubic feet of soil

Total of 540 graves  
3'x 9'x 6'

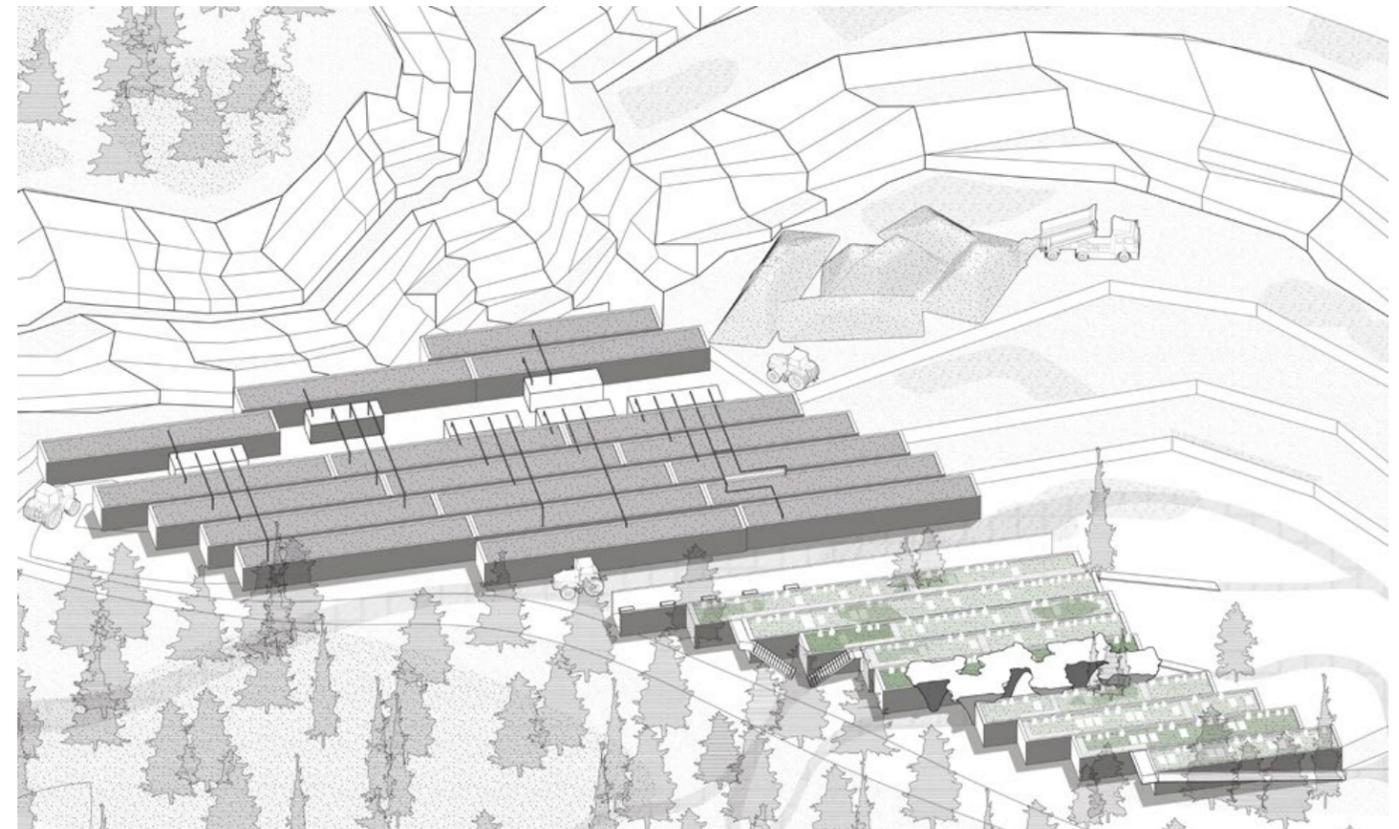
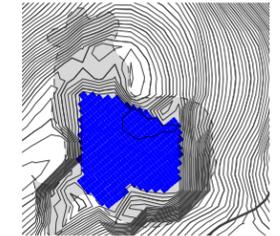
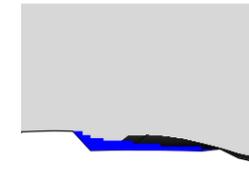
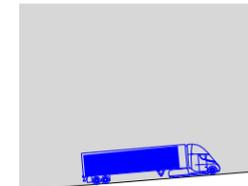
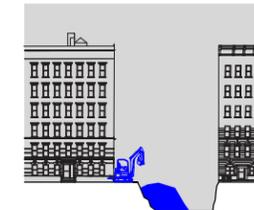
Existing quarry  
License expired in 2020

Excavate contaminated soil in  
New York City

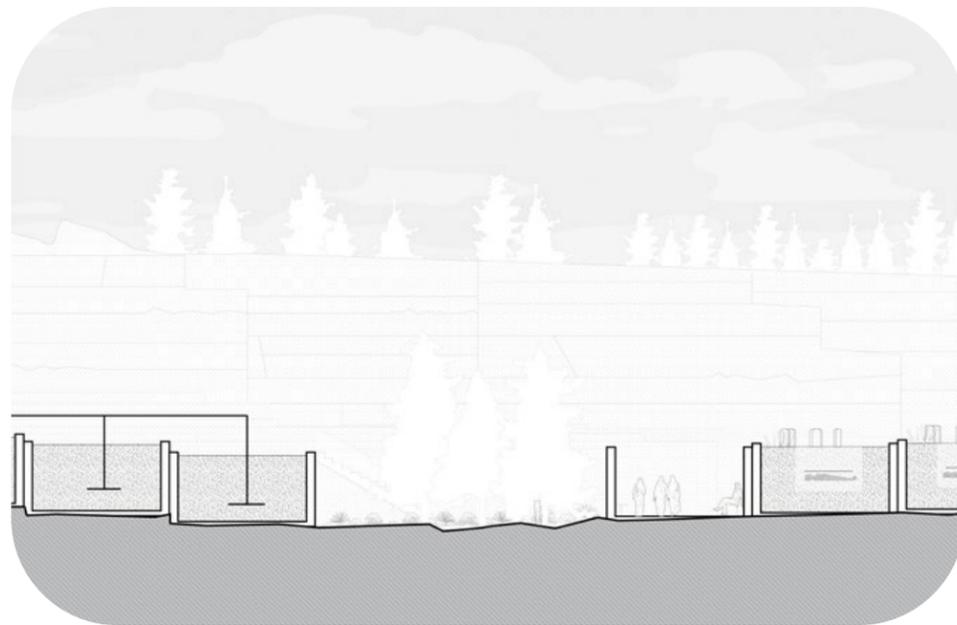
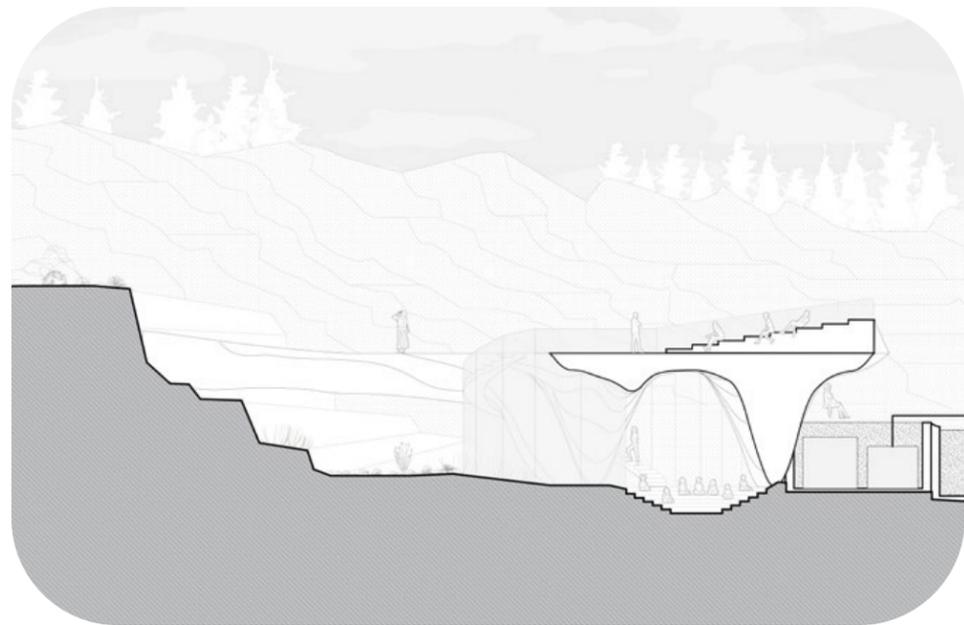
Transportation of soil from  
NYC to quarry location

Building the burial grounds  
with the contaminated soil

Healing of the landscape







Islamberg is in the center of multiple urban islamic communities. And is distinct is its rurality. A study of the typologies of rural churches and mosques was conducted and a similar relationship to infrastructure was found. Eschatology (the beliefs of death rites) has strong roots in Islamic primary sources. The afterlife is a major theme

in the Quran. Scaredness could be found through topics of death, ritual, time, and a shared religious experience. Therefore, an Islamic funerary service and burial ground is proposed, including praying areas, housing and a landscape experience - which will add to the economic stability and growth of Islamberg. Contaminated soil from NYC

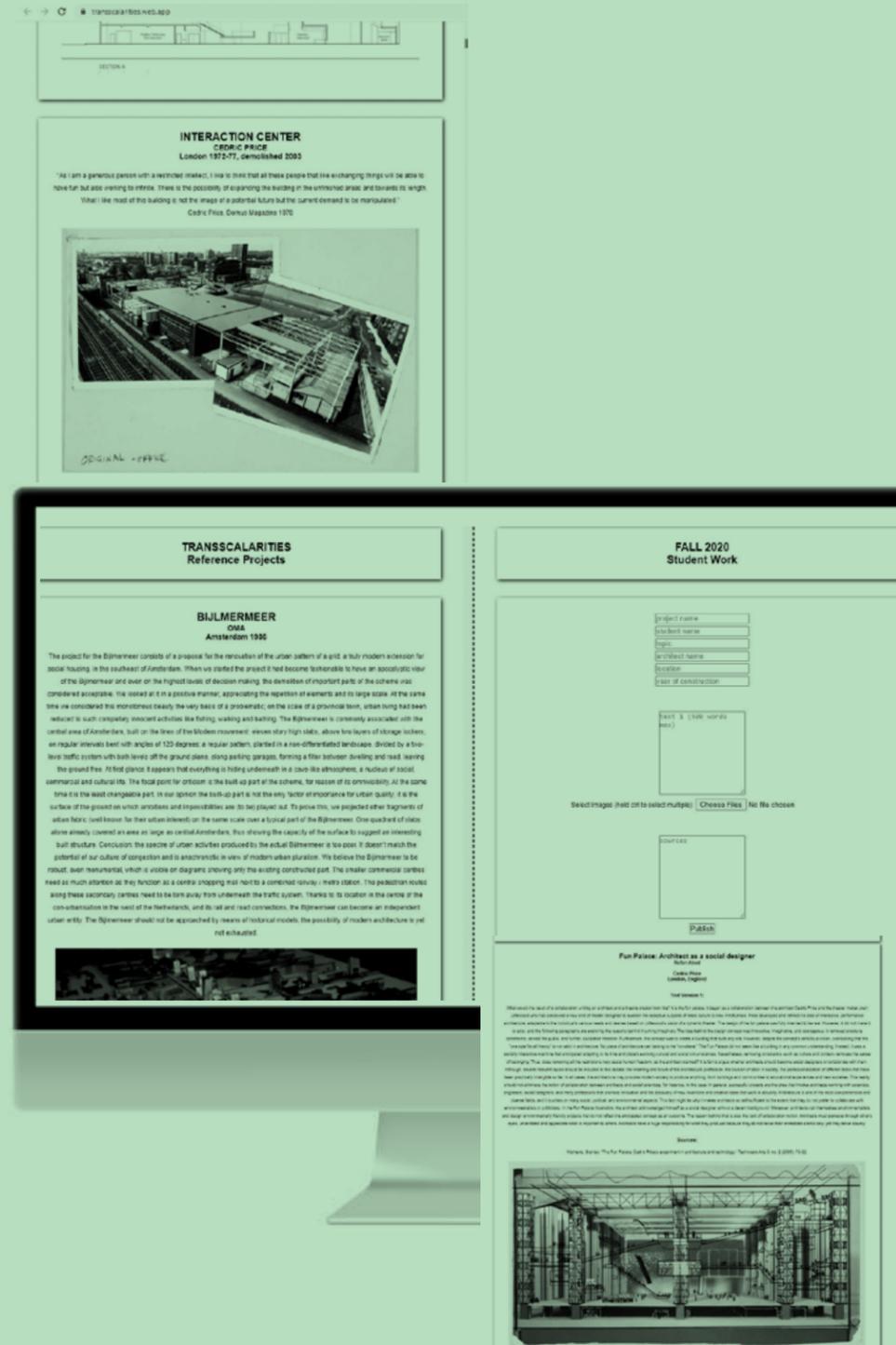
is brought to a nearby abandoned quarry where the burial grounds will be. The soil is remediated on site and then used as cemetery and park. The landscape heals through death. The site is constantly active, with soil being remediated, bereaved families burying their loved ones, using parts of the landscape to mourn, meditate, learn and pray.

# TRANSSCALARITIES

This course characterizes architectural devices as both relational and environmental entities in the way they build up interdependencies with each other; and in the way they participate in composites where economics, institutions, societies, biologies, ecologies, technologies, normativities, media, environments, aesthetics, and cultures are enacted as intersectional.

The webpage is divided into two parts: the left side is fixed, hosting the full list of precedents studied in the course, the right side is active, where students upload their study of the precedents. The result is that seeing both versions side by side, with a multitude of combination between the right and left sides. The website was built using Visual Studio Code, Git Hub and Firebase to store the information.

Website for Advanced Architecture design course, GSAPP <https://transscalarities.web.app/> with Kaeli Streeter



# JUST ANOTHER FARM

JA/S aims to propose a two part solution. On one hand, the project uses existing buildings and stays as minimally invasive as possible. On the other hand, it is creating a new landscape by the water that can act as a flood resilient strategy and provide enough food for the area. The new landscape showcases arguments of water, energy, urban farming and mobility.

The roof of the existing building is transformed into a sloped farm and public space. The rainwater is captured through the soil and some water basins on the landscape that filter the water and, through gravity, bring it down to the storage area under the topography. The water from the storage is then pumped to the top of the landscape for irrigation and used as needed for production.

The shape of our landscape also acts as a flood resiliency solution for the entire area. It prevents the water rise to reach beyond our site which would make a change on a larger scale as seen in this post intervention flood map.

On a smaller scale, the flood resilient strategy happens in specific moments as well. The space is inhabited in usual times and then the continues to be used after a flood.

This topographic landscape on the waterfront creates an ecosystem around urban farming, with produce being grown on the roof and sold in the farmers market on the street level.

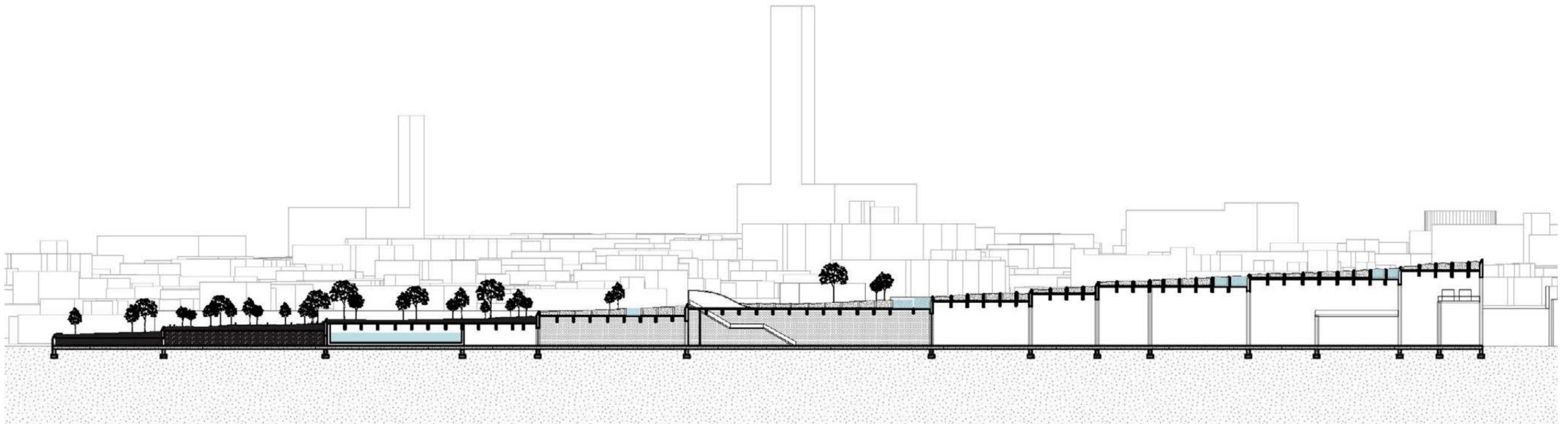
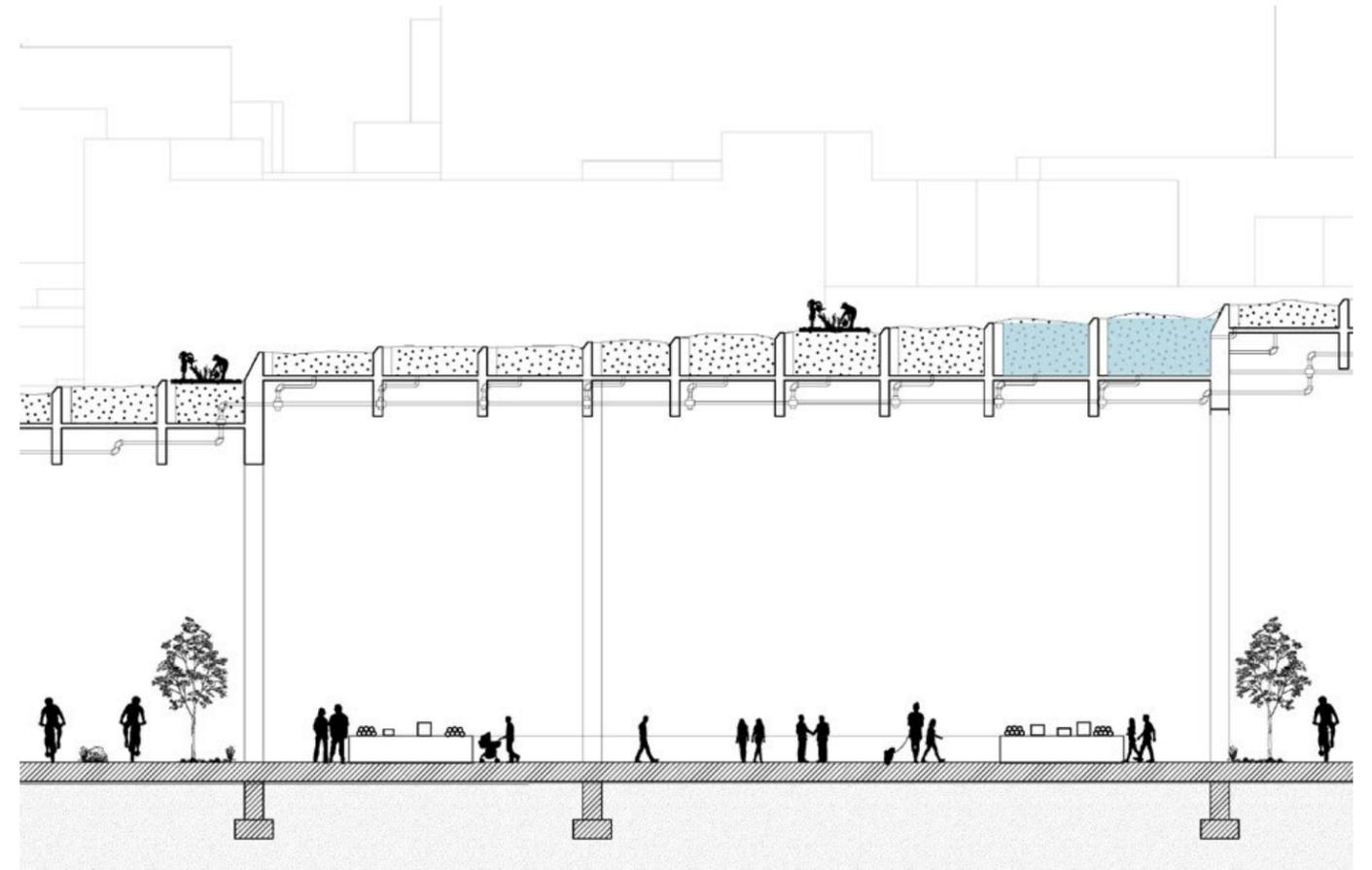
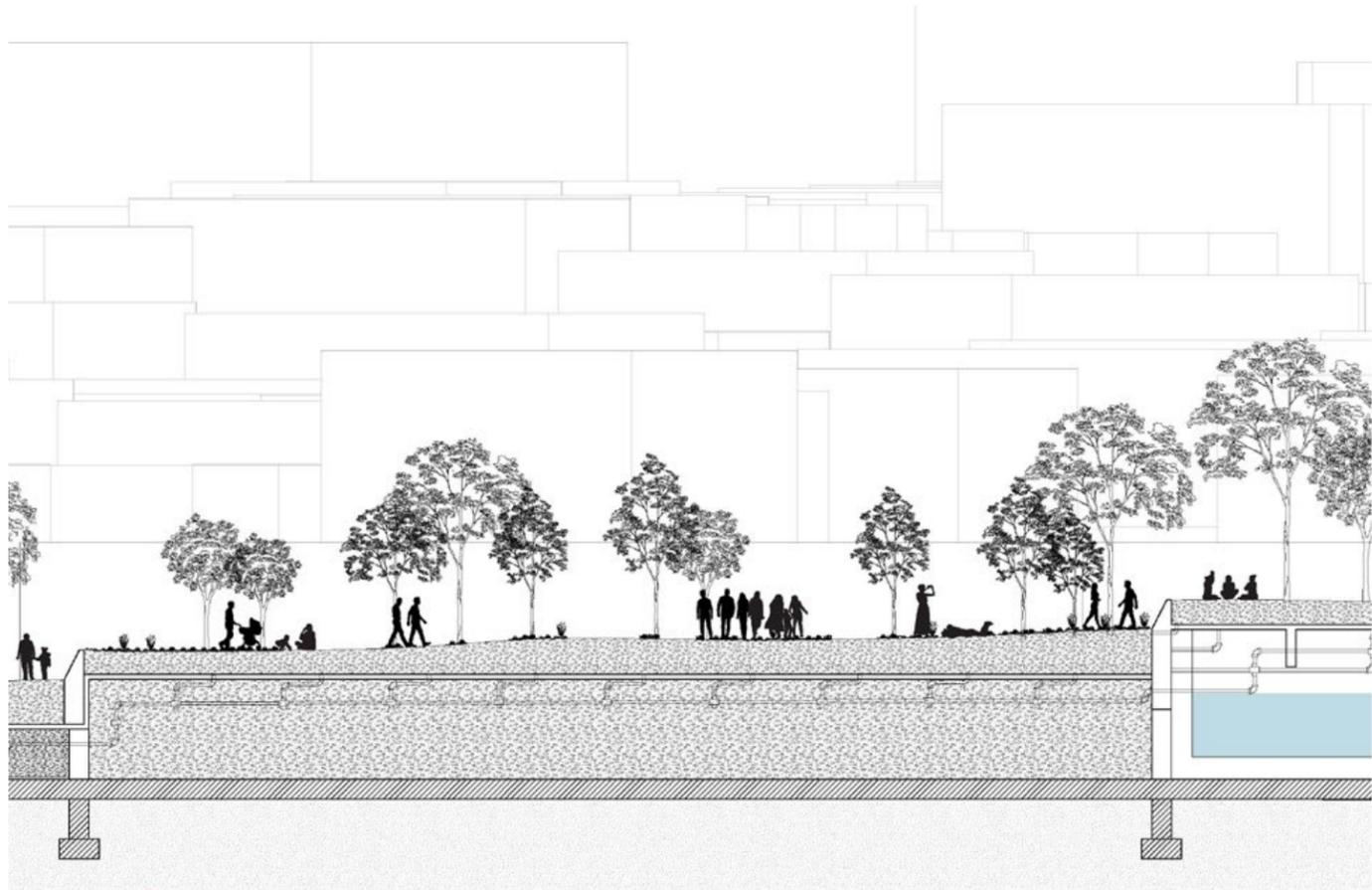
Three different types of Urban Farming will be implemented on our site, vertical farming in the existing mta building, hydroponic and aquaponic farming in the city storage building, and open air farming plots on the roof of the main waterfront structure.

In terms of mobility, the existing city storage building is revitalized and creates a network of electric vehicular trucks which can access the farmscape above and enter the city storage mezzanine to distribute and receive goods. There is a direct relationship between the landscape and the city storage on the right which are connected via ramp up the edge of our landscape.

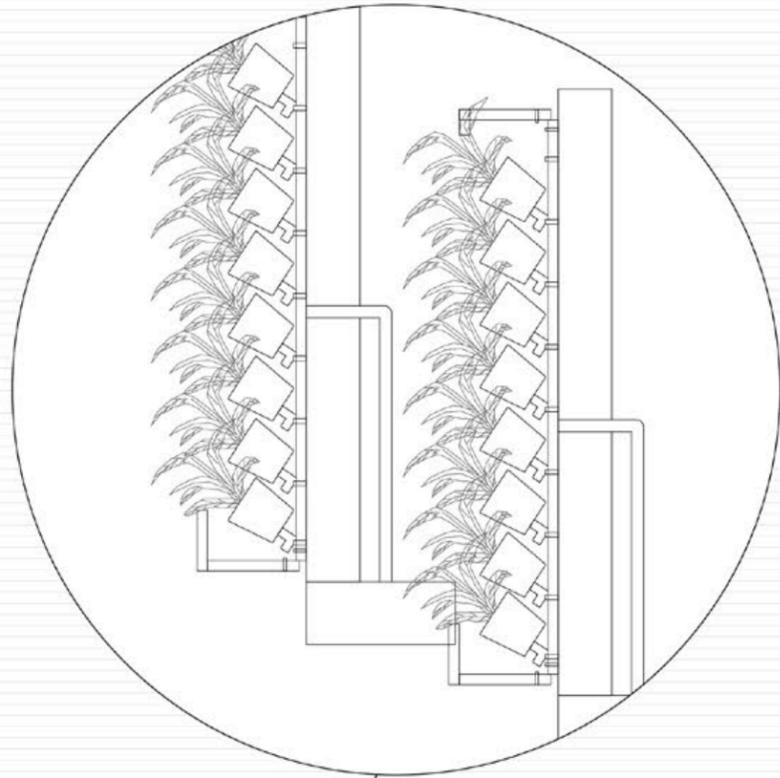
GSAPP AT V Integrated Design Urban Scale - Spring 2021

Critic - Lola Ben-Alon

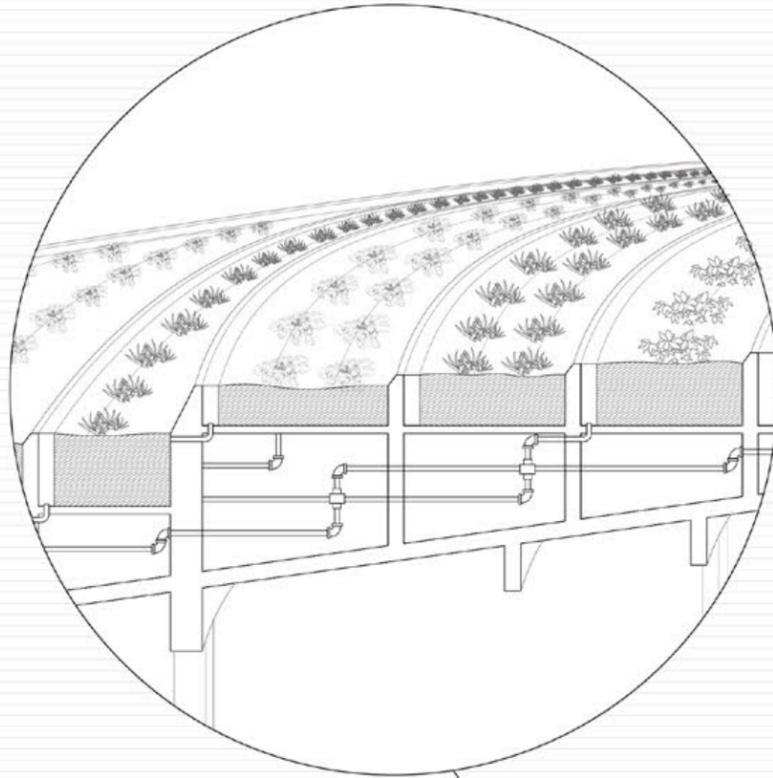
Partners - Gene Han, Mickaella Pharaon, Danielle Nir



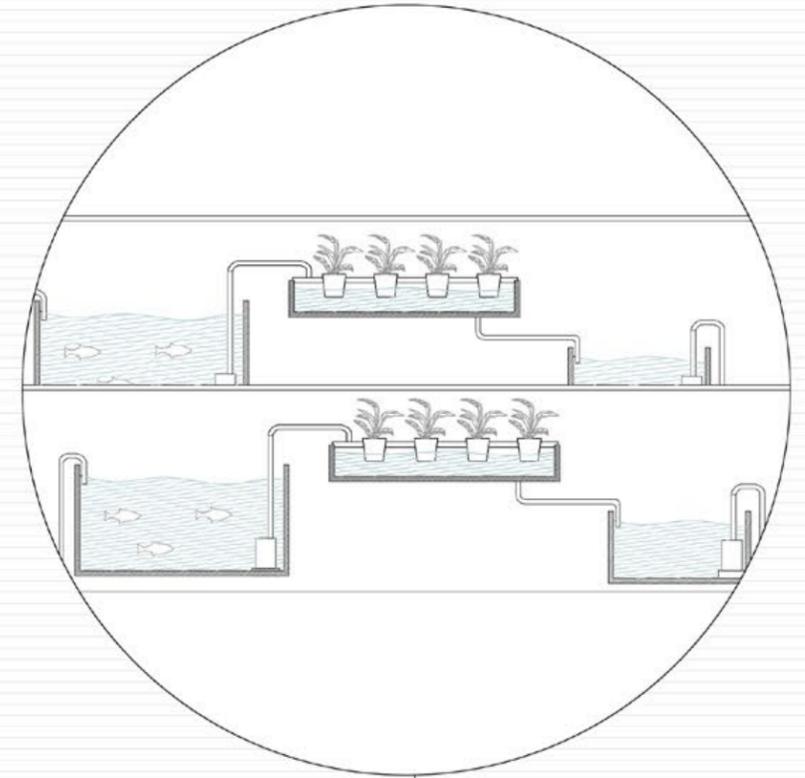
VERTICAL FARMING

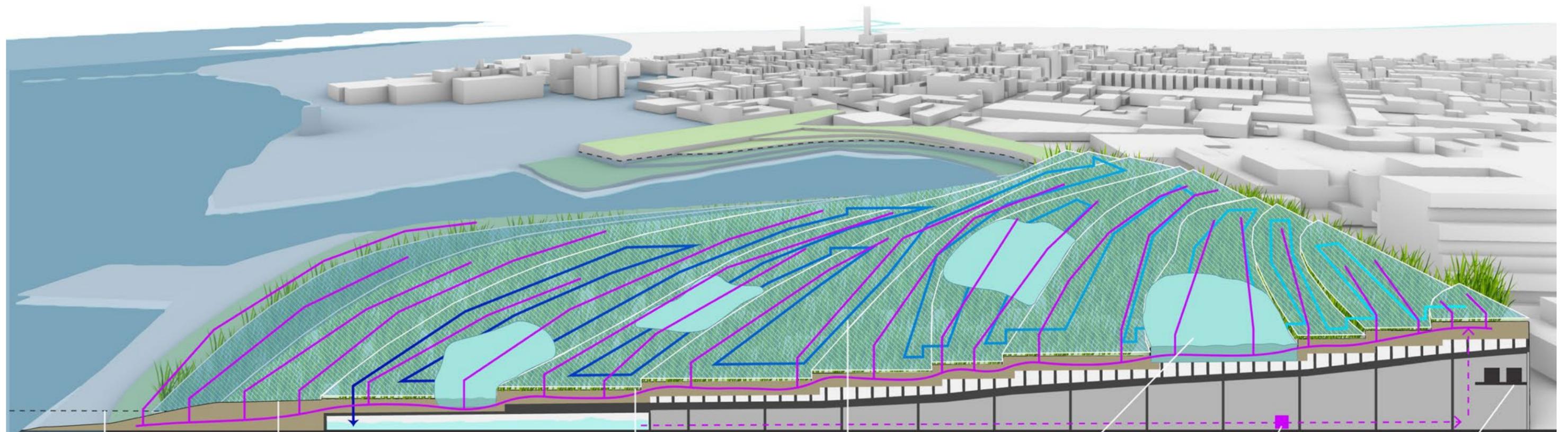
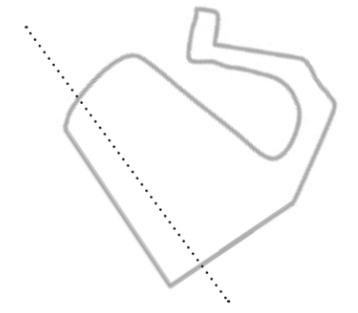


OPEN AIR FARMING PLOTS



HYDROPONIC + AQUAPONIC FARMING





MAX WATER RISE  
BFE 12'  
DFE 16'

TAPERING SOIL

WATER STORAGE  
60,000 sqf  
600,000 ft<sup>3</sup>  
= 4.4M gallons

IRRIGATION  
SYSTEM

WATER RUNOFF  
+ FILTRATION

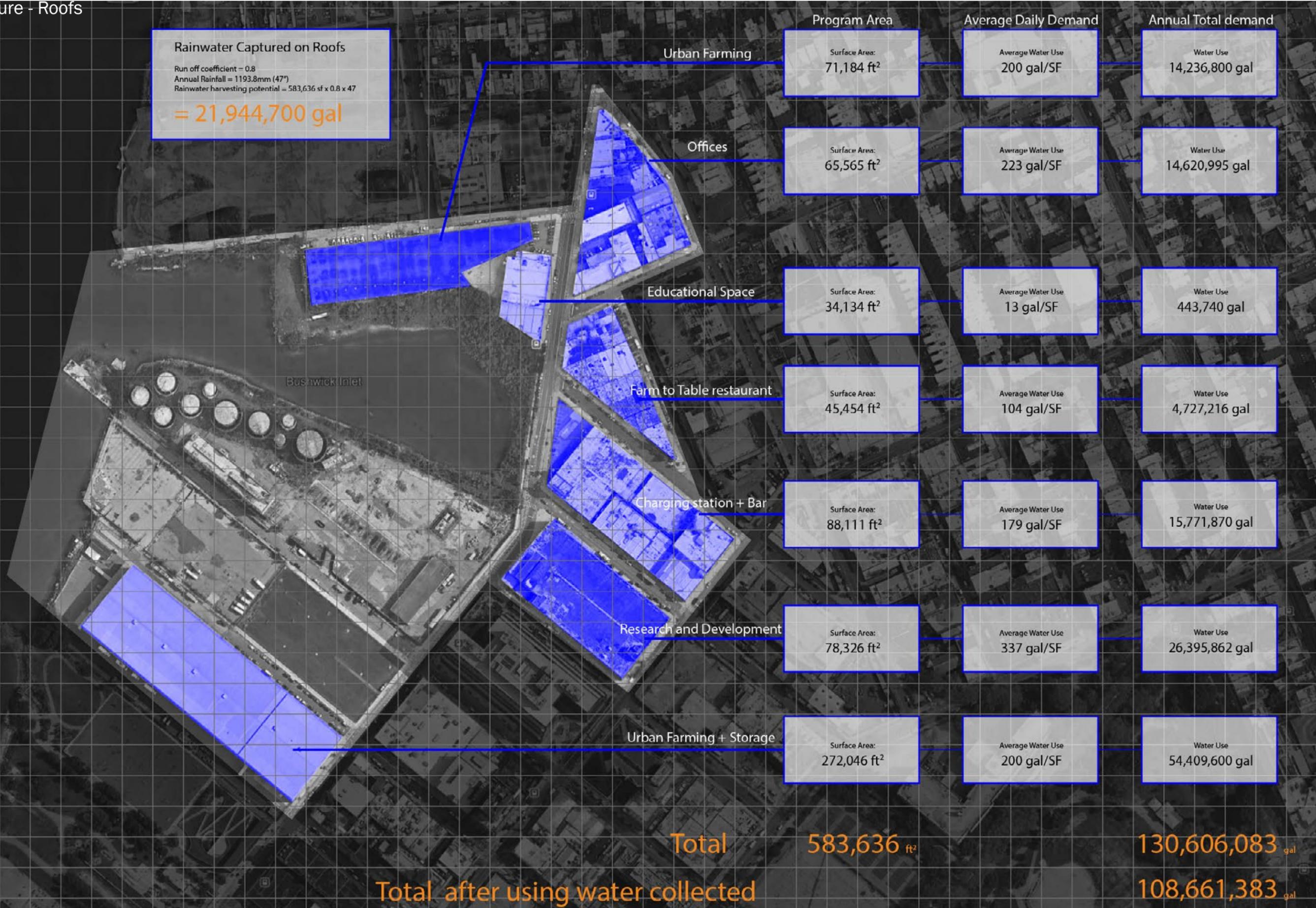
WATER BASSINS  
FOR COLLECTION

WATER PUMPING  
FOR IRRIGATION

BATTERY STORAGE

# Rainwater Capture - Roofs

**Rainwater Captured on Roofs**  
 Run off coefficient = 0.8  
 Annual Rainfall = 1193.8mm (47")  
 Rainwater harvesting potential = 583,636 sf x 0.8 x 47  
**= 21,944,700 gal**





**JUST ANOTHER FARM**

TOTAL SF:

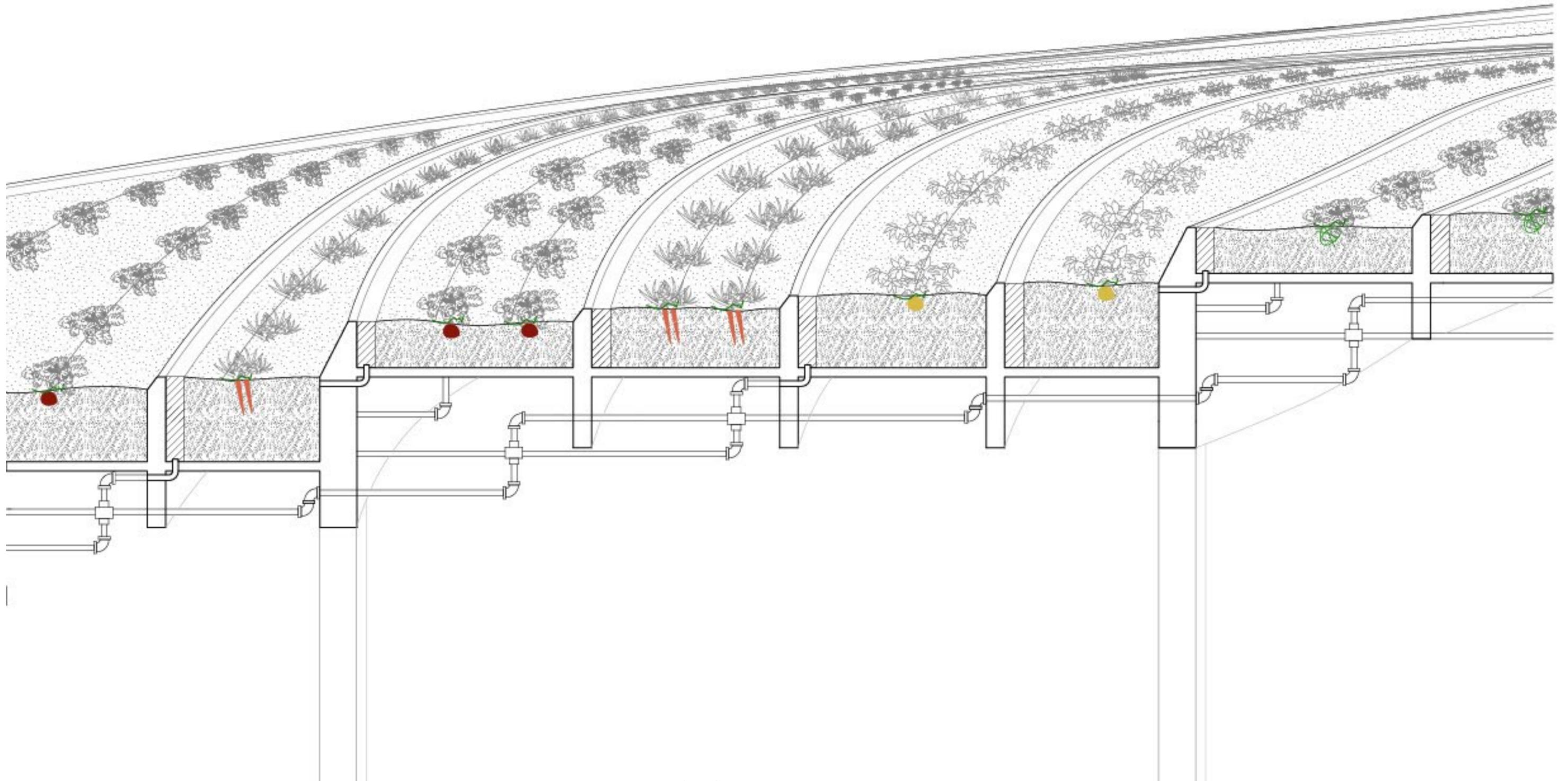
**250,000**



**BROOKLYN GRANGE**

3 LOCATIONS COMBINED SF:

**135,000**



# HETEROTOPIA OF DEVIATION

## ANALYZING BEIRUT THROUGH ITS MARGINS

As many cities around the world are dealing with issues of urbanization, rising inequality, and marginalization, Beirut is no different. In fact, many Arab cities, which are often said to be exceptionalized from global development, have been wrestling with these same issues. Joseph Fahim, the Egyptian film critic who is optimistic about the profile of Arab film points to how recent movies such as Capernaum and In the Last Days of the City are poignant films that have rightly received recognition across the globe.

Tires as makeshift roofs, dilapidated neighborhoods, broken windows, garbage filled streets and slums that don't seem to end. These are the first few minutes of the movie Capernaum that starts with the absence of dialogue, but we are greeted with one of the main characters of the movie; the city. A city where deviation of heterotopia exists as the marginalized citizens of Beirut are crowded, neglected and pushed to the edge. In these marginalized spaces, we witness a duality between the housing conditions of Zein, the undocumented Lebanese young boy, and Rahil, the Ethiopian migrant worker. This duality makes clear the neoliberal policy of Beirut, that despite some differences that we will highlight in this paper, both are victims of policy in Beirut that abandons lower income communities.

One of the most striking aspects of housing projects developed across the Middle East in the second half of the twentieth century is their rejection by users and inhabitants. Conceived by well-intentioned architects, planners and city officials they were meant to usher a newly liberated people into modernity; in other instances, they were introduced by colonizing powers as a way to subjugate the population. Irrespective of motives transformations occurred, shifting their initial pristine visions into an informal assemblage of sorts that nevertheless was an expression of their culture and lifestyle.

Housing more than any other building typology encapsulates themes of displacement, identity, urban growth and inequality. The home is a very specific space through which one can read a society's sense of itself, indeed its very essence. This applies to both state-led initiatives, as a way to legitimize ruling classes, and informal forms of dwelling in which people have a direct input in their houses, thus becoming a true expression of their life style. Through looking at housing forms across the region, the very nature of the Arab city is explored.

GSAPP Arab Modernism(s): Experiments in Housing 1945-Present  
Spring 2021

Critic - Yasser Elsheshtawi

Partners - Bisher Tabbaa & Sarah Hejazin

*“As many cities around the world are dealing with issues of urbanization, rising inequality, and marginalization, Beirut is no different. In fact, many Arab cities, which are often said to be exceptionalized from global development, have been wrestling with these same issues. Joseph Fahim, the Egyptian film critic who is optimistic about the profile of Arab film points to how recent movies such as Capernaum and In the Last Days of the City are poignant films that have rightly received recognition across the globe”*

## Heteretopia of Deviation

Analyzing Beirut Through  
Its Margins

Capernaum as a Case Study

Aya Abdallah, Sarah Hejazi, Bisher Tabbaa



مرّة جديدة في السينما اللبنانية، كما عند لبكي، نحن أمام فيلم سياسي بلا بُعد سياسي. بيئة بلا أنثروبولوجيا، مدينة من دون عمق، بشر بلا امتداد، حد أنّ مجمل الفيلم يمنح الانطباع أنّه يعوم في الفضاء

Hovik Habachian  
An Nahar



As many cities around the world are dealing with issues of urbanization, rising inequality, and marginalization, Beirut is no different. In fact, many Arab cities, which are often said to be exceptionalized from global development, have been wrestling with these same issues. Joseph Fahim, the Egyptian film critic, who is optimistic about the profile of Arab film points to how recent movies such as Capernaum and In the Last Days of the City are poignant films that have rightly received recognition across the globe.

“The situation in the Arab world now is difficult. But, for me, that means there is fertile ground for great cinema - for creators to try and work around the system to create great stories.”<sup>1</sup>

1. Almosly, Raya. “How Arab Cinema Is Throwing off the Shackles of Cultural Colonialism.” Arab News, Arabnews.com, 2021. Accessed 10/10/2021.

"It's very easy to write a cynical review in a cafe in London or in Paris, sitting in your own bubble, not understanding what's going on in the world. Unfortunately the reality is much harsher than what they see in the film. So if they think this is poverty porn, I don't know what they will do when they see the reality of it."<sup>2</sup>

2. Iain Akerman, "Nadine Labaki Says 'Capernaum' Changed Her as a Human Being," Arab News, February 22, 2019, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/1445886/art-culture>.

Through this tension between the screen and reality, the paper will examine the relationship between the characters of the movie in their interaction with the built environment, and the degree to which the movie is a reflection of reality.

The movie was filmed in Beirut in three main locations; firstly, Bourj Hammoud and its vicinity which includes Sin il Fil, the Sunday Market, and Karantina, secondly, Raouche, and finally Roumieh Prison. The framework of the paper was determined based on these locations and segmented them as the following: Zein's family's house in Nabaah, Rahil, the Ethiopian worker's house in Karantina, and what we're defining as the 'other' spaces in the movie. These spaces are scenes where we see how marginalized communities occupy communal space, such as the Souk Al Ahad, and Roumieh Prison.



The overarching theme of the movie emphasizes how poverty is more than monetary deficiency, as the world bank definition confirms. But rather, it is a multifaceted issue that makes it difficult to have any social advancement.



### Naba'a Housing

In Labaki's Capernaum, Zein's family lives in one of the many slums that are scattered around Beirut. These scenes were filmed in the East Beirut neighborhood of Bourj Hammoud even though it is not explicitly mentioned in the movie. However, Bourj Hammoud represents many of the neighborhoods that are neglected by the government and investors due to a number of reasons. These reasons could be attributed to the fact that many residents are not voters either because they are refugees, immigrants who cannot vote, or undocumented people. Furthermore, the neglect is also due to the low environmental quality of urban space and being a low-income neighborhood with no significant purchasing power. As a result, many of these neighborhoods suffer from lacking proper infrastructure to public space, and often, segregation.<sup>3</sup>

Media in Beirut has had many different views of Bourj Hammoud in the past, and continues to do so. While some romanticize it and see it holding "old traditions that are seen in the countryside" by having for example "laundry lines hanging from balconies",<sup>4</sup> other media outlets spew and ignite the division that has been part of Bourj Hammoud. These media outlets feed on dividing the diverse population of Bourj Hammoud and Naba'a that has residents from different backgrounds such as Christian Syriac, Armenians, Orthodox, Catholic, Shiite Muslims, Sunni Muslims, and Druze. However, this division is mostly created between Syrians and Lebanese, as some media outlets write "it [Bourj Hammoud] has many unruly Syrians that go out at night to rob and riot... and are distributed all around the area which means it is only a time ticking bomb".<sup>5</sup>

To understand this division, and to be able to assess it against Capernaum, we briefly look at the history of Bourj Hammoud which started under French rule where Naba'a became a camp for Armenian refugees after they were transferred from Karantina to Bourj Hammoud. The transfer of properties that are adjacent to Naba'a into camps led to a decrease in real estate prices in Naba'a which allowed the owners of these properties to divide and rent or sell them to the displaced. Throughout the fifties, most of the houses added floors without permits and appropriated the neighbourhood without any planning from the governments, which led it to become deprived of goods, services, and proper infrastructure to accommodate a population that were mostly low income Shiites. Naba'a's demographic and urban fabric changed after the events of "Tal al Zaatar" under which it was besieged. This led to many residents leaving the areas and the Kataeb occupying it. After the end of the civil war, the Ministry of the Displaced wanted to return the homes to their original owners, however, it was not in their interest so they rented their apartments to working migrants from Syria and Ethiopia.



3. Aelbrecht, Patricia, and Quentin Stevens. Public Space Design and Social Cohesion An International Comparison. 2019.

4. "بحور رملی، 'بورج حمود: الصیفة اللدائیة فی شارع' الأخبار، March 9, 2009, [https://al-akhbar.com/Archive\\_Research/141007](https://al-akhbar.com/Archive_Research/141007).

5. "بناہ بلسکال لور... قتلہ بوقریة"، Elnashra News

### The Other Spaces

Nadine Labaki uses Capernaum as a title, preparing the audience for what awaits them in the movie. She borrows it from *Kfar Nahum*, a fishing village on the Sea of Galilee, historically known for its disorder and chaos. This disorder and chaos that the movie is trying to capture starts from Zein's apartment, and Rahil's shack, but also continues to all the spaces in between. Growing up playing, begging, and selling juice on the street, Zein is street smart. This gained quality, shared with many children facing the same conditions, drives him to run to the in-between spaces, the heterotopias.

Heterotopia is a concept used to describe certain spaces that are somehow "other"; disturbing, intense, and contradictory spaces that exist in order to make a real "utopian" space possible. One of those spaces seen in the movie is Roumieh Prison. As a facility holding up 300% more than its actual capacity with some of Lebanon's most high-profile criminals, Roumieh prison can be considered as Lebanon's most notorious.

It was designed by Pierre El-Khoury, whose modernist design can be read clearly in this prison. Its massive interconnected set of triangles and hexagons generates a Lebanese panopticon. The intentional form of a central observation system assumes that the prisoners will be effectively compelled to stay regulated as Big Brother watches. However, despite this intention, Roumieh prison is only internally regulated. Its overcrowding resulted in a prisoner-run facility, where prisoners

have their own governmental structures. Through the *Mas'ool* who is an elected representative of the inmates, and the *Shaweesh* who is often an older influential prisoner, the hierarchical structure which the government seems to have no say in, is maintaining the radicalization and extremism in the prison. Due to this overcrowding, another clear security issue occurs, which is the imbalance between prisoners and guards. This has resulted in a "thriving market of resource smuggling",<sup>13</sup> where prisoners exchange their compliance to the guards with better internet access, a bigger supply of protein, and the waiving of visitor strip-search routines. Capernaum may have shed a light on the prison's overcrowding, racial segregation, and smuggling, but it has failed to portray this system which seems to run the whole prison. Indi Phillips, an Australian research analyst based in Lebanon, believes that there are minimal efforts in exposing the processes and hierarchical structures within Roumieh and other similar institutions.<sup>14</sup> We believe that this is related to Lebanon's censorship practices; where glimpses of the repressive state apparatus and its repercussions are deemed "unfit for public consumption due to it being a threat to national security".<sup>15</sup>



13. "Prison Radicalization: Indirect Processes of Radicalization at Lebanon's Roumieh - European Eye on Radicalization," 2019. Eeradicalization.Com. December 16, 2019.

14. Jadalyya, "Misery in Hindsight: On Nadine Labaki's Capernaum," Jadalyya (Jadalyya, May 4, 2019), <https://www.jadalyya.com/Details/38447>.

15. Jadalyya, "Fractured Space: The Case of Souk Al-Ahad, Beirut," Jadalyya (Jadalyya, July 10, 2017), <https://www.jadalyya.com/Details/30990>.



Another heterotopia that is portrayed in the movie is *Souk Al Ahad*, *Souk Al Ahad*, or Sunday Market, is a vibrant and busy outdoor market that is located under the bridge of Jisr al-Wati in an industrial zone between the residential areas of Achrafiyeh and Sin al-Fil. In one of the scenes, Zein is seen with Yonas, walking precariously on the highway, which the market lies underneath. The white tensile fabric roof which that can be seen from the highway above protects a fractured space, in which many Syrian and Palestinian refugees' marginality is highlighted. Other than being a liminal space of sociability, the movie portrays the souk's potential in being a fertile ground for misdeeds such as human trafficking and the illegal trade of documents and refugee babies. The movie showcases the souk as an informal public space with a collection of stalls, vendors, and affordable goods, but it fails to mention both the long conflict over its land ownership between the Lebanese Ministry of Energy and Water and the municipality of neighboring Sin el-Fil, and the social divisions between the vendors themselves which we believe make the simplistic representations of the market as a homogeneous collective space unrealistic.



Souk Al Ahad is often perceived as a gift to the public, a place where the state allows urban 'informality' on state-owned non-buildable land to take place, however, Marieke Krijnen sheds a light on the connection between the private actors who exploit the Souk and the ministry that licensed them to exploit it. This 'informality' is questioned when private actors are given the upper

*“In Islam, men and women pray at the same time. When the call to prayer has been announced, bodies move through the space, find and assemble with other bodies that are similar, stand shoulder to shoulder with their garments barely touching each other. Through the ritual of prayer, bodies of women are in the back. They are nowhere to be seen. They are rendered invisible.”*

## Women, religion and agency

Women's constant negotiations of space in the mosque

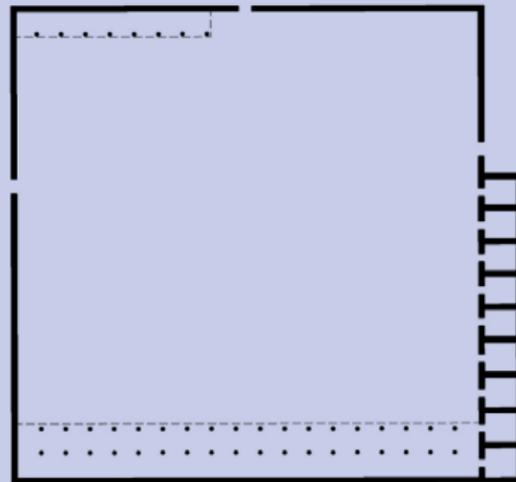
Critic: Ana Puigjaner  
Fall 2021

### Introduction: History and evolution of mosque architecture

The earliest mosques gave life to some of the most compelling facets of Islamic Architecture. In Islam, the mosque has not solely been a place for prayer : the mosque's formal, social and structural organization differs from one religious institution to another, the Sunnis divided into four schools (Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, Hanbali) and the Shiites into three (Twelvers, Ismailis, Zaydis).

The home of the Prophet Muhammad is considered the first mosque. His house, in Medina in modern-day Saudi Arabia, was a typical 7th-century Arabian style house, with a large courtyard surrounded by long rooms supported by columns. This style of mosque came to be known as a hypostyle mosque, meaning "many columns." Most mosques built in Arab lands utilized this style for centuries.

Diagram reconstruction of the Prophet's House, Medina, Saudi Arabia



From Indonesia to the United Kingdom, the mosque in its many forms is the quintessential Islamic building. Masjid, in Arabic, is the Muslim gathering place for prayer. Though most of the five daily prayers prescribed in Islam can take place anywhere, all men are required to gather together at the mosque for the Friday noon prayer.

A mosque is a space for reflection, congregation, and meditation. Its size depends on the population around which it is built. The most fundamental necessity of congregational mosque architecture is that it be able to hold the entire male population of a city or town. (Women are welcome to attend Friday prayers, but not required to do so.)

The separation of roles and spaces is present in multiple layers of Islamic tradition, and especially in the spatial organization of gender in mosques.

Most mosques host both men and women, but female prayer spaces are only very rarely mentioned in Islamic architectural history. These gendered areas vary according to the schools they belong to.

So what makes these gendered spaces unique? What is the experience of these marginalized populations in what is supposed to be the most democratic of spaces? If these women are kept out of the main spaces of worship, what kind of spaces are created instead? What isolated spaces are created through informal appropriation by marginalized populations when they are denied access to worship areas born out of repression and restriction?

## Women in Islamic Spaces

Historically, a specific mosque typology does not exist. Mosques have followed the trend of time and have morphed depending on their context. The first mosque was the house of the prophet, consisting of just one single room. Overtime, mosques have taken over existing structures, sometimes even other religious edifices such as churches. Ziad Jamaledine, professor at Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, focuses on a particular research into architecture in the Middle East—rigorously interrogating topics such as religious architecture and religiosity in public space. He mentions in an interview with Architect Nabi Agzamov in East East:

*“We know that for the first hundred years there was no mosque architecture that we could recognize as such today. Prayer spaces were created by simply orienting towards Mecca. The direction of such orientation changed during the life of the Prophet, from facing Jerusalem to facing Mecca.”*

So how did we go from a non architecture to a strictly gendered architecture today?

While women and men are seen as spiritually equal in Islam, in other parts of every day life, patriarchy has become the norm in the practice and has led to various forms of segregation and oppression of women.

From what I have noticed, all literature around women and Islam begins with describing the life of the prophet Mohammad and his wives. All the stories (or hadith - a collection of traditions which constitute the major source of guidance for Muslims apart from the Quran), portray the high level of respect and equality the prophet used to treat his wives which usually sets the standard for the rest of the population. His first wife, who was much older and richer than he, plays a big role in the rise of Islam.

The Quran has a number of commands towards the Muslim community about praying, but nothing differentiating these commands by gender. Even the language in the Quran does not segregate between men and women. In the verses that discuss the appropriate times to pray, plural pronouns are used, and are directed towards everyone. There are many hadiths that mention the presence of women in mosques, some recalling stories of the prophet praying alongside women.

In Qasim Amin's works, *The Liberation of Women* and *The New Woman*, he discusses the way a gender hierarchy and gendered thinking have resulted in practices that deprive Muslim women of agency.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Bethany Mintha Elias Jenner, “They Made Their Sacred Space: Power and Piety in Women's Mosques and Mushollas” (Ph.D., United States -- Arizona, Arizona State University), accessed November 13, 2021

In her breakthrough work ‘Quran and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective’, Amina Wadud examines the text of the Quran for indications on how the Prophet Muhammad intended women to be viewed. According to Wadud “there is no indication that the Quran intends for us to understand that there is a primordial distinction between males and females with regard to spiritual potential.” If this is the case, why have certain activities and roles aimed to promote spiritual growth become available to only one gender? Through Bethany Mintha Elias Jenner's work in ‘They Made Their Sacred Space: Power and Piety in Women's Mosques and Mushollas’, Fatima Mernissi's extensive body of work is analyzed, including ‘Beyond the Veil: Malefemale Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society’<sup>2</sup>, where she explores the division of public and private space in Islamic societies and how these spheres have become separated and gendered. One justification for this division is the threat of sexual temptation; that is, the idea that women carry the burden of being so sexually tempting that for the good of men, and therefore society as a whole, to prevent the dangerous consequences of a woman's sexuality, women must be relegated to separate spaces. With this separation, however, comes a distinct power differential, which Mernissi describes thus:

*“Strict space boundaries divide Muslim society into two sub-universes: the universe of men (the umma, the world religion and power) and the universe of women, the domestic world of sexuality and the family. The spatial division according to sex reflects the division between those who hold authority and those who do not, those who hold spiritual powers and those who do not.”*

Veiling becomes a method that allows access for women to enter space otherwise restricted to them while still making their presence invisible.<sup>3</sup>

Jenner continues to explain that the presence of women in mosques has been debated at least since the caliphate of Umar (634-644 CE). Different cultures have chosen to interpret and enforce ideas of gender and space, sometimes in conflicting manners. Marion Holmes Katz uses the concept of gendered space to follow a timeline of women's inclusion or exclusion in the mosque throughout Islamic history in her book ‘Women in the Mosque’. Katz takes on common justifications for preventing women from attending mosques— that they are too busy with domestic duties, that

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ber 13, 2021

<sup>2</sup> Fatima Mernissi, *Beyond the Veil: Male-female Dynamics in a Modern Muslim Society* (New York: J. Wiley and Sons, 1975).

<sup>3</sup> Bethany Min tha Elias Jenner, “They Made Their Sacred Space: Power and Piety in Women's Mosques and Mushollas” (Ph.D., United States -- Arizona, Arizona State University), accessed November 13, 2021

the Prophet did not command women to attend, that they are too sexually tempting to attend, and more.

The simple action of going to the mosque was a symbol of a woman's mobility and visibility outside of the home. Therefore the discussion surrounding it was an occasion for the expression of fundamental ideas about women's role in society, as wives, community members and ritual actors.<sup>1</sup>

The stark differences between the women's sections and the men's sections in mosques are described in several testimonies of women. Some are available online and some are found through on site research by academics. This blog was posted by an anonymous writer in 2011:<sup>2</sup>

*"It was a terrifying and thrilling experience the first time I crossed the line and tip-toed my way into the men's section of the mosque. The area was brighter and cleaner — and books containing authentic religious knowledge gleamed in the sun. There was no broken stereo system, no screaming children, no dusty carpets and no barrier. I kept looking over my shoulder hoping that no one would notice me. Once I grabbed the book I wanted, I flew back to my section of the mosque — heart pounding, relieved that I wasn't caught. I was completely paranoid, but left that space feeling like God was closer in the men's section."*

Bethany Jenner does a deep dive into women's spaces in mosques and gets first hand quotes herself through her travels and her research. She asks women about their past experiences in mixed-gender mosques (see next quote<sup>3</sup>). From these interviews, we can deduce that his physical separation made women feel spiritually peripheral, like they don't belong, or simply an afterthought.

*"Just having space for women is an issue in so many mosques," Amira, a young professional, noted. "There either is no designated space for women and then either they're not allowed to come or they get pushed into some weird corner and are made to feel they are somewhere they are not welcome...Or the space that is designated for women is just so horrible, it's not comfortable, it's off somewhere on the side where you just don't feel connected to the rest of the community." Laila, a writer with young children, echoed this sentiment: "It's always that women are like an afterthought—it's not an equal space...Sometimes they're like, 'Oh we don't have enough money so we wanted to first make the men's section and in the meantime you women can pray,' you know, in some sort of, I don't want to say closet but maybe a backroom type or a lobby of some school that is attached to the masjid."*

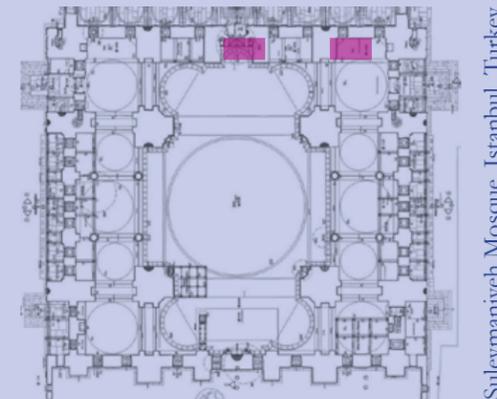
### Gendered Spaces

1 Marion Holmes Katz, "Introduction," in *Women in the Mosque* (Columbia University Press, 2014)

2 wood turtle. "Power and Accommodation at the Mosque," August 18, 2011. <https://woodturtle.wordpress.com/2011/08/18/power-and-accommodation-at-the-mosque/>.

3 Bethany Mintha Elias Jenner, "They Made Their Sacred Space: Power and Piety in Women's Mosques and Mushollas" (Ph.D., United States -- Arizona, Arizona State University), accessed November 13, 2021

These written testimonies are emphasized when looking at images of existing mosques around the world where the gradients of separation range drastically from complete isolation to no gender distinction. In some instances, mosques have a completely separate smaller room in the back, as an addition to the original building. Others offer slight visual separations such as screens, often sharing the same view of the Mihrab but sometimes completely obstructing it.



Süleymaniye Mosque, Istanbul, Turkey

Sometimes, the changes are an afterthought, separating space using pieces of furniture (such as shoe racks).



Şehzade Mosque, Turkey



Santa Barbara Islamic Community Center, Los Angeles, California



Blue mosque, Istanbul, Turkey

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But the distinction is also oftentimes architectural, keeping the women out of sight on the second floor.

Mosque in Afghanistan



They are even kept outside of the facilities at times, and usually lack basic amenities, are unkempt or are used for storage.

Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey



Case Study : Al Umari Mosque, Beirut, Lebanon

Looking more closely at an example of a mosque where the addition of female spaces were part of a reinterpretation of the religion, Al Umari mosque in Beirut portrays that point clearly. This mosque was built at the end of the 13th century, when the Mamluk Army recaptured Beirut from the Franks and converted its Crusader cathedral into a mosque. It underwent multiple renovations and additions until its most recent one in 2004.

Like mostly everything else in Lebanon, this last renovation created a lot of turmoil. Some tensions arose between the DGA (Directorate General of Antiquities) and Solidere, a private architecture and construction company and the mufti.

May Farhat, who is an assistant Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture at the American University of Beirut, writes a piece on this particular mosque and accurately describes the changes made to the original building<sup>1</sup>:

Therefore, the women’s prayer hall was a later addition, almost 7 centuries after its construction. This argues for different interpretations of Islam that are making their way into architectural changes.

*“The original courtyard was expanded and enclosed on two sides by domed porticoes supported by tall granite columns, many of which were retrieved from the site. [...] The white paint that had covered the interior vaults of the mosque since the Mamluk period was removed to reveal the original sandstone, a decision justified by aesthetic considerations. Also, the eighteenth-century external mihrab was removed from its original location and installed in the newly created women’s prayer hall, a large room located on the western side of the courtyard.”*

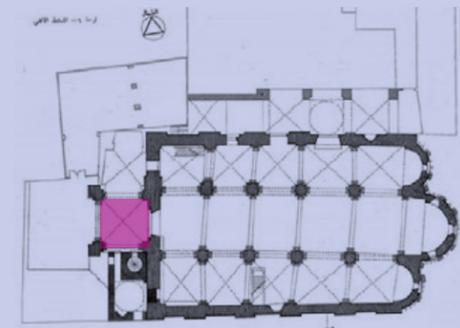


FIGURE 8.3 Plan, 'Umari Mosque, Beirut

Mosque in Istanbul, Turkey

<sup>1</sup> Farhat, May. “Chapter 8 Beirut’s Great Umari Mosque”. In *Art and Material Culture in the Byzantine and Islamic Worlds*, (Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill, 2021)

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**Bodies in Time & Space**

In Islam, men and women pray at the same time. When the call to prayer has been announced, bodies move through the space, find and assemble with other bodies that are similar, stand shoulder to shoulder with their garments barely touching each other. Through the ritual of prayer, bodies of women are in the back. They are nowhere to be seen. They are rendered invisible.

Through time, space is divided. An imperceptible barrier grows from the moment the imam utters his first words to his last. This barrier can start inside the mosque, but also can start right at the entrance, where bodies are separated before even entering the space.

Brick Lane Mosque, London, UK



Different from lines of access, women's bodies cannot cross lines of visibility. They are kept in specific angles that let men focus on their spirituality. Women are allowed to physically be there but not allowed to be seen. That leads to a reorganization of the space with different priorities in mind. Suddenly, a big open space is not possible and the architecture needs to be modified and adapted. By tracing the line of vision of men to women, a clear indication of where women must be located is drawn.



Praying in a mosque is a collective act. It must feel like everyone sharing the room is there for one purpose only, to dedicate their time to God. Therefore, the act of praying must be somewhat collective. People are encouraged to stand near another person, a stranger or a friend, and perform the ritual together. A synchronization happens, everyone kneeling and standing at the same time. It is a moment of heightened spirituality, a closeness to a world beyond the earth, the mosque, the room.



Diagram from ADV IV work by Hazel Villena and Reem Makkawi

When mosques are modified to fit an interpretation of women's spaces, that high is not reached by everyone. As women's spaces are set off to the side, they shrink, becoming tighter and more crowded. The room feels less spiritual and more efficient. But the ratio of space is not proportional to the number of people that attend prayer. The ratio clearly dictates segregation by importance of gender. Women's spaces almost always include children and elderly, and that makes the space feel even smaller.

**Digital Activism**

With an accumulation of these inequalities, around 2012, women started speaking up. They seemed to feel the same disparities collectively: not feeling important enough to have a proper space, feeling overcrowded etc... As most movements nowadays, the protests started online, on blogs and community platforms. A group called Women in Mosques was initiated in October 2017 by a group of women aiming to improve the conditions of women in mosques. According to Alparslan Nas who wrote about this particular group, the primary concern of the activists includes the gendered spatial organization of the mosque, the problems of accessibility for disabled and older adults, and the inadequacies of mosque facilities such as toilets and ablution rooms. Even if their activism is digital, their methods are spatial as they are interested in the mapping of religious spaces through the representation of ideological spatiality and cartography which constitutes the major strategies applied by activists to tackle the patriarchal making of the religious space. Their statements explicitly suggest that the religious space, which is constructed according to a patriarchal ideology in spatial terms, alienates women.

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In the 2000s, digital feminism prioritized the opportunities provided by the internet for fostering feminist networks, solidarities, and new political subjectivities by challenging patriarchal power dynamics in media, culture, and politics. In the early 2010s, muslim women’s activism was growing. New digital counter-spaces were forming on social media to pursue political and social rights in countries such as Tunisia, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Iran and Indonesia, where women managed to gain increased visibility.<sup>1</sup>

In mainstream Islamic culture, the mosque is “God’s House”, a place where anyone is welcome regardless of gender. According to Nas:

*“WIM’s digital activism is centered on the demystification of mosques as hospitable spaces by opening them up to questioning that unsettles their visual politics. The mapping of mosques to expose the spatial arrangements and reproduction of power in the sacred space is the essential strategy of WIM’s digital activism.”*

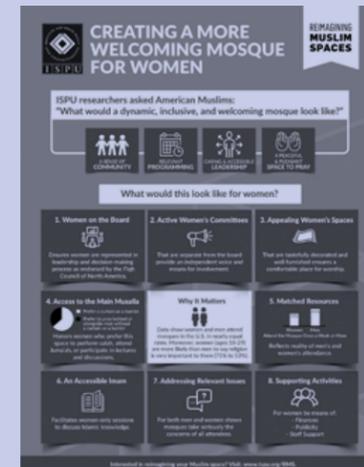
Geography and spaces become a direct translation of this segregation. Through the act of mapping, women are able to measure and monitor the religious space. Through photos, they are able to expose and argue for better praying conditions. Hind Makki, does exactly that in her blog “Side Entrance”. She is an interfaith educator in the United States and organizes workshops for civic leaders, interfaith activists and students. She founded “Side Entrance in 2012” and to this day, curates photos submitted by women all over the world. The description of the website reads: “Photos from mosques around the world, showcasing women’s sacred spaces, in relation to men’s spaces. We show the beautiful, the adequate and the pathetic.” The website offers a visual representation of women’s barriers in muslim societies by using WIM’s strategy of mapping and documenting existing spaces.

This activism has gone beyond the screen and has led to changes in policies within the United States.<sup>2</sup>

*“In 2013, the Islamic Society of North America published a National Needs Assessment where they found that on average 66% of mosques utilize a curtain or physical divider to separate sexes. Additionally, they noted that Jumma’a attendance was only 18% female. 157 ISNA formed the “Task Force for Women-Friendly Masjids” and, in 2015, issued a statement saying that women should be able to pray in the main prayer spaces of mosques without barriers.”*

1 Nas, Alparslan. “Women in Mosques’: Mapping the Gendered Religious Space through Online Activism.” *Feminist Media Studies* 0, no. 0 (January 25, 2021): 1–16.

2 Bethany Mintha Elias Jenner, “They Made Their Sacred Space: Power and Piety in Women’s Mosques and Mushollas” (Ph.D., United States -- Arizona, Arizona State University), accessed November 13, 2021,



Institute for Social Policy and Understanding

Continuing off screen, the emergence of Women-only mosques in Europe and the US has created a new trend. Although that typology has existed in China for hundreds of years - where women have had a long tradition of leading prayers - these mosques are finally coming to life in places like France, US and Germany.



Karima Bahloul, Fatima Mosque, Paris, France

In the US, some women came together and formed the Women’s Mosque of America, a mosque built in Los Angeles exclusively for women. According to Jenner’s interviews with that community, women’s first interaction with women-mosques was exclusively online. They were now intrigued that a physical approach was finally available and were actively seeking new perspectives and experiences of their Islamic spirituality and community.

A lot has been written about problems of equality in islam, but not much has been

written about women's appropriation and control of space.

Jenner even counts the story of Rachel, a young transgender woman and a recent convert to Islam, who is delighted that she is welcomed at WMA without hesitation. Many topics are discussed after the prayers, and in this case, women's issues are put at the forefront, as well as Black Lives Matter and other current social issues. They give a platform for women to speak up without fear of being judged.

WMA has taken up multiple typologies. It can be a stand alone women-only mosque but it can also be a programmatic change. In other mosques in California, WMA takes over an existing mosque and holds women only meetings and gatherings one Friday a month. That creates a safe space within already existing infrastructure and is considered a complimentary space in the Muslim community.

### Conclusion

In summary, the spatial politics of the mosque advance an intersectional field that critically negotiates the complex encounters of patriarchy, militarism, nationalism, and Islam. The digital world has become a space where women seek refuge, discuss and challenge sexist notions. Women are reclaiming narratives around space, embodiment and power through the digital space. For they can suddenly access any space they want, without a gender barrier.

The digital world empowers women, it is a space that allows for the voicing of dissident sentiments among Muslim women including those who might be marginalized in explicitly religious physical spaces, but it does not erase the restrictions that society places on Muslim women.<sup>1</sup>

In the Middle East, the digital realm is a safe space for women to claim their individual and collective Arab feminist identities. It also connected them to other activists around the world. But these spaces are not limited to women, a large surge of LGBTQI support networks have been growing similarly, especially in the Arab world where censorship is the norm, and sexuality is a public matter.

Unfortunately, the safety from harassment doesn't just disappear online. Women have suffered censorship and surveillance, and even trolling and harassment by local men.

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<sup>1</sup> Hirji, Faiza. "Claiming Our Space: Muslim Women, Activism, and Social Media." *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 6, no. 1 (2021): 78–92.

This constant shift between the digital and the physical is crucial for any progress to happen. It's a constant negotiation and one cannot survive without the other in the 21st century.

There is quite a bit of literature about women in Islam but little information on female spaces in Islamic monuments. The women-only mosques that are making the news are starting to make it relevant again for academics to study the theme, even though in Asia, this typology has been around for many years. However there is still a lot of work to be done.

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OF URBAN  
LANDSCAPES,  
CRISIS,  
HOUSING,  
SACREDNESS,  
**DISSENT,**  
IDENTITY,  
REPRESENTATION,  
POLITICS,  
AGENCY.

## ECOSYSTEMS OF DISSENT

As corporate telecommunication buildings evolved around the world, infrastructural systems have gradually been concealed through methods of black-boxing, limiting them to the realm of experts. By eliminating entire material narratives that carry accountability, these corporations became active participants in the production and centralization of secrecy and power. However, cracks within the system exist, and historically, opportunities for dissent have emerged.

For the sake of un-detailing, an ecosystem of dissent emerges as a form of contestation. It is not meant to resist but to undermine the monopolistic control of everyday life. By mapping the infrastructural breaking points of this system, and bringing forward an alternative ecosystem of dissent, unanticipated political and aesthetic capacities can emerge which rethink how power is enacted as an urban reality. Episodes are brought forward, recreated spatially, and understood in their social capacities. A series of interventions is proposed and the regime of communication is slowly dismantled to give room for networks of empowerment. A series of techno-social fictional interventions around New York City allow for alternative ways to engage with data infrastructure. These independent scenarios act to undermine the centralized hegemonic system of communication. They do so by rethinking adjacencies to infrastructure, what it means to maintain it, rewriting contracts, and expanding dissenting initiatives.

For the sake of safety, some infrastructures were tucked away from the public and shifted to the realm of experts. Systems are unearthed and rendered visible again to the public. Activities start to emerge around these once hidden structures, creating spaces for play, learning and leisure. For the sake of national security, infrastructural systems became synonymous with centralized control and power. People take back control of their narratives by taking over their surroundings. The co-opting of private spaces to serve a public benefit creates circular economies of care and trust.

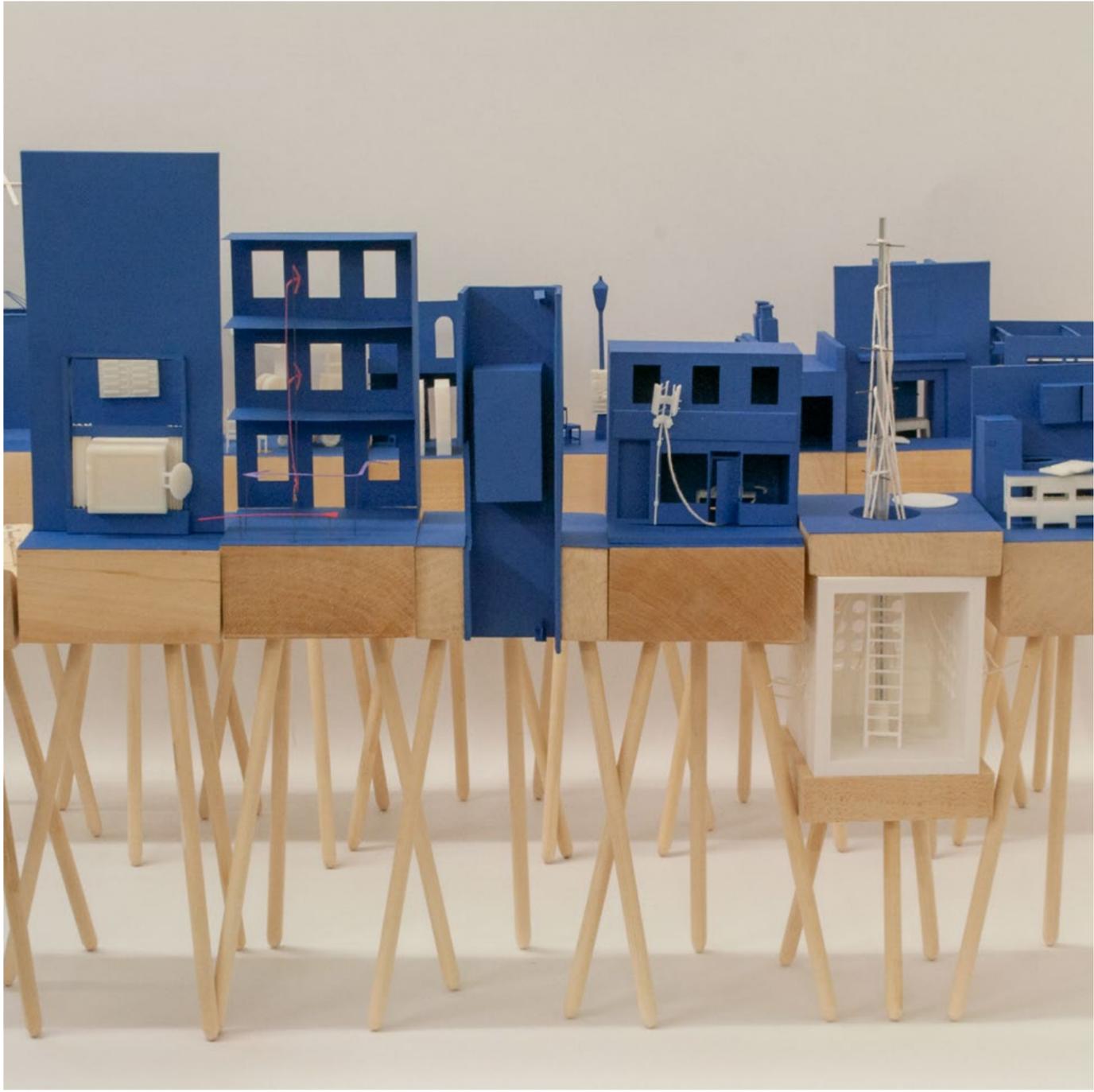
An installation accompanying this abstract serves as a tool to visualize the multiscale relationships in which the ecosystem operates. The material is meant to be physically explored around the map and with the handheld guiding pamphlet.

GSAPP ADV V Fall 2021

Critic - Andres Jacque

Partners - Nayef Al Sabhan & Osvaldo Delbrey





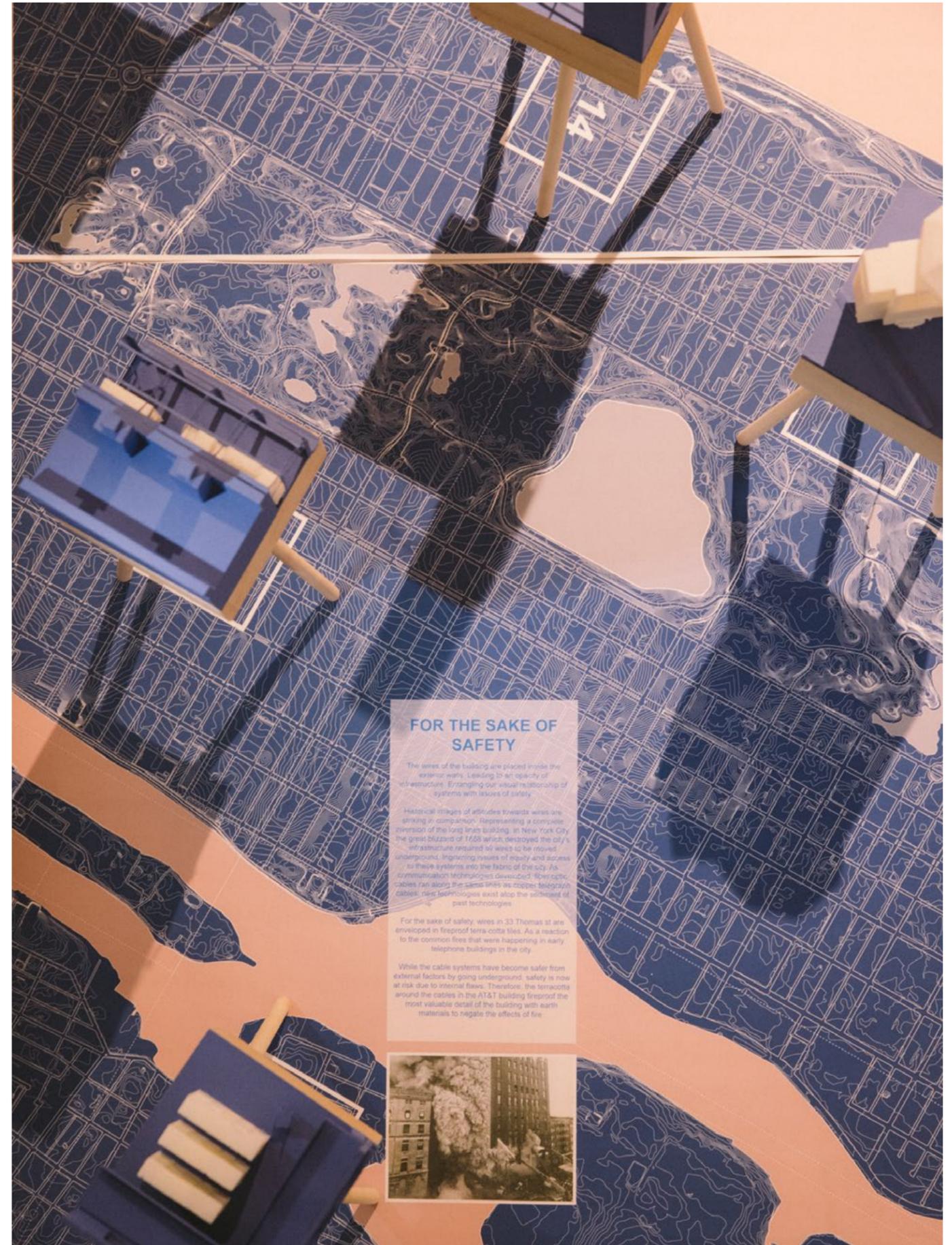


By mapping the infrastructural breaking points of this system, and bringing forward an alternative ecosystem of dissent, unanticipated political and aesthetic capacities can emerge which rethink how power is enacted as an urban reality.

Episodes are brought forward, recreated spatially, and understood in their social capacities, as well as through the specific infrastructural element that allows for its interactions.

An installation accompanying this abstract

serves as a tool to visualize the multiscalar relationships in which the ecosystem operates. The material is meant to be physically explored around the map and with the handheld guiding pamphlet.



### FOR THE SAKE OF SAFETY

The wires of the building are placed inside the exterior walls. Leading to an opacity of infrastructure. Enlarging our visual relationship of systems with issues of safety.

Historical images of attitudes towards wires are shown in comparison. Representing a complete inversion of the long iron building in New York City the great blizzard of 1858 which destroyed the city's infrastructure required 10 weeks to be moved underground, ignoring issues of equity and access to these systems into the fabric of the city. As communication technologies developed, fiber optic cables ran across the same wires as copper telegraph cables, new technologies exist atop the skeleton of past technologies.

For the sake of safety, wires in 33 Thomas are wrapped in fireproof terra-cotta tiles. As a reaction to the common fires that were happening in early telephone buildings in the city.

While the cable systems have become safer from external factors by going underground, safety is now at risk due to internal flaws. Therefore, the terracotta around the cores in the AT&T building fireproof the most valuable detail of the building with earth materials to negate the effects of fire.





On 33 Thomas street, a 29-story windowless telecommunications building is the source of many debates and suspicions, and stands as the embodiment of telephone system architecture: anonymous, brooding, and forbidding. This building op-

erates beyond its property line, and is part of a larger network, its elements span from the global scale to the smallest detail. The building's exterior wall sandwiches cables in layers of concrete, terracotta, and granite. Through this wall detail, many nar-

atives unravel the political complexities and constructs which operate for the sake of the system. For the sake of space, 33 Thomas St. reduced the number of people per floor, windows were no longer necessary, so cables were pushed into the wall.





# BEIRUT POST-EXPLOSION

GSAPP Collective for Beirut is an interdisciplinary student and alumni organization dedicated to the promotion, discussion and reflection of contemporary issues in the middle east, and Lebanon specifically. It was founded organically in 2020, in the aftermath of the Beirut blast and includes individuals based in Beirut and abroad. Following a series of economic, political and environmental crises that culminated in the Beirut explosion on August 4th 2020, the Collective, in collaboration with Hiba Bou Akar invited a group of multidisciplinary professionals to a round table discussion that explores architecture and cities in a time of emergency and political deadlock through ecological, planning, and policy lenses - engaging questions of the built environment on a variety of social and infrastructural scales.

Emergency Architecture and Planning: Recovering Beirut Post-Explosion / Fall virtual event organized by the GSAPP Collective for Beirut



## TESTIFY 4 BEIRUT

Following the blast on August 4th 2020 which destroyed half of Beirut, killed hundreds of lives and displaced thousands of citizens, many people sent their testimonies to an instagram account that was attempting to collect memories and heal the population of the trauma. In a country that still doesn't have an official history book, it is important and mandatory to keep archiving. It is crucial that we keep records of the monstrosities and hold the right people accountable. It is important to keep filling in the gaps to get a deeper understanding of the recent violent past. We can't underestimate the power of archives to shape national history and eventually identity. There isn't just one side to this story - in this case, there are 250 testimonies and a couple million unrecorded. This book is meant to be read as one single story, one with no end in sight and collects written, drawn and photographed testimonies.

Graphic Architecture Project - Spring 2021

Critic: Yoonjai Choi

Personal project in collaboration with Mickaella Pharaon



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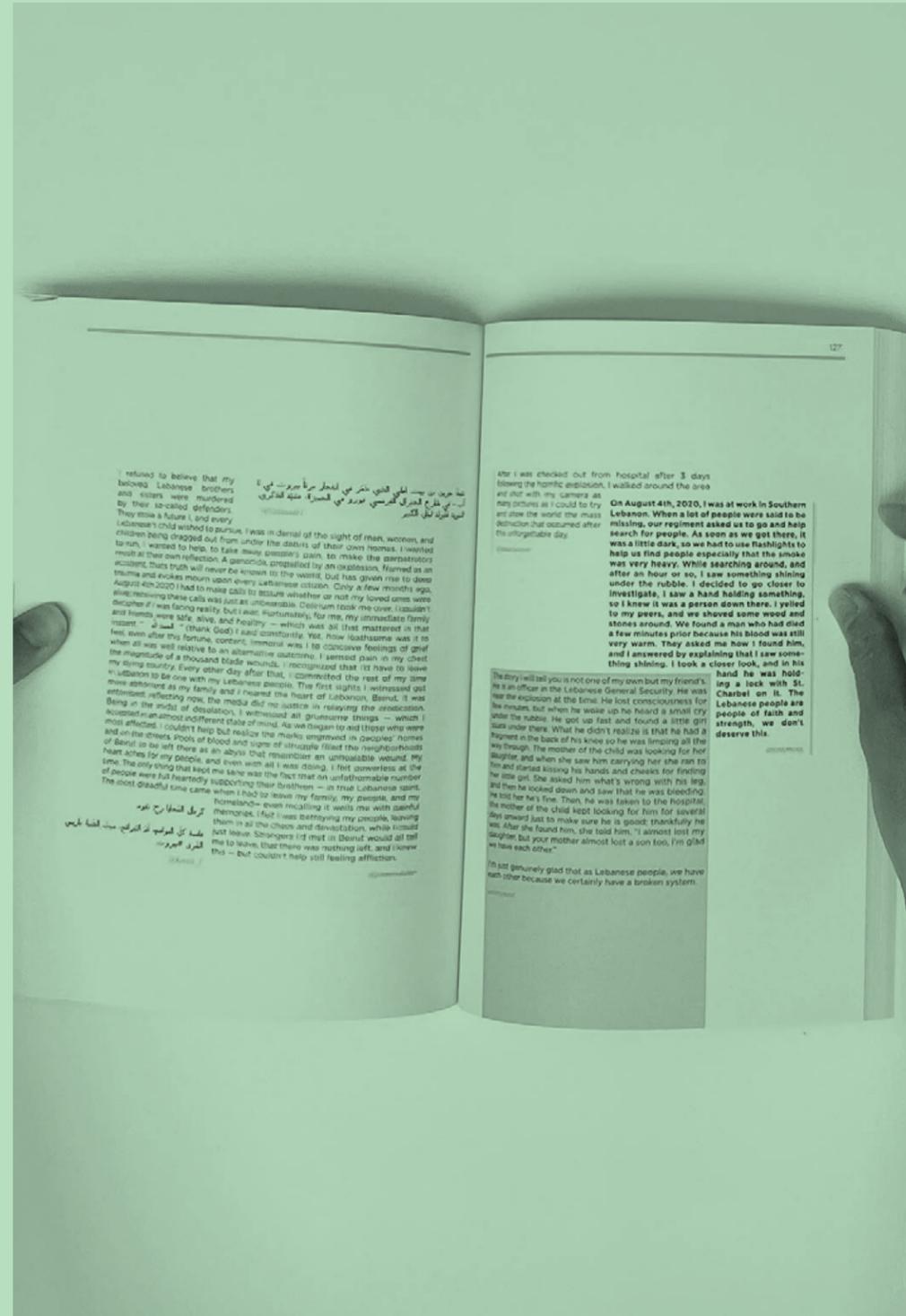
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DISSENT,  
IDENTITY,  
REPRESENTATION,  
POLITICS,  
AGENCY.

## BORROWED COMFORT

Borrowed objects, made objects, found objects, reused objects. All unremarkable, all familiar. How can I challenge these invisible objects? How can I unlearn what these everyday objects mean to me, change their definition and relearn their new identity? Does that make me uncomfortable? Does that make you uncomfortable? Unlearning to relearn. Discomfort can become the space to create new, to rethink, to question and requestion, to observe, to analyze, to change. But should it? An awareness of discomfort is not just an indicator of privilege, but a surrender to it, a submission. Discomfort becomes comfortable again. Discomfort is borrowed comfort: borrowed from our future selves, borrowed from someone else. Welcome to my journey of exploration. The last chapter of the GSAPP book but certainly only the beginning of my adventure as a designer.

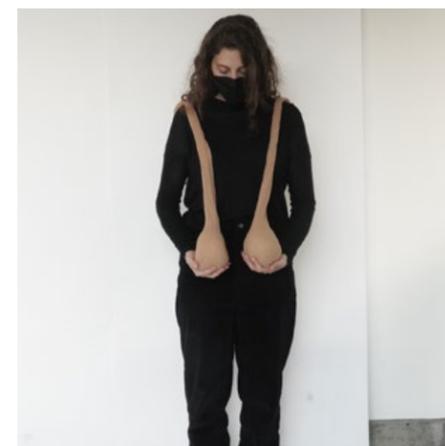
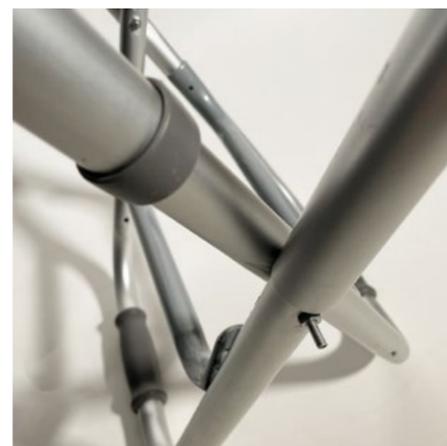
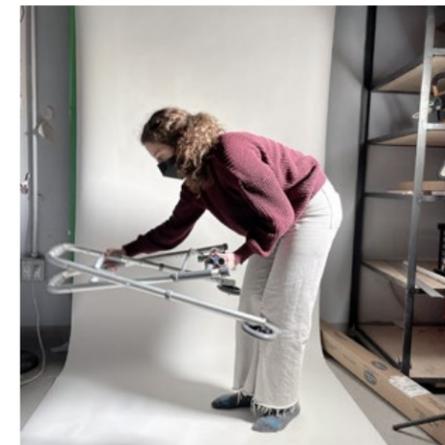
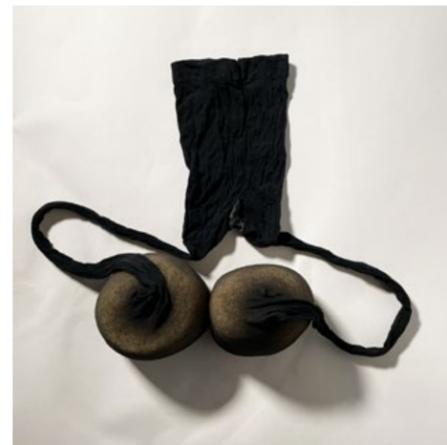
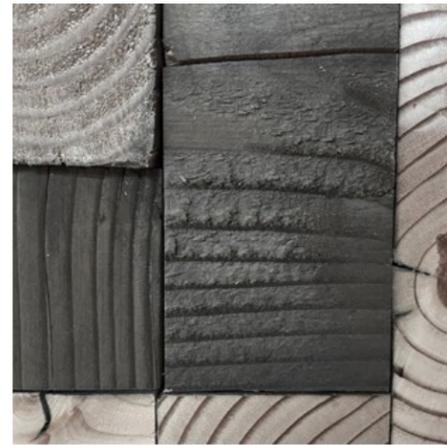
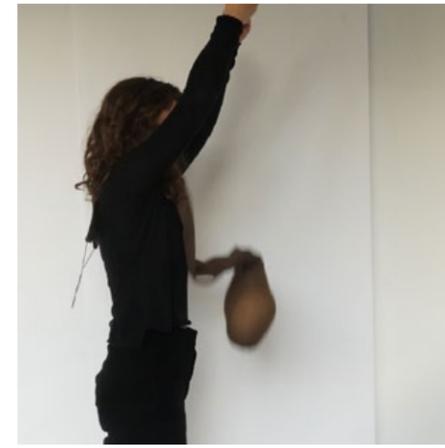
Challenging the notion of discomfort can be triggering. Discomfort of an ageing body, discomfort of a disabled body. It can't be measured or compared, it is an ephemeral concept that varies from one person to another. 'Letters of Discomfort' is set up in tandem with this project and is deployed during the exhibition of the object in a gallery style viewing. It asked visitors to share their definition of discomfort, whether a feeling, a word, a situation, a temporary state.

The MAKERGRAPH Studio brings our attention to thinking-by-making; to material culture as an expression of culture; to craft and digital craft; and to material practice—from weaving to welding. This applies the enthusiasm in our own practice for radically adaptive reuse and upcycling, but does not teach you to do what we do. Our intent is to empower you, with our tough-but-tender conspiracy, to teach yourself what you do. Students draw deeply on personal, cultural, and physical legacies—on traditional Maori tattooing; on global foodways and local folklore around home cooking; on the aesthetic/ethical inheritance of an anti-sustainable family business; on linguistic practices within New York Hip Hop; on intergenerational storytelling around immigration, gender, and family; on twenty years of involuntary cello lessons; and on all that each one of us brings to this Spring.

GSAPP ADV V Fall 2021

Critics: Ada Tolla & Giuseppe Lignano







What happens if a stool is no longer sitting on the ground? What if a stool is suspended? Does it lose its purpose? To every average height person, doors are probably the most invisible object around. We have learnt how to walk through them

since we were born. We are set in our ways. But what does it mean to make a door height slightly lower than my personal height? Would I have to think about it every morning for the rest of my life? Or will my mind unlearn a typical door height

and relearn this new one? What about the 'other'? The too tall? or the too short? Are they more aware of their physical boundaries?

A bought object. A plank of wood. A corset. What a loaded object. A tool for shaping and slimming of the body. A support for a weak body. Whose body? The torso is different from one person to another. Physically, the torso is the core of

the body. Its shape is defined by the curves of the skin and organs that envelope it. How have we in the past shaped the torso, and can this wood do the same? A corset has historically been worn by women to dictate a certain body image in society. A piece of



fabric that doesn't adapt to the body but that shapes it. It's a support garment that is traditionally worn to hold and train the torso into a desired shape, a smaller waist and a larger bottom.



Tights. Feminine piece of clothing. Again, body shaping, morphing of the body, disforming of the body. Setting a beauty standard. Sometimes it's too seductive, sometimes it's not seductive enough.

Body dismorphia. A common trait in my generation. The different skin tones offered are meant to be inclusive but still set a standard to have beautiful - uniform - tight - tanned legs. Tights. As covering, neutralizing. Making

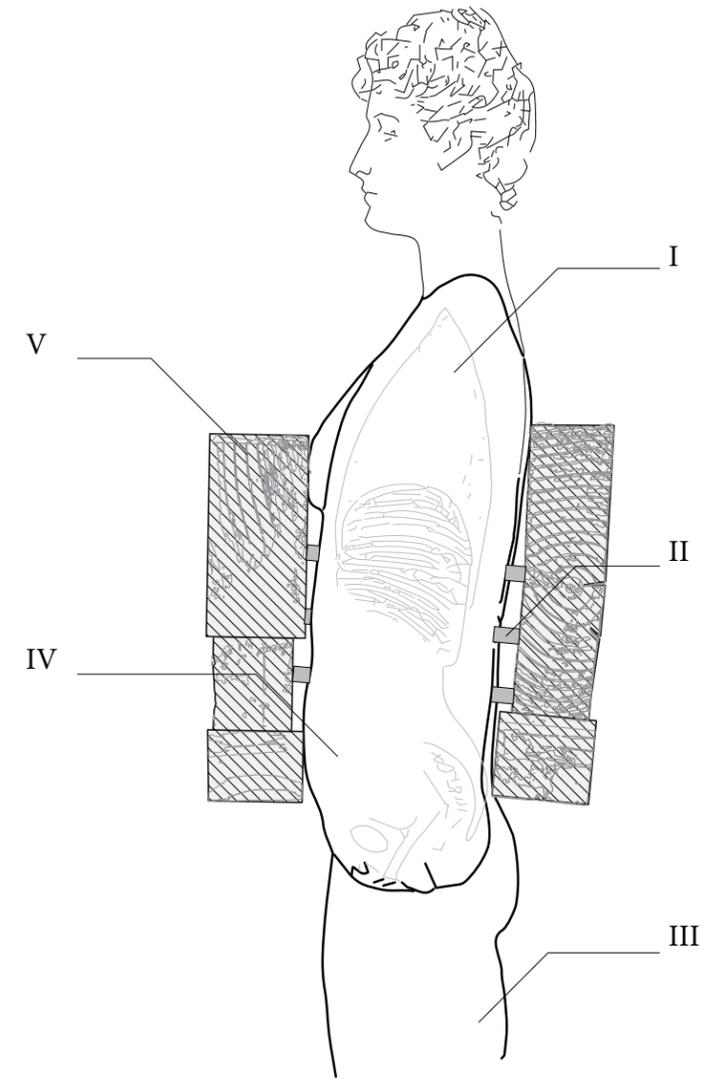
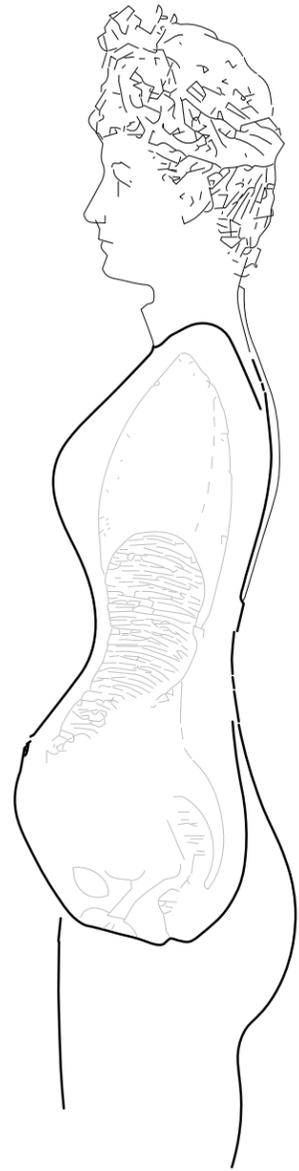
everything uniform. Devoiding the object of material properties. Losing identity, stealing identity. Fabric is a material with no structure. How does filling it with another structureless and grainy material such as rice make it structurally sane?

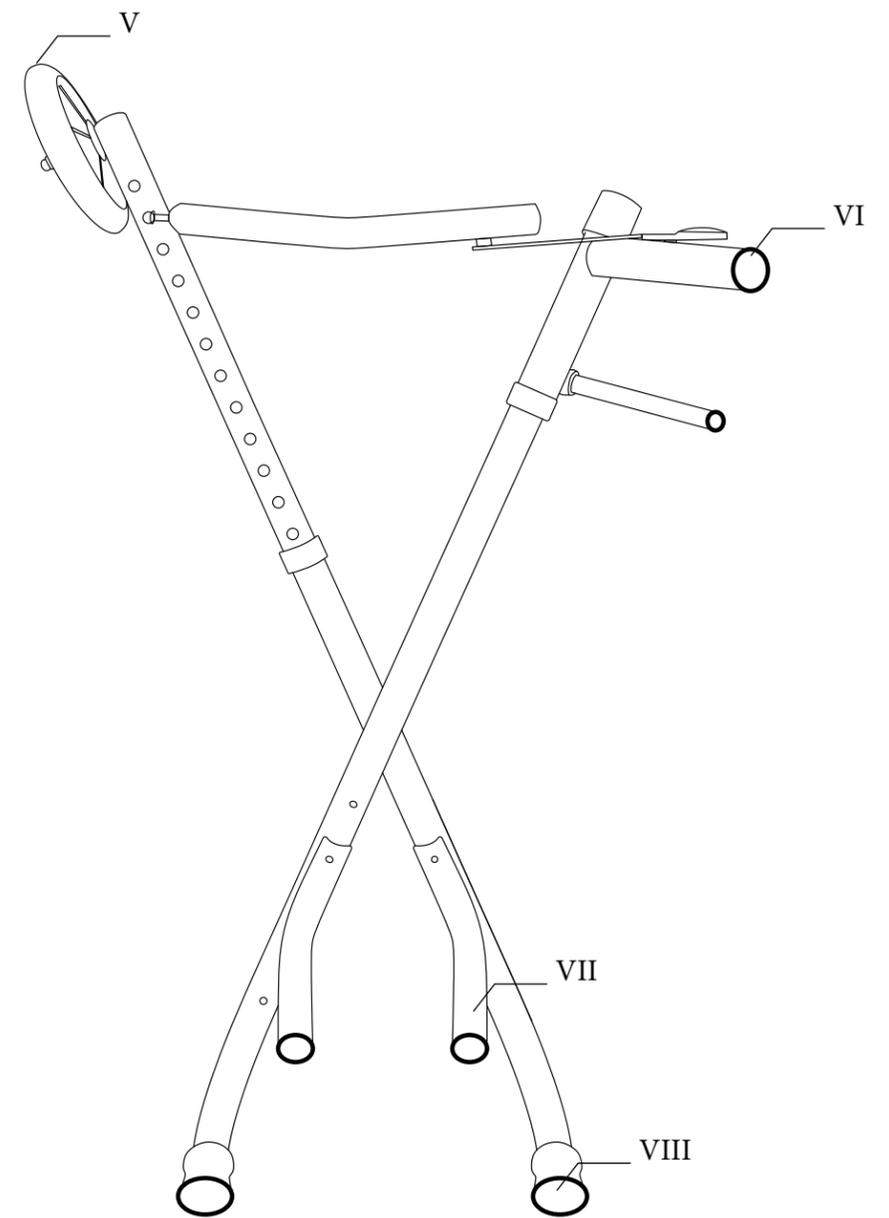
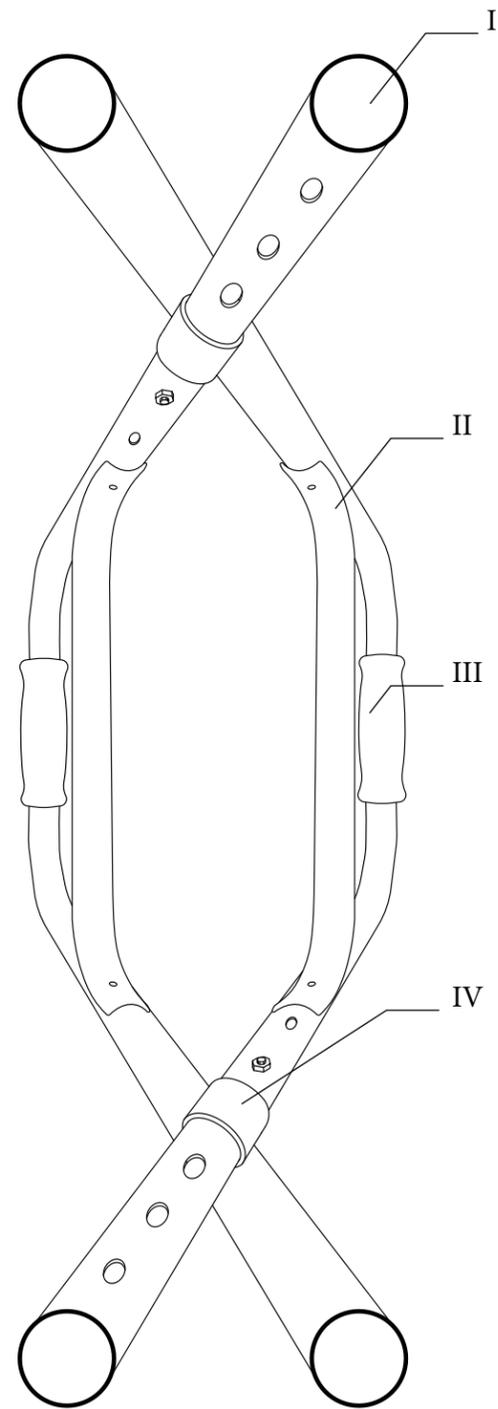


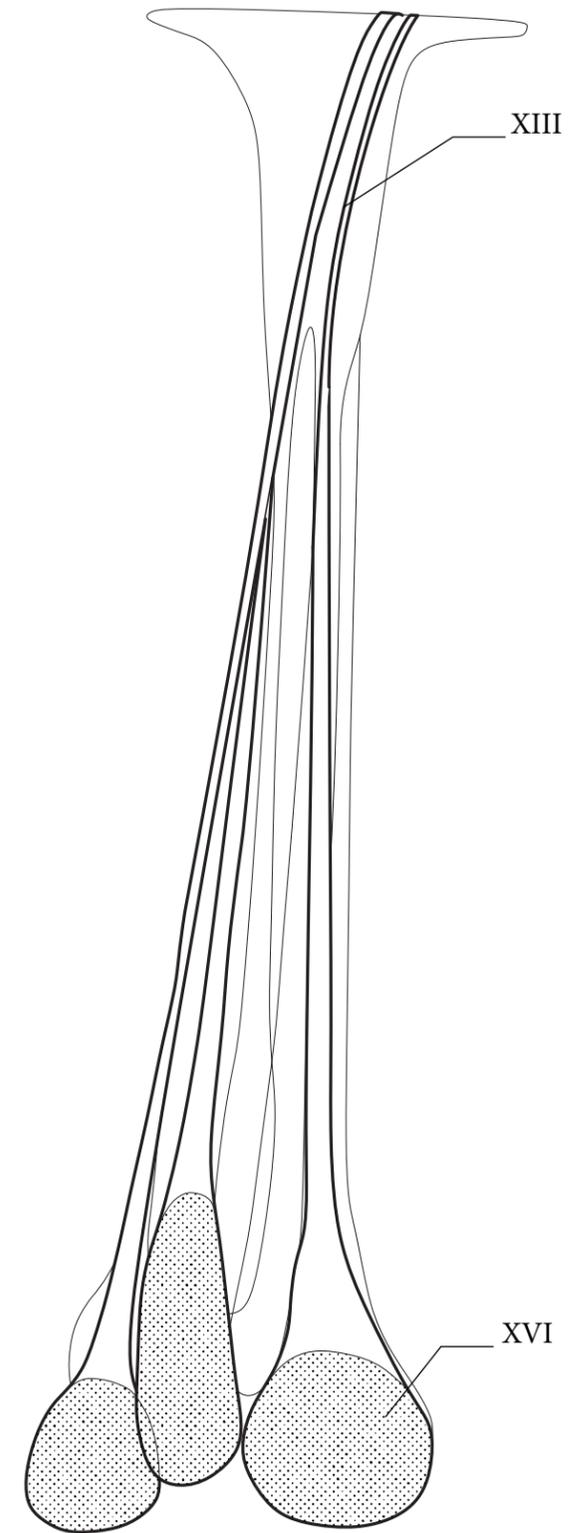
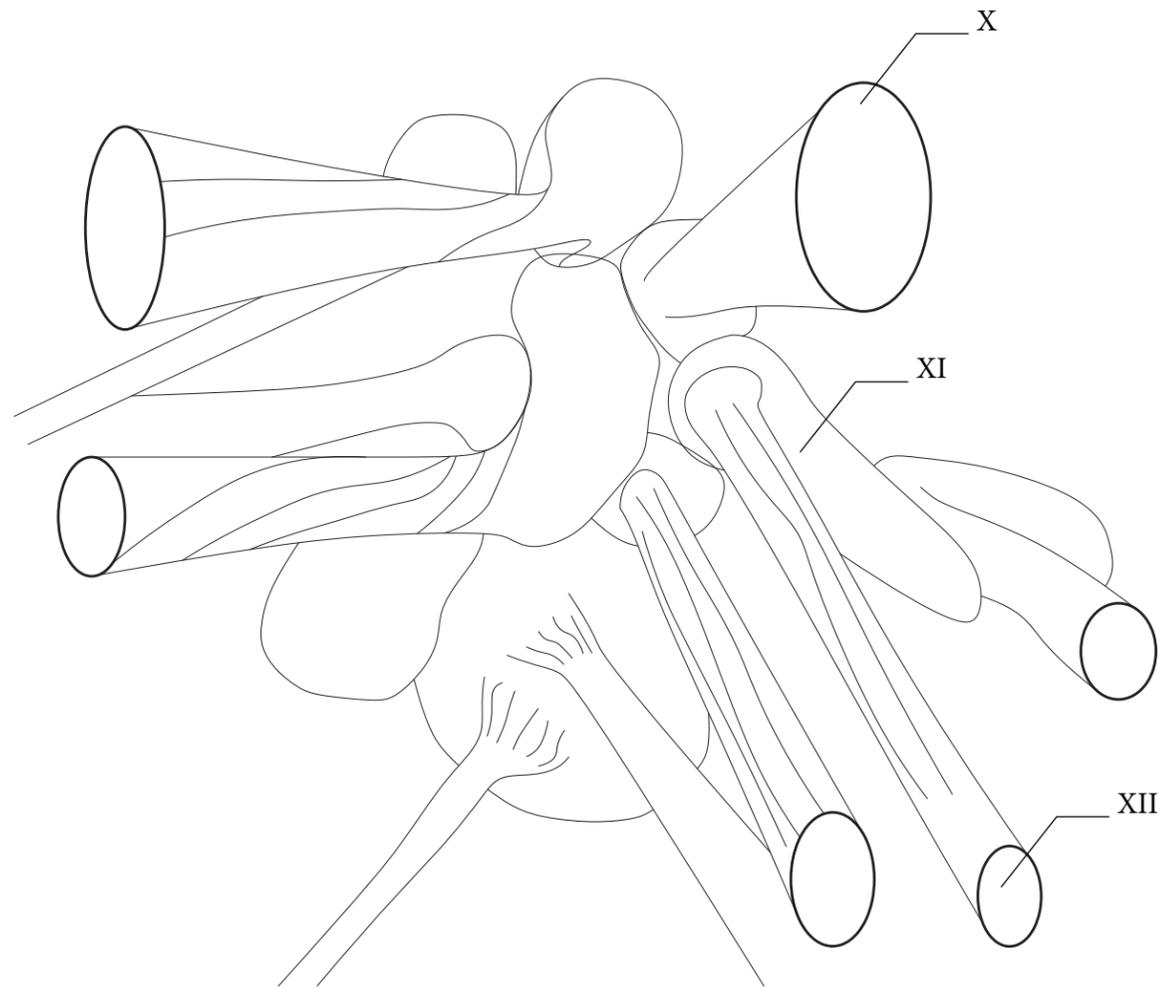
A found object. A walker. No, not one, but TWO walkers. Something new, something borrowed. A walker. What a loaded object. A tool for walking. An extension of the body. A support for a weak body. A walker. It is stan-

dardized. It is customizable. It is storable. It is light. It is transportable. It is not mine thus it is uncomfortable. It is Frieda Lipp's, today 97 years old. Her birthday :August 22 1934. Something borrowed? A walker is a tool to facilitate walking. It's an aid for legs, but

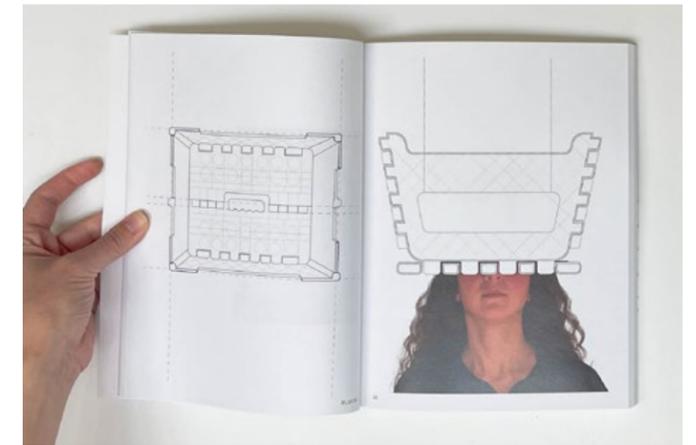
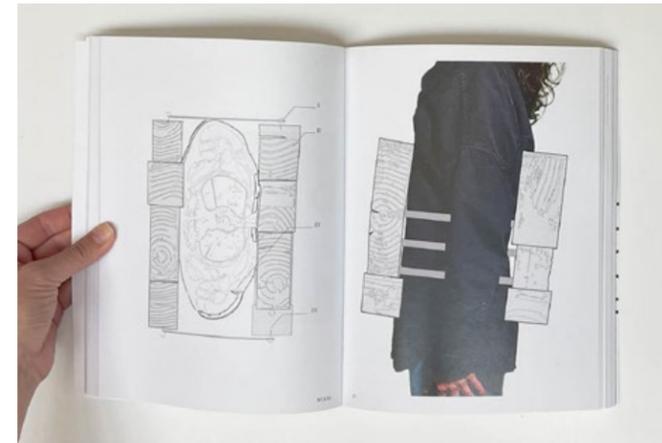
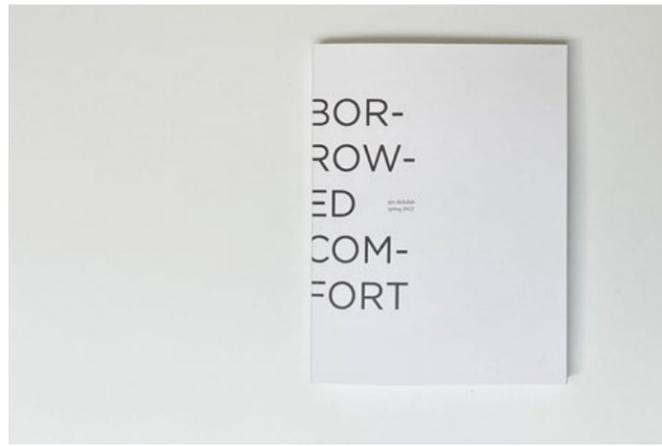
cannot happen without arms or hands. It is still using 4 limbs. How can I transform such a unique shape into something unrecognizable? Or maybe recognizable but unfamiliar? Or maybe familiar but not standard?

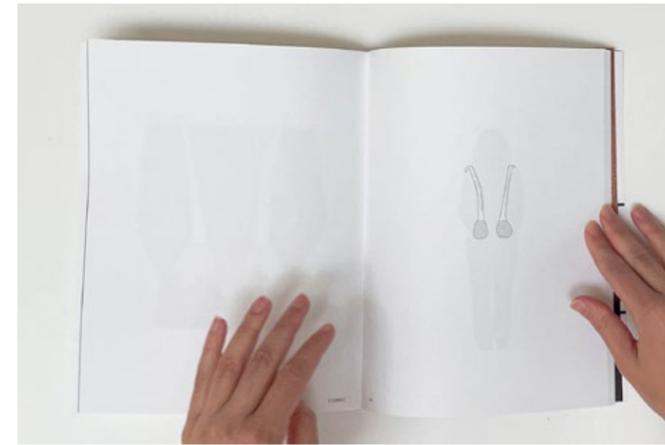


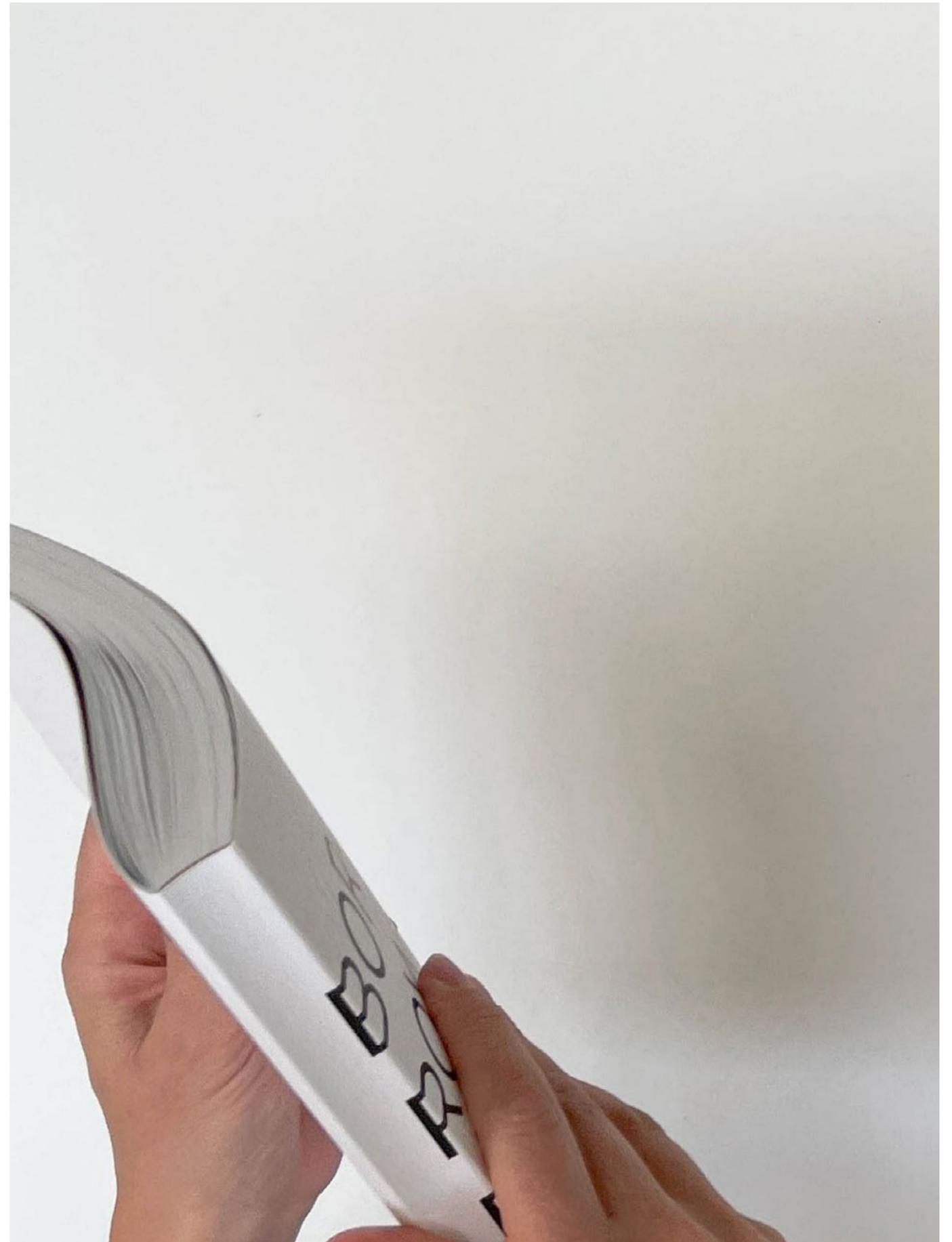












#### 4 ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The intellectual venture in which we are all engaged requires of faculty and students alike the highest level of personal and academic integrity. As members of an academic community, each one of us bears the responsibility to participate in scholarly discourse and research in a manner characterized by intellectual honesty and scholarly integrity. Scholarship, by its very nature, is an iterative process, with ideas and insights building one upon the other. Collaborative scholarship requires the study of other scholars' work, the free discussion of such work, and the explicit acknowledgement of those ideas in any work that inform our own. This exchange of ideas relies upon a mutual trust that sources, opinions, facts, and insights will be properly noted and carefully credited. In practical terms, this means that, as students, you must be responsible for the full citations of others' ideas in all of your research papers and projects; you must be scrupulously honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student,

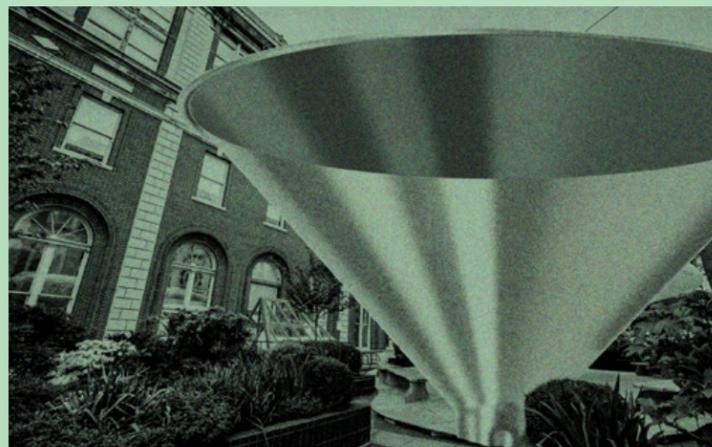


#### 3 SANDCASTLES



#### 1 BIRD DEATH CONE

The Bird Death Cone collects dead species victim to the windows of Columbia University. The 86' wide funnel rests on the ledge of the Avery and Fayerweather window sills. During Fall and Spring migrations, bird strike is inevitable. Upon retrieval of the avian specimen, the metal cone responds with a series of clicks and clacks. The matte metal cone acts as a toxic buffer between dead and living species. Using a process of refined reverse corrosion, the death cone blends the remains of stricken birds, sorts reproducible parts and returns new specimens to surrounding Riverside and Morningside Parks. Once the cone has reached a critical mass, the remaining bones, preserved during the reverse corrosion process, are pulverized and reintroduced to Columbia's campus as mortar.



A mound of sand collects between Fayerweather and Avery Halls. Sandcastles is an opportunity to un-cover up the complex history of the Courtyard as well as the larger realm of University building - conceptualizing how traces of various human and non-human communities continue to register and prefigure the future of the site. In addition, the sandcastles should consider deep time: a non-linear exploration of the site from the pre-colonial to the present, including the University's relationship to Harlem, the Hudson River, and the environment at large. GSAPP students MUST MAKE a collaborative, interdisciplinary sandcastle that addresses the Lenape people. Year after year, students build atop other sandcastles and the ground becomes a witness of the different cohorts that pass through GSAPP until Avery is inevitably buried underground.

#### 5 DEEP TIME CAPSULES

As time passes, Columbia University is buried beneath the Old World. Sitting prestigiously underground, it acts as a time capsule of the years 1897 to 2097. Children from the 22nd century are astonished to hear about untouchable Ivy League schools, charging exorbitant amounts of money for education. Excavation trips involve careful restoration of the ivory towers and now dilapidated libraries. Very few historians care to ask what lies below the schools. City infrastructure and pre-colonial artifacts become obsolete. The 2016 IN HONOR OF THE LENAPE PEOPLE sign was extracted some 185 years ago. Some radical thinkers with access to counter-culture texts believe there was an escape capsule that gathered all relics of pre-colonial thought.



## SIX CAUTIONARY TALES FOR DEEP TIME

### PREMONITIONS OF THE MYSTICAL REBIRTH OF EDUCATION

Kaeli and Aya evoke six visions of ideal competition entries, the supreme achievement of twenty thousand years of an ivy league school, blood, sweat, and tears; the final haven of Man in possession of Truth, free from contradiction, equivocation and indecision; totally and forever replete with his own PERFECTION.

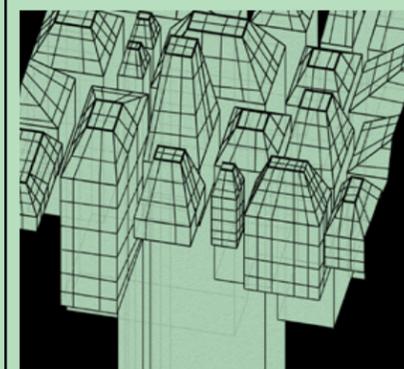
#### 6 DEAR DATA

In this school we are bodiless, contextless, contactless. We exist as pictures on a screen. Buildings



exist as pictures on a screen. Communication has never been easier. Communication has never been harder. Language adapts to our methods of communication. Words are no longer used. Data is constantly gathered, in our mind, in our screen. Correspondence can only be read in symbols. As a reaction to the hyper tech, the analog makes a come back, but this time, can it dissociate itself from the code?

#### 2 DO NOT TOUCH [RARE BOOKS]



Please note that any physical materials must be consulted in the RBML/University Archives reading chamber. Each above ground window tunnels through Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library into the deeply rooted Rare Books Archive. Research is by appointment only (Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm) and, due to the ongoing emergency crises protocols, we only have a limited number of cubicles and time slots available each day - many of which are likely already booked up. If your students wish to visit any of the books, we can arrange for individual reservations of a glass chamber and they may observe the pages from the Avery courtyard. The students will not be allowed to touch the manuscripts but can turn the pages by blinking and our sensors will pick up the slight movements and perform accordingly.

**Aya Abdallah:** born 1994, graduated in architecture in 2016 and she joined GSAPP in 2019

**Kaeli Alike Streeter:** born 1996, graduated in architecture in 2018 and she joined GSAPP in 2019

The moment has come in which to reveal the significance of these descriptions: this is a test Of the six entries whose descriptions you have read, how many would you like to come true? Have you felt that they might be of advantage to humanity? Work out your answer carefully. Results below.

Results of test:

If you approved :

**\_more than 5:** Congratulations, you have understood the assignment: we are already living in these dystopian worlds.

**\_from 3 to 4:** You don't want to admit your educational reality. You pay hundreds of thousands of dollars to participate in this institution - yet don't care to engage your critical thinking skills.

**\_under 2:** You haven't caught on. We suggest you rethink your enrollment in this institution, close Instagram and look around.

**This design entry is meant to challenge the notion of architectural competitions. These types of competitions, however helpful and inclusive in the past, have been monopolized by big corporations and institutions, spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per submission. In our opinion, architecture competitions are purely concepts and do not provide any type of solution to the issue at hand.**

# CAMP URBANISM

Migration at large - whether forced or voluntary - physically manifests in what one might term “camp urbanism”. Camps are an inherently ephemeral urban typology, where logics of time and space are collapsed. While camps are meant to act as non-permanent spaces of shelter, they have often grown increasingly permanent or regulated. Camp Urbanism is the formal typological manifestation of “temporal” structures onto the landscape to accommodate an influx of people and associated objects for a “limited” duration of time often dependent on external factors including war, climate, and capital. At the core of this investigation is the logic of mobility, capital invested or averted, and ultimately the footprint ingrained onto the soil in fluid contexts of migration. Questions of refuge, mobility and migrancy manifest in the discourse around access, policing, and enclosure of bodies, space, and resources.

Camps often look like cities from the vantage point of a satellite. This specific tool allows for a temporal study of such urban formations, giving the impressions of ephemeral cities which appear, disappear, and/or instead continue - sometimes organically but other times systematically. Because examples of this urbanism are often organized by top-down stakeholders and agencies, they share aspects of an ‘urban’ typology like clear boundaries, grids, and homogeneous urban allotments. While these visual formations are not perfectly similar, and the satellite images do not show how voluntary a set of mobilities may be, they all are manifestations of a flux in capital, resources, people, and time. These moments of flux are conflicts, and their results are start-up urban space.

GSAPP Conflict Urbanism - Spring 2022  
Critic - Laura Kurgan  
Partners - Yasmine Katkhuda & Ryan Hansen



AfrikaBurn South Africa yearly music festival	Kunshan Industrial Park Western China 2017 2019 (?) detention center	Azraq Camp Jordan 2014 - today refugee camp	Baq'a Camp Jordan 1968 - today refugee camp	Sayam Forage Camp Niger 2014 - today refugee camp	Bonnaroo Music and Arts Tennessee, USA yearly music festival	Tuas View Singapore 2014 - today foreign worker dormitory
Kakuma Camp Kenya 1992 - today refugee camp	Qah Syria 2012 - today refugee camp	Ifo Kenya 1992 - today refugee camp	Hagadera Kenya 1992 - today refugee camp	Al Muhaisnah Dubai 1990s - today labor camp	Electric Forest Michigan, USA yearly since 2008 music festival	FEMA Camp New Orleans 2005 - 2008 Emergency relief trailer camps
Burning Man Nevada, USA yearly music festival	Mrajeeb Al Fhood Jordan 2013 - today refugee camp	Dagahaley Kenya 1992 - today refugee camp	Zaatari Jordan 2012 - today refugee camp	Yida Sudan 2011 - today refugee camp	Nahr Al Bared Lebanon 1949 - today refugee camp	Ban Nam Ya Thailand 1975 - 1992 refugee camp
Domiz 1 Iraq 2012 - today refugee camp	Darashakran Iraq 2013 - today refugee camp	Tijuana Mexico - USA border 2021 - 2022 migrant camp	Maicao Venezuela - Columbia border 2018 - today refugee camp + reception center	Ritsona Greece 2016 - today refugee camp + reception center	Reynosa Mexico - USA border 2018 - 2021 migrant camp	Pugnido Ethiopia 1995 - today refugee camp
Mishamo Tanzania 2014 - today refugee camp	Boa Vista Brazil 2014 - today refugee camp	Dheisheh Palestine 1949 - today refugee camp	Kutupolang Bangladesh 1991 - today refugee camp	Nong Samet Thailand 1979 - 1984 refugee camp	Panian Pakistan 2008 - today refugee camp	Nduta Tanzania 2015 - today refugee camp



Zaatari Camp

FEMA Camp

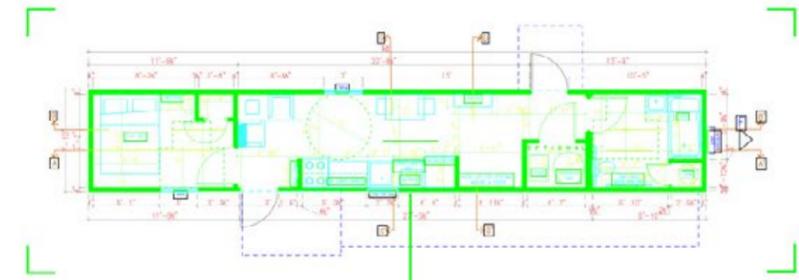
Dheisheh Camp



These camps in question, which carry a similar typological representation, are by nature programmatically different and their time spans vary drastically. Some camps are recurrent or in flux such as music festivals, which draw a large number of people every

year; other camps are created in the aftermath (or during) a humanitarian crisis, such as UN regulated refugee camps around the world, which usually have an outlasting expiration date. Some camps are put in place after a natural disaster to house climate ref-

ugees, a state of emergency shelter. Some camps can no longer be called camps, as they have completely merged into the urban fabric they are in and moved from temporary to permanent.

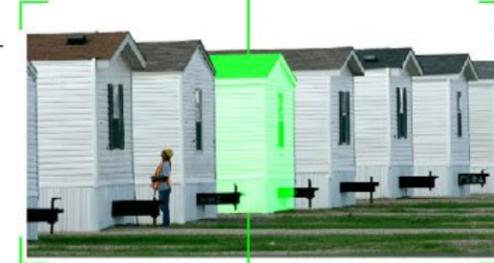


**01**  
HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TRAILERS  
MASS-PRODUCED COST:  
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**02**  
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**03**  
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**04**  
CDC CONFIRMS TOXIC CHEMICALS IN TRAILER MATERIALS



**05**  
STORAGE IN YARDS LIKE HOPE, ARKANSAS AIRPORT  
COST: \$130m PER YEAR



**06**  
SOLD AT AUCTION IN BATCHES OF 10,000 FOR AN AVERAGE OF \$5400 EACH

