

● **NEW ENCOUNTERS**

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MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE
M.S. CRITICAL, CURATORIAL, AND
CONCEPTUAL PRACTICES
COLUMBIA GSAPP 2022

● **A collection of works that
reposition encounters
between disciplines, viewers,
and histories.**

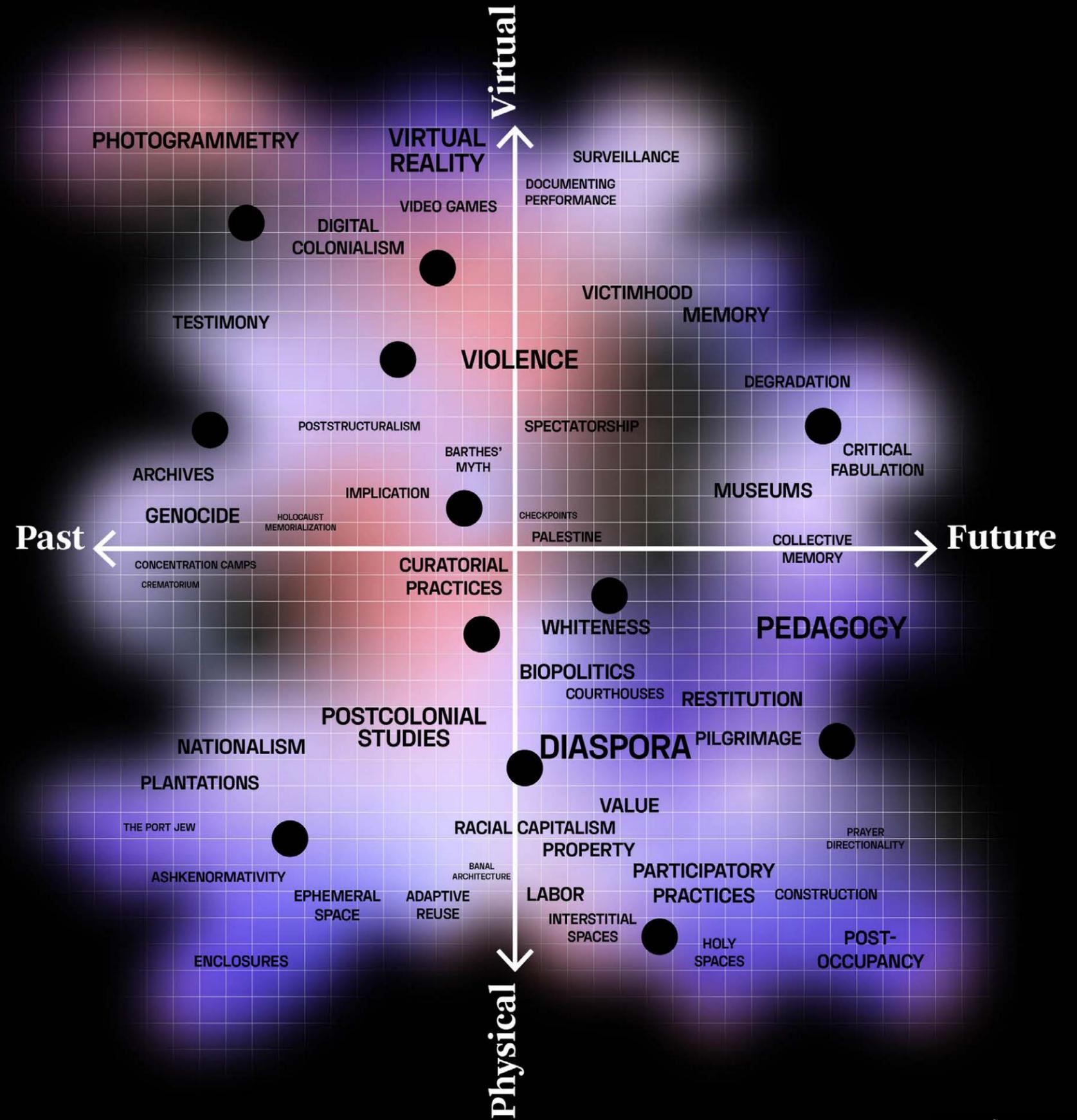
- **I've been consumed by fear. A crippling fear that transfiguring any discourse into representation would be reductive. Yes, there is an undeniable futility to representation. It will linger. And yet, representation can ultimately reveal our invisible conditions; expose adjacencies that appear to be distant or unrelated. Representation is a radical act of dismantling, retangling, refashioning, and challenging our ways of perception. A new encounter.**

It is at the seismic, uncertain collision of practice and discourse I to find myself, not on the edge of either entity but rather within its beautiful void.

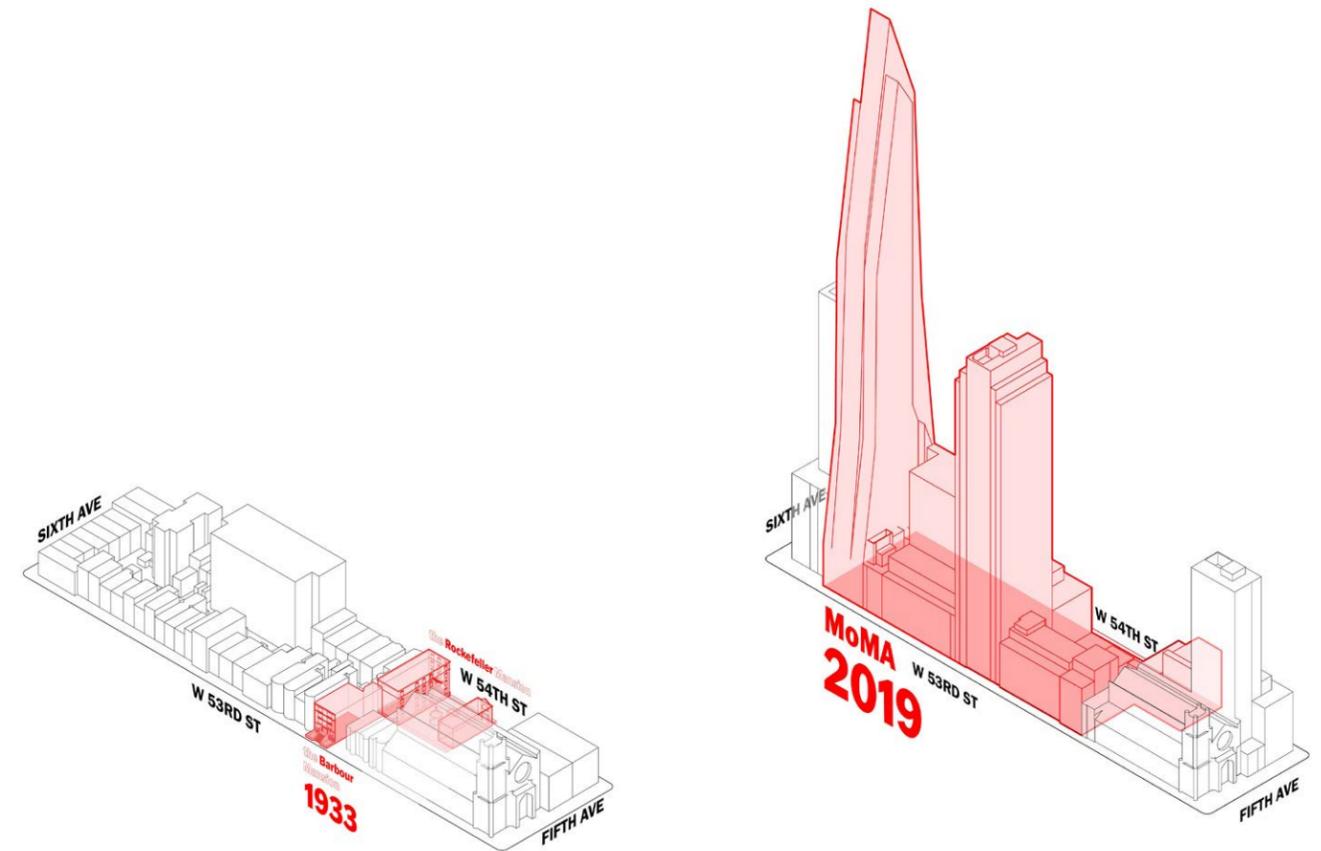
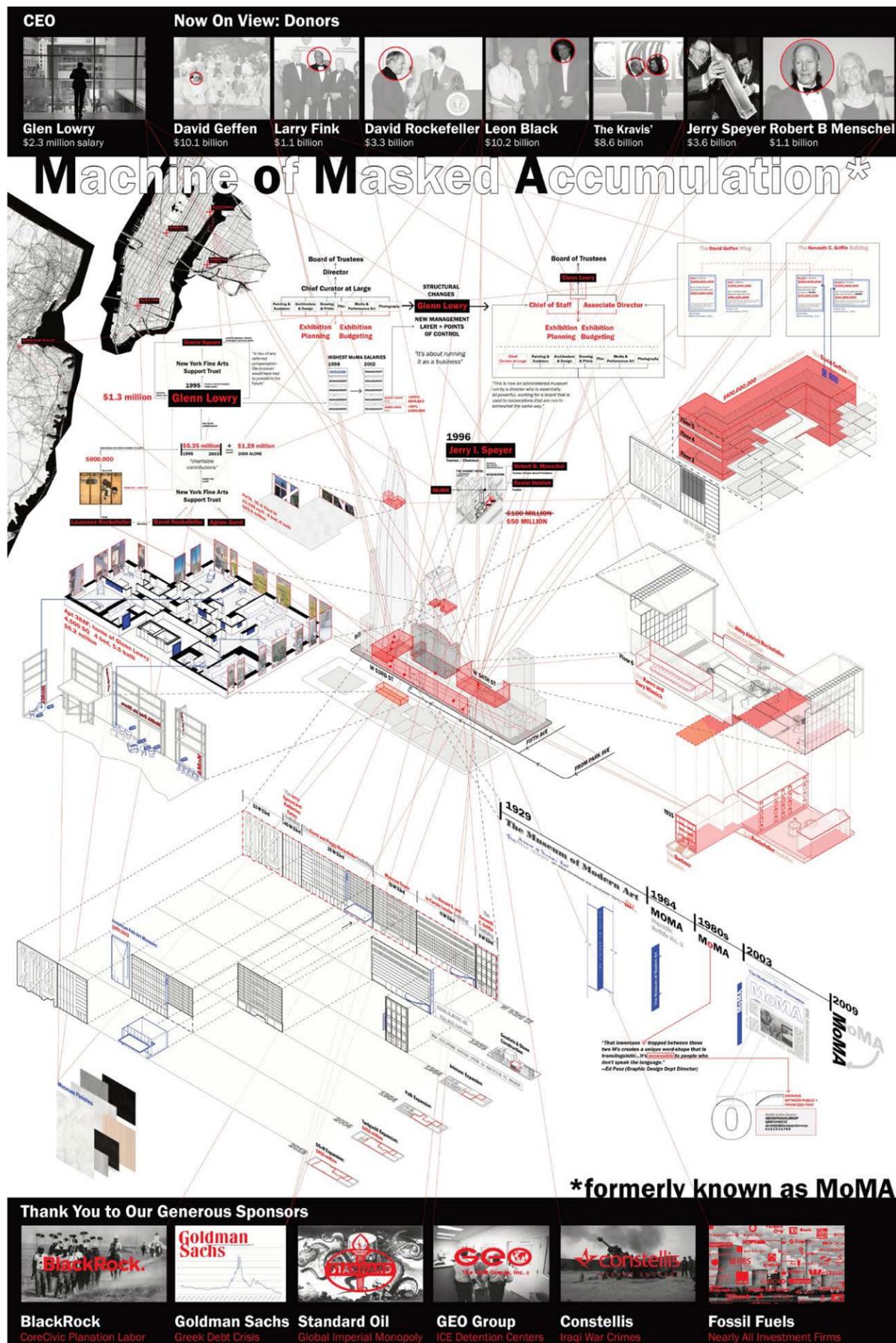
While fear and apprehension weighed me down, they also held me accountable. And, they allowed me to never assume things as self evident. New encounters for me operates on the levels of design and discourse, experience and explanation, program and performance. One's new encounter with another; with architecture; with images; with memory.

A SERIES OF ENCOUNTERS

- **MoPA**
Public + Art
- **Encounters and Enactments**
Holocaust Memory + Virtual Reality
- **Misratzeh Berach'mim**
Blackness + Ashkenormativity
- **A Rural, Religious Front Street**
Islamberg + Deposit, NY
- **Mr. Lopez Jr.'s "Skilled Workers"**
Religion + Slavery
- **A Crack in the Diaspora**
History + Legibility
- **Holy School**
School + Religion
- **A Frame within a Frame**
Legality + Media
- **Units of Care**
Housing + Resources
- **Displayed**
Displacement + Augmented Reality
- **Grounds for Play**
Climbing Gym + Theatre
- **Shroud, Bury, Return**
Restitution + Statehood



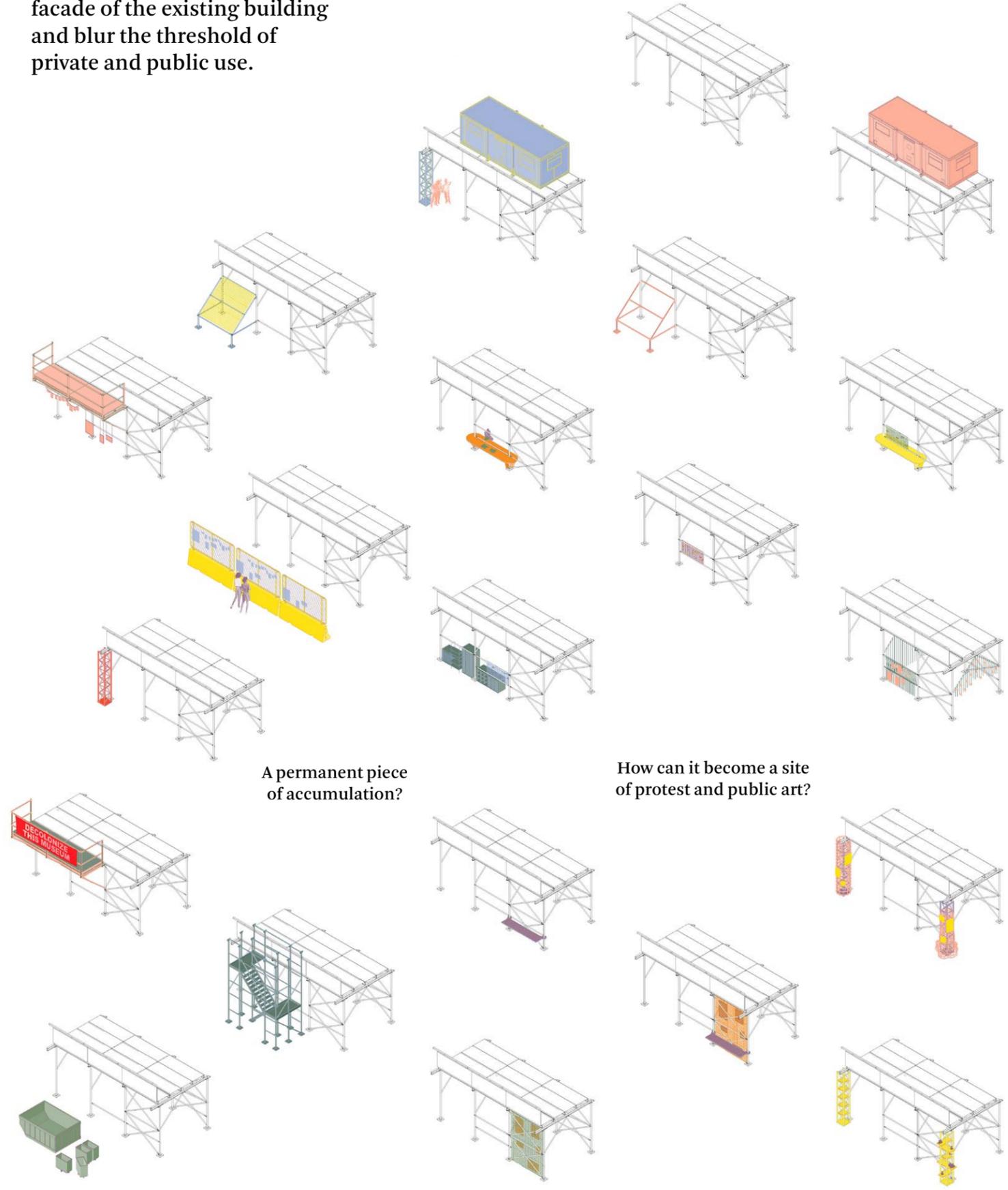
What is **MoMA** without its art?
Actually, quite a lot.



MoMA is a tool for accumulation: a site of unwavering enclosures that remain since its founding a locus of hypervalue, whereby modernity is perpetually rebranded to allow for an unending amplification of space, wealth, and dominance.

To expand and thicken the facade of the existing building and blur the threshold of private and public use.

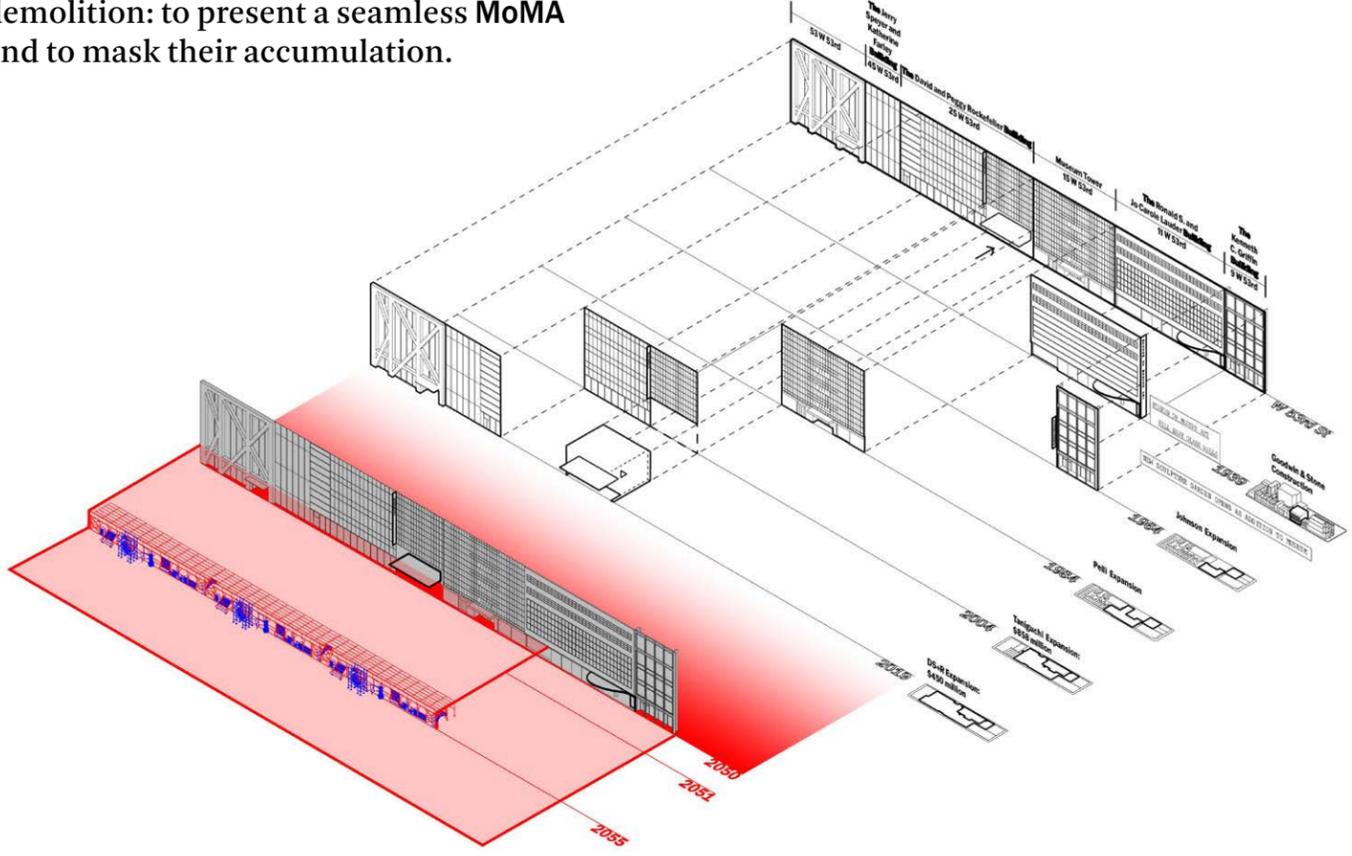
MoMA's facade is evidence of constant accumulation and expansion. Each expansion comes not as an appendage to its existing body but as a violent interior demolition: to present a seamless MoMA and to mask their accumulation.



A permanent piece of accumulation?

How can it become a site of protest and public art?

Scaffolding is MoMA's most universal, timeless piece of architecture.



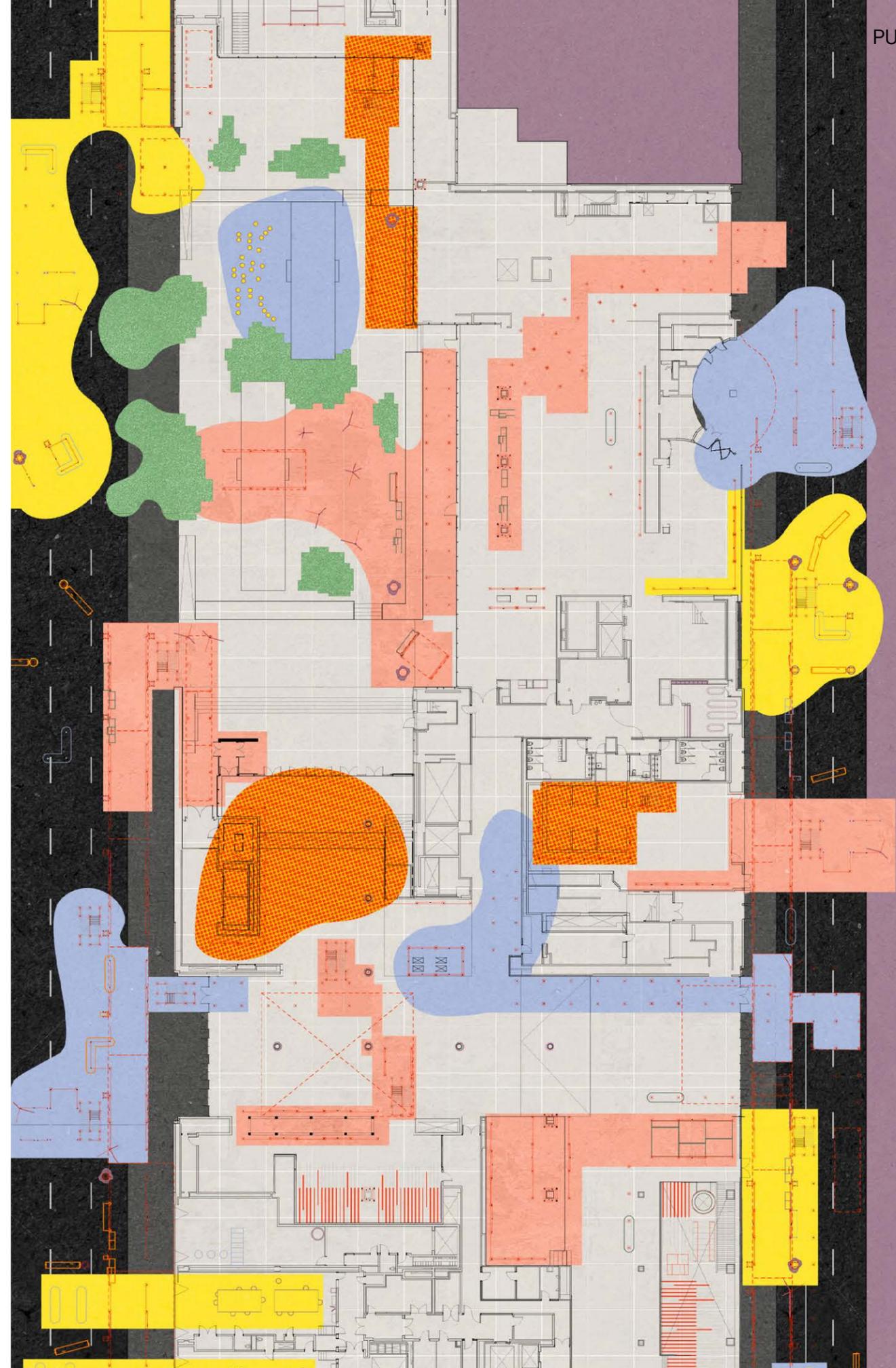
Facade Evolution Diagram

Construction Typology



The act of accumulation distorts the subject leaving it unrecognizable; unable to return to its original state.
What happens when MoMA's insides can no longer be separated from its facade?

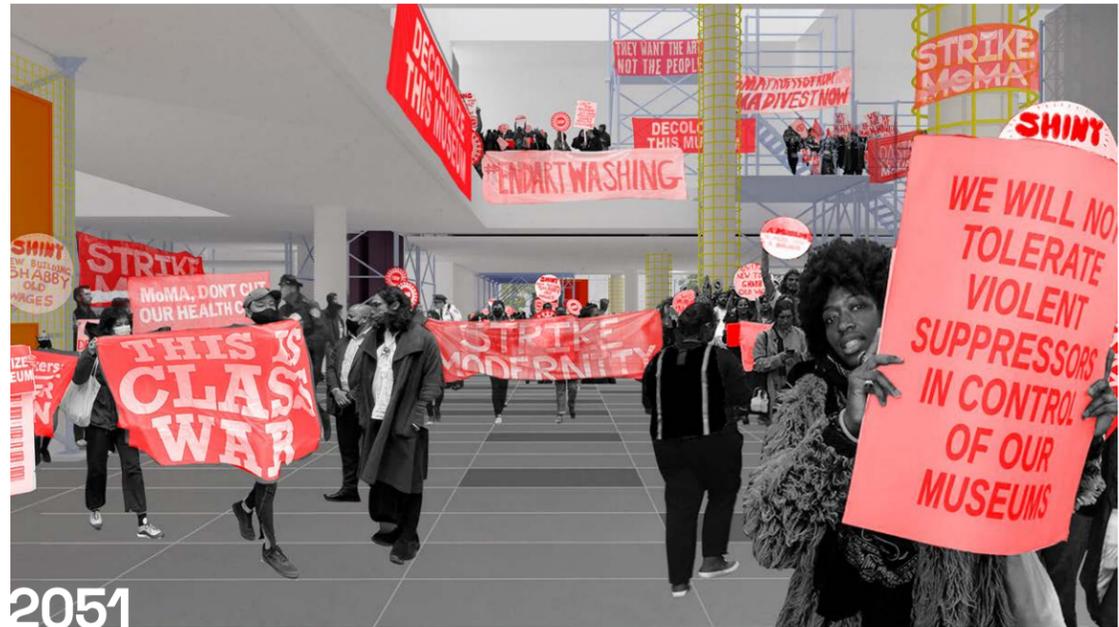
*Left: Exploratory Model (Acrylic Frame, Stockings, Insulation Foam)
 Right: Site Plan, MoPA in 2055*





2050

Procedural, choreographed, obfuscated arrival. It gives the appearance of an open, public arena, and yet stale revolving doors push people into the space only to be met by ticket handlers 10 feet into the lobby.



2051

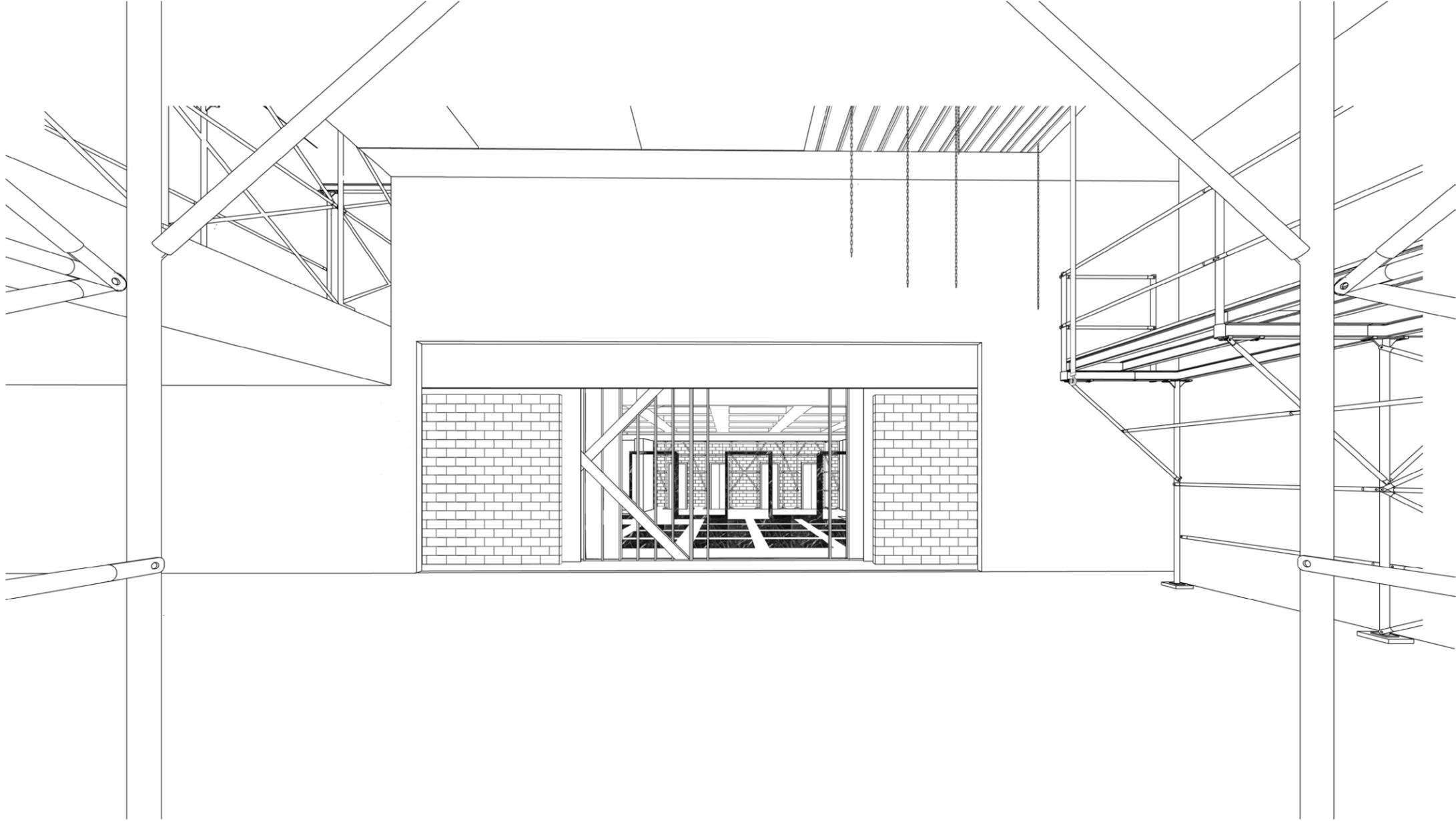
Protest is a part of the history of MoMA, one that unfortunately sees no end at this rate. Conflicts between real estate, labor, culture, philanthropy and representation have always been present, and each of our vignettes find ways of asking how might these issues take space in a future MoMA.



2055

Here we see MoPA operating as a fully curated gallery in the public arena featuring work from the exhibition *Marking Time: Art in the Age of Mass Incarceration* curated by Nicole R. Fleetwood. The unapologetic trajectory established by the occupation of MoPA takes advantage of previous entrance and expands past the subtlety of a thin awning to provide direct access through the block connecting the newly reclaimed pedestrian streetscapes. While, taking advantage of the additional wall space provided by the scaffolding interventions. MoPA inhabits the ground floor volumetrically.

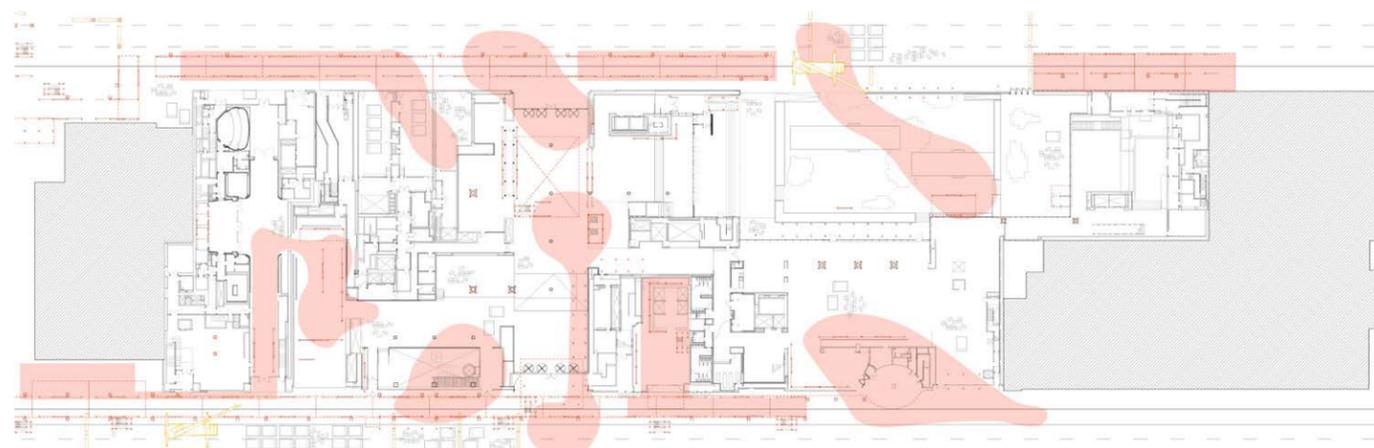
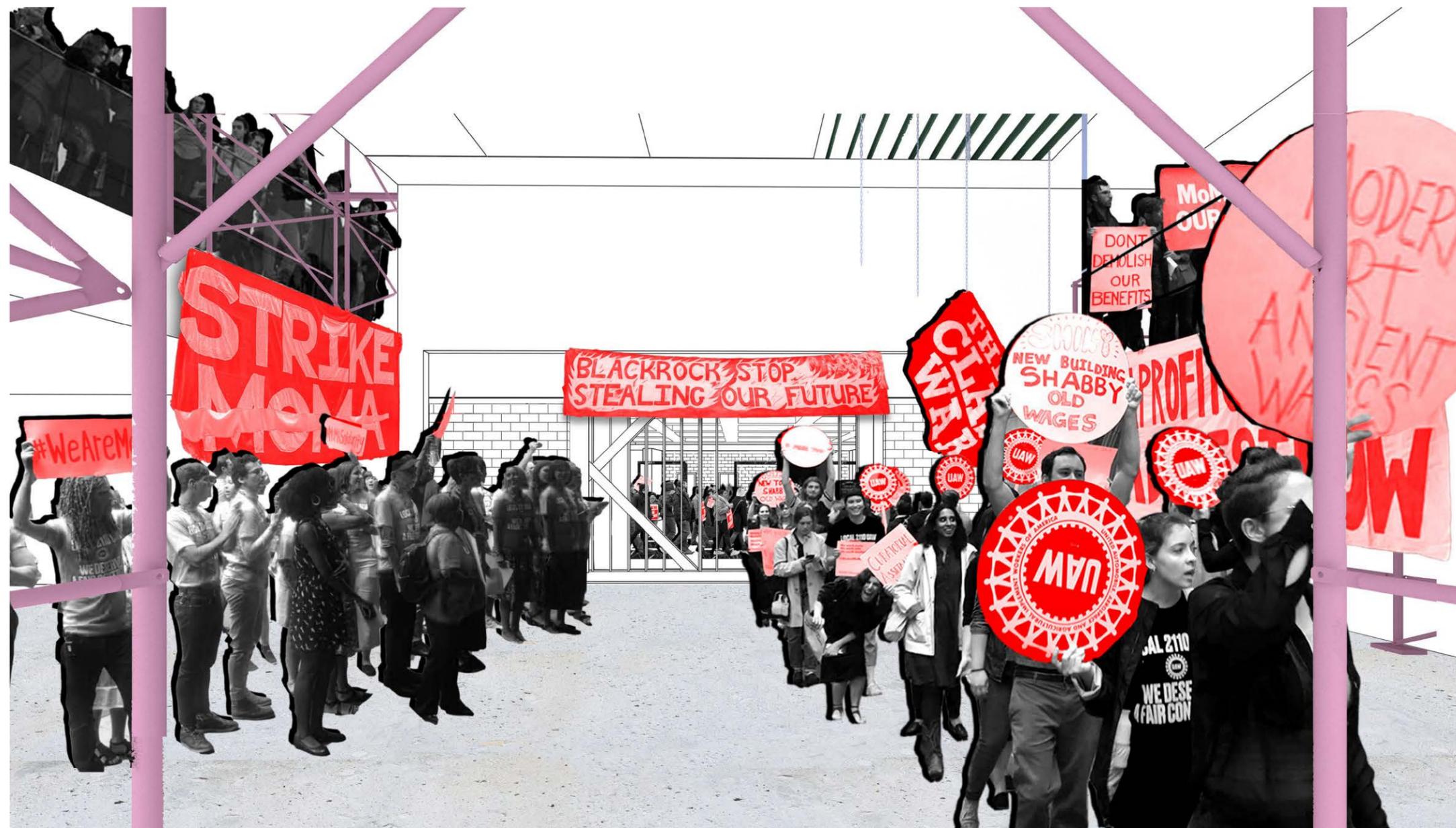
Main Lobby + Plaza Corridor



We look to the “public gallery” as one of the first zones during the occupation and in use as **MoPA**. The exhibition space was previously unannounced at the level of the streetscape, lacking a direct entrance from the sidewalk to the gallery.

2050

“Public Gallery” + Nouvel Lobby, 2050



Exploiting MoMA's interior demolitions, the protest pushes beyond the enclosure at the Jean Nouvel residential tower to claim and connect the two juxtaposing realities of luxury real estate and thin facade of philanthropy and public education MoMA.

2051

"Public Gallery" + Nouvel Lobby, 2051



Residential vs art, private vs public are no longer divided. The Nouvel lobby is reclaimed as a space for viewing art, while the “public” gallery now has multiple points of entry. The space is one of performance, participation, publicity.

2055



The mere demolition of the 18 ft garden wall becomes a radical move. MoMA goes from a manicured landscape zoo to an inviting public plaza, bringing a performance by Black trans activist Qween Jean, a site specific installation of Mickalene Thomas, and art vendors on the street.

MoMA Garden, 2055

What happens when **MoPA's** facade and insides become unapologetically public? Can this strategy make MoMA more accountable to the public? What kind of art can be displayed, made, circulated, and experienced?

Public Plaza

ENCOUNTERS AND ENACTMENTS

DECONSTRUCTING VIRTUAL HOLOCAUST TESTIMONY



Ways of remembering the Holocaust have become increasingly devoted to the self. If the counter memorial, that which is desolate and empty, has obfuscated tensions between abstraction and representation, then a new era of Holocaust memorialization is now being ushered in through that of palpable and explicit sensation. Virtual reality interrogates the reactivity of the memorial; its ability to engage its viewer discursively, adaptively, and intimately. Given that this shift in the memorial's trajectory welcomes, if not now depends on the self for its actualization, it is readily enticing to pursue explorations of how this selfhood and modes of perception come to be. And yet to engage solely with the participant in a virtual reality denies any agency, complexity, and fragility to all of the actors that construct this virtual reality in the first place. To engage solely with the participant is to enforce a kind of narcissism that these new memorials perpetuate. What is the participant actually engaging with, and at whose cost? To what extent is the participant's heightened status predicated on a violent rupturing of the very space they inhabit?

The Pinchas Gutter you greet in The Last Goodbye is not a Pinchas standing on the physical ground of Majdanek. Rather, he is standing in a digitally reconstructed Majdanek using photogrammetry, the process of taking

tens of thousands of overlapping photographs to recreate the volume of each building. Yet Pinchas was physically present at Majdanek to record what he tells you. For every barrack, gas chamber, and railway car Pinchas takes you to, he is there standing on and in front of a green screen. The process is one of perpetual location, extraction, dislocation, and relocation: Pinchas' testimony is extracted as an isolated 3D stereoscopic image of himself, the space he occupies is then digitized by engineers into a virtual, room-scaled space, and finally the stereoscopic image of Pinchas and his testimony are inserted into the digital space. Based on this order of operations, one could argue Pinchas is able to deliver this testimony anywhere with a green screen: why not stay in the comfort of his home in Toronto instead of travel all the way to Poland? Amidst such a convoluted process, the Shoah Foundation found it integral for Pinchas and other survivors to deliver their testimonies on site in order to elicit the raw emotions that give their testimonies their affect and power. In other words, the reencounter becomes a spokesperson for victimization. The participant experiences a retraumatization of the survivor in real time.

In Eyal Weizman and Thomas Keenan's "Mengele's Skull: The Advent of a Forensic Aesthetics," Weizman and Keenan unpack the forensics of the prominent SS physician's skull as a forensics dealing with the relation between three components: an object, a mediator, and a forum. If the forum becomes a space where objects are negotiated, presented, and contested, produced via "a series of entangled performances," the objects involved neither independently speak for themselves nor be trusted as self-evident. If The Last Goodbye becomes a forum that is "dynamic and contingent, temporary, diffused, and networked by new technology and media," what is to say that its objects cannot be contested? And who or what is the mediator that assumes such negotiation?

Pinchas Gutter
 2 stereoscopic cameras
 1 360° camera
 Lights
 Crew members
 Majdanek as a physical space
 Majdanek as a series of photographs
 Majdanek as a digital photogrammetry reconstruction
 Majdanek as a room-scaled walkable virtual environment
 Spaces in Majdanek with testimony
 Spaces in Majdanek with no memory or personal attachment
 Tourists
 White noise
 Voiceovers
 Pinchas Gutter as a stereoscopic image
 Pinchas Gutter as a voice over
 VR goggles
 The installation that houses the experience
 The gravel bed encircling the installation
 The mirror coating the installation
 The participant

This is our inventory of objects that make The Last Goodbye a process, archive, and experience. These objects should not be separated by the "real," "digital," and "virtual" spaces they purportedly inhabit, for they all are invested in shared institutional, moral, and experiential operatives. By breaking down this system into separate entities, "by disrupting" "conscious meaning," Shoshana Felman would push us to see this moment as one where each object becomes performative, "that they begin to enact rather than report." To both acknowledge a rupture already present within the processes of extraction, reconstruction, and exhibition, and to further rupture these dependencies oneself. Further, what happens when notions of selfhood and perception extend beyond the participant to include the rest of these objects? By rhetorically writing into these objects actions, thoughts, and experiences of their own, they not only become humanistic but destabilize the hierarchy that privileges the participant's experience. Playing with voice and narration allows us to foremost interrogate the kinds of selfhood that are nurtured and developed within these virtual realities. It also challenges us to reconsider who is encountering who, and on whose terms.

The tool that ultimately confers this invisible network of objects, as fragmented as they may already be—or the hinge that shifts political aesthetics as Weizman and Keenan would claim—is the green screen. In certain moments it is invisible and unfathomable, yet in settings it is unmistakable and off-putting. The green screen is everywhere and nowhere, both a means of extraction and something to be extracted itself. It bears its own testimony because in Felman's words, the very act of crossing a line between a witness and a mute object renders it "frontier evidence." Every object is contingent on the green screen's ability to dislocate, rupture, and reconstruct. It promises certain modes of adaptability, visibility, and engagement, whether or not each object realizes it or not. The green screen is also a testimony, for it crosses a line between witness and perpetrator, storing certain objects, estranging others, and violently pushing some into extractive, exploitative predicaments. To embody the green screen is to fully occupy the real, digital, and virtual realities of Majdanek, and to explore what The Last Goodbye is ultimately invested in producing—as a memorial, experience, and moral conditioning.

I am the piles of shoes Pinchas is looking at. Not you, not even the camera you may be clever to suspect. He is talking to me, lamenting over me, traumatized by me. I am the reason he is here on this green carpet instead of back home in Toronto. I remind him of the most intimate details. The very precious belongings his family wore every day before this place obliterated them. I may as well be the only piece left of them he can access physically or visually. I am the fuel for his performance, the motor of his emotions. That is why they chose me to sit behind your eyes.

I am 3,000 polygon meshes linked to 3,000 images. That is only how the engineers see me though. To you, I am a bunch of shoes piled up, well virtually. I have never met the real Pinchas, only you, the participant. Digital as I may be, I am the only thing in these barracks that has any signification of life-of bodies. As you turn away from Pinchas and around towards me, Pinchas' voice follows. He tells of his family being torn from one another upon arrival, his sister straight to the gas chamber. You hear this painful testimony while looking at me, wondering if any of these shoes belonged to his family. Your emotions swell. Pinchas and I work as a team to make the visual and vocal become an experience of your own.

The dissection of a single object into three: physical, digital, and virtual/experiential. In his interviews about the project, USC Shoah Foundation director Stephen Smith explicitly mentions the placement of the camera in between Pinchas and the shoes as a staging that provokes emotion and justifies the green screen method. As a result however, the shoes engage their own various temporalities, relationships, and motives. As a physical object on the set of *The Last Goodbye*, the shoes are a violent tool for retraumatization: a reason to bring Pinchas out of his home to deliver his testimony. As a series of photogrammetry scans, they are an asset, an archive unto themselves. One that can be recycled for other testimonies, other experiences. They are independent from Pinchas, not only in that they were constructed asynchronously to filming, but also because of the green screen that makes Pinchas replaceable or redactable at any moment. A gap between what is produced and what is consumed.

Yet as a virtual experience, the shoes become an appropriating tool. Their original history and aura has eroded after a series of modifications; gaps in time, space, technology. The shoes become words going through a

disruption of meaning, now only able to enact rather than report. The virtual shoes lose and gain elements, forgoing history and physicality while layering in new voices and subjectivities. The subtle magic of the latter is that, since Pinchas is fixed in place as a stereoscopic card within interior spaces, the participant can never see Pinchas along with the shoes simultaneously in one frame. When the participant is then turned away from Pinchas, they consume the visual of the shoes while listening to a faceless testimony, allowing them to adopt their own subjectivity and attachment in the absence of Pinchas. The participant comes to form their own remembered past through an aural and visual experience that by conception privileges their encounter. It is a gap in understanding in more ways than one. It is the participant's inability to recognize that everything was initially positioned in such a way for the shoes to have an effect on Pinchas, nevermind the effect they had on themselves. The reconstruction of the shoes in space yields new parasitic subjectivities while leaving no trace of their previous actions or motives. It is a curation of not one space, but multiple, via filming, extraction, and presentation: a gap between exchange and emotion.



Virtual view of Majdanek barracks, digitally reconstructed with Pinchas as a stereoscopic image. Screenshot courtesy of the USC Shoah Foundation.

The most explicit moment in gaps could very well be here in this screenshot of the modeled virtual environment. It captures what is never seen, physically or virtually. It is the interstitial stage of stitching and reconstructing. The embryonic participant is positioned inside the photogrammetry barrack, given its origin location, and a field of vision with a level of depth and range. They are the first cube on the far right, their field of vision extended as a perspectival square projected towards another box, Pinchas Gutter, and towards a two dimensional image, Pinchas Gutter, and towards a shadow, Pinchas Gutter. There is another viewer here; that who constructs this very encounter. Their presence and power disappears after this step, yet their omniscient eyes and movement around this encounter tell us everything that is visible, invisible, connected, and disjointed. At times they deny the participant autonomy, at others, they reveal how the multiple forms of Pinchas are at the participant's unconditional service. They document what was brought from the physical world, and what is being discarded or replaced for the virtual. And, amidst this project that excavates the selves of each silenced object, they also interrogate the selves that are being solicited, formed, and interpolated for our two protagonists.

When viewed progressively around the digital room, Pinchas' depth, ambient occlusion, and three-dimensionality all are exposed as fallacies. The green screen is what both enables Pinchas' elasticity and denies him any groundedness. The green screen gives

creators the ability to position a digital Pinchas as they choose, even discarding him from the space when producing other content, so that the photogrammetry remains a universal asset. Yet for this given production, logistically the green screen restricts the amount of cameras and angles from which one can film the physical Pinchas. It is a tradeoff: preserving the independence of one digital asset to flatten the other. If the filmmakers were to surround Pinchas in a green screen, similar to what is done for their hologram interviews for *Dimensions in Testimony*, another tradeoff ensues. The green screen's 360° setup would promise a 3D body, only then it completely cocoons Pinchas from the barrack in which he stands; he may as well be back in Toronto at that point. The green screen's flattening of Pinchas represents a more insidious move then, as it becomes a polarizing vector. Its blatency aids the filmmakers in isolating Pinchas from his environment, while its invisibility behind and below Pinchas forcefully projects him back into this very environment, back into his trauma.

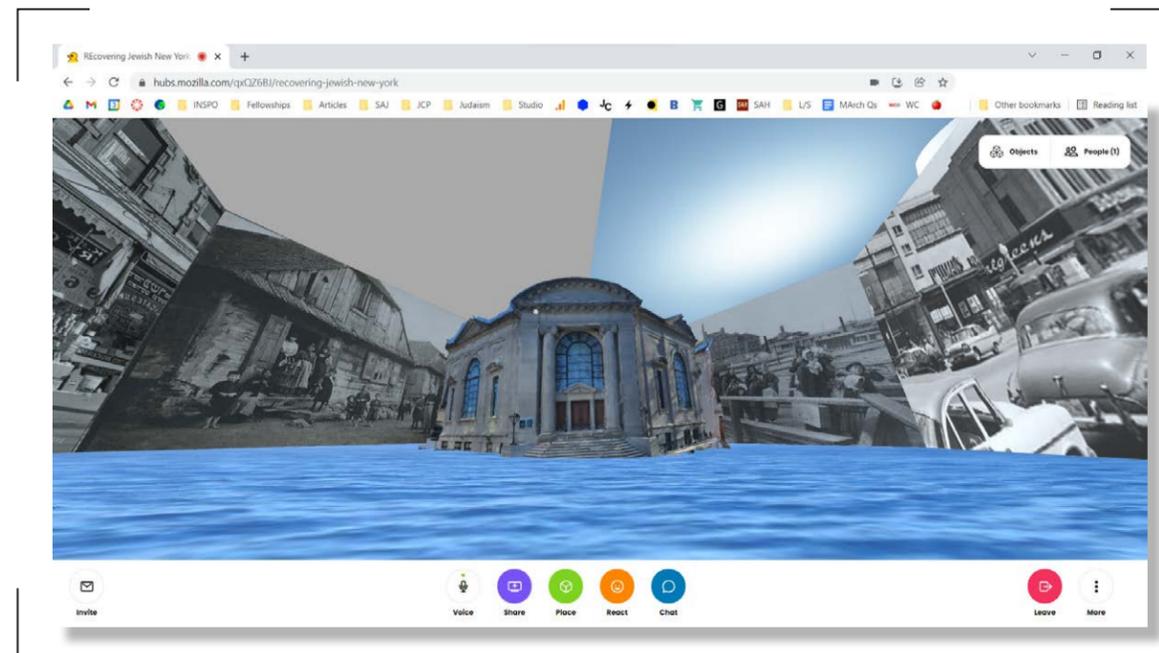
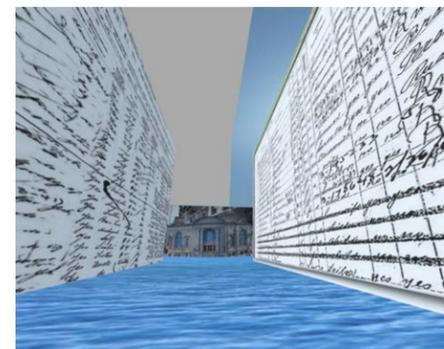
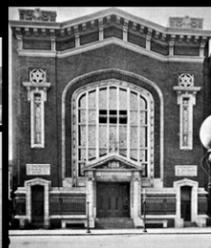
In consuming trauma and experience, transforming the historical past into a remembered past, does the self become conditioned to be a phantom of victimage, a vehicle of testimony, a certain liberal moral subject, or some negotiation of the three? Residing somewhere in between passive viewer and simulacra, the nature of perception and selfhood become increasingly murky. Do they remain at a status that is higher than these objects who also have testimonies to share? When and how do they begin to listen to those testimonies as well?

MISRATZEH BERACH'MIM

BLACKNESS +
JUDAISM

Tools for Show, Visual Studies Elective
Bika Rebek
Harlem, New York (Munsee Lenape)

Misratzeh Berach'mim ("Become favorable through compassion," Yiddish song) decenters the Ashkenormative narratives about Jewish immigrants in New York in the early 1900s. This virtual exhibition first begins with the trite narrative of New York Jewry: with the arrival of Ashkenazi (Eastern European) Jews arriving at Ellis Island in the early 1900s. Yet narratives and spaces quickly destabilize, first with a 3D-scan of Congregation Beth Elohim (Park Slope, Brooklyn) submerged in the sea of the diaspora, and next through a shattered void. At the other end of the void appears a hidden, overlooked community, that of Harlem's Ethiopian Jews.



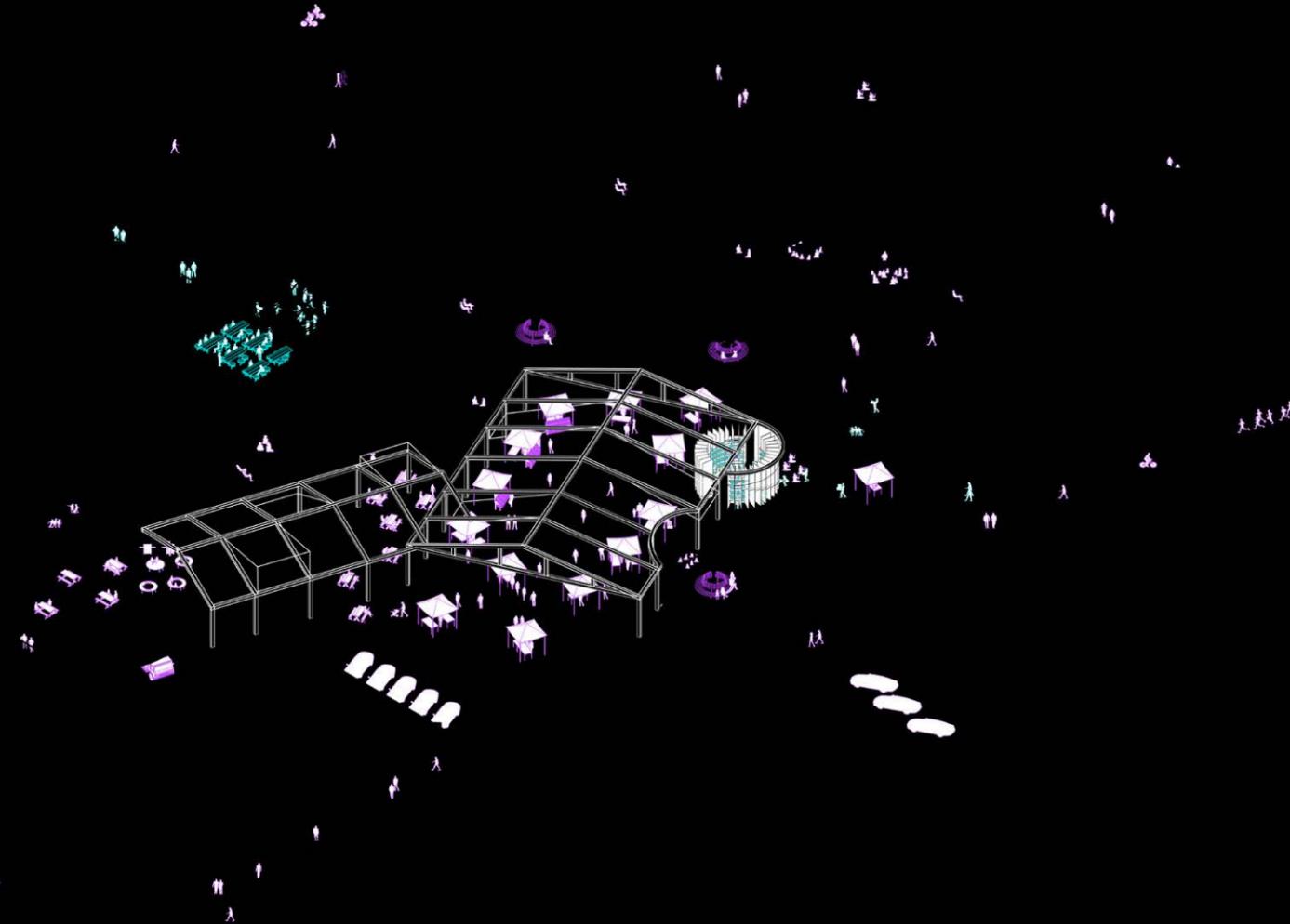
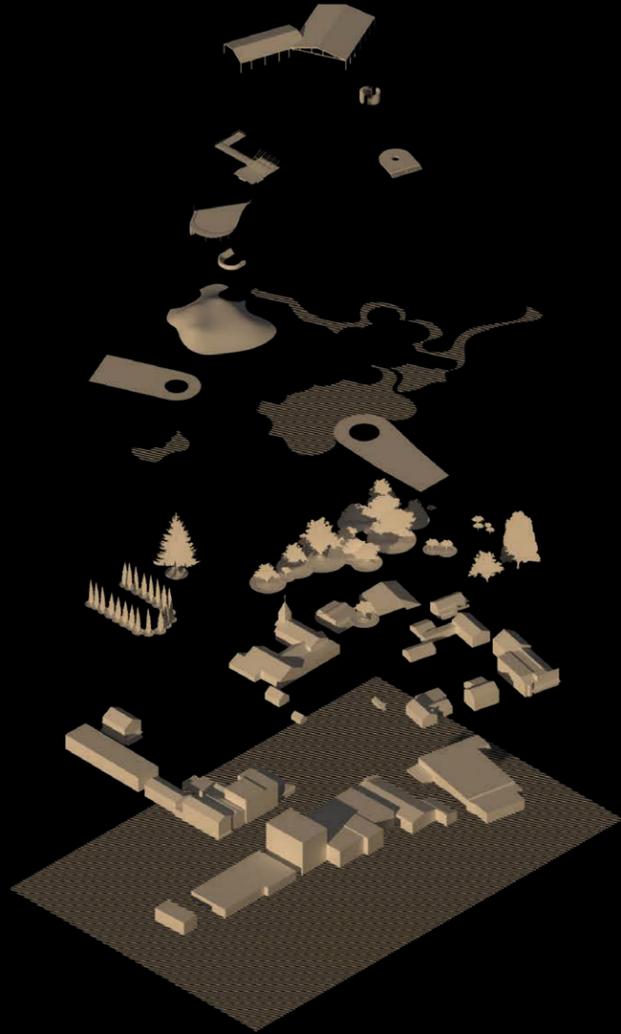
● A RURAL RELIGIOUS FRONT STREET

ISLAMBERG +
DEPOSIT, NY

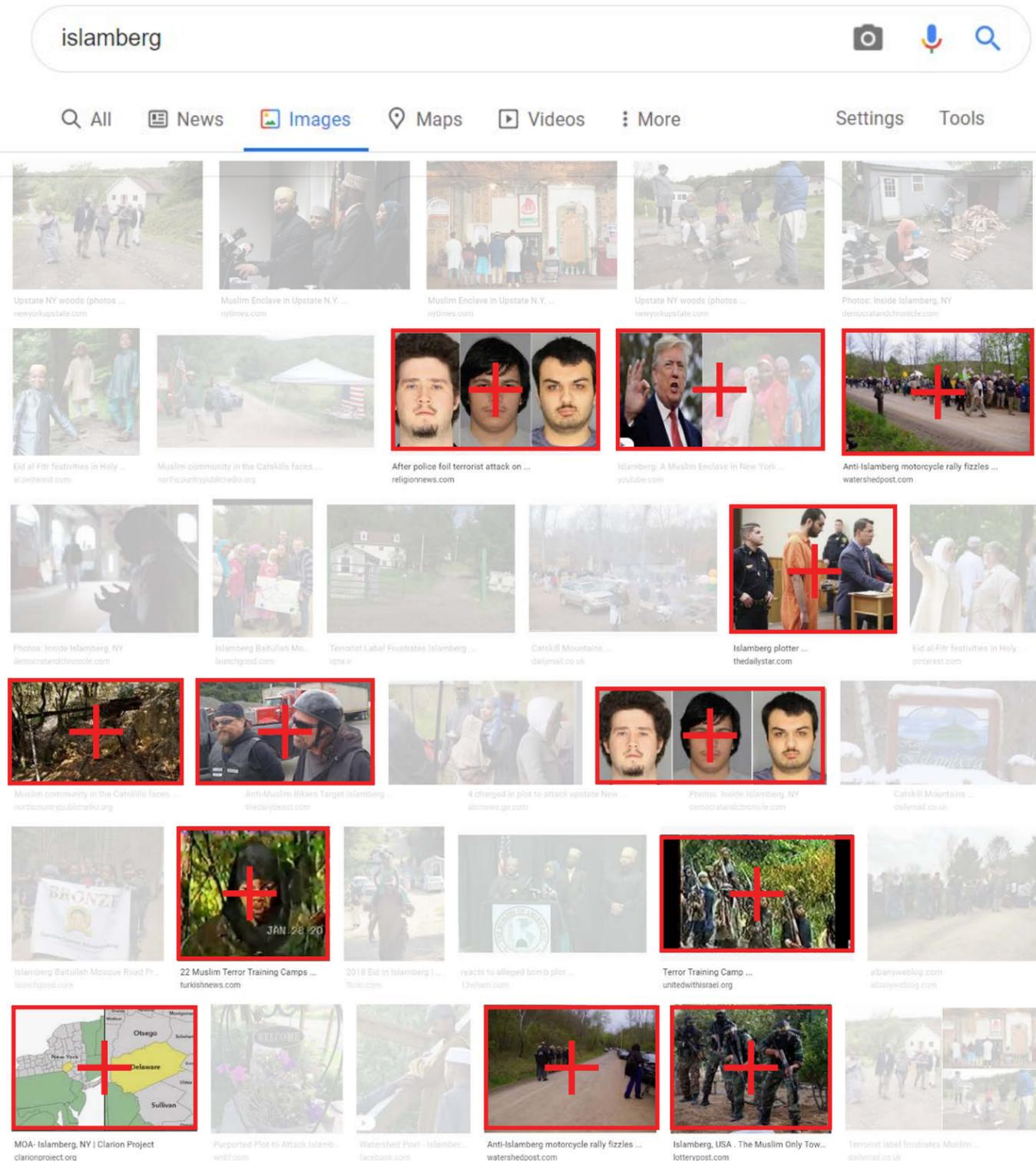
Adv IV Studio: In the Name of GOD
Ziad Jamaledine
Islamberg, NY (Oneida + Haudenosaunee Lands)

Exploring Islamberg, a religious hamlet of ex-urban African Americans in Upstate New York, God's Main Street asks how might we produce meaningful, voluntary, and sustaining encounters at a locust of divided America; one that transcends reductive neoliberal forms of "coexistence." This project explores and dismantles binaries found in Islamberg and the surrounding town of Deposit: secular vs religious, American vs foreigner, mine vs theirs, etc.

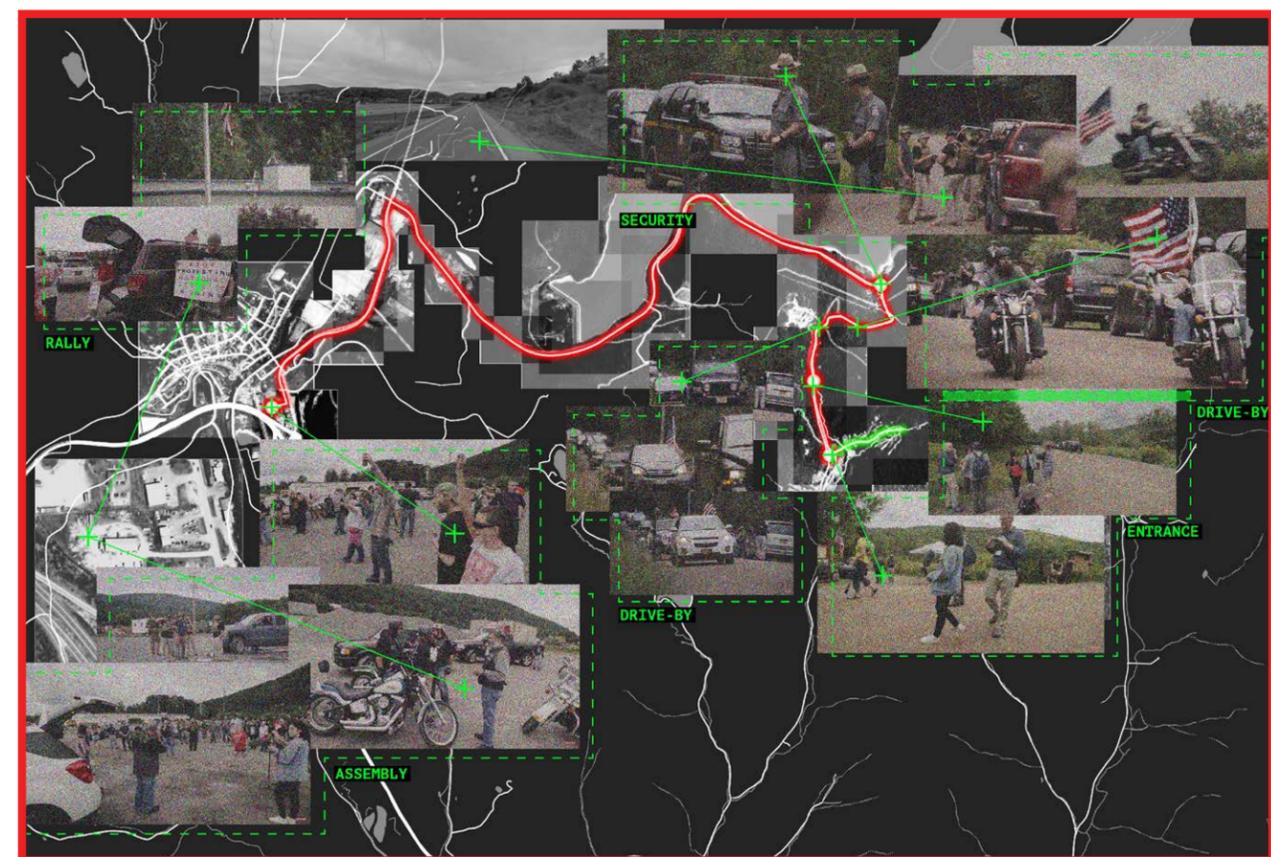
Moving forward, this project hopes to provide a subtle yet poignant intervention through a typology shared by Islamberg and Deposit: the shed. How might the banal shed be reinvented physically, spatially, and programmatically to produce new ways of encounter, exchange, and community? How might mobile, adaptive sheds reconcile capitalist notions of ownership that are isolating these two communities?



Staged, hegemonic, virtual white supremacist encounters with rural Islam...

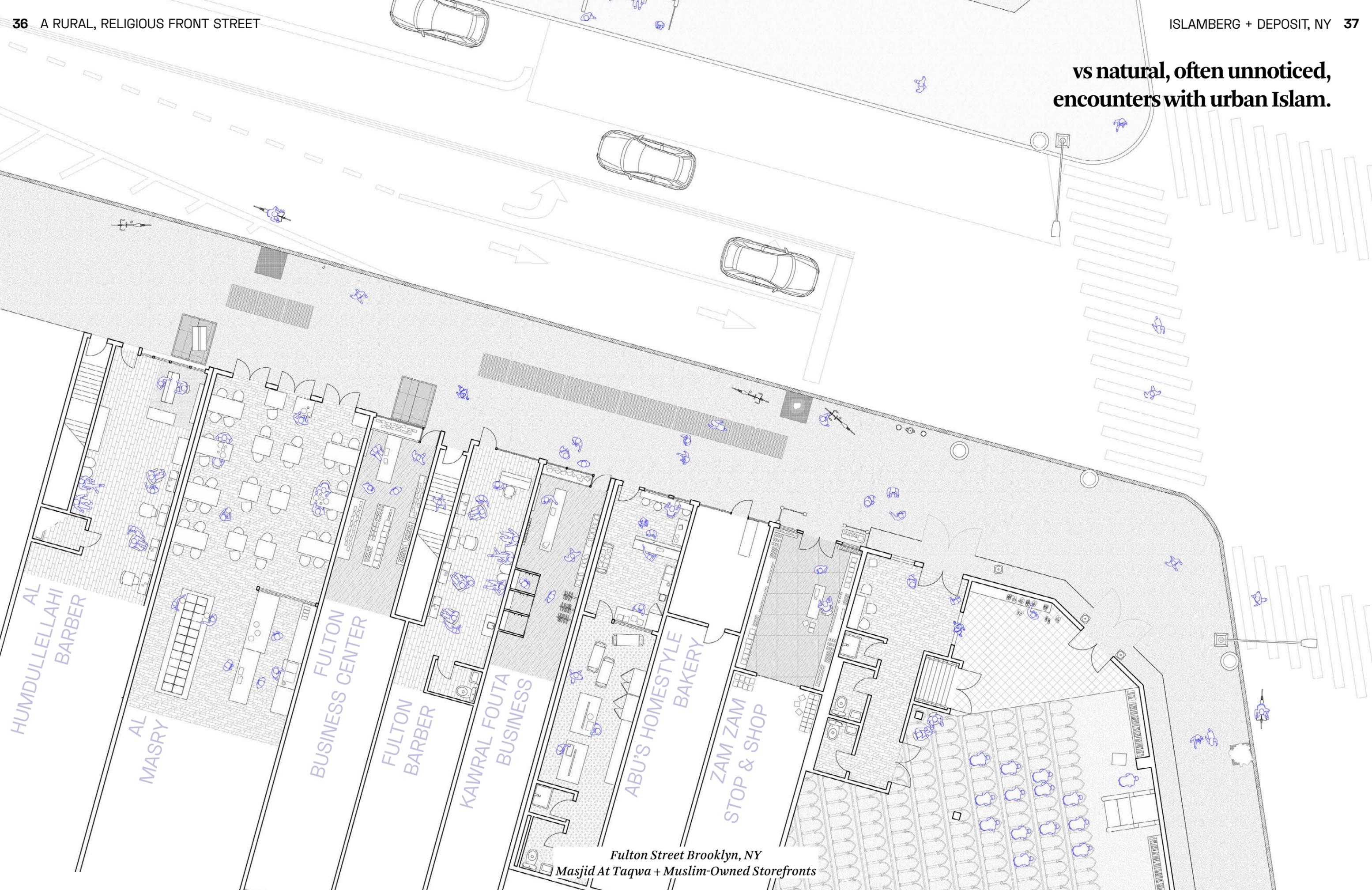


Google Search for "Islamberg"



White Supremacist Drive-By Against Islamberg
Deposit to Islamberg, 2017

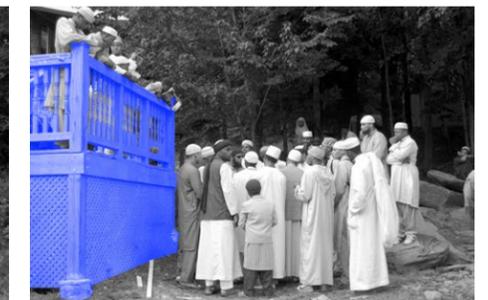
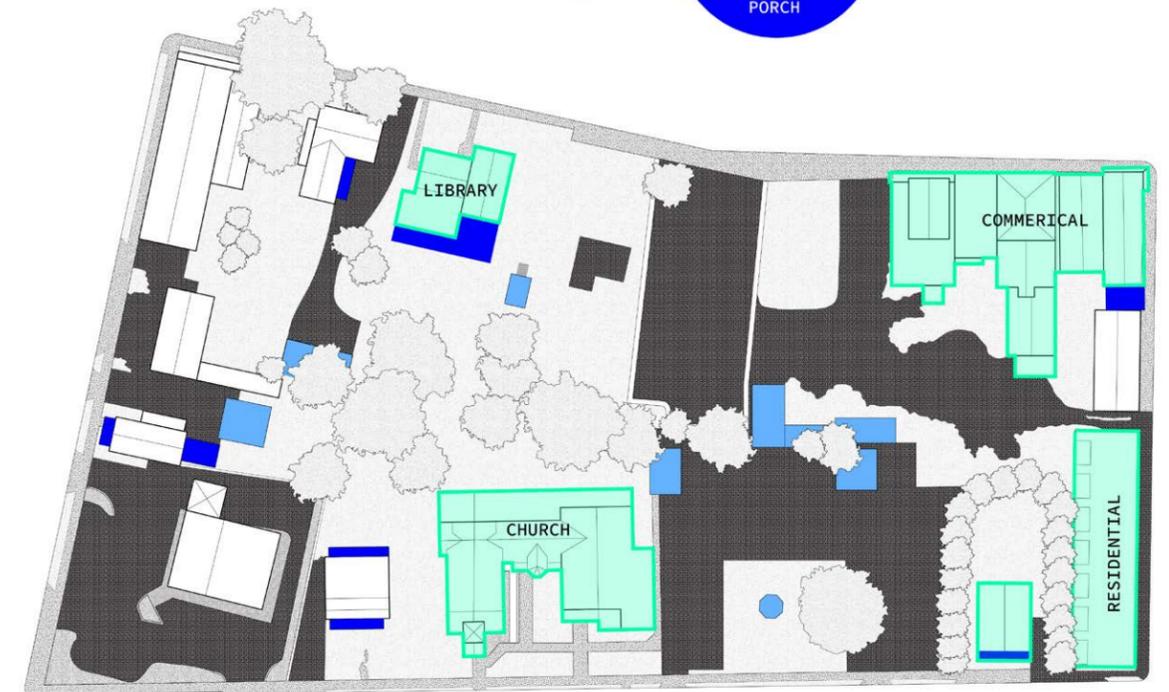
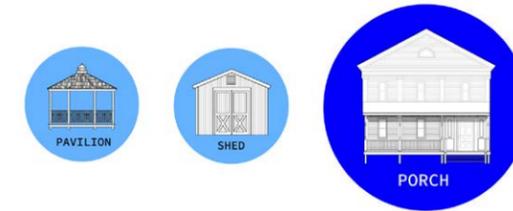
vs natural, often unnoticed, encounters with urban Islam.



Fulton Street Brooklyn, NY
Masjid At Taqwa + Muslim-Owned Storefronts

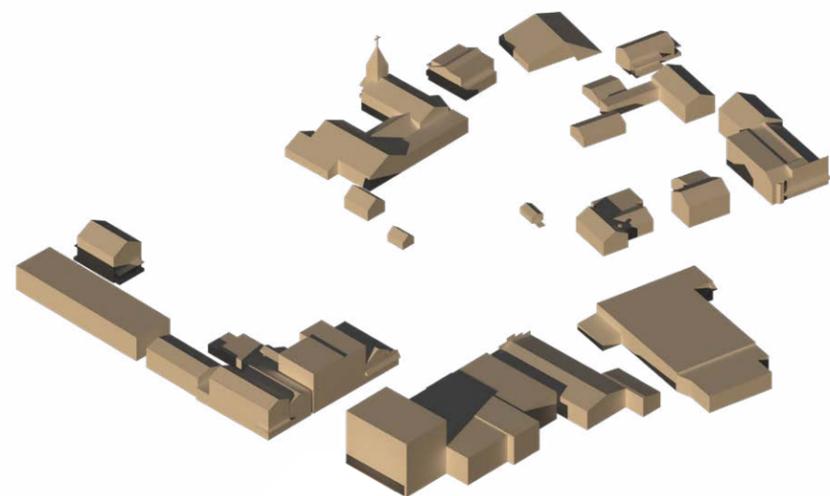


Islamberg Elevation-Plan

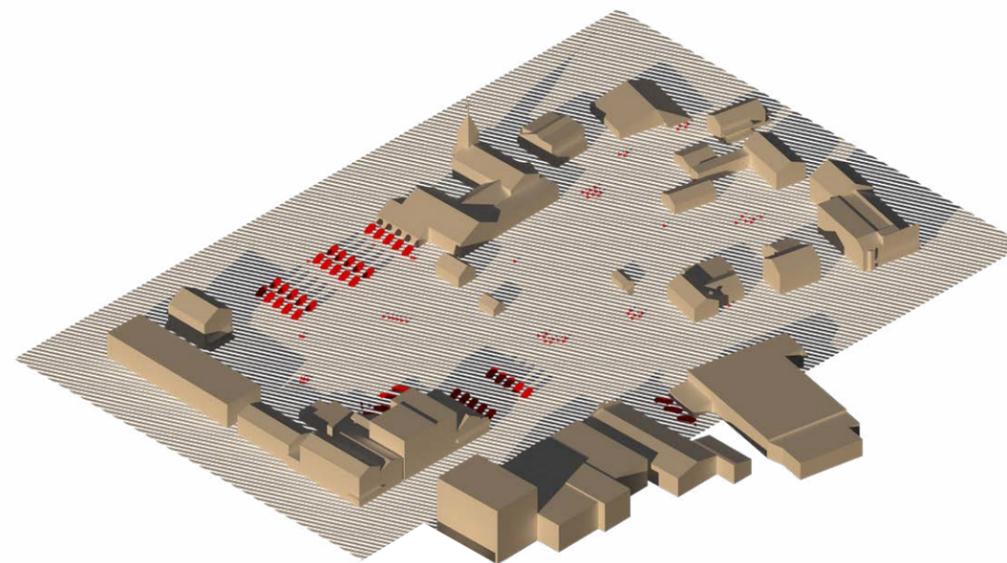


What spaces, programs, or opportunities might Islamberg bring to Deposit?

Downtown Deposit Plan



1. Existing Buildings + Sheds



2. Mecca Pavers



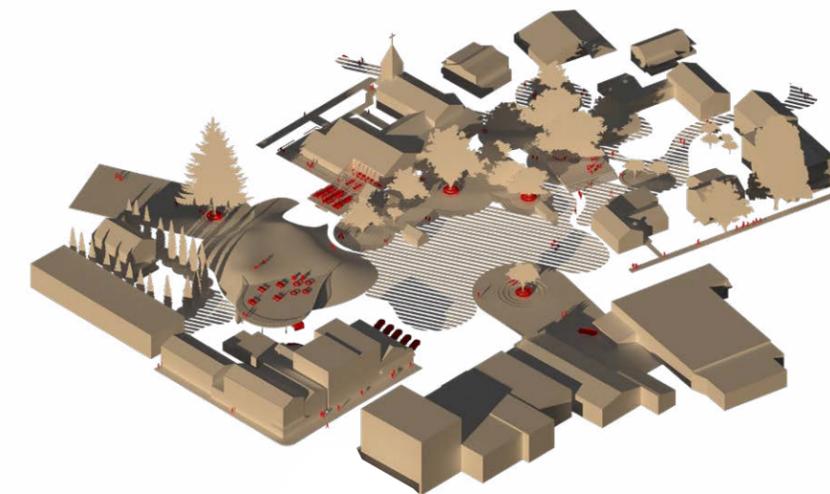
3. Concentric Tree Furrows



4. Carving Paths + Extending Sidewalks



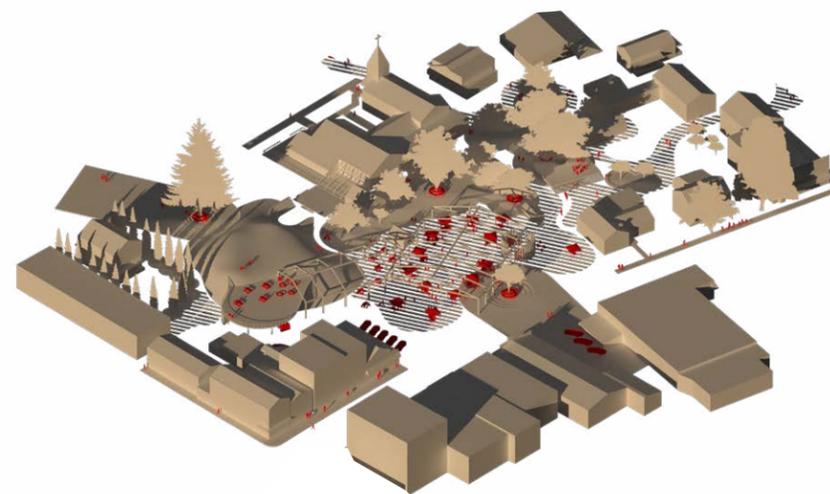
5. Berm (Biodigestor Underneath)



6. Porches: Berm, Church, Library

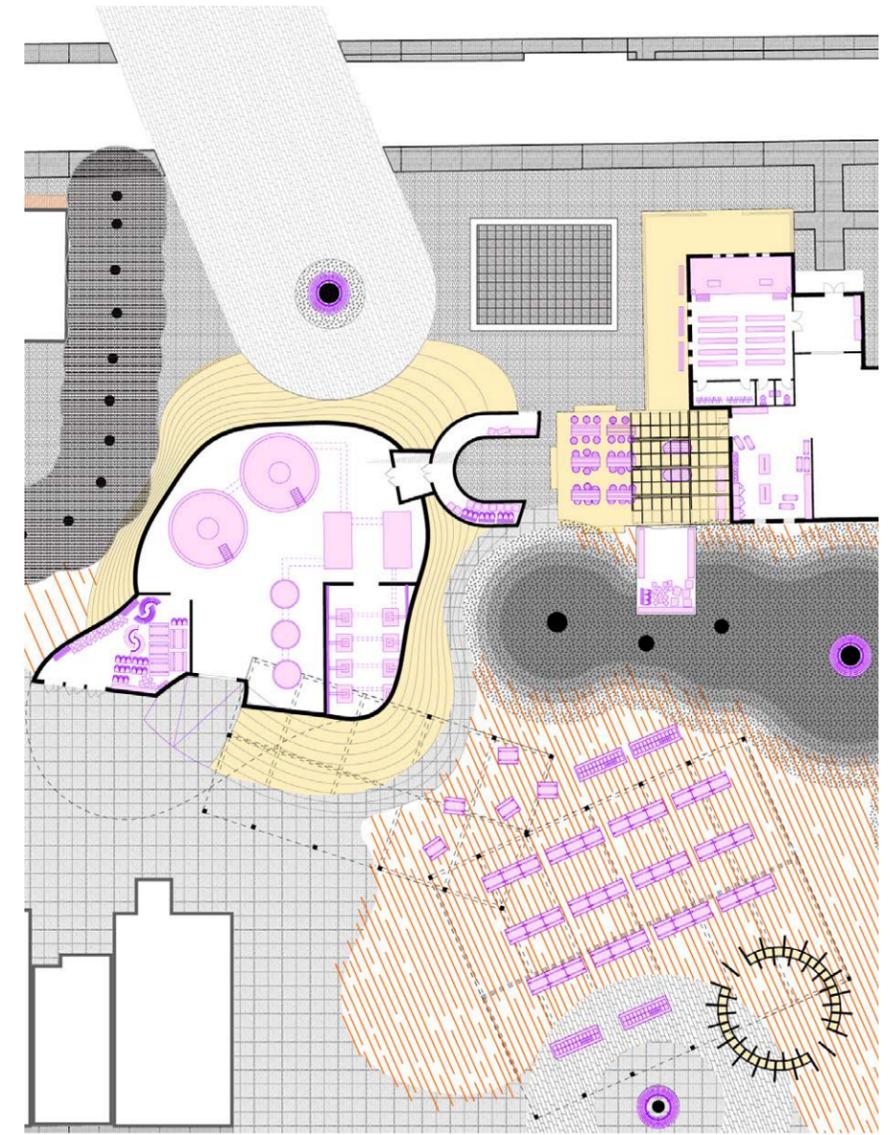


7. Library Drum + Church Amphitheatre

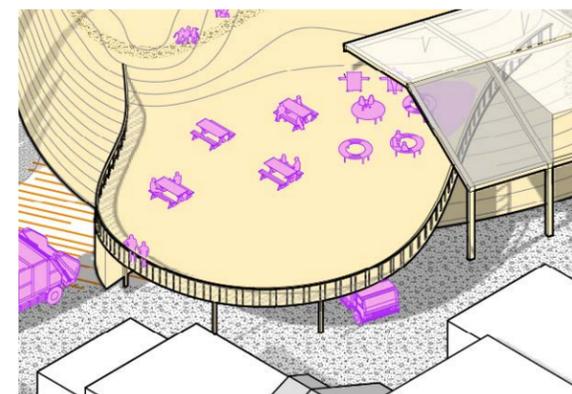
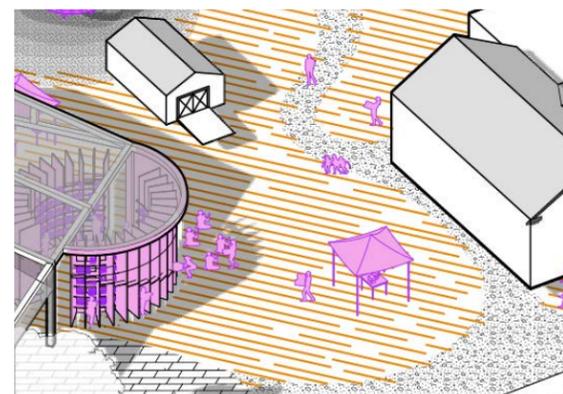
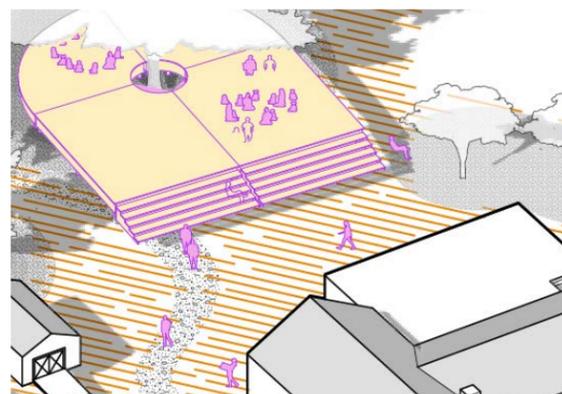
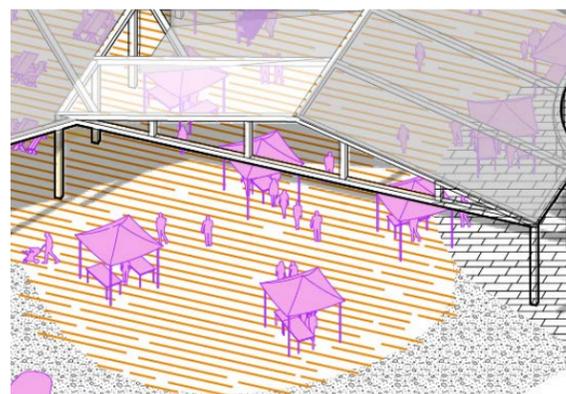
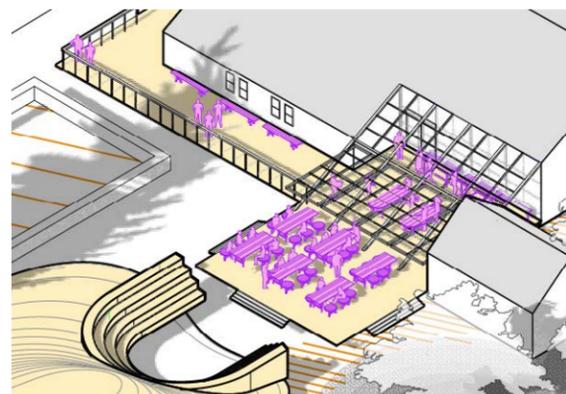
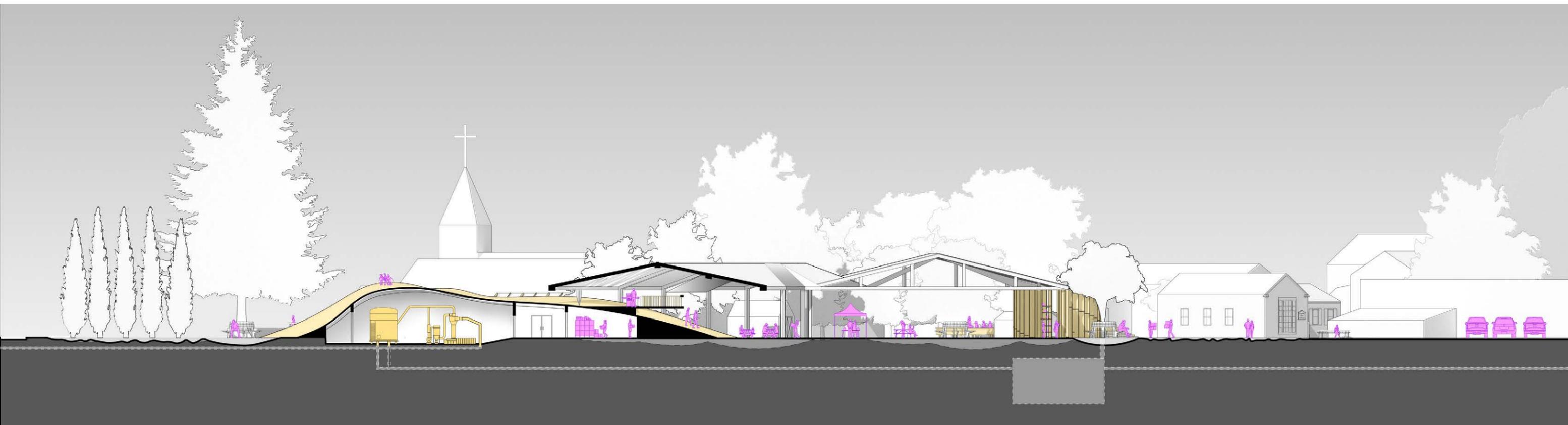


8. Overlapping Canopies

To achieve an intervention that could be subtle yet provocative, noninvasive and still encouraging, the project was generated from the ground up at a variety of scales. First, redoing the ground met undoing the block: both the capitalist tax lots that block fluidity and encounter, as well as the manicured yet dilapidated landscape consumed by parking lots. Next, negating the performative main street meant finding new elements to center on: the ecology and institutions. As furrows around trees enforced their natural canopies, natural and built objects bled out from the church and library, bringing with them their existing programming.

*Site Plan**Site Plan, Cut*

Sprawled out throughout the block, the intervention serves as offering limbs to surrounding pieces of community and infrastructure, uniting them in the areas most commonly underused. In turned, what was once a polar relationship between the street facing and back facades becomes challenged if not reversed, whereby the “back of lots” become vital sources of activity and encounter between one another. Various canopies come to exist in multiple scales, providing shading and varying degrees of privacy.



Sunday Afternoon: Post-church community luncheon, sponsored by St. Joseph's.

Saturday Morning: Food and crafts market, featuring local farmers, Islamberg clothing and jewelry, and Deposit coffee roasters.

Tuesday Afterschool: St. Joseph's bible study above, mommy-and-me reading library time below.

Saturday Afternoon: Deposit Free Library hosts a book fair, featuring interfaith children's books written by Islamberg authors.

Friday Afternoon: Open seating for Front Street restaurants above, recycling collection below.

*N-S Section
(L to R) Tree Furrow, Biodigester, Storage Shed, Barbecue Porch*

(L to R) Interior Canopy, Library Porch, Library Drum, Deposit Free Library, Tree Furrow, State Theatre Plaza / Parking



Programming Axonometric

DAVID LOPEZ JR.'S "SKILLED WORKERS": NEGOTIATING ARCHITECTURE, RACE, AND RELIGION

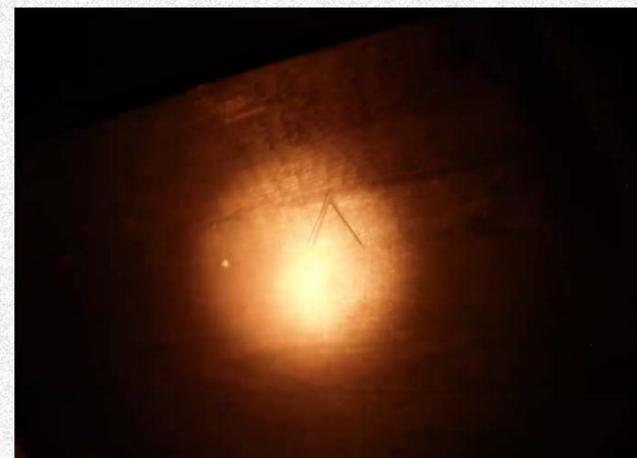


In 2019, the congregation Kahal Kadosh Beth Elohim (KKBE) of Charleston began a one million dollar renovation of its historic synagogue built in 1841, aiming to preserve its historic structure while modernizing it for its ongoing use. Two years later, the synagogue emerged with not only a face lift, but also a new plaque at its footsteps (Figure 1), recognizing that the very building restored was one built by enslaved people. This was not a novel awakening in the city of Charleston. The effort lay amidst an active backdrop of reflection: just one year before KKBE's renovation, the city had issued an apology for its role in the slave trade. Moreover, the knee-high plaque sitting on top of bricks, likely also formed by enslaved people, took its cue from Charleston's Unitarian Church, where a brick monument similarly stands to commemorate the enslaved who built their building. So too does the city's First Baptist Church mark their stairwell, used by the enslaved to sit upstairs in a formerly segregated space. What appeared most unusual about KKBE's plaque was thus neither its tone nor timing; it stands as the only memorial within the entire synagogue's complex without a single name inscribed. For along with omitting the names of the "skilled workers includ[ing] African Americans," it withholds the name of its "Jewish builder," one known by the current congregation and a prolific builder of his time. As it turns

out, this omission was a political move: one of KKBE's immediate past presidents is a cousin of this builder and in carrying his legacy, they are trying to distance themselves from the fact that members of their family enslaved people.

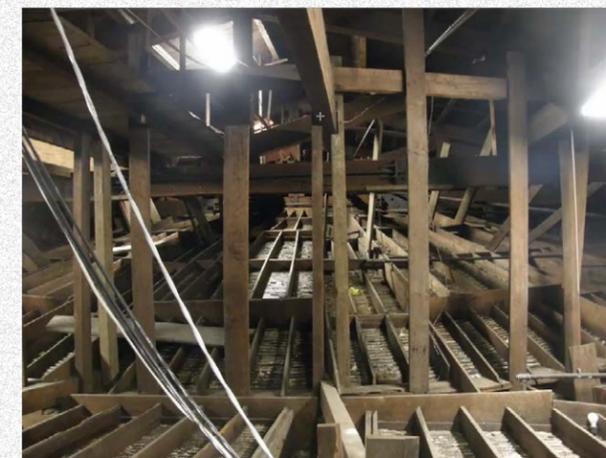
The canon of American Jewry propels stories of Ashkenazi immigrants and religious exiles, settling in the Northeast and attaining great social and economic mobility along with progressive agendas. Consciously or not, it fails to bring light to people like David Lopez Jr.: a Sephardic, Confederate, arms-manufacturer, and slave-holding builder, one who attained significant stature in his life. Similarly, the canon of architectural history has long upheld a predisposition towards designers and financiers of the built environment, rather than the builders or makers that turn ideas into reality. David Lopez Jr. was a maker in every sense of the Yiddish word. He was a pathfinder architecturally, politically, and economically—a true entrepreneur who leveraged the breadth and flexibility of the profession of "builder" to constantly reinvent himself as his city and nation evolved. On both a literal and figurative level, one might ask why society and scholars alike, in collective memory and the rewriting of history, all too often leave out those who are the builders of our modern world. Is it merely a lack of archival records, in which their histories were deemed unworthy of being preserved, or might it be less easily digestible to come to terms with the layers of privilege, violence, and less aesthetic realities they bear?

It is both the taboo legacy and profession of David Lopez Jr. that often leaves him at the periphery as a redacted or omitted figure on the built environment. This paper departs from this polemic by adding in yet another dimension of conflict, one that surpasses a liminal debate of who designs and who builds our built environment to unpack the builder as a plural



Wood joinery marking from KKBE Attic. Courtesy of Barry Stiefel.

entity with various degrees of power, status, and responsibility. It is not enough to conceive of a builder, and while KKBE's plaque mildly suggests this, it exemplifies a general failure to expound upon the ways in which privilege and skill are negotiated within the profession. While David Lopez Jr.'s Jewish identity excluded him from becoming an architect, his confined status as a builder did not prevent him from being successful or an oppressor of others. As he skillfully negotiated his connections with the outside elite world, so too did he carefully cultivate his enslaved laborers, bringing them into his own profession. It is both these layers of the builder, and the intermediary status of that of this Jewish builder, that deserves reckoning. Amidst all of the confounding identities and legacies that David Lopez Jr. brings to the built environment, he becomes a critical figure to test the clichés or paradigms of how we as society and historians think about the trade professions (or minor professions in the words of Nathan Glazer), Jews in America and the antebellum South, slave holding, and the very notion of the enslaved as unskilled labor. This analysis honors and extends the work of preservationist Barry L. Stiefel, who is foremost responsible for uncovering the archives and history of David Lopez Jr. My intention is thus not to simply



KKBE Attic. Courtesy of Barry Stiefel.

regurgitate David Lopez Jr.'s narrative that Stiefel has already meticulously crafted, but to rather begin to make sense of David Lopez Jr.'s layered and often conflicting experiences by projecting them onto various academic discourses, spanning Jewish studies, memory studies, Black studies, and critical theory. Not often do these disciplines all collide when talking about the labor behind America's built environment of the 18th century; case studies such as this however show promise in finding moments of confluence and conflict that can challenge what scholars, preservationists, and society alike choose to unveil and remember. As Stiefel once remarked on his time living in Charleston, "I look around me everywhere and I see blood." While the violence that built our modern nation cannot be erased nor overstated, what can emerge are ways of decoding the power, privilege, as well as skill that persisted.

Afirming the entangled layers of his identity does not and should not strip him of any accountability. Rather, in the conception of the skilled enslaved as a multidimensional figure, it is equally important to unpack the oppressors as complex entities, allowing for a nuanced understanding of their relationships.

A CRACK IN THE DIASPORA

LEGIBILITY + HISTORY

CCCP Colloquium II: Operating Platforms
Felicity Scott
The Jewish Museum, NY (Munsee Lenape)

“At the Crack of the Diaspora” asks how we might reckon with history, art, and survivalist forgetting, and what kind of reckoning we should demand. Conceived around the Jewish Museum’s current survey of Jonas Mekas alongside years of rigorous work by Michael Casper in unraveling Mekas’s narrative, the Talmud page becomes a fertile notational device for representing the peculiar textual and spatial adjacencies Mekas kept during the war and in his current depiction at the museum. Is it the curator, the historian, the artist, or interlocutors who lay at this crack? Whose responsibility is it to reveal and accept it? While cracks only grow with more trauma, displacement, and oppression, we might hope tradition can be the force that brings us into new collective forms of narrating.

“The doppelgänger who treats all those letters as if they were available, rendering them into something clear and distinct!”
Almút Sh. Bruckstein

what took place. Mainly
While such a failure
of imagination might be
poet, lack of empathy
crime. It is, I'm afraid, an
of human nature—and
aspect of Jonas Mekas
I'm preoccupied now.

rest passes unnoticed, not
essential to one's existence,
slips out of memory.

may have
over from
a dorm
orie
not

THE JEWISH WAR
we still are displaced persons,
from those were

go go go
i can't
home i can't
i will

afraid
ght the barrac
an't i can
maybe

each and every
to all manner
historian Cas
witness. He i
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of imagination
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crime. It is, I
of human nat
aspect of Jona
I'm preoccupi

EXCERPTS FR



12 At the Crack of the Diaspora Legibility, Deviation, and Reckoning

Reality-ripple, so
dissimilar from my
own life - but one
that gives me a frame
of reference to so
many other lives -
Peter Bogdanovich

I want
to shout d
shout,
was s
from displaced person camp.



you are welcome to read all this as fragments from
someone's life or as a letter from a homesick
stranger or as a novel pure fiction yes you are
welcome to read this as fiction the subject the plot
that ties up these bits is my life my growing up the
villain the villain is the twentieth century

"Okay, now you
pull it!"
I believe in survivors
testimonies.

home thinking about money
in it
from the liberators of gorno revaro.

After spending 5
years stateless and
homeless in a Nazi
work camp and
then Displaced
Persons camps
throughout
Germany, Mekas
(b. 1922,
Semeniskiai,
Lithuania; d. 2019,
Brooklyn,
New York) emigrated
with his brother Adolfas
in 1949. A
penniless,
war-weary refugee,
he nonetheless
swiftly integrated
into the city's
thriving
counterculture,
becoming a central
organizer, and
later a prolific
filmmaker, within
avant-garde
Like

Those of us who admire Mekas's
films, writings, and personal
kindness can hardly object to
Casper's effort to reread his early
writings in the context in which they
were first published—publications
Mekas later described simply as a
"provincial weekly" and a "national
semi-literary weekly." In any case,
Casper's presumption that, even in
the absence of any sign of
wrongdoing, Mekas owes a more
detailed account of himself than he
has cared to provide strikes me as
having more in common with the
attitude of an operative of the
ICE confronting
than with that of a disinterested
scholar. A historian may have
remain obscure and, in some
correct even the memories
who have witnessed the
in the event of a question
does not have the right
through me, the guilt
his question is not
any individual's
evidence to
is it justified
unwillingly to
matters to a

you don't want to go home you
enemy
go go go
i can't
home i can't
i will
i am a
worker

Yes
I'll go
slaved
my free
battle
go home
tremble
you are not
only
afraid
i can't
i can't
i can't
i'm going
maybe
maybe
chaos anarchy i am

EXCERPTS FROM MEIN KAMPE
THE JEWISH WAR
we still are displaced persons,
from those were
but you're the only ones who
How many of you are alive?
it's not when you're in
(silence)
ma with P
(singing in Lithuanian)

What's difficult is the
remembering of the facts
themselves,
because they were
the constant
but during of us concentrates in our
use with on certain things,
chosen to each of us
The rest passes unnoticed, not
essential to one's existence,
slips out of memory.

Of course you'd like
have you ever stood in front of displaced person
it's about somebody who's far away
retracing bits of past

It is precisely because Jonas's art
is so profoundly concerned with
his life that Casper's article
landed like a bombshell in a
portion of the film world. Initial
response was intense. What did it
mean? Had Mekas been a German
collaborator? Another Paul
DeMan? Who the hell was
Casper—pushy nuisance or
charismatic assassin? Was
Anthology Film Archives
endangered? None of these are
true but people did read Casper's
article wildly different ways. How
painful it must be to have
someone else telling his story! I
don't judge Jonas. Almost all of us,
each and every day, are bystanders
to all manner of atrocities. For the
historian Casper, Mekas was a
witness. He is not looking for
evidence of guilt but knowledge of
what took place. Mainly, he fails.
While such a failure of
of imagination might be fatal to a
poet, lack of empathy is not a
crime. It is, I'm afraid, an element
of human nature—and that's the
aspect of Jonas Mekas with which
I'm preoccupied now.

EXCERPTS FROM MEIN KAMPE

THE JEWISH WAR
we still are displaced persons,
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but you're the only ones who
How many of you are alive?
it's not when you're in
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(singing in Lithuanian)

Of course you'd like
have you ever stood in front of displaced person
it's about somebody who's far away
retracing bits of past

HOLY SCHOOL

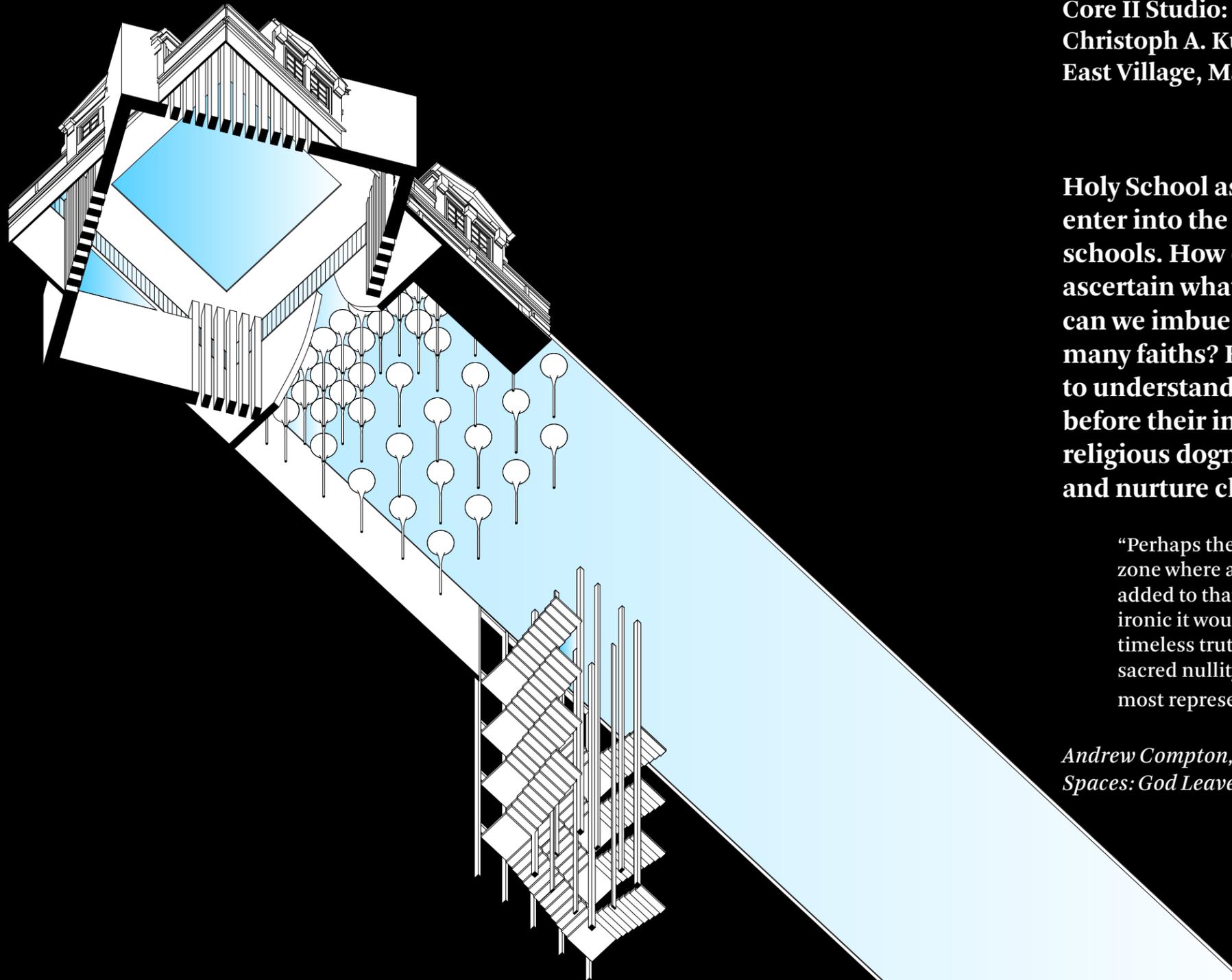
PUBLIC SCHOOL +
RELIGIOUS PLURALISM

Core II Studio: A School of Outsiders
Christoph A. Kumpush
East Village, Manhattan (Munsee Lenape)

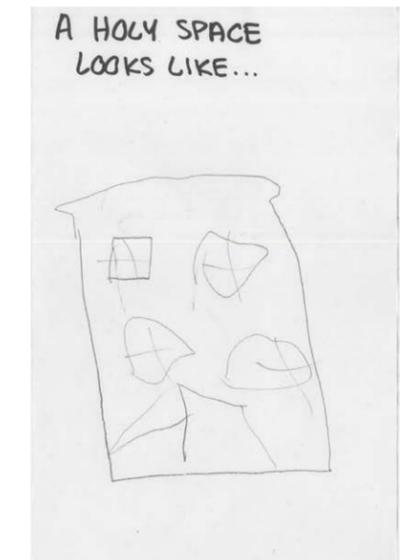
Holy School asks how religion might enter into the civic arena by way of public schools. How does a child begin to ascertain what makes a space holy? How can we imbue spirituality into a child of many faiths? How can children begin to understand holiness and spirituality before their indoctrinated into a religious dogma? How can spaces teach and nurture children into a spirituality?

“Perhaps the perfect multifaith space, an elusive zone where all people are at home, should be added to that list of numinous objects. How ironic it would be if this attempt to represent timeless truths in built form has resulted in a sacred nullity that turns out to be one of our era’s most representative architectural achievements”

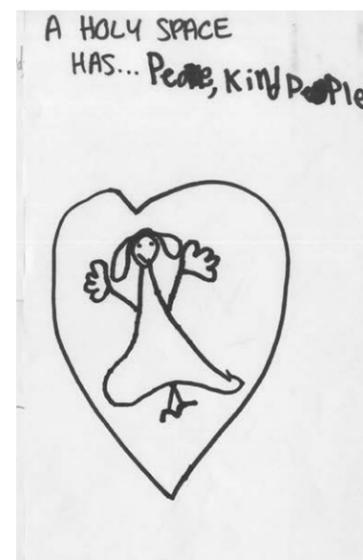
Andrew Compton, The Architecture of Multifaith Spaces: God Leaves The Building



A holy space is...

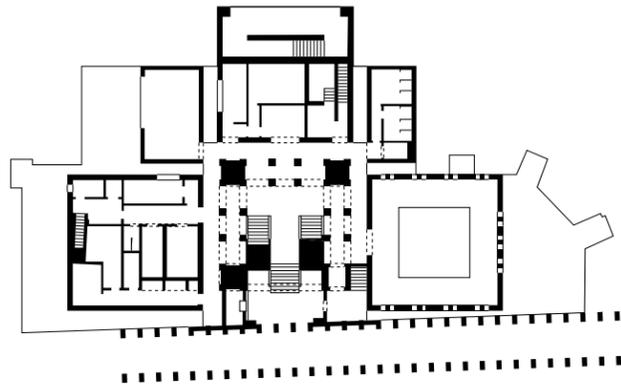
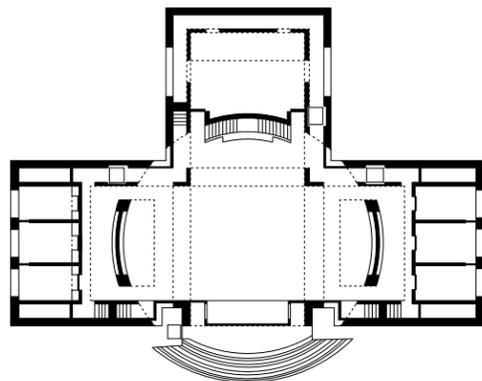
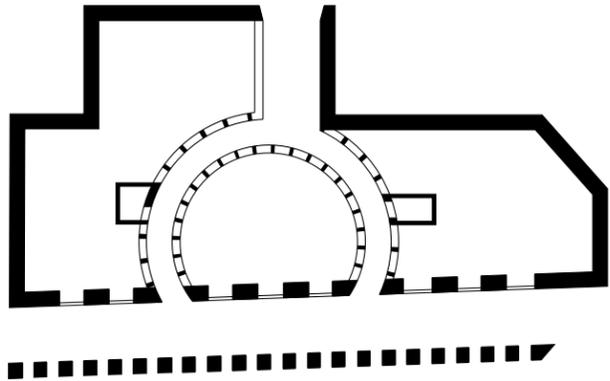
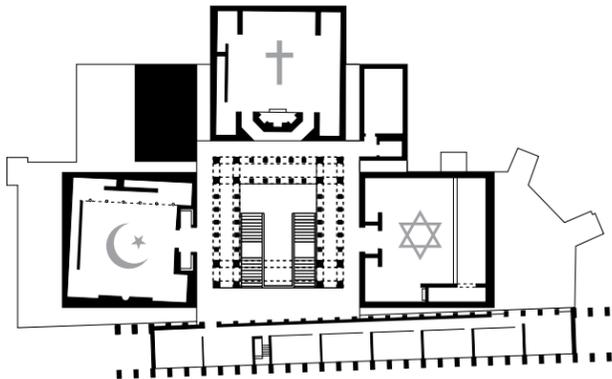
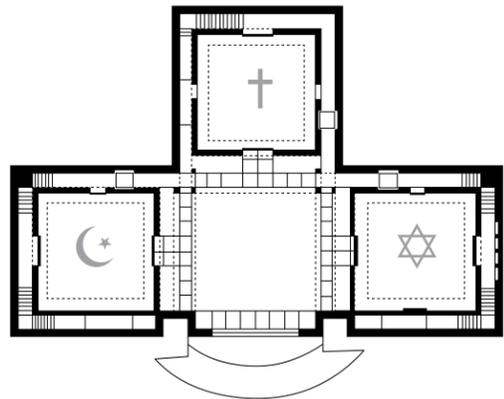
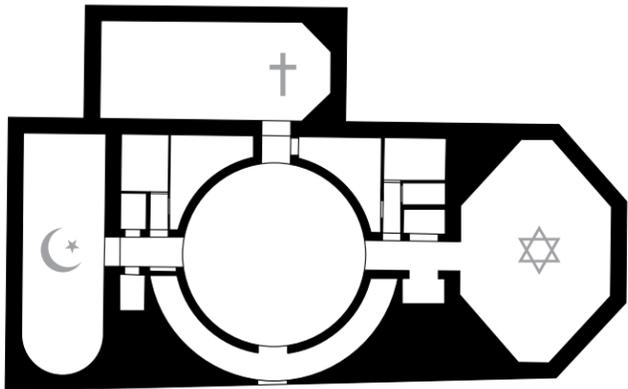


for children

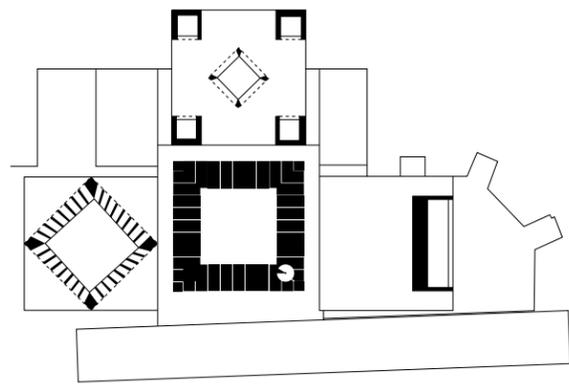
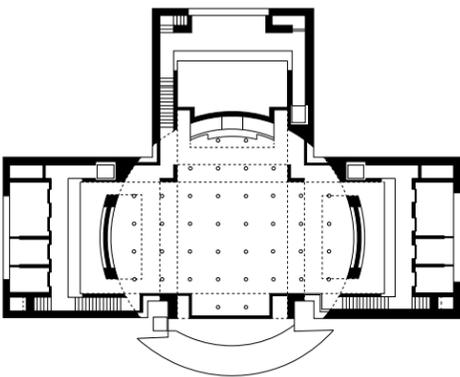
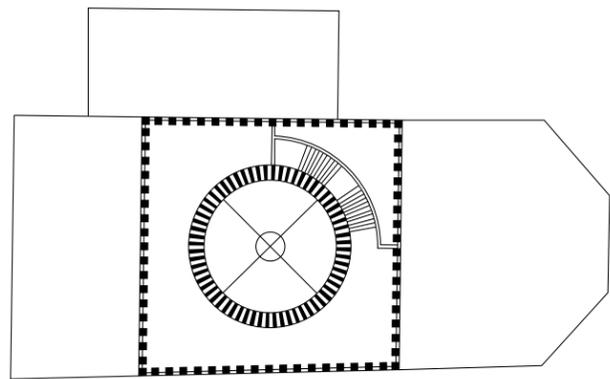
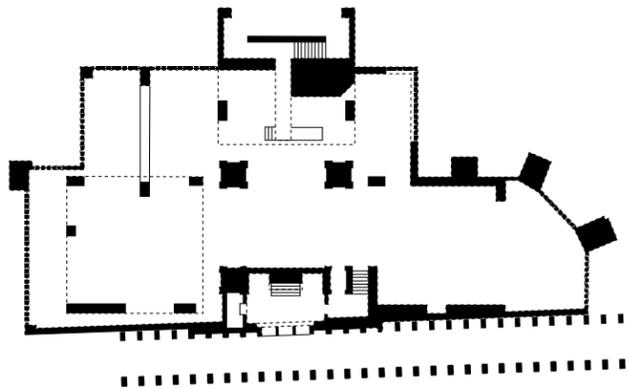
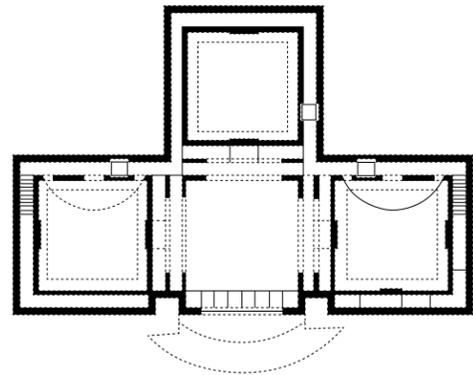
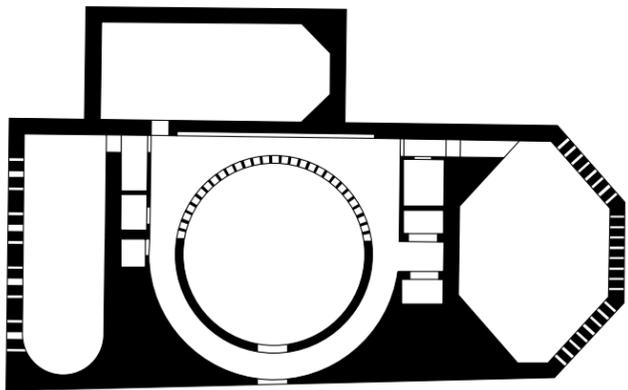


Drawings from My 2nd Grade Students

Stephen Wise Free Hebrew School



for architects

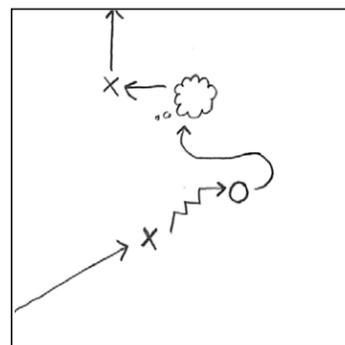


Precedent Study
House of One Multifaith Prayer Space Competition

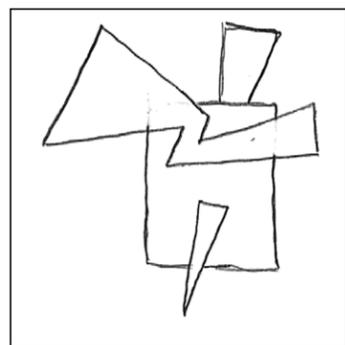
Winning Entry (Middle) and Finalists
Berlin, 2019

for the public?

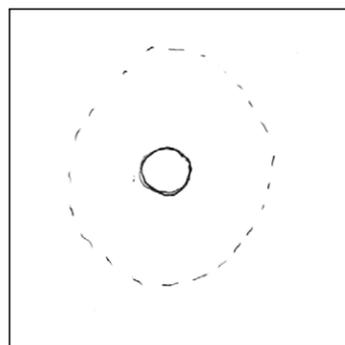
- unified
- expressive
- protected
- private
- segmented**
- interactive
- shared
- unapologetic**
- undefined
- adaptable
- anachronistic
- eclectic
- universal
- accessible
- divine
- powerful
- neutral**
- grounded
- sensuous
- exposed
- dignified
- divine
- modernized
- ephemeral
- integrated
- transparent
- heterogeneous
- accommodating
- visionary
- recognizable
- prescriptive
- pure**
- engaging
- collective**
- intimate**
- harmonious
- peaceful
- inviting**
- imagined
- reimagined**
- negotiated
- porous
- theatrical
- rooted
- expansive**
- contained
- democratic**
- common
- balanced
- dynamic



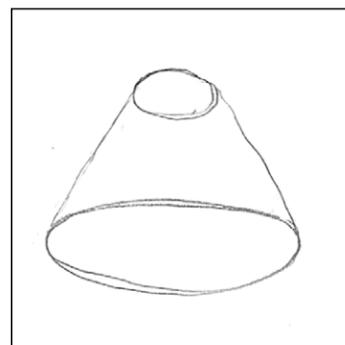
prescriptive



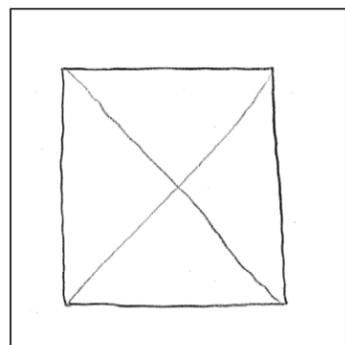
unapologetic



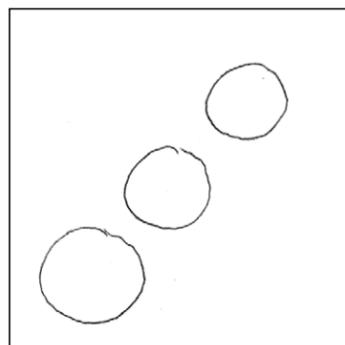
intimate



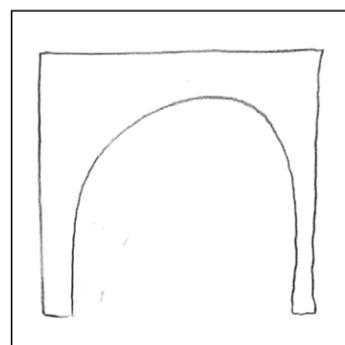
pure



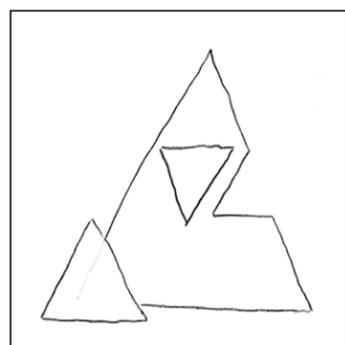
neutral



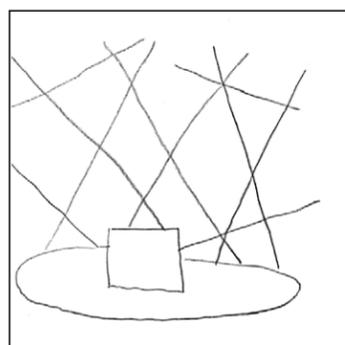
democratic



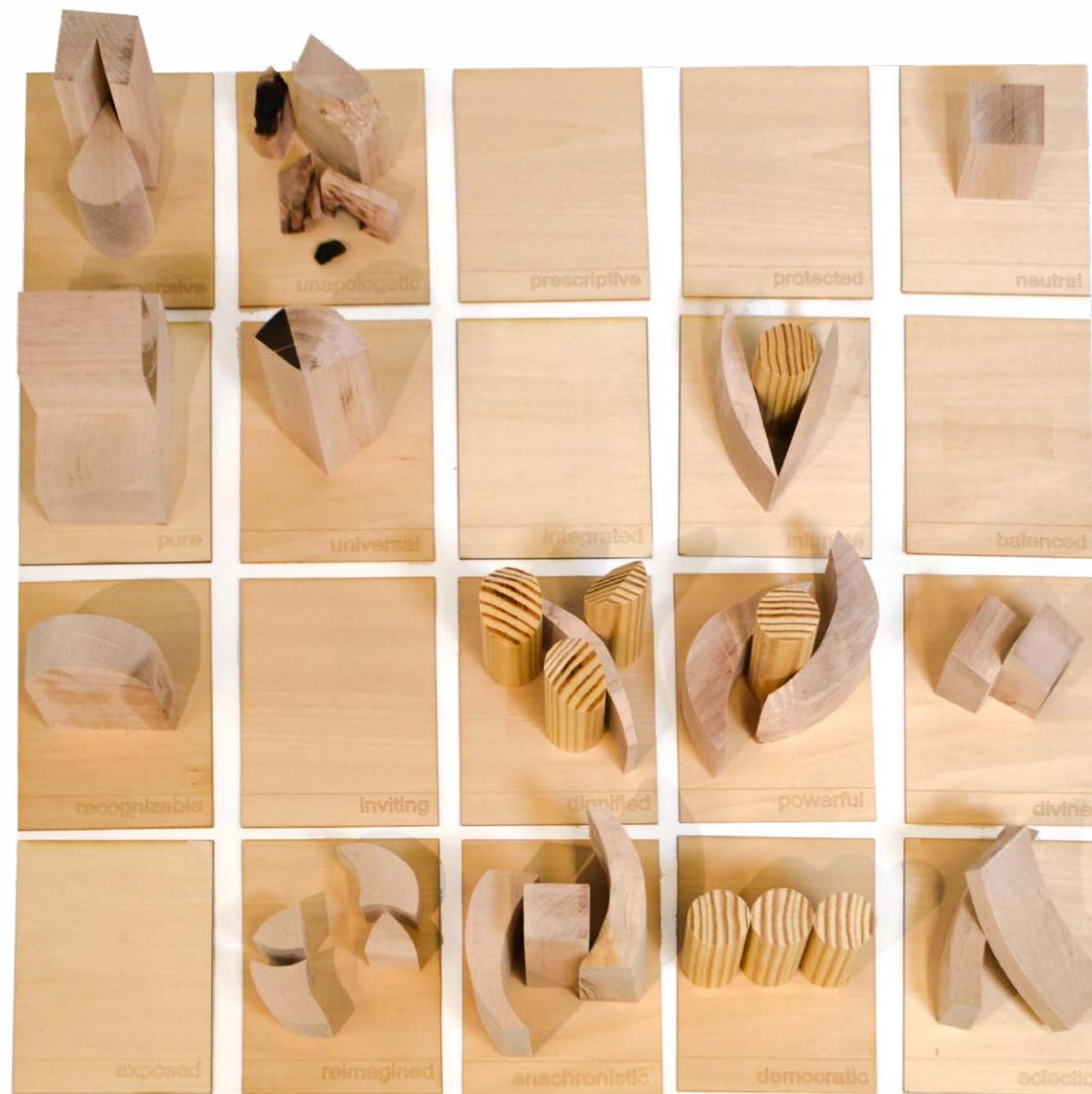
inviting

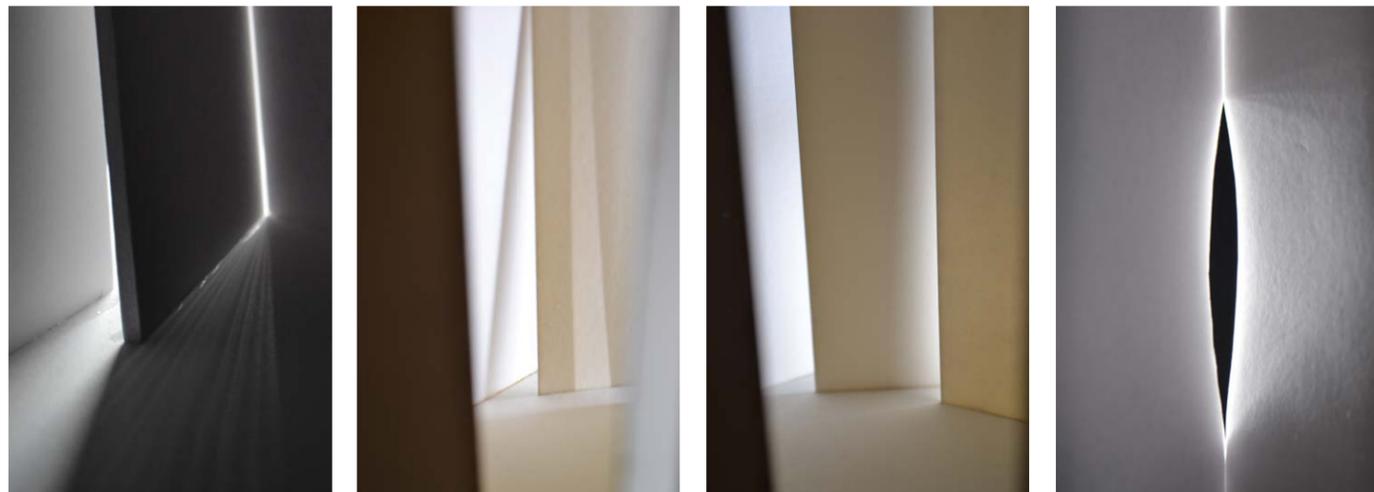


reimagined



expansive





*Light + Massing Study Models
Operative Lighting Moves Study*

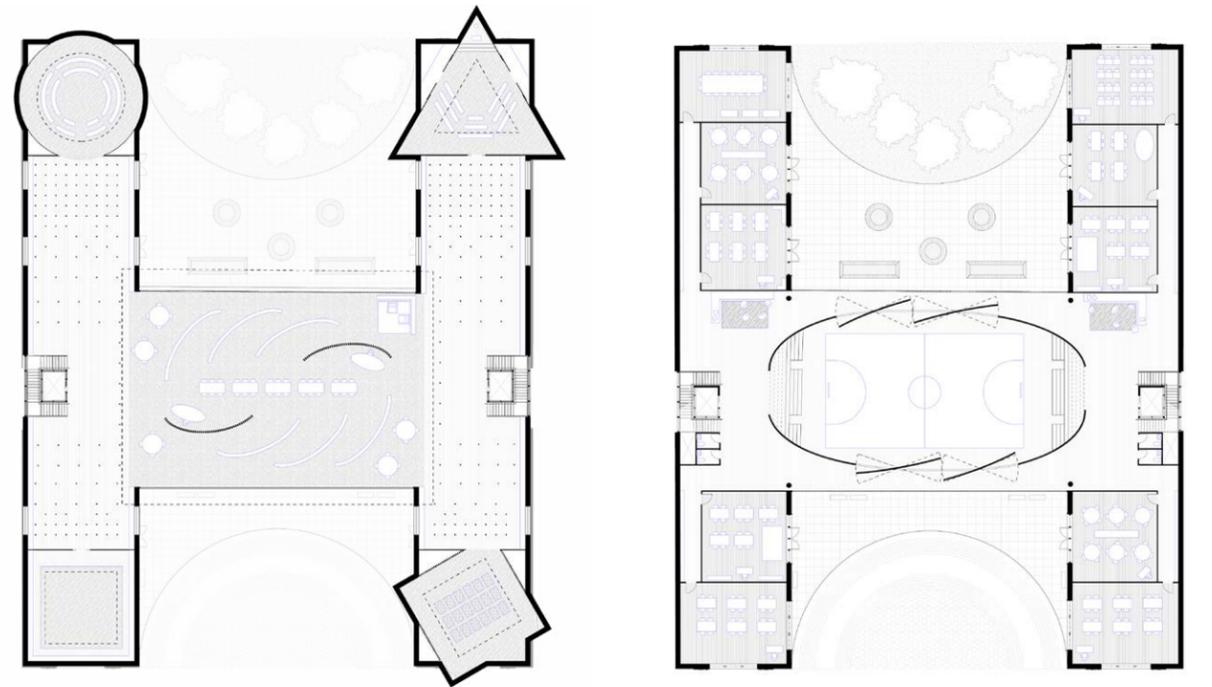
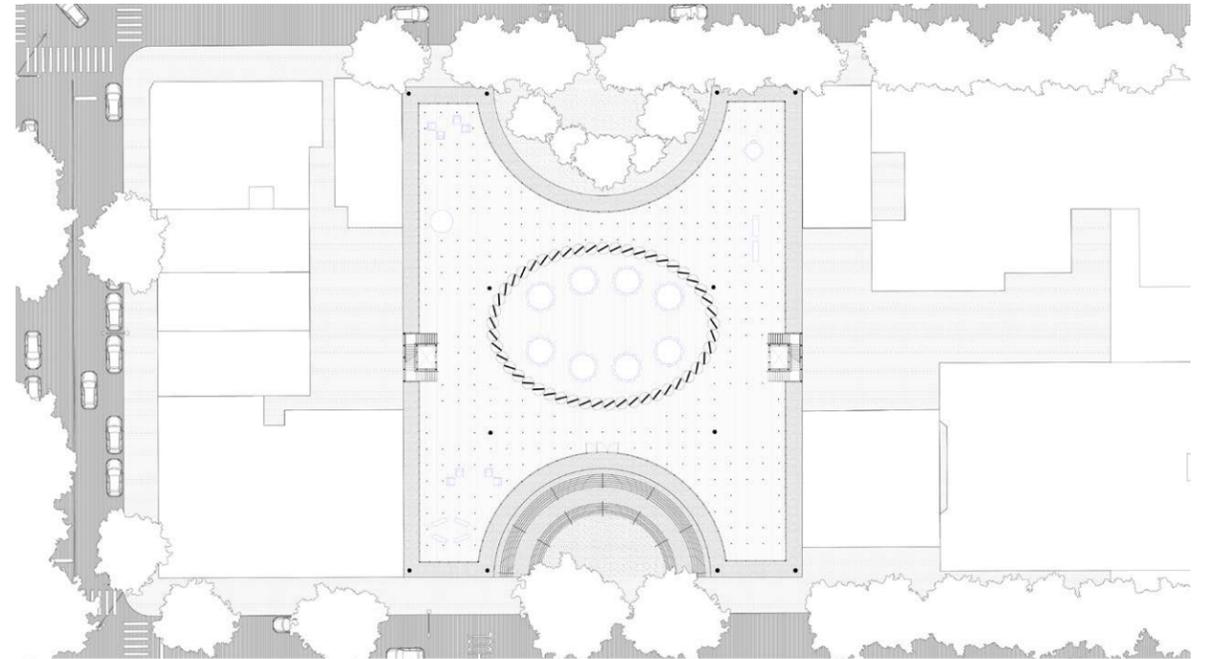


Situating holiness within C.B.J. Snyder's 1906 public school in the East Village, his iconic H-block appeared inaccessible and uninviting. While holy spaces traditionally offer light from above as a God-like presence, the **stripping of the middle brick facade** offers a new way of approaching the school and **experiencing light in a grounded, horizontal, democratized way**. Different lighting operatives are employed on each floor based on programming, acoustics, and accessibility.

Front Elevation



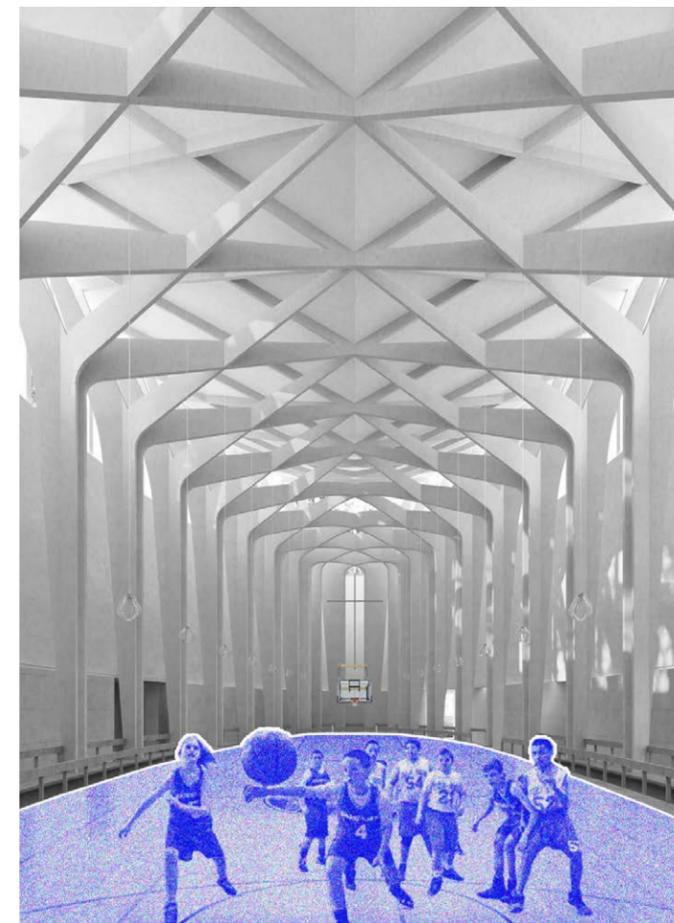
Night Rendering



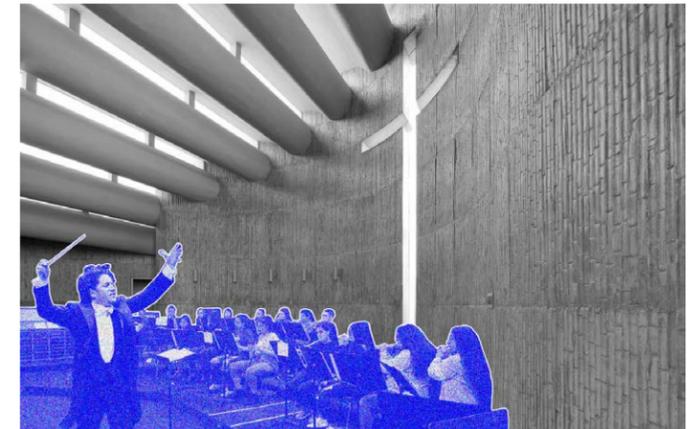
Ground, Second (Gym + Classrooms), + Third (Holy Spaces + Library) Floors



Holy Space Conceptual Render



**Chapel-
Gymnasium**



**Chapel-
Band Room**



**Crematorium
Hallway Lockers**

*Collage Study, Reprogramming Existing Religious Spaces
with School Activities*

AN OUTSIDE DRAWN INSIDE THE INSIDE

THE INTERSTITIAL SPACES OF ISRAEL'S COURTHOUSES

If the courthouse aspires to be a space devoid of the quotidian whereby power, knowledge, and justice are to be insulted, then architecture becomes the physical and symbolic entity that displays and reinforces this authority. The aspirations and byproducts of architecture as an entity within law are codified as much as they are manifold. As the courthouse becomes the physical locus of a nation's wisdom and values, so too must it navigate the didactics of law and reprehension. Within architecture's capacity to both be allegorical and prescriptive, the perception of these two roles fluctuates within each given nation. The limits of statehood, citizenship, authority, and even democracy ultimately determine what exists outside of the courthouse, inside the courthouse, and what is allowed to permeate from the outside to the inside. When chaos, corruption, and the banal enter these sacred spaces of law, what frame regulates and modifies their entry?

In a colonial state whereby Palestinians are largely non-citizens but are subjected to Israel's legal framework in disproportionate and unjust ways, Israeli courthouses become a peculiar entity. Supplemented, if not overpowered, by extralegal violence that "discipline" Palestinians on a daily basis, the courthouse becomes a site where order is purported to be civil, non-militaristic, and regimented. These peculiarities invite various discourses on the biopolitics and larger structural, architectural underpinnings of Israeli courthouses, yet little has been written or suggested about the latter's role. Endeavoring to push these conversations forward through a narrowed lens, this investigation centers film and testimony as its primary spatial object of inquiry. Departing from scholar Piyel Haldar's conceptualization of the frames that define the inside and outside of courthouses, the documentary *Advocate* (Jones and Bellaïche,

2019) becomes both a space and testimony to interrogate these conditions further. Ultimately, *Advocate* reveals that this "frame" is more than a threshold of entrances and exits. It extends to what I will call the "padded" spaces that amplify these thresholds yet aren't to be considered part of Haldar's inside or outside. Hallways, elevator banks, turnstiles/gates, and the nearby sidewalk all become interstitial spaces that neither belong to the courtroom nor the outside world, but are rather included within the frame. Beyond Haldar's insistence that the frame is what filters and alters events from the outside that are brought inside, these frames construct places and events on their own: they become sites of spectacle, rehashings or reconstructions of identity and narrative, informal spaces of legal guidance, and above all, spaces that mirror and intensify the inequalities and tensions throughout occupied Palestine.

RETHINKING THE COURT FRAME AS AN ENTITY UNTO ITS OWN

In "In and Out of Court: On Topographies of Law and the Architecture of Court Buildings," Haldar constructs his argument around the binaries of court: the heard and excluded, ritual and quotidian, truth and falsity, logic and emotion. He does so to establish a larger field of inside versus outside that exists at the courthouse. This binary of inside and outside operates on several dimensions for Haldar, including the chaos of the city versus the order of the law house, the supposed truth from the outside versus the truth reconstructed inside, etc. Yet what proves central for Haldar is his implication that, as both the very construction of law and the evidence brought forth bear some relationship with the outside, there is a frame that negotiates this transgression:

While his identification of the frame and his claims for how it functions are nuanced, when put into real situations as seen through *Advocate*, Haldar's notions can be expanded and challenged. Haldar nonetheless attempts to situate his claims into the tangible arena of the Israeli Supreme Court. The frames he identifies are situated around the many layers of entrances and exits that exist to enter into the Supreme Court's courtrooms. Analyzing eight in total, these entrances and exits are discrete doorways and gates, thresholds he sees to strengthen the principle of interiority and provide an ocular representation of the outside. Although his claims architecturally appear valid, they fall short on observing how bodies and events navigate these spatial conditions, something that film can capture and analytically supplement.

Advocate, directed by Rachel Leah Jones and Philippe Bellaïche, is a 2019 documentary that follows Israeli human-rights lawyer Lea Tsemel as she defends Palestinian political prisoners. Partially made up of archival footage tracing her career, the majority of the film follows Tsemel around from her office to the Jerusalem District Court as she takes on two high profile criminal cases: a 13-year-old boy charged with murder for attempting to stab two Israeli men in Jerusalem with an ornamental knife and a 31-year-old woman who attempted a failed suicide bombing. While recent TV shows like *Our Boys* (Cedar, 2019) take viewers into Israeli courtrooms to recreate other high profile criminal cases, the documentary nature of *Advocate* prevents filmmakers from ever stepping foot into an actual courtroom. Instead, the camera is confined

to the hallways, stairwells, elevator banks, lobbies, and outside sidewalks which all orbit the courtrooms. While this may be considered a limitation, given such restrictions, the film is able to expose the many overlooked and understudied situations that unfold in these interstitial spaces. The verdicts may ultimately unfold in the courtroom, however *Advocate* reveals there are equally critical events that take place before and after every hearing in these banal spaces.

The film's attention to these moments in particular challenges two of Haldar's claims: that the frame is architecturally confined to entrances and exits, and that the frame's role is primarily to represent and reduce the outside world. For *Advocate*, traversing and pausing in the spaces beyond the courthouse, largely considered banal spaces of circulation architecturally speaking, become spaces loaded beyond passage from the city to the courtroom. This leads to the second challenge: Haldar does insist, in a Derrida mindset, that by bringing an outside event inside there is this idea of an event or a place that can never quite exist within the courtroom, and extends this to imply that the process of this transference itself can elicit the production of space and event. Pushing this implication even further, if altering events becomes an event and place unto itself, I assert that the frame becomes a space that produces place and events, and thus becomes its own entity. While the frame is still reliant on the conditions of the inside and outside, it does not solely exist to mediate and bridge the inside and outside. What does it do besides filtering be sorted by the physical spaces that layer onto Haldar's entrances and exits, which I deem as "padded" frames. Rather, to show the



frames' abilities beyond filtering, I will lay out and examine the types of events that are depicted in the film and thus constructed within the frame: the frame is a spectacle, a place to reconstruct identity, provide legal guidance, further movement restrictions, and proliferate the occupation's grievances. Banal transitory corridors become spaces where informal and formal events occur in planned and spontaneous ways.

CONSTRUCTING PLACE AND EVENT WITHIN THE FRAME

Spectacle: Waiting like an impatient hive by the elevator bank before the trial and by the courtroom doors after the trial, a slew of paparazzi wait to photograph both Ahmad and Israa throughout *Advocate*. Notably, the film shows the initial newsreel of Ahmad, going beyond reporter coverage to show graphic pedestrian footage after the incident was deescalated, where Ahmad is verbally and physically assaulted by Israelis. As the film viewer watches Lea Tsemel view and process this footage, the film sets a baseline for the graphic and manipulative ways the Israeli media depicts these crimes, and how criminals become such high profile figures in the media. This all becomes context for the paparazzi, who seek to photograph and film

the boy entering court and leaving after each verdict. Ahmad and Israa both become more than just isolated spectacles: they are spectacles constructed around their environments. The first space that the paparazzi seek to photograph them is deliberately right at the elevator banks, for as the elevators open onto the accused, these photographers are immediately able to get the most raw footage; the doors open leaving Ahmad and Israa stunned, with little time to cover their faces. Because of the fragmented circulatory nature of



elevators, which chops up passage and spits the body out to a new floor, the spatial conditions of the elevator make it perfect for paparazzi to exploit as a site of spectacle. Beyond the spontaneity provided by the elevator bank, the corridors connecting the elevator to the courtroom grant a process which paparazzi too exploit. After the court has adjourned, Ahmad and Israa must walk down this corridor back to the elevator. While walking down the hallways they must process the news they just received inside, giving the paparazzi ample time to watch and photograph. The spectacle is a quick moment, a lengthened process, or somewhere in between. Regardless, the spectacle becomes new material added to initial footage from the outside, now reconstructed from the inside.

Reconstructing Identity: Yet what is the motive for creating a spectacle? To what ends do the paparazzi wish to reconstruct the outside events, and warp the image of the accused? For Ahmad and Israa, their fates as spectacles differ. As seen in photos above, the paparazzi wish to reconstruct Ahmad as an evil, twisted child. If the news footage sought to illicit paranoia and begin to vilify Ahmad, then in the frame Ahmad is to be demonized. As the paparazzi look through their photos of Ahmad while court is in session, the camera zooms in on the paparazzi's camera screens showing photos of what looks like Ahmad crying, or Ahmad smiling, according to the paparazzi. These images become a new space and event for the outside world to access from the inside and interpret. After the session, a new padded space emerges: the lobby. As paparazzi reconstruct Ahmad's image from photos, it is now the prosecutor who reconstructs Ahmad and the trial. Yet instead of the paparazzi having to hunt and



prey for material to twist Ahmad's identity, here in the lobby, it is handed to them on a silver platter. It is the prosecutor's motivation to vilify Ahmad as a "terrorist," and now the reporters are merely messengers to bring this

reconstruction to the outside world. Spatially, the lobby would be expected to read more as a site of spectacle, as the open nature of the space lends itself for planned theatrical situations. We see though that multiple padded spaces can produce place and events in various ways. While the paparazzi lurking the hallway try to bridge outside footage with their own, the prosecutor's lobby vindication attempts to bring courtroom events back outside to the media and nation.

Guidance: Amidst the frenzy of paparazzi, the hallway has moments of respite in *Advocate*, where informal legal counsel is able to take place. While Lea Tsemel is able to meet with Ahmad's mother and father at her office to go over plea negotiations and a course of action, her time with Ahmad is confined to courtroom session breaks. Here in the hallway adjacent to the courtroom, Tsemel often finds a bench to be able to speak with Ahmad alongside his father, giving him guidance for how to answer questions, and crucially, what his forced testimony does for the case. Although the hallway does in fact provide moments of respite to be able to discuss and advise, the film affirms the extent to which this space is makeshift and exposed: amid Tsemel's counseling, two Palestinian women interrupt Tsemel to come over and start kissing Ahmad, praising him as a martyr and affirming to him that "all Palestinian mothers are mothers to [him]." Although this interruption is of support and condolence, we see Tsemel get somewhat impatient; she is clearly frustrated with the little time she has with Ahmad, the lack of privacy, and the task to get a child to concentrate on her words in such a chaotic situation. While the hallway can be considered more than a transitory spontaneous site, Tsemel's decision to use the space for pressing and intimate matters, despite obvious limitations, shows how the frame adapts into another space—that of an office—and the dire means taken to assist tried Palestinians.

UNITS OF CARE

AFFORDABLE HOUSING + COMMUNITY SERVICES

In Collaboration with Adeline Chum
 Core III Studio: Housing
 Hilary Sample
 Melrose, Bronx (Munsee Lenape)

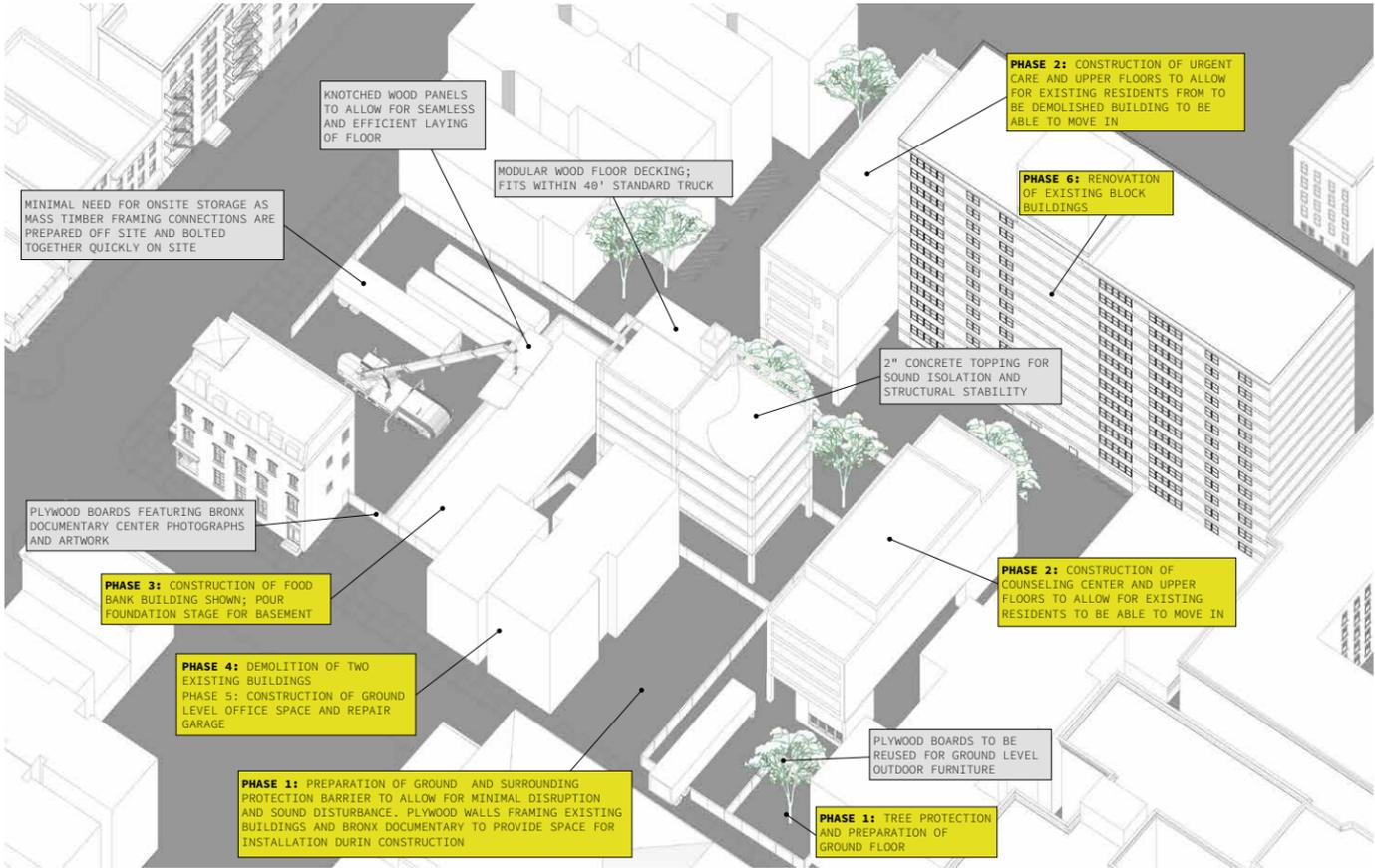
Winner of the 2020 Buell Paris Prize

Units of Care calls for affordable housing that is both efficient and detailed, both humble and resourceful, and looks to provide care through every scale and program. We organized ground floor programs that could render maintenance as visible and important, enable access to sites of repair, reconstitute resiliency by amplifying existing community support networks, and balance community amenities between street-facing and more internal areas. Units of Care seeks to bridge the gap between efficiency and diligence that all too often comes with affordable housing design. What should new housing developments bring to new and existing residents alike, what should be minimized and what can be maximized?

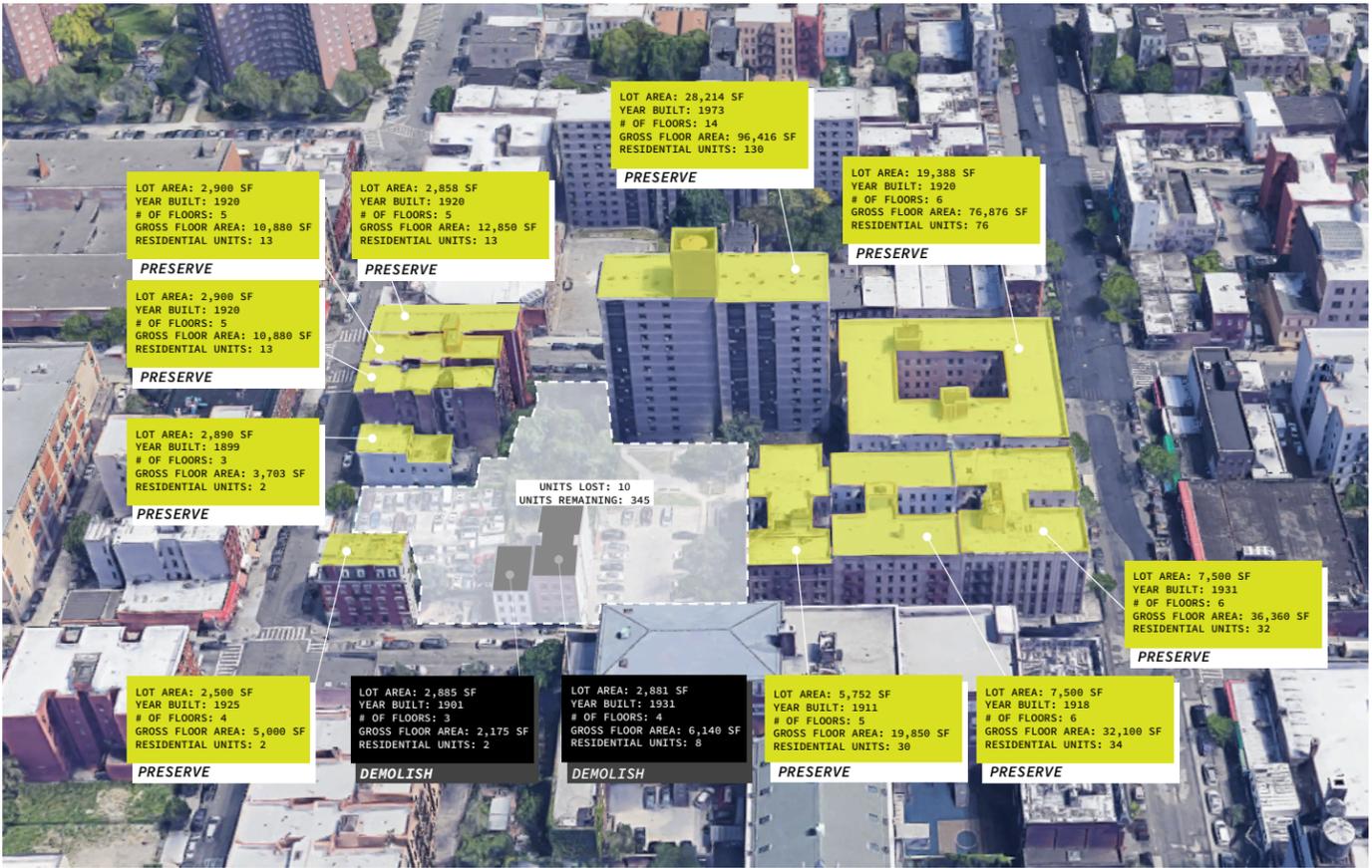


Melrose’s existing structures and livelihoods led us to see **maintaining existing structures as an initial act of care**—

that any demolition is the destruction of not just dwellings, but the displacement of people, families, livelihoods and rituals.



Construction Phasing

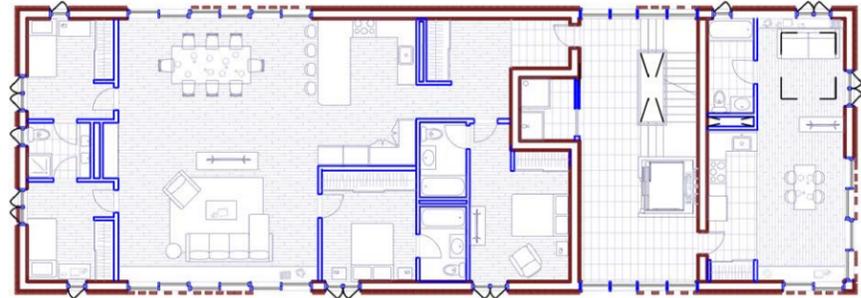


Demolition Site Analysis

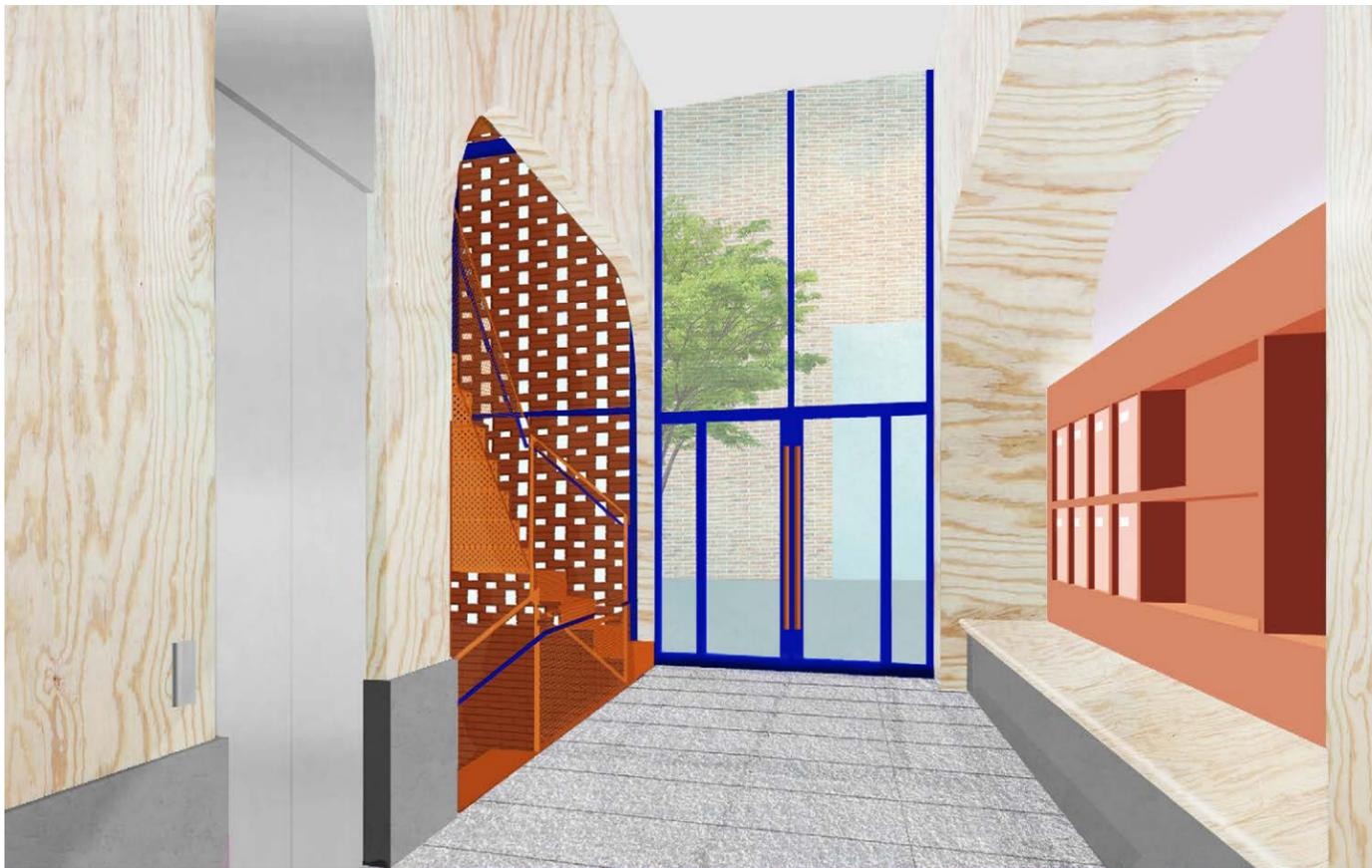
- 1 Community kitchen
- 2 Food bank
- 3 Food and cookout storage
- 4 Super / management office
- 5 Library / office space
- 6 Open space
- 7 Repair shop
- 8 Counseling center
- 9 Recycling, trash, compost area
- 10 Open
- 11 Urgent care
- 12 Community garden (throughout)
- 13 Rainwater collection
- 14 Parking / maintenance ramp



Care via programming: the care for bodies through food justice and health facilities, the care for homes and amenities, the care for children, work, and learning, the care for site and existing species/landscapes and ultimately, personalized care, leaving some spaces unprogrammed and open for the community to appropriate.



Acknowledging the spectrum of family and household sizes within the Bronx: multi-generational adaptability, 1- to 2-bedroom units that incorporate duplexes for added internal privacy. Projecting to entire floors where the corridor becomes an extended space connecting two units, thinking towards ideas of household longevity, building lifespans, and adaptability of units.



Above: Multigenerational Housing (4 Bed + Adjacent Studio)
Below: Lobby Rendering



Above: Corridor Rendering
Below: Sustainability Diagram, Typical Building



Looking from the second floor of this studio, staggered courtyards create a lush, green view. Seen are canopies framing the rainwater collection in the middle. This canopy is a connection to the senior housing, allowing their residents to have a leisurely program nearby. Looking within a unit, detailed millwork challenges what should be considered the “minimum” designed by architects in affordable housing.

Interior Unit Rendering



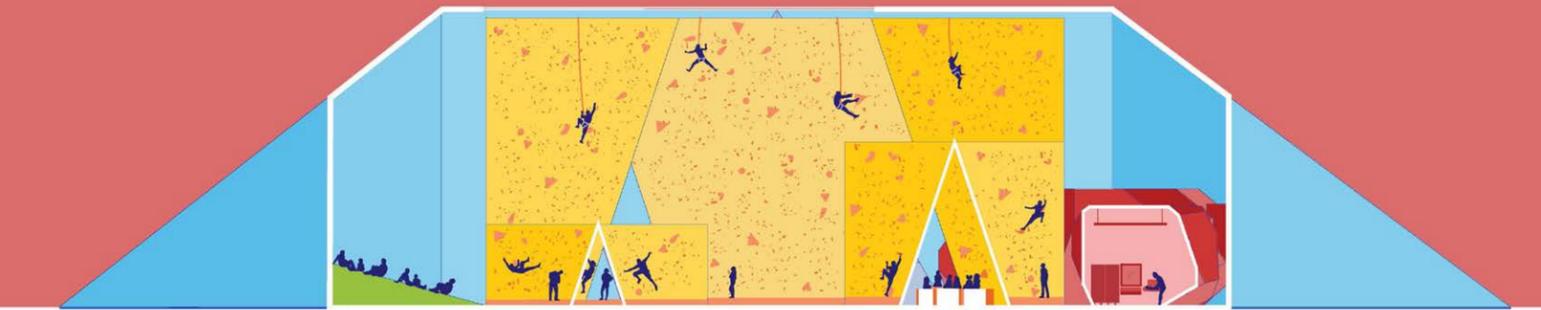
With some programming operating overnight like Urgent Care, night is key for safety and accessibility. The perforated brick not only dulls down the lighting for neighbors but maintains anonymity, with a mezzanine space being an additional visual and acoustic buffer to the second floor residents. Wayfinding and signage bring awareness of what exists onsite and are a way of displaying public information.

Urgent Care at Night Rendering

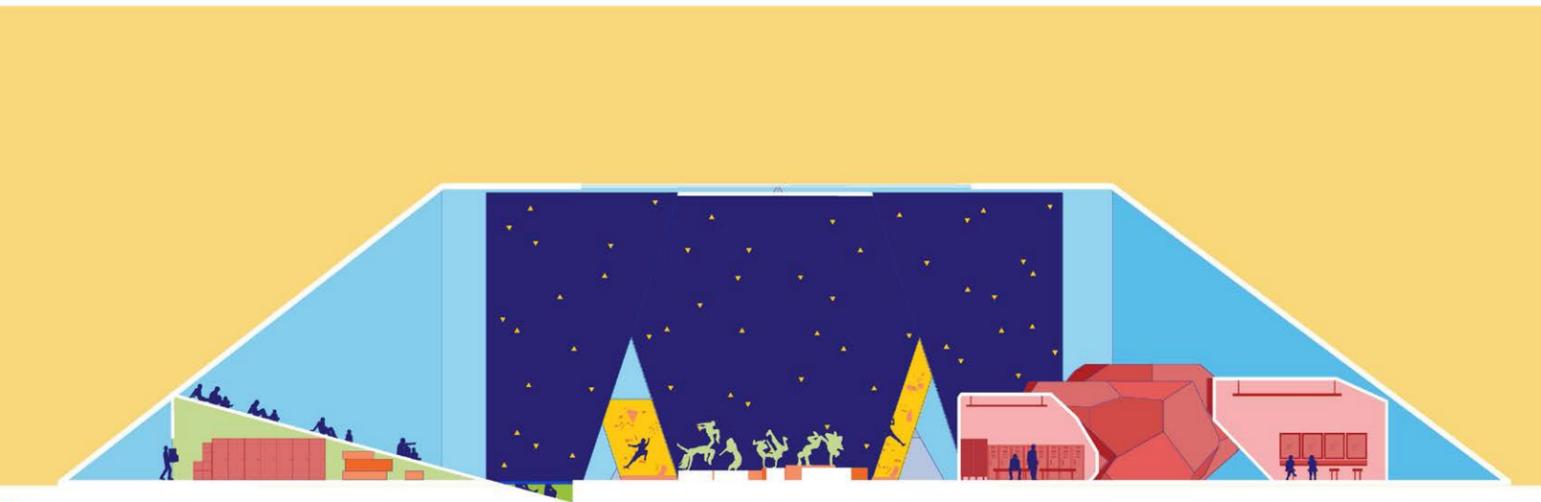


Main Complex Entrance

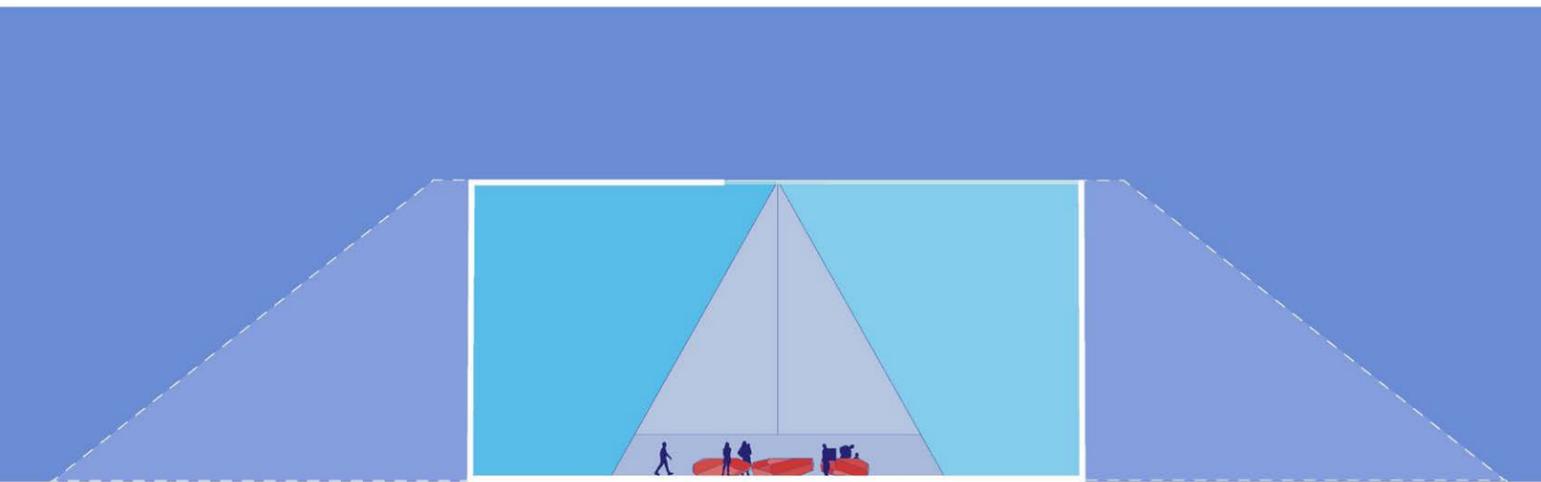
Community Kitchen, Garden, and Bronx Documentary Center



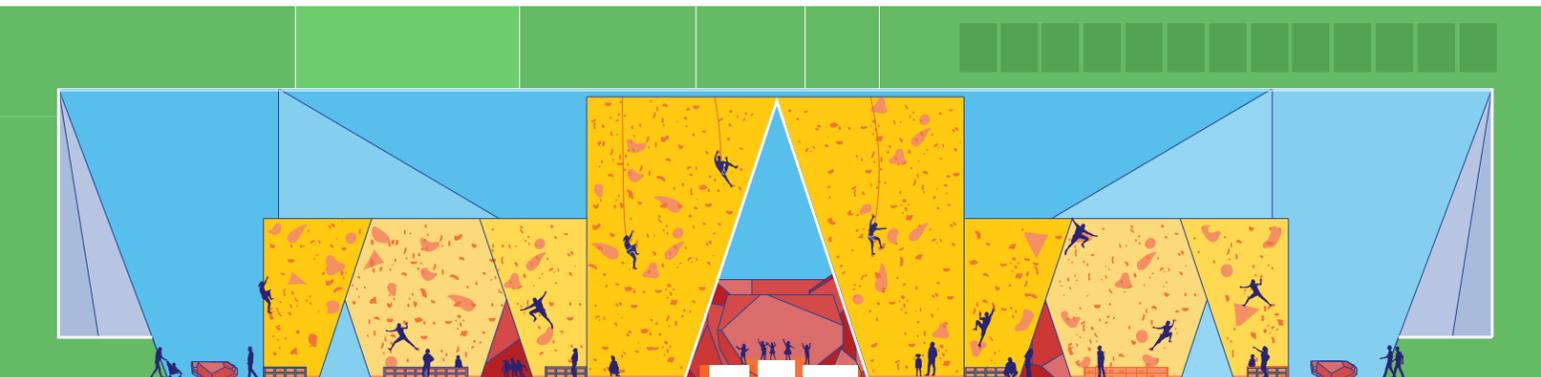
A



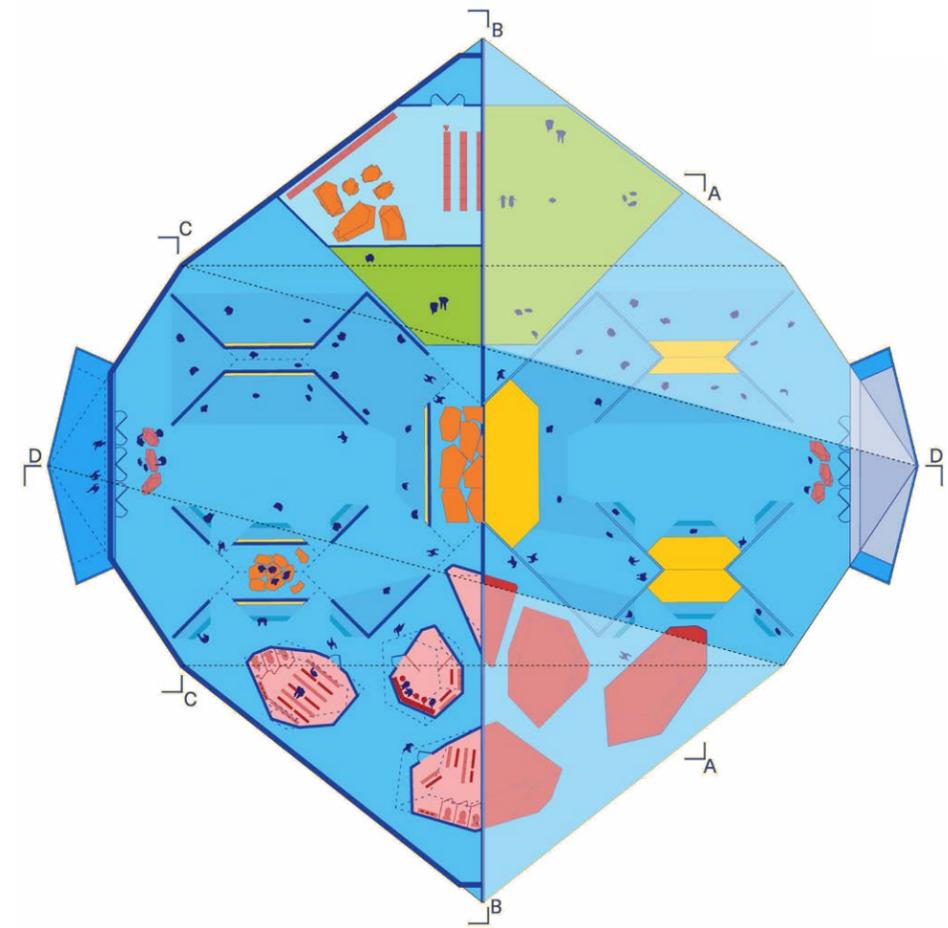
B



C



D



Blurring **interior and exterior**, the poche space is flipped at different times of use. To create a dynamic relationship between thresholds (envelope vs inside, gym vs theatre), the design allows for circulation through triangular slits. As visitors move through transitioning spaces, new vantage points appear, fostering fluidity between the two programs. These spaces ultimately reflect a **new vision for child care, one of flexibility and openness.**

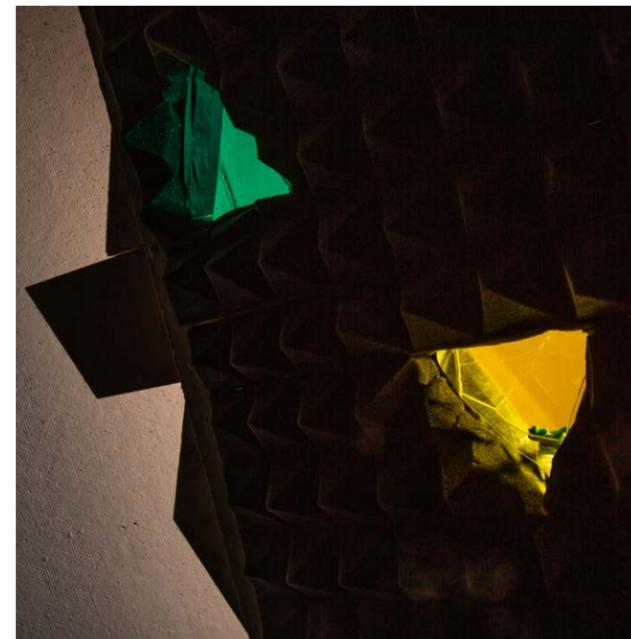
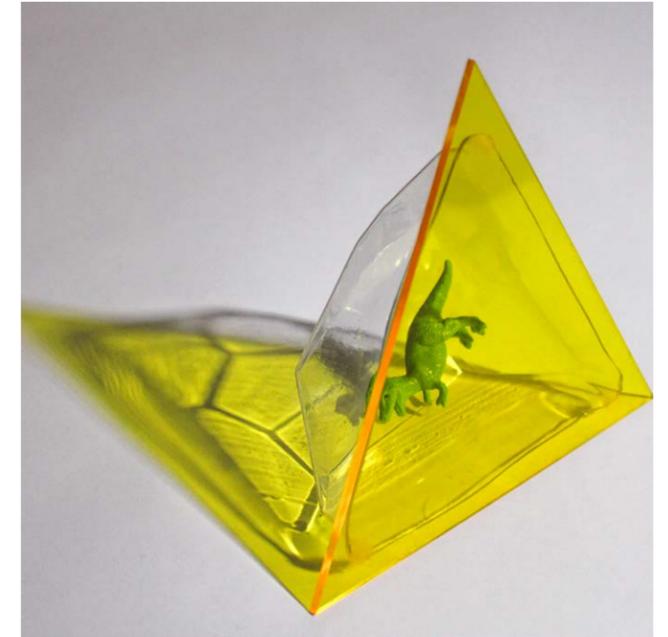
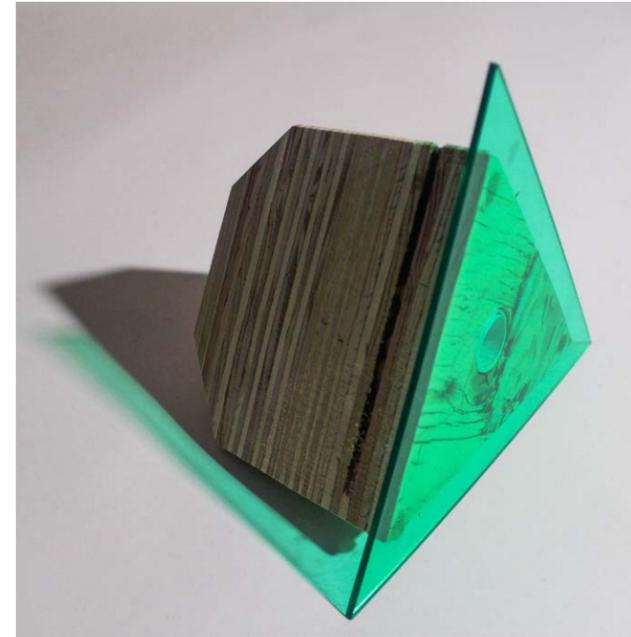
*Left: Sections
Right: Plan*



Exterior Climbing Wall



Interior Theatre

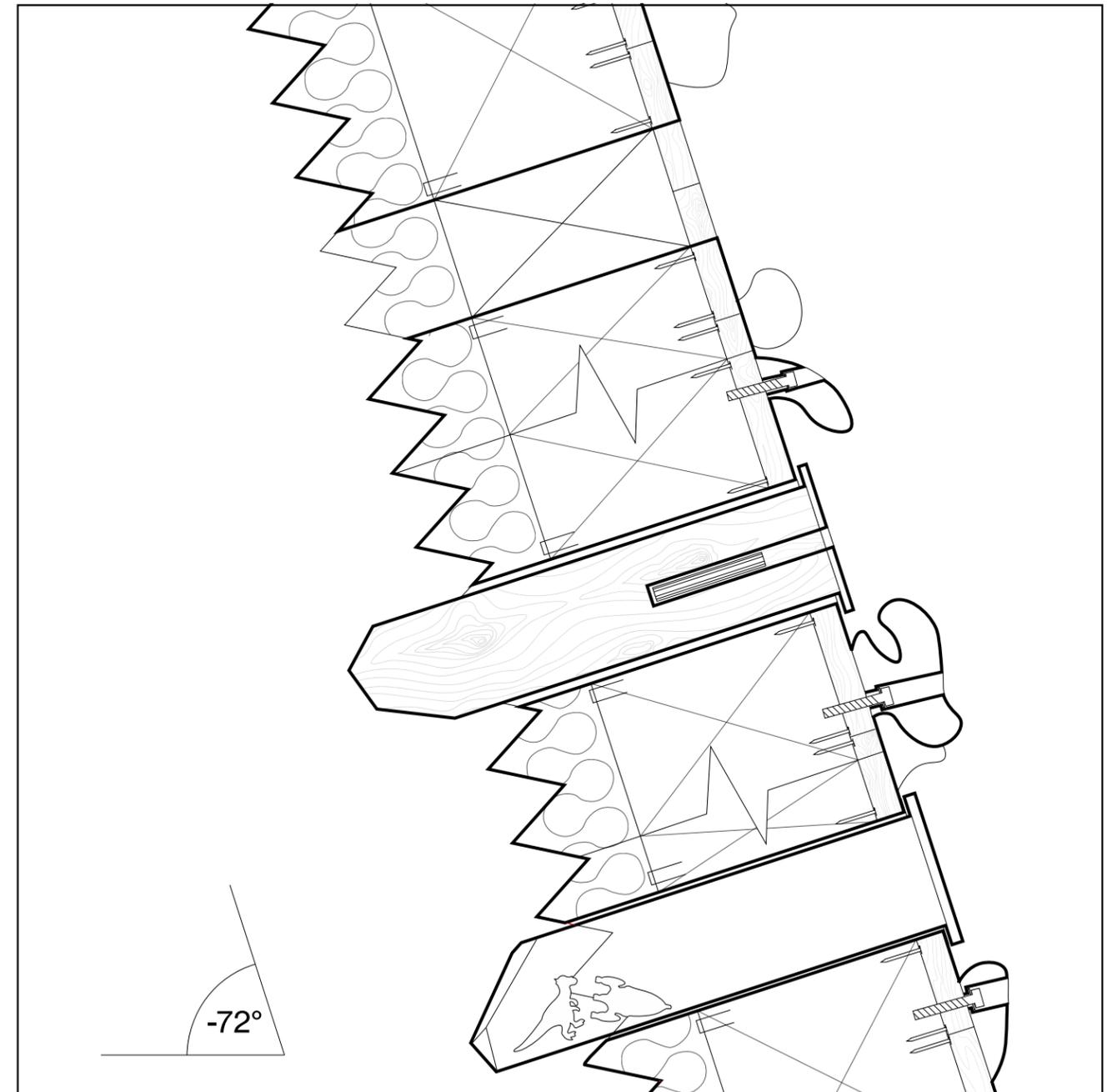


As children visiting Grounds for Play, they are encouraged to **leave permanent traces at the site**. Upon their first visit, children can either leave a note inside a wooden block or place a small object inside a plastic mold, resembling a climbing rock. As more children attend, more molds are placed in the rock wall, slowly illuminating it from inside the theatre to create a physical and metaphorical mosaic of **belonging, permanence, and uniqueness**.

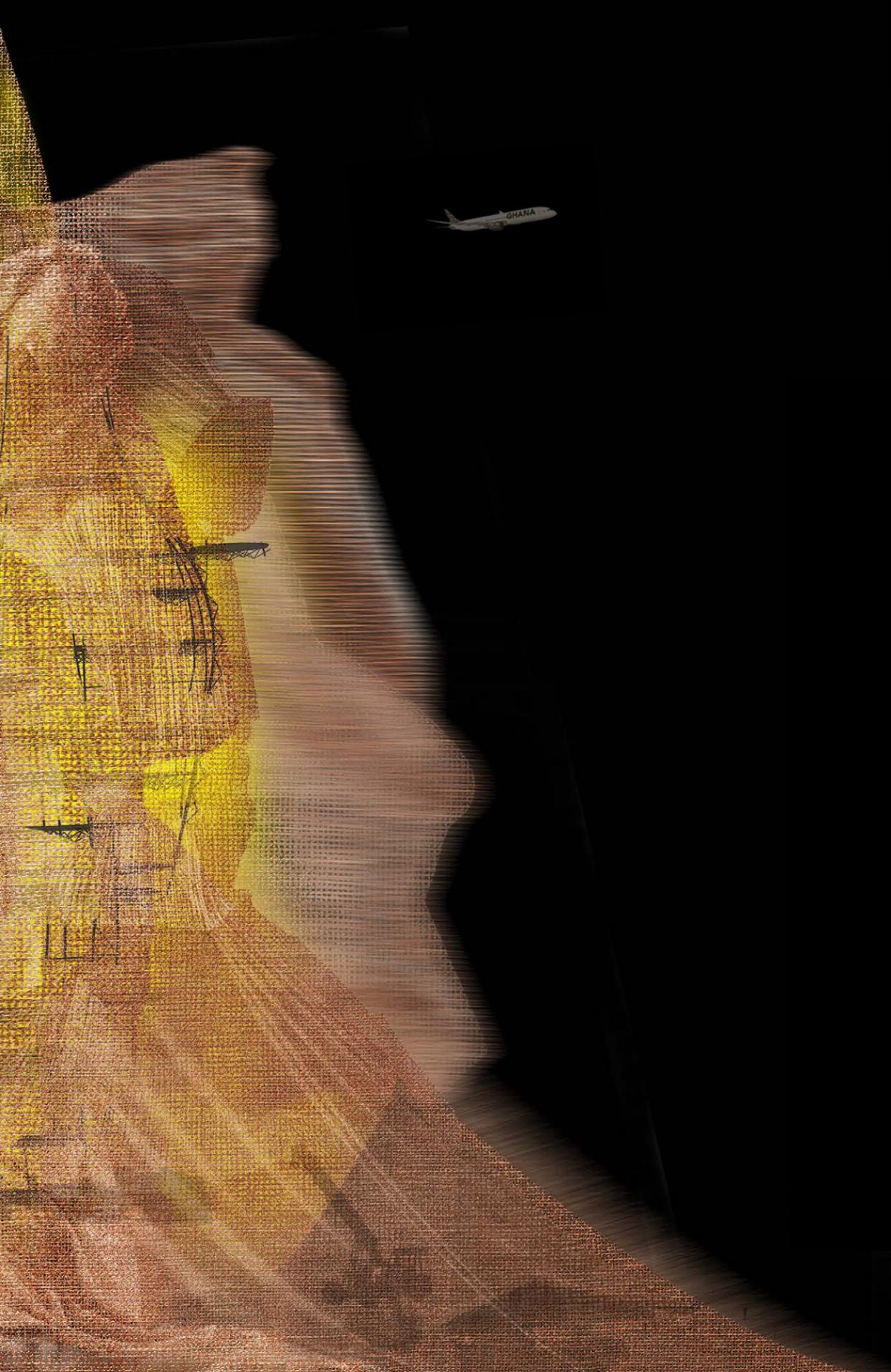
*Left: 8' x 3' Wall + Acrylic Inserts
Right: 1-1 Scale Model Fragment*



1-1 Fragment, Side View



1-1 Section Construction Details



● SHROUD, BURY, RETURN

RESTITUTION + STATEHOOD

In Collaboration with Keneilwe Ramaphosa
Adv VI Studio: AFTERIMAGES
Emanuel Admassu
Washington, DC (Piscataway Anacostan)

This story reimagines the museum typology - what becomes of it when it's no longer needed in its original uses and conceptions? This story is about letting go to both objects and architecture. What new forms of return are occurring in what temporalities, space, and continents?

Starting by veiling the Washington Monument in a shroud of burlap, slowly, bamboo scaffolding is erected around the monument. The structure becomes both its own art space for displaying looted artifacts in its own shrouds, while eventually, dismantling the monument completely. This art space remains a middle passage as looted objects await their return. As more return and/ or are put to rest, our structure is no longer needed. The iconography of both the obelisk and our corporeal structure is denied any longevity. What's ultimately left is a mound: that of the obelisk's remains, covered in burlap.



This is a story that stitches together histories of subjugation and displacement of people who embody Blackness and the vessels of their heritage.



“The Stitch”: Hand-Designed Ankara Fabric Heated Printed on Cordura Fabric + Sewn with Burlap

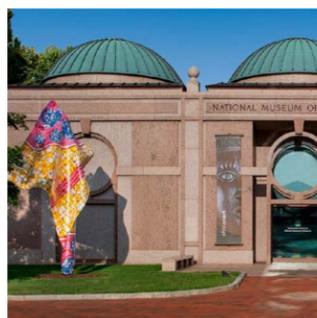


This is a story of burlap.

Found Images, Burlap’s Extraction, Manufacturing, Use, and Globalization



For Yinka Shonibare, ankara fabric suggests colonialism's nuances: an economic, racial web between Europe, Africa and Asia, their interdependencies and hybridities now visible. The work also operates spatially with multiscalar attributes that urge the viewers to digest the many layers of representation: via iconography, textiles, and the forms these fabrics ultimately take.

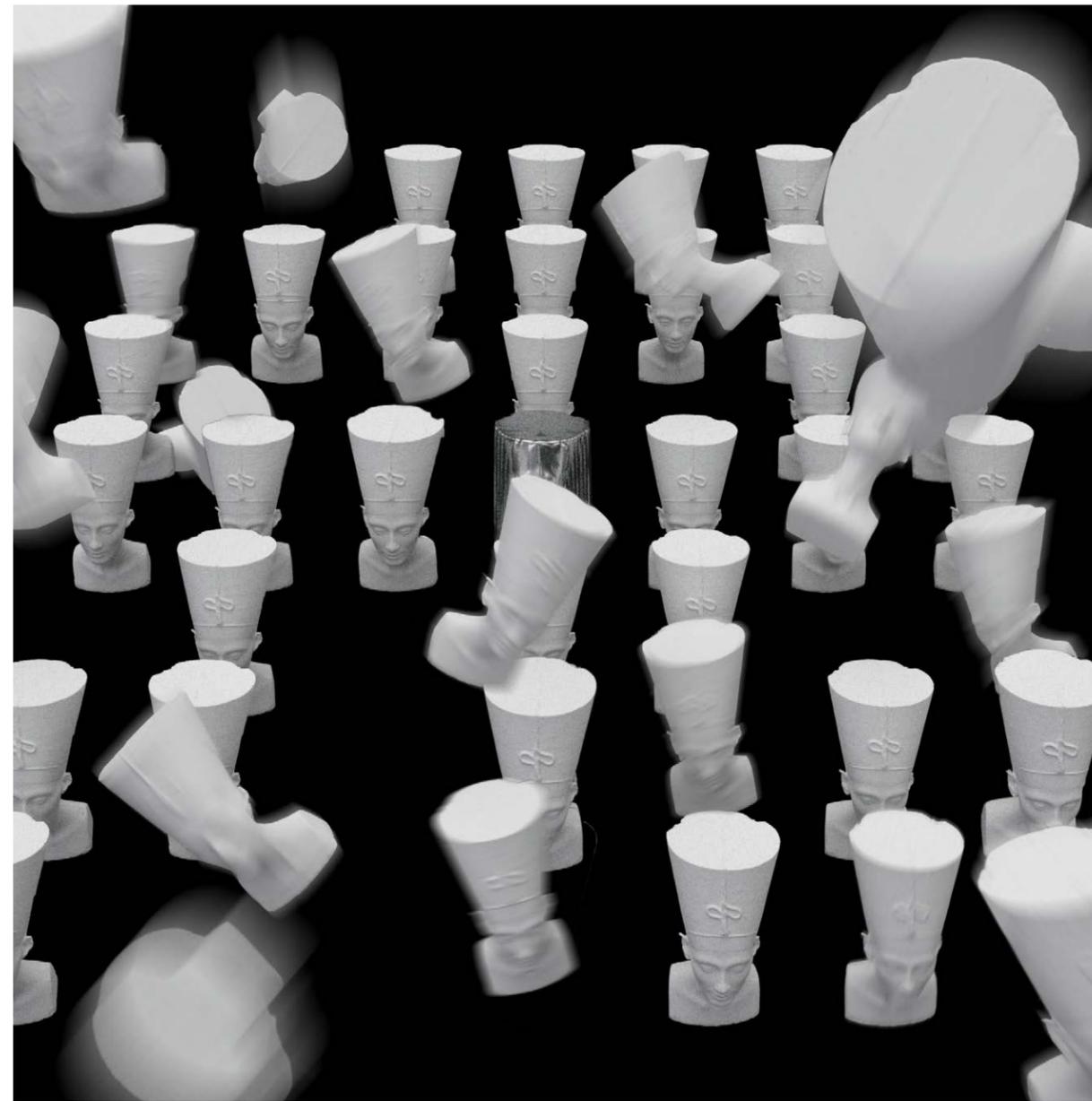
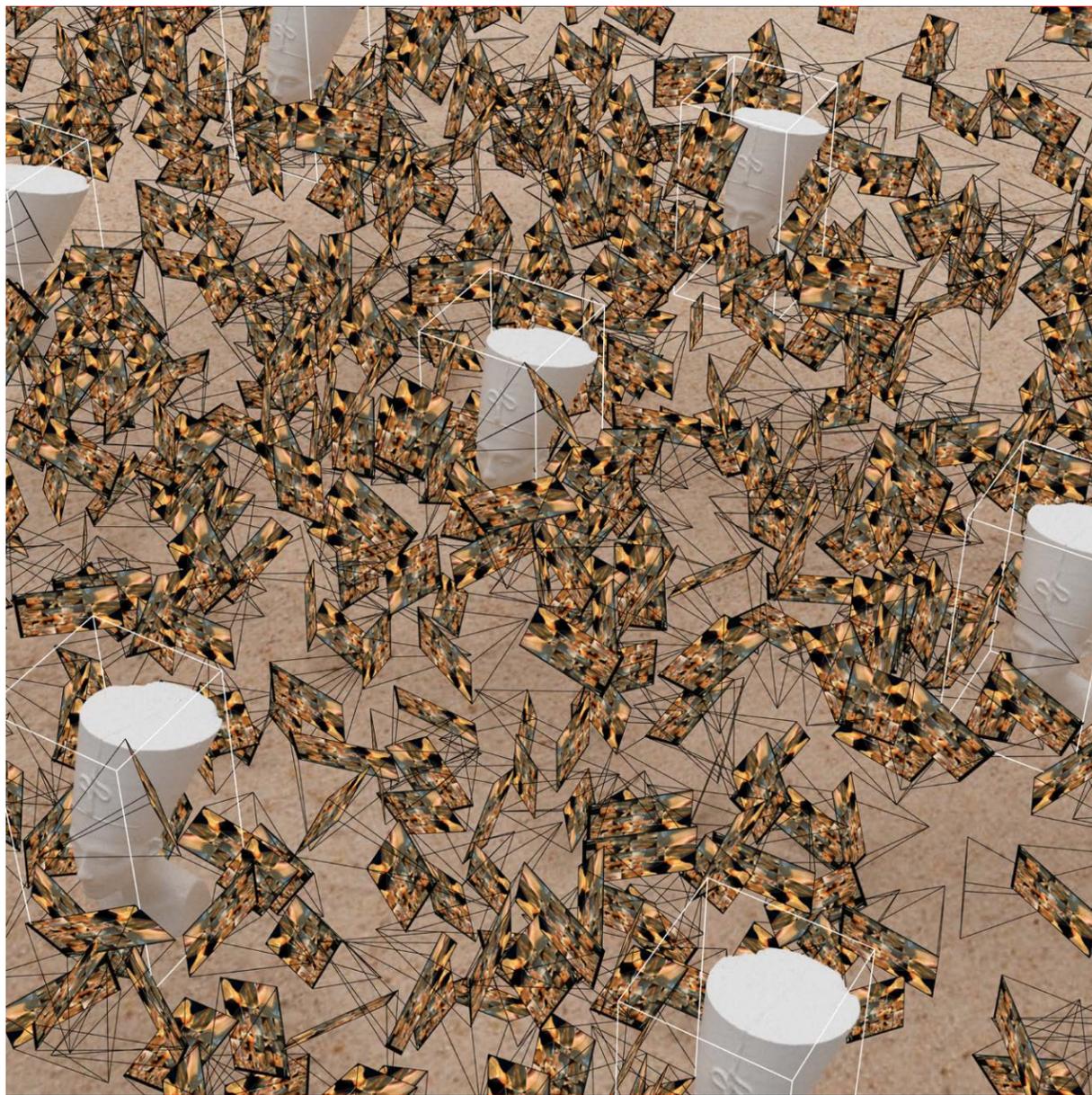


In line with his work, our Ankara fabric decodes the hybridity of its violent colonial origins. It is a tool for a post colonial African imaginary where current power structures are challenged and dismantled. At first glance, the message encoded in the fabric is unseen and beguiling; closer inspection uncovers a multiscalar, layered reading that is spatially suggestive while loose and interpretive. It points to ideas of when and how we read violence within art and architecture. The textile patterns sit on a pleasant yellow field, a seemingly typical array of objects at different scales. The blue cotton may be read as a flower but not only does cotton carry the legacy of slavery and racial capitalism: visually the cotton compels us to look closer at the other violent imagery being deployed as complementary iconography.



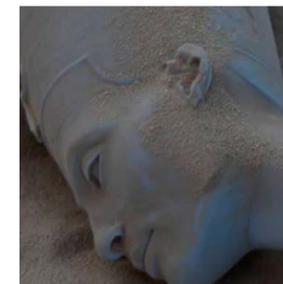
*Left: Found Images, Yinka Shonibare
Right: Ankara Fabric Textile*





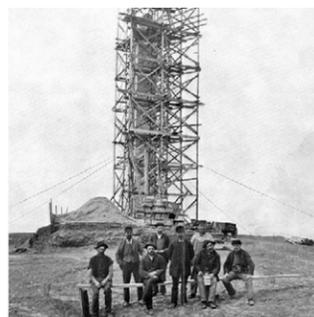
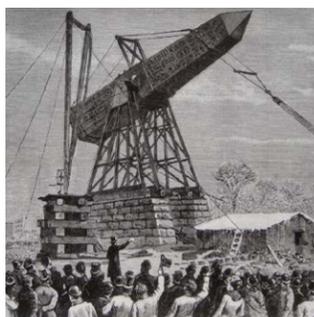
Frozen in time and perfection, the bust of Nefertiti is displayed at the Neues Museum in a chamber crowned by a dome built just for her. The way in which she's displayed compounds desiredness and sanitizes the duplicit violent nature of her displacement and imprisonment.

As a tool of photogrammetry, Nefertiti becomes flattened, mobile, dislocated: a product of more unregulated gaze and consumption. While Nefertiti is physically should as paralyzed, how might we read her mobility in the virtual realm, and the counterfits it produces?



Photogrammetry's Consumption and Flatening

*Above: The Real and Mobile Nefertiti's
Below: Found Images*

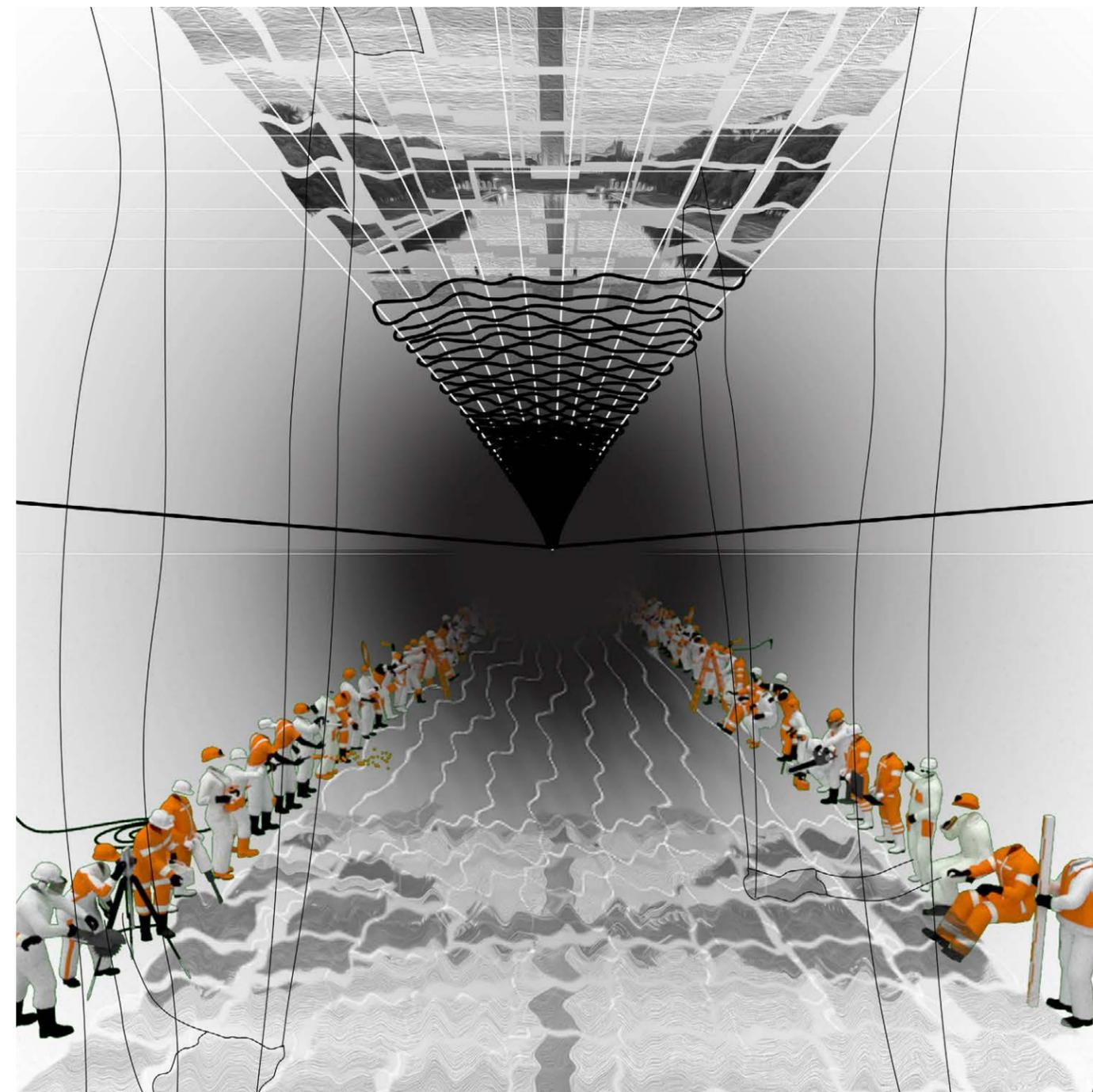


This is a story of bodies.

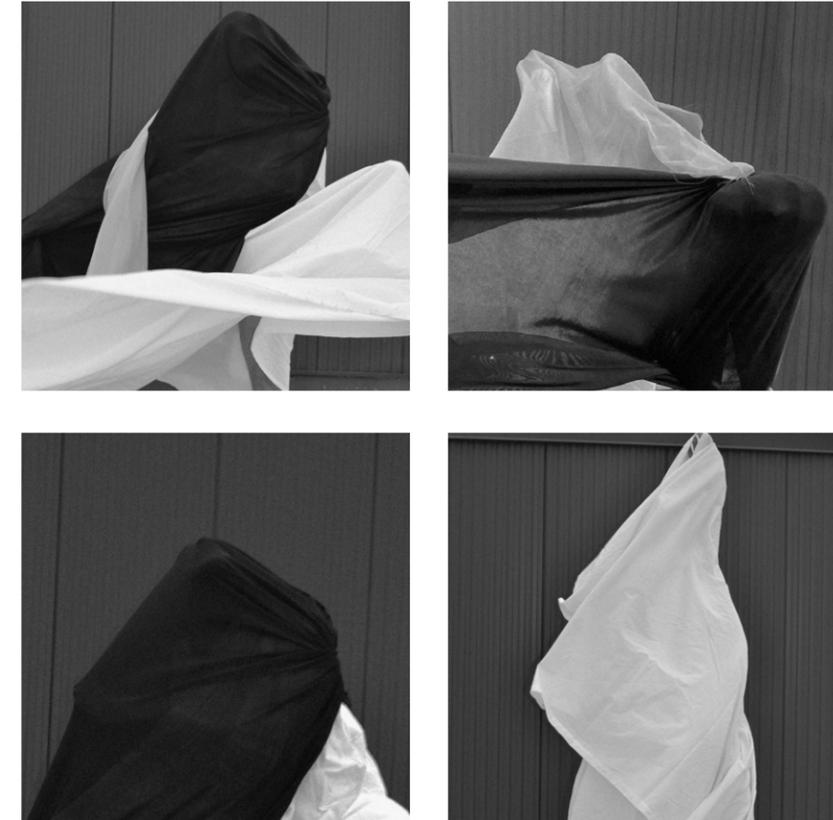
The National Mall's aesthetics of symmetry and proportion are symbolic of the ideals of justice and democracy established by the Ancients. The Washington monument is an obelisk, in the image of the powerful Egyptian empire. However, with the expansion of the empires idealized in the architecture of the National Mall, liberty and justice were not extended to all people. Built in 1848 by unknown enslaved people, the national image today is maintained by invisible labor. The obelisk might be a symbol of empire, but it is also part of the history of looted objects. Around 30 BCE, Rome seized control of Egypt and looted various temple complexes; there are now more than twice as many obelisks that were seized and shipped out by Rome as remain in Egypt. These obelisks, taken by force like so many people and looted artifacts, were commodified in their removal and displacement.

The discourse around looted objects from the African continent as they relate to the American National image is unpacked in this drawing, interrogating the idea of image making for the nation state. To the right we see the looming image of the Washington Monument, fractured and imperfect, the tiles bunch in as the image is woven and tightened. Whereas the one point perspective is continuous and axiomatic, the synched perspective implies a concerted force needed. Hands are always pulling, forcing the image to converge to a perfect center and whole. Below the distorted horizon line, the invisible human labor needed to build and maintain this image is shown.

Found Images, The Washington Monument as a Source of Labor, Empire, and Image Making



Who Constructs the National Image?



As we explore notions of hidden narratives and the unseen, we experimented with veiling as a way of obscuring, shrouding and revealing. While veiling allows for a certain obscuring that yields multiple readings, unlocking associations with memory and the ways we are conditioned to see, veiling also has an anthropomorphic tendency: to protect, to bury, to hide or disguise. What becomes of the monument and our perception of it when it becomes veiled and seen as a body?

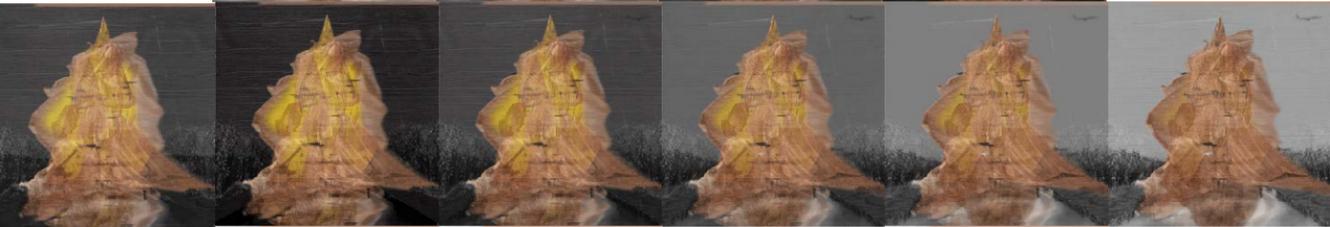
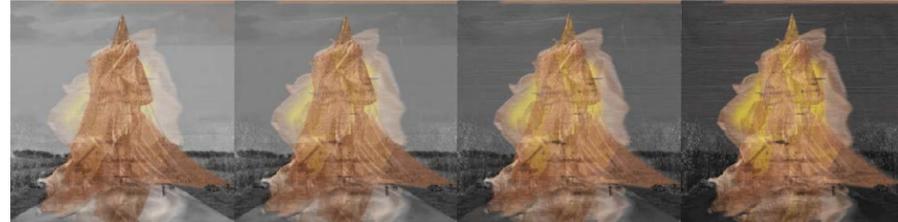
*Left: Bodies Entangled in Labor, Entangled in the Obelisk
Right: Personal Images while Veiled*



Shrouding



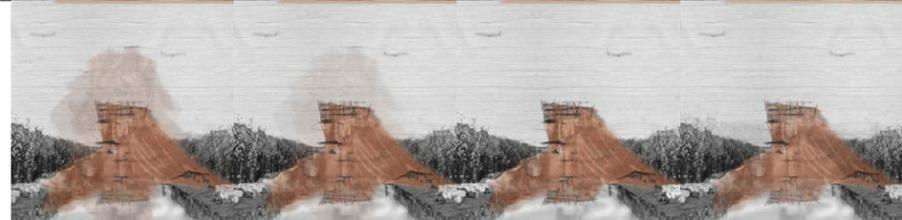
Burying



Destroying



Returning



Resting.

This is a story of burying.

Our endeavor requires an extreme scale of time. We start by veiling Washington Monument in a shroud of burlap, clearing the manicured greenery that enforces the one point perspective. Slowly, bamboo scaffolding is erected around the monument, building its corporal expression. Within the scaffolding, platforms are added and an arts space is created, housing contested objects in a new spatial logic. However, this radical gesture to destabilize colonial power doesn't only have to exist when it appends itself to colonial symbolism. While the obelisk initially serves as the core spine of our space, our structures work to both hold objects and deconstruct the largest artifact of empire: the obelisk. This fully erected burlap shroud disrupts the legibility that gives the obelisk power, reading a multiplicity of forms and anthropomorphic tributes to unseen laborers who built this very structure. At night, we see the sheer hollowness of the space, no longer punctured by this opaque mass. With the obelisk torn down, the art space remains as a middle passage while these looted objects await their return. As more are returned and/or put to rest, our structure is no longer needed. The iconography of both the obelisk and our corporeal structure is denied any longevity. What's ultimately left is a mound of the obelisk's remains, covered in burlap.

Reflecting Pool Timelapse



Section Perspective Quilt, 24"x24"



We created a sectional perspective of part of our arts space through quilting: a tradition of salvaging materials, created in community, and through a labor of love. Sewing and fabric become our notational device and a way to abstract. We've represented the poche as twisted jute fibre and the obelisk is chipped, and scuffed suggesting its deconstruction. The artefacts inside the shrouds are exposed depending on the section cut and they're represented as Ankara fabric, as are the visitors to this space. Our art space becomes a space of air, diffused natural light and life, where these art pieces are freed from their glass prisons and are allowed some contact with the elements.



The breathable burlap skin of the art space become the quilt base, over which green mesh signifies gabion mesh used to form the folds and pleats of the art space. Bamboo was chosen as our structural material as it is lightweight and an organic material, countering those used on the National Mall and complimenting the jute origins of burlap. These columns and spokes that form the structure support the burlap skin and are softened by a second breathable fabric membrane. The floor plates are porous crates supported by beams and are braced between the columns. The Shrouds are suspended between levels in clouds from the floor plates, becoming a ceiling skin and integrating the shrouds to the architecture.

Sewing + Stitching Processes



Our quilt is not meant to be displayed against a white wall, but rather simulate the performance of our textile space itself, illustrating the layers of opacity that regulate light, visibility, and accessibility.







This story reimagines the museum: what becomes of it when no longer needed in its original use or conception? This story is about letting go: to both objects and architecture. What new forms of return are occurring in what temporalities, space, and continents?

This is a story that grants a new return.

