THESIS 2023

This is Not the Last Year of Thesis

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The year 2023 is an auspicious one for Syracuse Architecture. It marks the 150th anniversary of the School's founding and the 45th—and last—year that graduating students will present a final Thesis capstone project in May. As Syracuse Architecture Emeritus Professor Randall Korman notes in his essay included in this final Thesis book, this convention was established by former dean Werner Seligmann in 1978 as a way to introduce rigor into the School's curriculum following a period of curricular experimentation inspired by student protests and social movements that began in the 1960s which, in Seligmann's view, had led to the relaxation of both disciplinary and professional standards. Thesis, as Korman observes, originally required the design of a building, providing the school and its students with a transition path from the academy to the profession, from the development of ideas to what Korman calls "an architectural proposition that was structurally sound, functionally appropriate and aesthetically pleasing"—a transition that within the Thesis year itself took place from the fall semester, when the ideas were developed, to the spring semester, when the ideas were realized as a building design project.

Over the intervening 45 years many things have changed, and many have stayed the same in Thesis as defined by Seligmann. While the structure—fall Thesis prep followed by spring Thesis project development—has remained the same, what have changed, dramatically, are not only the Thesis projects themselves but also the very means by which Thesis, and indeed all architecture projects, are conceived, developed

and "finalized." A quick review of the projects collected in this final Thesis book reveals that while some are still focused on designing a building, most are instead focused on a vast array of issues and concerns—from machine learning, to public policy, to fashion design—which, while framed by and through the discipline of architecture, are not architecture in any conventional sense and certainly would not be recognizable as such by Seligmann and his acolytes. Two developments in the school curriculum, both of which occurred in the 1990s, set in motion a process that has today resulted in the brilliantly varied architecture projects collected in this book. The first was the introduction of required theory courses, which enabled students to question the conventional definition of architecture itself and propose alternatives to the building as project. The other was the introduction of computers, and more broadly, computational processes, including digital fabrication technologies, which accelerated the speed of the design process itself—idea creation followed by design realization—to such an extent that the "final" project, whether in Thesis or in core studios, can no longer be considered final but instead must be understood as a prototype in an evolving project that commences in the first semester and continues well beyond the final presentation, whether in first-year studio or Thesis. The entire professional degree program has become a process of continuous, creative prototyping: with each project, with each year completed, students add to an evolving body of design knowledge specific to their personal and academic interests, career goals and requirements. Considered in this way, Thesis is not the final transition from idea to building, from the academy to the architecture profession, but is instead the final disciplinary framing of each student's academic project, a framing that might lead to work in an architecture firm but might also lead to work at NASA or with an NGO or to graduate school to study urban planning or landscape architecture.

In 2004 the integrated studio was introduced into the curriculum, and Thesis was finally relieved of its responsibility to demonstrate professional competence. With this third curricular change, Thesis—as conceived by Werner Seligmann—became obsolete and has continued to this day in name only. Indeed, it could be said that 2023 is not the last year of Thesis but is instead the last year that the brilliant research and design work conducted during the final year of study at Syracuse Architecture is designated "Thesis." Henceforth that year and that research and design work will be designated "Directed Research." Long live Thesis. Long live Directed Research.

A Brief History of Thesis at Syracuse

Randall Korman
Emeritus Professor

"Feces on Thesis" appeared on the men's room wall one April in the mid-1980s signaling the coming end to another academic year. It also emphatically communicated the anxiety Thesis students felt when confronting the prospect of rapidly approaching Thesis final reviews. Those reviews marked the defining moment in which graduating students had to demonstrate they had absorbed the lessons and culture of the School and were prepared to make the transition from the security blanket of academia to the high-stakes environment of the professional office. For any student of architecture, the heart of the Thesis experience was how, in many ways, Thesis reflected the demands of the professional world that encompassed the processes of research, the construction of contention, invention, pragmatics and presentation, all couched within hard deadlines, sometimes resulting in harsh judgments. In this way, Thesis was construed to serve as a bridge to that world. It hadn't always been that way.

During the 1960s and early 70s, the School was under the sway of popular counterculture movements and curricular standards had become somewhat lax. In the years prior to 1978, Thesis as a requirement for the completion of the degree did not exist. Instead, students were encouraged to use the last two semesters for "individual exploration" of personal interests that could include taking an additional studio, studying abroad, or completing a dual degree. It was the rare student who elected to do anything like a Thesis. In 1976, with the appointment of Werner Seligmann as the new dean, things were about to change.

By the time Seligmann arrived at Syracuse, he had a distinguished career as both an architect and an educator. His teaching experiences included a brief stint at the University of Texas (1956-1958) where he extended the legacy of a group of innovative teachers later to become known as the "Texas Rangers." At Cornell University (1961-1974), he taught alongside Colin Rowe, also a former "Texas Ranger," who became a mentor and lifelong friend. Over the years at Cornell, he taught along with a group of young and talented studio instructors who shared a generally common and rigorous pedagogical orientation. At Harvard University's Graduate School of Design (1974-1976) he had occasion to observe and teach within the G.S.D.'s graduate program; this led to Seligmann's establishment of the first professional degree master's program at Syracuse in 1980. Each of these experiences afforded Seligmann the opportunity to hone his own evolving sense of what constituted a well-coordinated and rigorous professional degree-granting education.

Correspondingly, Seligmann's professional activity, as the architect of a series of noteworthy buildings, accentuated his deeply held conviction that a fundamental goal of an architecture program should be to train students to be cultivated and knowledge-based builders. For Seligmann, Thesis was seen as the best vehicle for testing a student's capacity to translate ideas into an architectural proposition that was structurally sound, functionally appropriate, and aesthetically pleasing.

Working with a coterie of like-minded faculty, Seligmann strove to establish what eventually became the protocols of organization, execution, and promotion of the Thesis program. He began, first, by moving the option semesters from the fifth to the fourth year during which students could go abroad to the Architectural Association in London, study at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York City or remain on campus and take a visiting critic studio. This cleared the way for the creation of a two-semester sequence in which students were required to complete a Thesis project. It was stipulated that the Thesis had to be based on a building project of sufficient complexity, on a real, preferably urban site complete with a fully fleshed-out program of functions. Thesis was viewed as a capstone project, the outcome of which was as much a test of the rigor and effectiveness of the entire curriculum, as it was a measure of a student's competency after five years. In the fall of 1978, the fledgling Thesis program was launched.

The first semester of Thesis was devoted to establishing a premise, the "thesis contention" that formed the conceptual

armature of the project. This was to be developed from the research, documentation, and analysis completed in the precursor course known as Thesis Preparation. The semester culminated with the submission of the "Thesis Prep Book" and a defense review by the student's committee. A minimum grade of "C" was required for passing the course to ensure that the conceptual and pragmatic foundation for the next stage, Thesis Design, was minimally sound. The second semester was devoted to the design of a building that embodied the knowledge gained and positions developed during Thesis Preparation. It was expected that the design would be brought to an appreciably high level of development.

Key to the success of this new Thesis program was the system of advising and interim reviews. Students were assigned a Thesis advisor, with whom they met weekly, and two committee members who, along with the primary advisor, sat on reviews three times during both the Thesis Preparation and Thesis Design semesters. Assignment of the advisors and committee members was made through a lottery system in which students indicated their first, second and third preferences. For the final review, two additional faculty members, for a total of five, joined the committee to ensure that the critique and final evaluation were as balanced as possible.

To aid Thesis students in the production of their final review materials, students in the lower division, in particular freshmen, were encouraged to volunteer to assist the Thesis students. Their voluntary participation served a number of purposes, including those of socialization, developing a sense of community, and the early exposure of the lower division students to the standards and expectations of Thesis. It also helped Thesis students to produce more comprehensive and complete presentations.

Evaluation of the Thesis presentation was done immediately following the final review. The grade was based on the average of the grades given by all five jury members. A grade of "A" qualified the student for presentation at Super Jury, the all-School, all-day event that marked the culmination of the academic year. Those students producing the best Thesis projects (usually about 12 to 15) were given the opportunity to re-present their projects to a blue-ribbon committee of visiting critics, who included practitioners and academics from around the United States and, on occasion, from Europe. For the students, it was an opportunity to have their projects discussed by experts from outside the School in a more relaxed

environment. It was also a way of rewarding the students for their achievement and celebrating their success.

For the School, Super Jury was an opportunity to showcase the best work to noted professionals who would, in turn, carry their impressions to the outside world. Over time, this proved to be a particularly effective marketing strategy engendering collateral benefits. As the reputation of the School grew, so did the number of applications, which, in turn, allowed the admissions process to be more selective. Gradually, the qualification profile of the typical entering student began to improve.

Following the Super Jury reviews, faculty and guests convened for a closed session to elect, by secret ballot, the best among the Super Jury cohort (a winner and two runners-up). All students received a Dean's Citation for having been selected to Super Jury. Announcement of the award recipients was made at the School's graduation convocation.

Each fall, the projects from the previous year were displayed for the benefit and edification of the next cohort of Thesis students, ensuring the transfer of standards and values to each succeeding class. Additionally, in the fall of 1980, Seligmann mounted an exhibition of the best Thesis projects at the University's Lubin House in New York City. Invitations to the opening were sent to leading professionals and deans of the various schools of architecture in the metropolitan New York area. The goal was to situate Syracuse on the map of the best northeastern schools of architecture.

By the mid-1980s, the Thesis program was largely established, and the curriculum reconfigured to better prepare students for the Thesis experience. The evidence of its success was in the School's growing reputation among other schools and within the profession at large. Syracuse graduates were, and continued to be, consistently in demand by many of the best offices in the country. For many years afterward, the success of the Thesis program was emblematic of the robust nature of the curriculum as a whole.

In 1990, after fourteen years of dedicated leadership, Werner Seligmann stepped down as dean to pursue other interests. He left behind a school whose curriculum was well integrated, a faculty that was effectively engaged, and a reputation that had achieved an international status. However, there remained a residual issue. To achieve those goals, Seligmann had relied mainly on a coterie of young faculty who were largely graduates of Cornell and shared a common pedagogical orientation.

While this supported the needs of consensus building, it also resulted in the growth of a monocultural bias towards Modernism, which some felt deprived students access to a broader and more inclusive discourse. This, coupled with the absence of a comprehensive theory course outside of seminar offerings, suggested that a reevaluation of curricular and hiring objectives was needed.

The next dean, Bruce Abbey (1990-2002), a graduate of Cornell and Princeton, was familiar with Seligmann and was sympathetic to his academic and professional predilections. Abbey was viewed as a logical successor who would carry forward the standards and practices that had been established by the previous administration. He was also seen as someone who embraced a more heterogeneous view towards the intellectual territory of an architectural education, and who would bring greater diversity to the faculty and, by extension, to the curriculum as a whole. Abbey largely succeeded in doing this while also preserving the core objectives of the curriculum.

Throughout much of the 1990s, the Thesis program ran relatively smoothly. However, two emergent factors began to have a direct impact on the orientation and presentation of Thesis projects. First, questions were being raised by mainly newer faculty members as to why thesis projects were more "project" oriented and less about an actual thesis. It was thought that the absence of theory from the curriculum resulted in students being ill-prepared to construct a thesis within broader socio-cultural frameworks. This was finally addressed in 2002 by the institution of a new curriculum that included two required theory courses.

The advent of computing also affected the student work. What began initially as a slow infiltration of the studios in the late 1980s, progressed to a tidal wave in the 1990s. At first, the impact of computers on Thesis was negligible, but with the introduction of computing courses and the availability of increasingly sophisticated software, more and more students migrated from traditional media to projects developed almost entirely on the computer. This resulted initially in a mild schism between those faculty who welcomed the change and those who lamented the progressive shift away from the traditions of freehand sketches, physical models and hand-crafted presentation drawings.

When Abbey stepped down as dean in 2002, he left behind a school that had undergone a considerable transformation of its faculty, a notable change in its intellectual orientation, and with an urgent need for expanded facilities. Sharing Slocum Hall with another college was no longer viable. The solution came

in the form of a proposal to renovate Slocum Hall for exclusive occupancy by the School of Architecture. The project was shepherded forward by then-interim dean Arthur McDonald (2002-2004) and the conversion finally came to fruition under the deanship of Mark Robbins (2004-2012). In the summer of 2008, the School moved from its temporary location at the downtown Warehouse, to a completely renovated Slocum Hall. The dramatic increase in space afforded the opportunity to expand the studios, create larger computer labs, add a new wood shop, and enlarge the digital fabrication facilities, all of which helped Thesis students produce more sophisticated presentations. It also allowed the School to increase its enrollment. Within five years this began to have a direct impact on Thesis.

As the School's student population grew, so did the demands on Thesis advisors. For a number of years prior, the issue of teaching load had been a point of contention for the faculty. The number of primary and secondary advising assignments became excessive. For most advisors, the weekly time commitment was the equivalent of an additional 3 credit-hour course each semester on top of a typical annual 15 credit-hour load. This represented time away from scholarly and professional pursuits at a moment when both the School's and the University's expectations in this regard had risen. As the student population continued to grow, advising became increasingly more difficult. By the 2010s, it had become untenable.

During this later period, various advising and pedagogical models were proposed and tested in search of a solution to pressing issues that were making Thesis, in any form, unsustainable—as well as detached from significant changes that were taking place in both the profession and society at large. Alternative models included greater emphasis on collaboration and the trans-disciplinary potential of architecture. The NAAB-mandated introduction of "Comprehensive Design" studio in 2004 paved the way to a solution that obviated the need to think of Thesis as "a demonstration of general competence." Positioning the "Comprehensive Design" (now "Integrated Design") studio in the spring of the fourth year of the undergraduate program and the third year of the graduate program opened the door to rethinking what the terminal year alternative to Thesis could be.

After much discussion, in 2015, the faculty approved the replacement of Thesis with a newly minted, six-credit hour course titled "Directed Research." As the culminating course in the B.Arch and M.Arch professional degree programs, it offers students a choice of several courses each year, which reflect the faculty's range of expertise. Each course engages students in collaborative research endeavors led by faculty members and requiring student initiative and advanced skills. Areas of study include building design, design research, building technology, theory, history, digital media, digital fabrication, and urbanism. The principal objective is to prepare students for a wide range of advanced practices in the field by offering experiences that build on students' core competencies and knowledge. This is achieved through working in a collective environment with goals that are shared by an advisor.

Beginning in 2017, a gradual and strategic process of transitioning to Directed Research was initiated. Over the next five years, the responsibility for defining and proposing Thesis topics shifted from students to faculty "Advisory Groups," each with a defined topic of exploration and a distinct pedagogical approach. Finally, after a corresponding period of cycling down, in May of 2023, Thesis and the Super Jury had their last hurrah.

Since 1978, the past forty-five years of the architecture program at Syracuse have witnessed an extraordinary era of its development. From a small, regionally oriented, undergraduate program to a sizeable undergraduate and graduate college of national and international prominence, the academic trajectory of Syracuse Architecture throughout that period has been directly linked to the success of the Thesis program. While it may have ultimately outlived its relevance, Thesis most certainly will never outlive its important place in the history of the School.

Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

A focus on matter swerves around the comforting disingenuity of good practice and pretty aesthetics. It insists on an approach that looks not at quantitative "performance" of materials but at behavior and misbehavior of assemblages, practices, and machines. Matter eschews nature/culture oppositions, insofar as matter (both material and immaterial) can be simulated, projected, and invented to create new feedback loops with environmental systems and networks. Animal, vegetable, mineral—you can design them all. Tectonics reaffirm, but matter satisfies desires, weaponizes fears, plays with memory, and upsets our aesthetic proclivities and our penchant for perfection. Matter absorbs pain and pleasure. Matter releases placebos, toxins, pestilences, hallucinogens, and curatives. Matter is already encoded with politics, economy, geology, geography, genetics, and (deep) history. Matter is always already befouled, stained, sullied, and covered in blood. We aspire to disheveled tectonics, alt-materiality, corrupted aesthetics, fuzzy connections, and unethical assemblages. We look for flaccid strength, weak structures, dirty ecologies, and low-brow logics. We delineate forces, image substances, project failures, and design for cyborgs (you're already a cyborg, btw). We aim for unprofessional practice, to engineer the organic, and to faith-fully falsify. Reject the binary opposition, stop trying to cleanse yourself of your imperfections, stop trying to fix everything, get over your fake honesty, and get with a real that's better than reality. Matter is what you make of it.

Advisors: Jean-François Bédard, Britt Eversole, Julie Larsen

Residential interiors are the realm of the occupant—not the architect. There exists an alternate form of architecture that is derived solely through the organic habitation of spaces. Within the interior, inhabitants may obstruct, clutter, and "misuse" space as they see fit.

In her essay "The Power of the Hoard," Jane Bennett speaks of the inexplicable pull towards inanimate objects that she calls "thing power." (Bennett, 2012) This pull compels certain individuals not just to collect "irrationally," but to embed in the collected objects a sense of self—extensions of their own sensuous bodies. From this group of individuals emerges a broad international class: immigrants, expats, and refugees who, upon being removed (reluctantly or willingly) from their native cultural context, have elevated ties to their "things." The act of moving—having to make choices on what to take, what to leave, or what to forget—imbues in them a sense of necessity for these "things" regardless of their mundanity or utility.

The accumulations that result can no longer be understood as hindrances to architecture, but instead as the amalgamation of the emotions, people, places, and experiences that their owners associate with them. As suggested in Architecture in Extremis by Sylvia Lavin, "Stuff, things that have material lives, is not a secondary addition to the architectural situation, or merely an instrument of personalization or functional fulfillment; rather, it's what gives rise to architecture in the first place."...These transnational paraphernalia require re-representation.
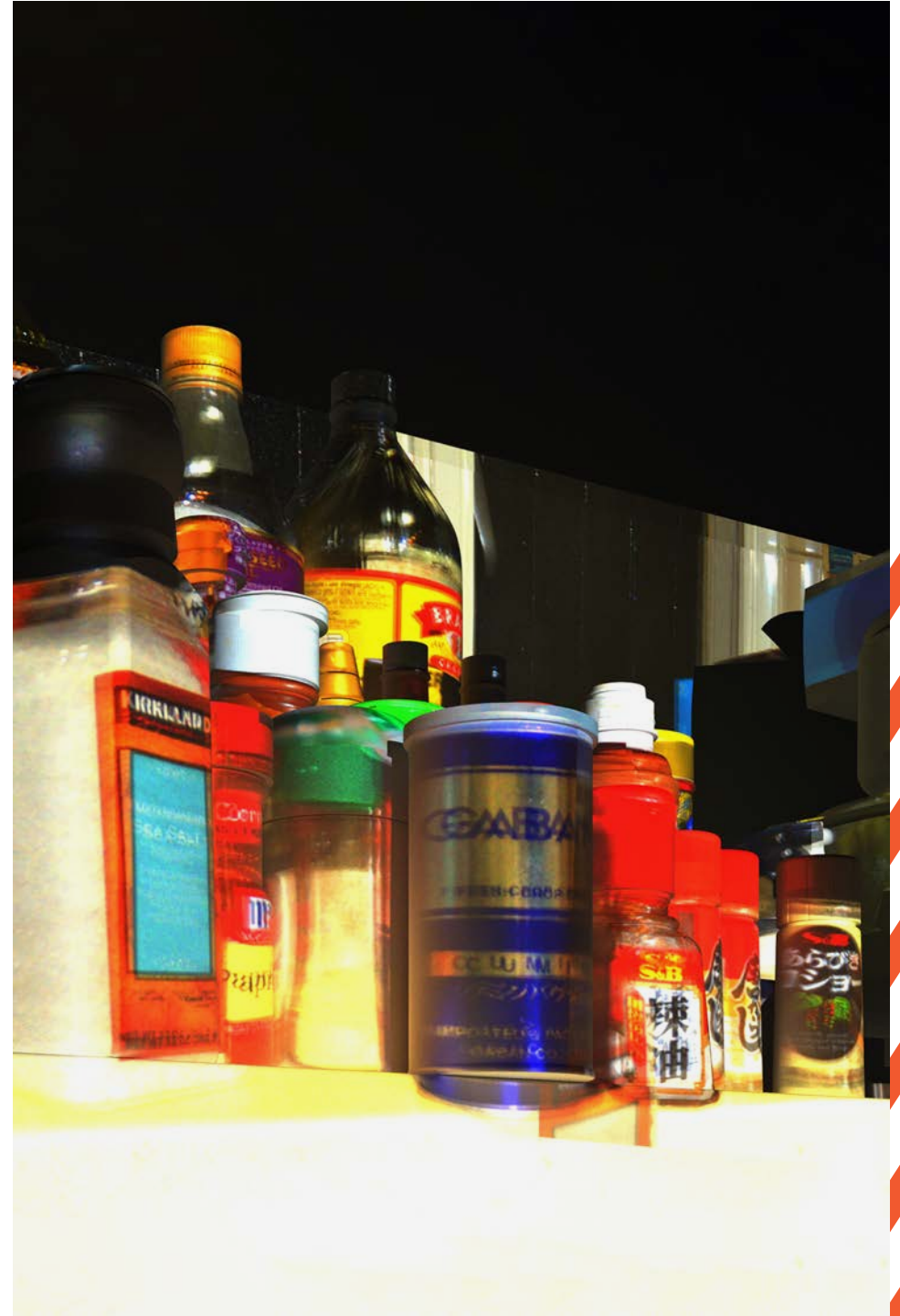
Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen

Image: Study of a Spice Rack

The Anthropocene has become an era where human-centered design approaches have controlled and manipulated the environment we inhabit. Within the Anthropocene, we have commodified everything from natural resources to organisms for our own pleasure and success. Within this tendency to control and manipulate landscapes for economic gain is where humans' aesthetic relationship with the environment is critiqued. Through this, the aesthetic sublime is imagined— one that simultaneously has the power to compel and destroy us. This thesis re-imagines alternative futures in order to experience the way creatures metamorphosize through mutational biology and alter their living conditions to fit their needs within extreme ecological conditions. Adaptation is instinctual to all organisms, forcing creatures to incorporate admixtures of human remnants not only biologically but also into their habitats. Processing images with the aid of artificial intelligence, new environments are envisioned to depict the effects of destruction. This further exemplifies the interrelationships among human beings, animals and the environment, defining the ways in which these organisms reproduce, hunt for predators, feed, and interact with non-human and human organisms.

Through the use of a publication, the reader is fully immersed within these chemical landscapes plagued by mutated species. The publication prompts a narrative storyline and curates imagery to further examine the imagined territories. In doing so, design is manifested as a form of critique that allows for thought-provoking questioning of the regime of human life. The new authority of the designer is the creature rather than the human. Through the use of imagery, we begin to understand the relationship between the large and micro-scopic scales of these chemscapes. The creatures transform themselves and encapsulate their habitats within the degraded landscapes to leverage their ability to survive. As they do this, new interactions are observed between organisms, forcing a disruption of the natural order. Ultimately, the publication situates itself within a period of time where animals are no longer cute and beautiful but have rather become mutated creatures within horrifyingly beautiful chemical landscapes.

Image: Designing Ambiguous Territories   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Processes of production and the extraction of natural materials have become reliant on human creation. This thesis is interested in how creations can maintain their processes of growth and decay. While earth's ecosystem is in a state of decline, architecture continues to separate itself from surrounding ecological deterioration. Through the fear of death, human creations have evolved to become permanent— living beyond. The idea that architecture can stand against time has further driven humans to become more familiar with and accustomed to everlasting objects than the living nature that surrounds us. Architecture and design emphasize this, with creations that conceal humans from the dying world around them. Instead of camouflaging the denatured world, what if design were used as a means by which humans began to adapt to a decaying planet?

This thesis looks at commonly used permanent objects and reimagines an alternative that responds to life cycles of growth, death and decay while symbiotically living with other organisms. The ambition is to create an artifice of nature that becomes indistinguishable from other forms of life. Beyond life, death, and decay are inanimate objects that humans have created to separate themselves from this sequence of transformation. Specifically, the thesis strives to create primitive pieces which, through their familiarity, also give a sense of unfamiliarity in their deconstruction of nature itself. The objects are created through elements found in nature that have already died and fallen to the ground. The material, made from dried leaves, highlights ideas of impermanence and fragility. The paper is created first through the process of boiling the leaves to break down their tough fibers, then straining and blending them into a pulp. As the pulp begins to dry on a flat surface it takes on new forms, warping into curves. Over time, this organic creation of space within the material can serve as a site that promotes symbiotic exchanges between both species and humans, speeding the process of growth and decay. The thesis imagines the ways in which these objects may start to crumble, warp and reconfigure over time.

Image: Uncanny Object   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Using the ruin as a critical precedent, this thesis seeks to re-engage architectural matter with time and the human relationship to altering the earth. An interdisciplinary approach that includes sculpture, ceramic art, and architectural history and design will be the most effective way to study and speculate on humanity's relationship with supposedly "static" materials. Studying ruin, this research designs the scars of time through projection of future scars, forgery of scars, and utilization of pre-scarred objects. This is the basis for the methodology. This study aims to draw from both philosophical and material standpoints to provoke an understanding of ruins not as mere objects but as symbols of the past, present and future in a single architecture.

By applying methods of ruination through sculpture, this thesis engages with the processes of ruination and weathering that occur over time. This is when the ruin exists in a realm that is out of an architect's control, as its function has been suspended from its original purpose. Its presence is the result of a collaboration between designer, culture, and the time it has weathered in its atmosphere. The result has inspired creativity for centuries, instilling an almost universal fascination with the ruin.

The common notion of the ruin today has become disjointed in the historical timeline of humanity's relationship to stone and earth. This project seeks to define a value for ruins that critiques modern building methods. The aim is to create an artificial ruin or ruin exhibition using slipcast terracotta blocks that will allow for rapid ruination, alluding to a temporal scale with ambiguity surrounding the origins of marks and forms.

Image: Terracotta Wall in Context   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter
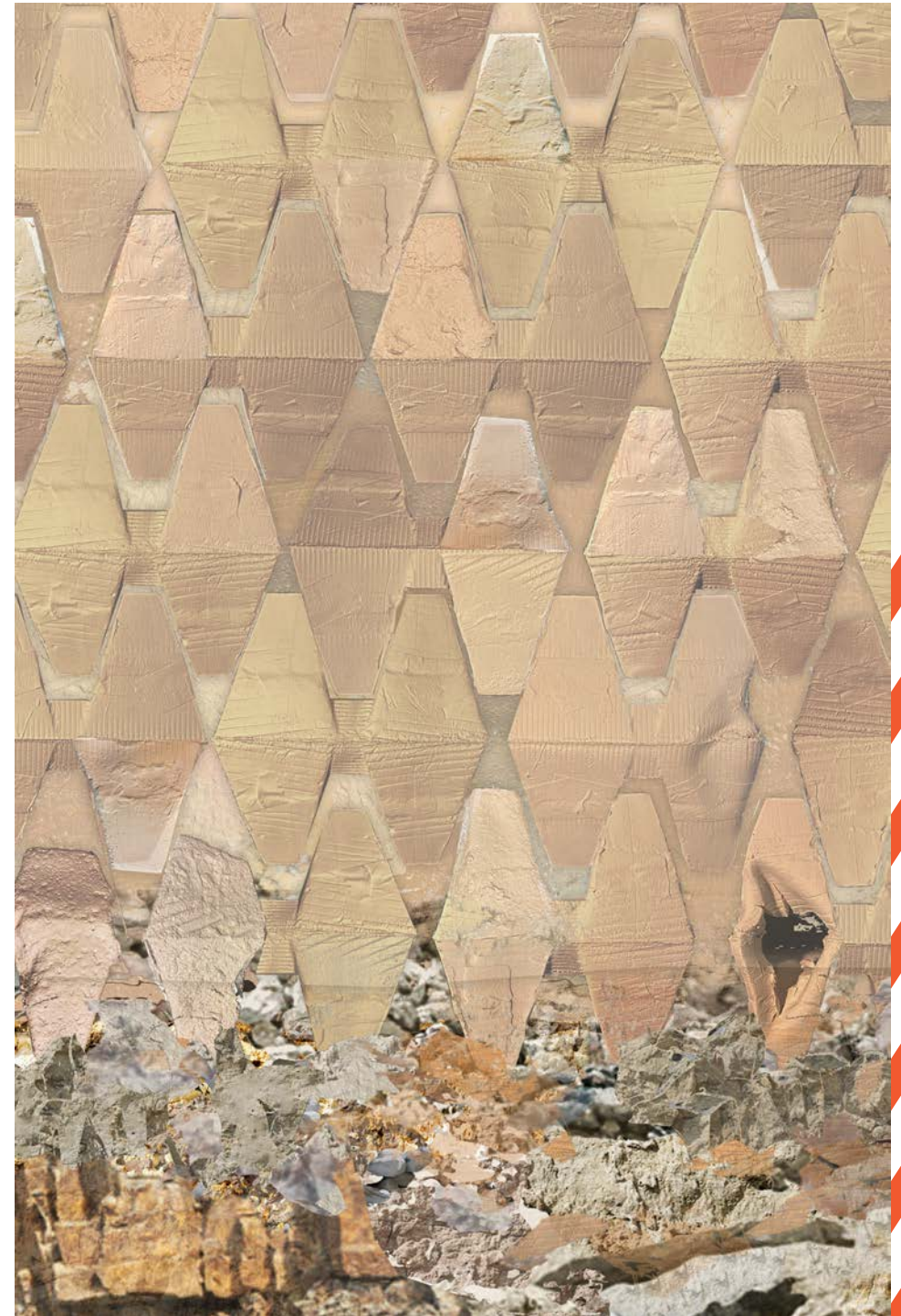
The planet has been stripped of its original form as humans engage in catastrophic global devastation, exposing the fragility of the world. **H**umankind has the ability not only to determine but also to change the current course of Earth's destruction. **T**he effort to focus and hold tight to the memories of those lost throughout significant moments in history continues to evolve. Memories allow us to keep the trace alive, even after destruction.

Remembering our past can teach us who we are and where we might be in the future. **W**ith the existence of the ever-so-fleeting memories, traces and collective perspectives of critical history must be salvaged. **A**wareness of the fragile nature of the visual memory trace allows for an overt reaction that forms separate and outward communication to the collective memory. Jean-Luc **N**ancy writes, "il faut refaire l'ontologie fondamentale...a partir de être-avec" which translates to "it is necessary to remake fundamental ontology...starting from being-with." **L**earning from new forms of knowledge allows memories and visualizations to link and relate the imprints of the tremendous loss of the collective memory. **T**hrough the senses, memory is formed, and through memory comes experience.

Referencing **B**eirut, Lebanon during the **A**ugust 4, 2020 explosion, this thesis seeks to explore reminders of the past with elements facing the current world, as societies begin to strengthen memory by redeveloping and embracing sites of architectural importance after the destruction. **O**n this day, a new phenomenon, timor vitri—fear of glass—became a prevalent worry. **T**he shattered glass from windows rained down on the streets 20 km away. **S**omething that was designed for light and living became a weapon. **W**ithout continued preservation of the memory of our past history, we risk losing the ability to remember where we came from and what we have overcome as a society.

Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen

Body (as subject) and space (as object) are polarized entities in modern discourse and design. The current epoch of hygiene, control, and mass production/consumption renders the body and the space(s) it inhabits as whole, discrete entities. In their totality, body and space are idealized opposites, failing to experience any meaningful overlaps or in-betweenness. My feminine body is particularly subject to this dualism, being tightly bound to the legal and social patriarchal dominance over my body's function and appearance.

This thesis seeks to corrupt my hyper-aestheticized and policed body by making (with) abject(ion). Understood both as an ongoing condition and process, abject(ion)—defined from Julia Kristeva's work, Pouvoirs de l'Horreur (Powers of Horror)—disturbs identities, systems, and orders by threatening the distinction between self and other. Although contemporary theorist Zuzana Kovar claims in her writing, Architecture in Abjection, that current works and theories of the abject—primarily in dialogue with Julia Kristeva—divide body and space (due to the abject's clarity of the separateness of subject and object), this thesis makes claim otherwise.

Designing with and for abject(ion) can refrain from its dualistic behavior in relation to the feminine body. Making with the disordered material processes of the abject feminine body destroys this paradigm and returns agency to my body. By designing with and for my body and spaces that inflate, peel, mush, ooze, and squeeze in non-isolated conditions, the abject feminine simultaneously becomes spatial and corporeal—neither objectified nor commodified. Body and space are now a mushy and tangled mess; it is unclear where a subject (body) ends and the space (object) begins. The ambiguous-making escapes the contemporary obsessions of patriarchal control and consumption, who are the perpetrators of the body and space estrangement.

Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

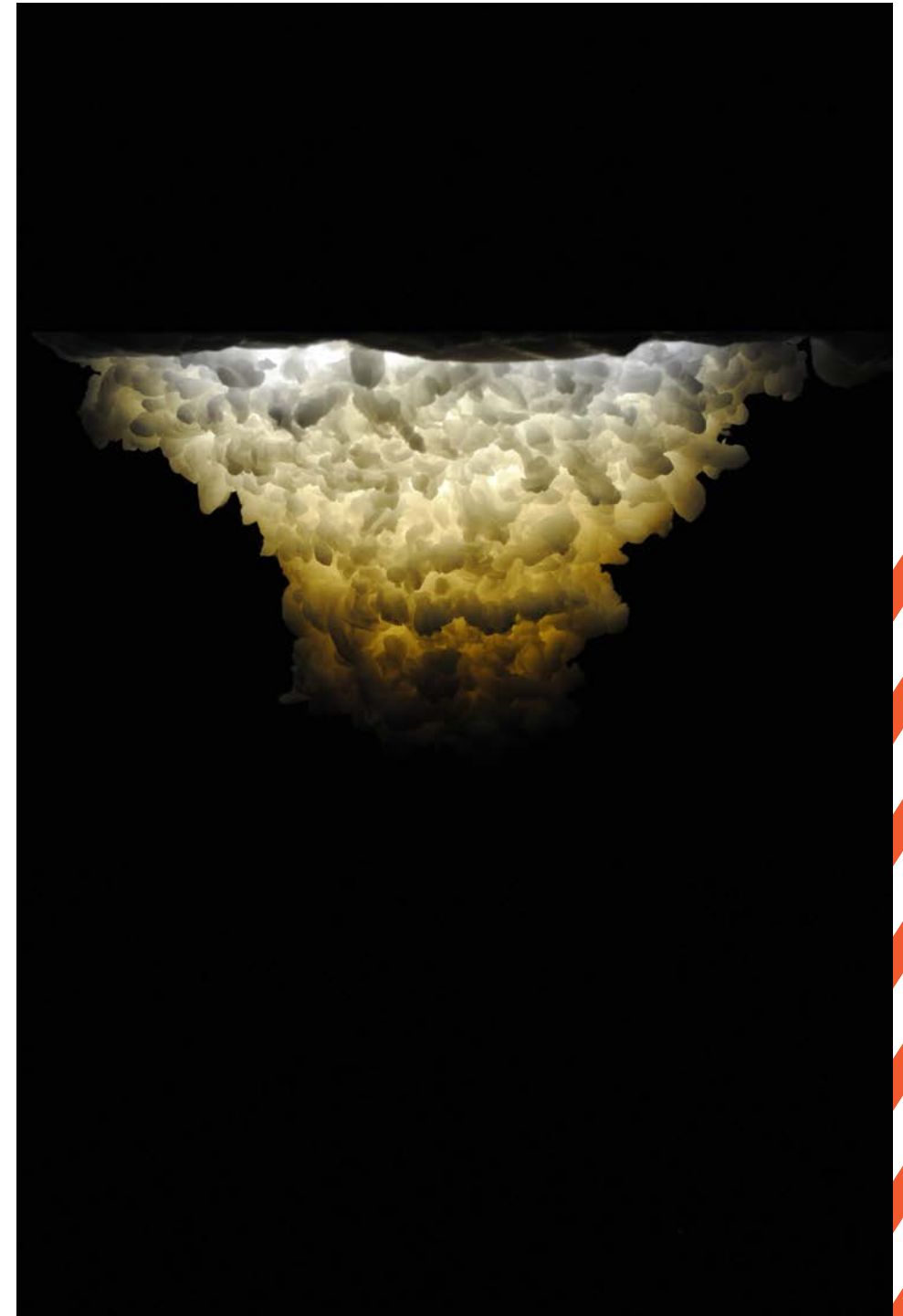Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen

Image: A Flabby Smothering of an Anonymous Feminine Figure

Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen

Image: Centripetal Phase-Change of Wax

This thesis examines the character of materials and what their qualities and limitations are. Can the re-understanding of these materials and their properties lead to more harmonious design and application? How might these identities change/evolve with addition, subtraction, warping, aging, eroding, enhancing, absorbing, etc.?

To generate a re-understanding of how what was previously thought to be a weakness could ultimately be utilized as a strength, this thesis explores material properties and how they may be redeployed within the design and building process. Furthermore, the project examines phase change in materials and how forces applied during those moments of change affect the material properties and forms. By generating new understandings and explorations, this thesis hopes to expand the utilized material palette.

Further investigations have been made into how phase change is affected by time, force, temperature, medium, material interaction, etc. The primary material utilized in these explorations is paraffin wax. Melting the wax and pouring it into an ice bath causes the rapid transformation through phase change from liquid back to solid.

This research studies how the manipulation of the medium in which the wax is poured affects the form generated as the wax resolidifies. By generating a centripetal force within the bucket containing the ice water and then pouring the wax in, different shapes and densities form, which accentuate the changing material properties of the wax.

As a society we have a craving for the premature disposal of short-lived products that is quick and detached from its landscape, called for from a capitalistic mindset that forces the increase of demand destined to become waste. Unfortunately for the society thus created, humanity's demand for resources to satisfy this craving has exceeded the earth supply, and a significant redirecting of resources is the only way to delay this inevitable environmental collapse. We have long passed the point in history when we can afford the luxury of remaining complacent in our current built economy; revitalizing bio-based materials will be the successful initiative.

Mycelium is a substance with properties that offer a solution to some of this wastefulness, as its regenerative growth and decomposition properties can combat the lifecycle of the indisposable trends of consumer behavior. Fungi are major recyclers of organic material, transforming often inaccessible matter into available essential nutrients. Mycelium is a fibrous organism that grows fast and can be easily contained in any shape chosen by the grower. The process can be slow in achieving the desired growth, but the final product is durable, waterproof, fireproof and completely biodegradable.

Mycelium here has been paired with hemp to shape something thatpulls and carves out divets and caves and pockets of space offering growth. Whether or not we are immediately conscious of it, the boundaries that we design and construct today are developed within a narrow bandwidth of available materiality. This offers to push that boundary and broaden what is possible for this materiality under a guise that is reflective alongside itself.

This architected biology harnesses the living and goes beyond using biology solely as a superficial repertoire, instead studying the relationship between what is built and grown and allowing it to do so freely while still being designed, providing opportunities for habitation through interventions that grow in scale. From bending, to folding, to stretching, to pulling, to placing, this overarching study has challenged further what capabilities are precise and controlled and which are irregular and fluid in the mycelium realm.

Image: Mycelium Growth on Crocheted Hemp   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter
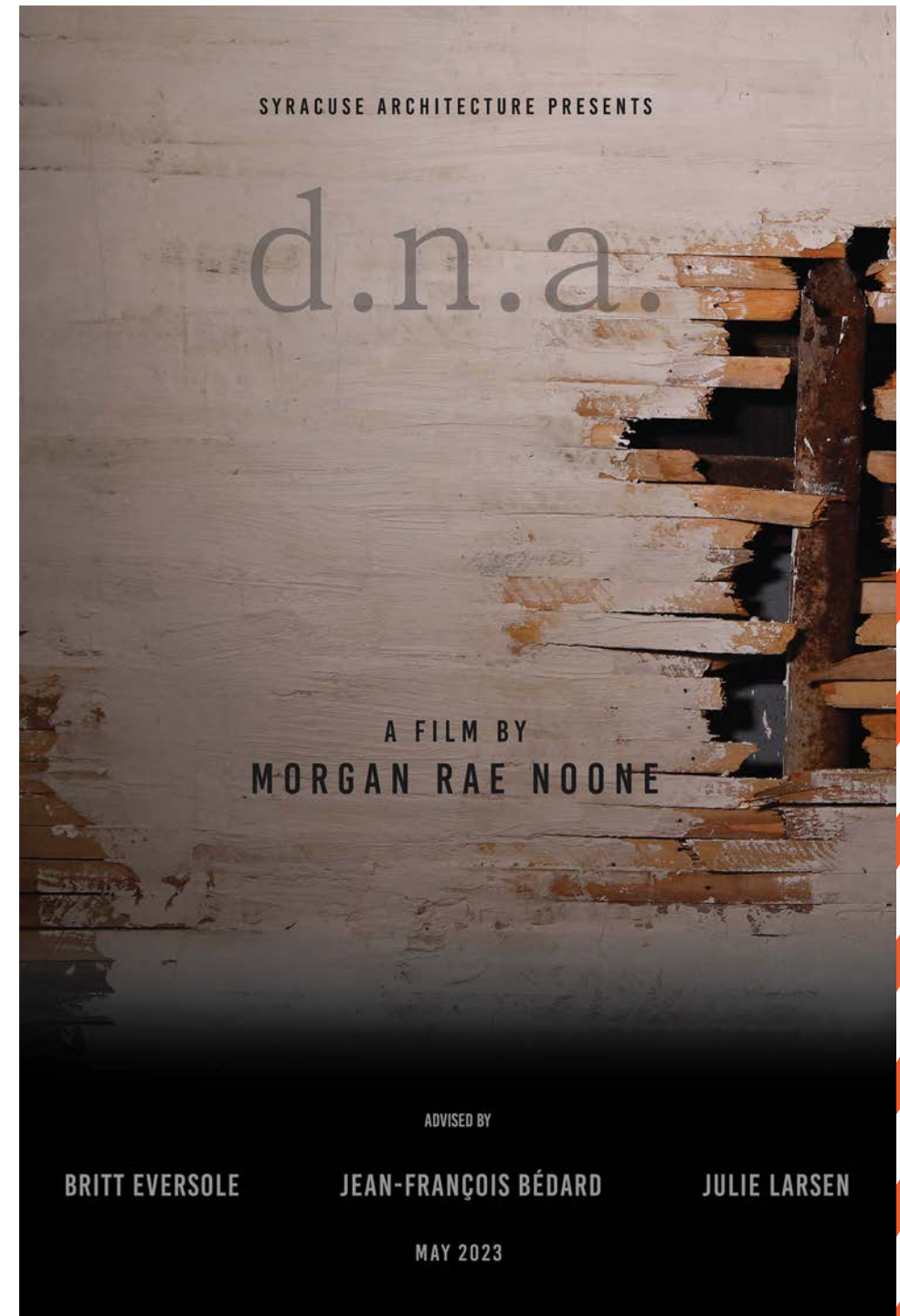
An investigation of psychophysical nature, this film project attempts to reveal the intimate relationships between the human body & spirit and the materials we surround them with. After 200 years of mass-producing materials, the human being, and the material culture we have contrived are nearly inseparable. Without these materials, who are we? Upon their disappearance, what happens to the collective memory embedded in a piece? This relationship is strongest and most fragile within domestic space and will be explored through the eyes of the polluted mind—polluted both by literal toxins of the home and by grief.

After the death of her mother, a woman attempts to renovate her now-dilapidated childhood home. The protagonist struggles to separate illusions and reality as she interacts with the decayed material fabric of the house. The film uses a variety of methods including mise-en-scène to make connections to its references from film, television and literature related to the themes of home and decay. Sources include but are not limited to: the book Stuff Matters by Mark Miodownik, HBO's The Last of Us, the film Amour by Michael Haneke, Lynne Walker's essay Home Making: An Architectural Perspective, William Morris' Hopes and Fears for Art and Tim Burton's Beetlejuice.

Image: Movie Poster for d.n.a.   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

SYRACUSE ARCHITECTURE PRESENTS

d.n.a.

A FILM BY
MORGAN RAE NOONE

ADVISED BY

BRITT EVERSOLE   JEAN-FRANÇOIS BÉDARD   JULIE LARSEN

MAY 2023

In just one day, the amount of trash from all five boroughs of NYC coming from residential, institutional, commercial, construction and demolition, and biosolids waste could cover the entire area of Central Park. This thesis addresses the rampant consumerist culture in our society by proposing a new approach to deal with the excessive waste that comes as a byproduct of unnecessary consumption. NYC was chosen as a site for analysis due to its exemplification of this culture.

The deliberate concealment of waste is the most significant issue. Those who produce waste the most, feel the impacts of their traces the least. NYC produces more than 14 million tons of waste annually, which gets transported to landfills, recycling centers, energy-to-waste plants, and compost facilities located outside the city and the state. This results in marginalized communities bearing the brunt of the waste's adverse environmental effects. In addition to the environmental injustice that disproportionately affects minorities, waste also negatively affects wildlife and ecosystems. It is alarming that even when waste is not physically present as we typically picture it, it has already taken a new form in in the water, in the earth, in the air, and even in animals' bodies, including humans.

As a response, this thesis proposes the implementation of a waste treatment plant that processes waste into a "Toxic Glacier" in Central Park, an area which was originally developed as a place to escape from overcrowding and polluted streets. The waste would undergo a process of careful encapsulation to avoid further ecological damage to the city while acting as a political agent that immerses people in a new system where they confront the consequences of consumerism. This glacier would grow exponentially over time as blocks of waste are produced in the plant and later stacked up in the park, serving as a wake-up call to the city's residents. The aim is not to halt consumption but rather to force people to live with the consequences of their actions, provoking behavioral changes and seeking to shift societal norms towards a more sustainable consumption pattern.
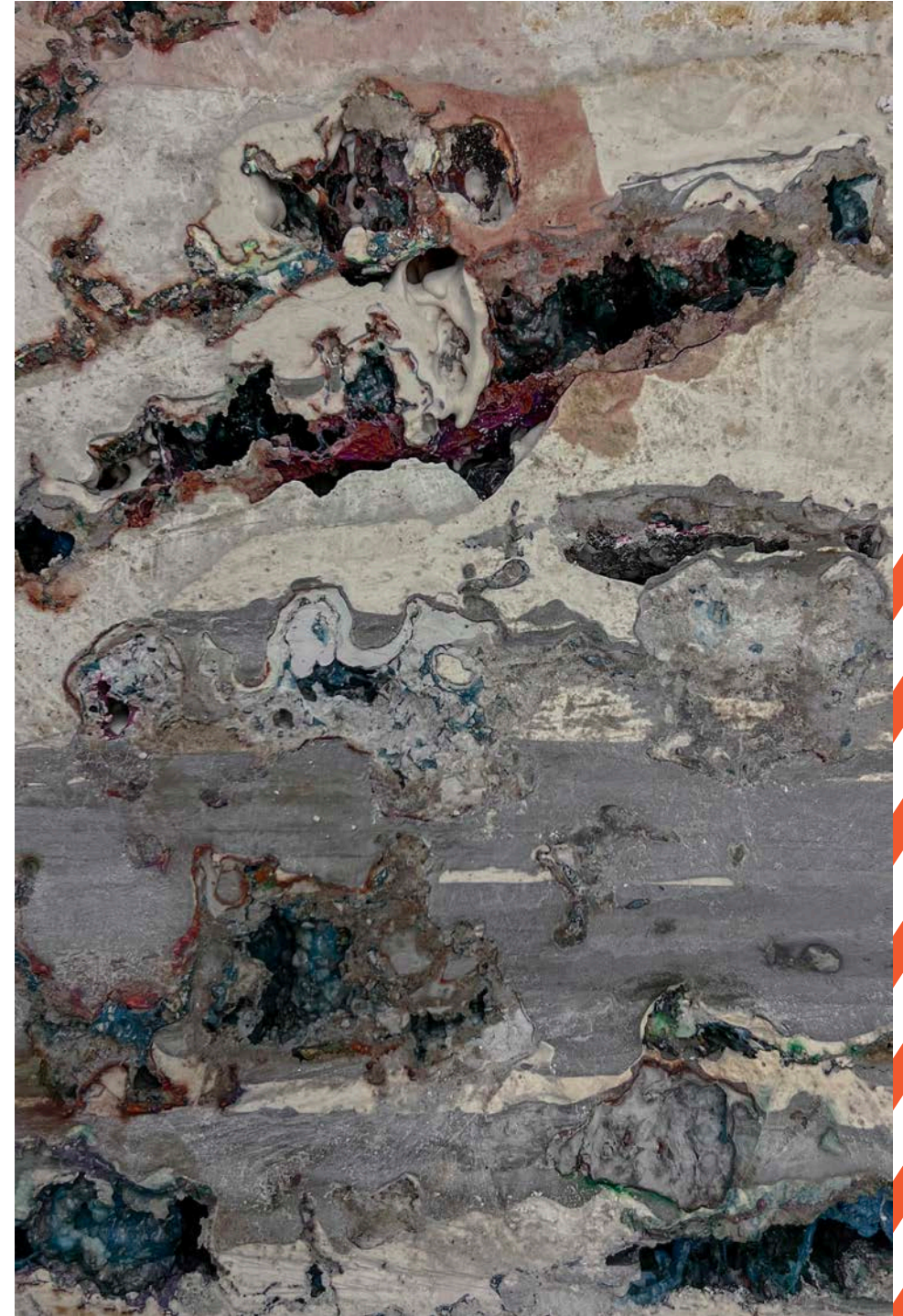
Image: Encapsulated Waste – Conceptual Model Section   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Contemporary readings of landscape emphasize accumulated numeric and visual data, detaching experiences from the physical. One may experience landscape through only data extracted from drones, scanners, and satellites.

The H.J. Andrews (HJA) Experimental Forest is a protected forest dedicated to biological and forestry research. This relatively unknown forest is the site of a just-concluded 200-year-long log decomposition study launched in 1985. A report on the results of the study issued by HJA staff states:

"Any means of measuring decay among the tested logs produces a level of irony: as these ecosystems play out, the data itself decays. At the conclusion of the experiment there is nothing left to measure, and the act of unearthing decay for the sake of data collection undoes the targeted biological processes. Therefore, all future experiments and human access on the log decomposition sites has been terminated."

This report intrigued a contemporary cartographer, who is fascinated by the irony of the human condition on this nonhuman site. Invigorated by the report, they researched and documented this forest, uncovering two historical accounts of this log decomposition study. The first account is from 1985 when HJA scientists launched the log decomposition study. They documented the initial data through photographs, physical samples, maps, and an initial report.

The second account is dated 2023. The cartographer found research carried out by a student studying the forest and documenting her personal experience. This student was not studying traditional sciences associated with forest research. She was an outsider who stumbled across it coincidentally.

The cartographer is curious about this site that has been abandoned for such long periods of history. There is a struggle to comprehend the historical accounts, which were first and foremost physical experiences, in an age where experience of the landscape relies on digital means. They created maps that carefully consider the historical accounts, contemporary cartography, and data visualization simultaneously.

This narrative is an archive, documenting past, present and future as experiences of landscape rapidly change from physical to digital. The cartographer is left to ponder how this change affects relationships between human and nonhuman.
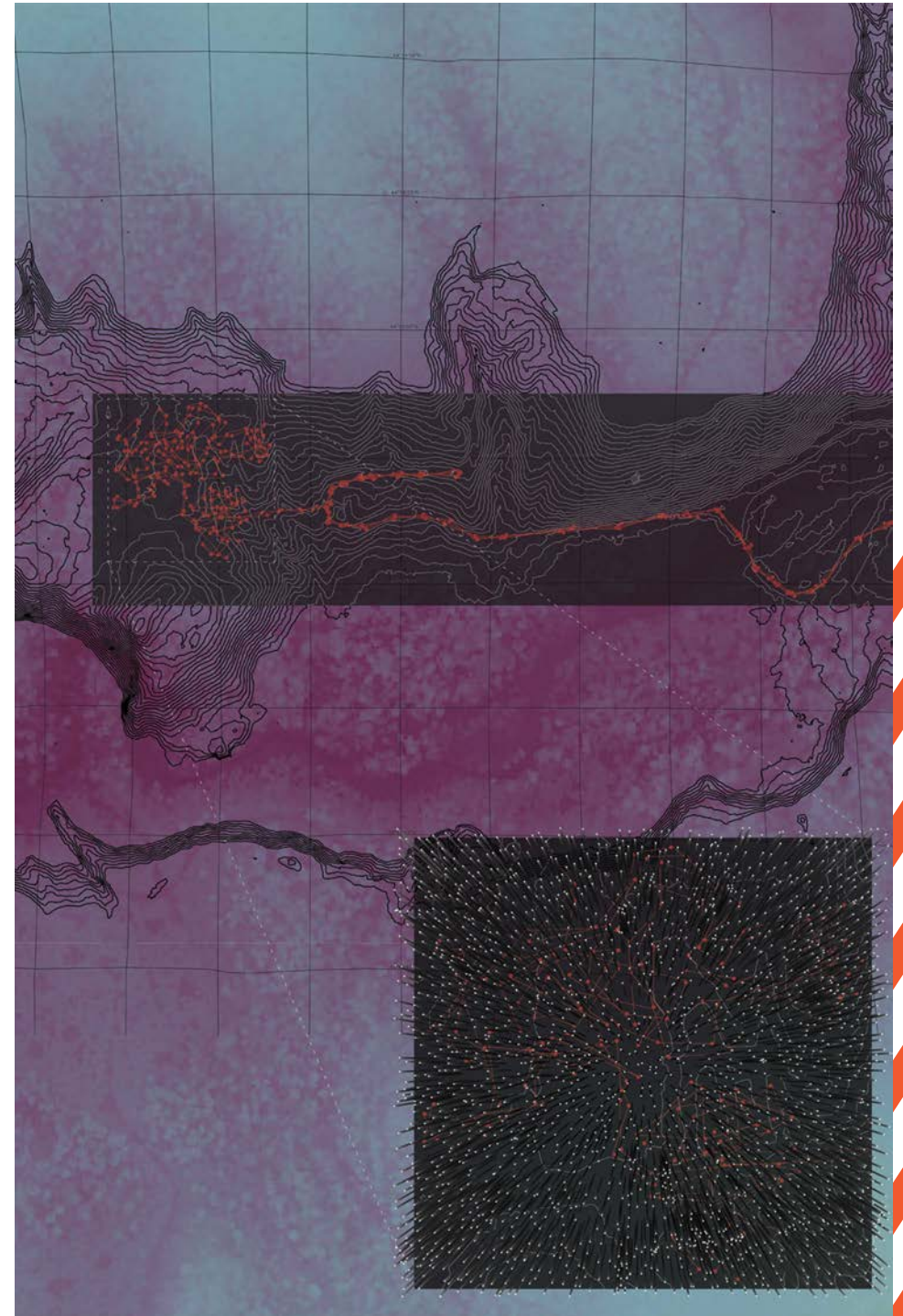
Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Image: Cartographer Illustrates Past Human Imprints on the Site

The title of this project, **AGOS**, signifies an act that causes disgrace, something that needs purification. **T**his project is a narrative representation of this state—where queerness manifests itself as a material substrate that ruptures and seeps through the surface of the East Asian body. **AGOS** ultimately uses diasporic queerness to subvert the Western gaze of bodies and environments in a phenomenon known as techno-orientalism.

Western heteronormativity and ultra-basic social binaries have plagued cultures outside of their own. **B**y setting social and racial expectations in place, the West has negatively affected minorities and diasporic communities. Asian queerness has always existed, but it has been denied and erased as Western hierarchies of gender and sexuality are upheld. **O**n how the West views East Asia, techno-orientalist tropes consist of two central themes: vague and bleak Asian-coded environments, and the "hollow Asian" archetype. **T**he general and jumbled depictions of different cultures in one environment stem from the West's view of the East as one single entity. **S**imilarly, the "hollow Asian" archetype sees all East Asian bodies as devoid of emotions and consciousness, like machine beings.

AGOS depicts both the calm and the complexity in the connection between race, identity, and sexuality. **A** record of emotional and physical intimacy, it is a collection of spaces for queer diaspora to reflect, exist, and thrive. **T**he use of queer East Asian American models is a response to techno-orientalism's flawed depiction of our bodies. **T**heir very existence is proof of how the system malfunctions when Western expectations are not met. In representing queer narratives, **AGOS** subconsciously moves towards the uncanniness of doubling. **T**he cyborgs and the subjects are quite similar, but there are also noticeable differences that cause unfamiliarity. **W**hile they can be read as two lovers, this doubling can also help the audience read them as one mirrored subject. **T**his gives them an ambiguous identity between the two subject positions because both can be seen as confronting their double and making sense of themselves.

Image: Lesbian Cyborgs   Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen   Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Since entropy constantly increases in the universe, this shows the unavoidable ultimate result from order to disorder. Fermentation is utilized as a way to observe and visualize entropy, and the fermented structure challenges traditional ideas of permanence in traditional construction. It offers a more regenerative way of creating structures that aims to contribute to a more harmonious relationship between architectural perception and energy.

This project proposes different ways to understand materials that behave as living entities, embracing the effects of time and energy. Additionally, exploring digital simulations of fermentation serves as an input-output process for understanding entropy. By leveraging these methods, we aim to deepen our understanding of the fascinating interplay between fermentation, entropy, and architecture.

The use of flour and fermentation in bread-making processes has been a source of inspiration. Flour and yeast are combined to form unique and dynamic fermented building materials that are living, growing, and evolving and that interact with the surrounding environment. The gluten bond in flour captures fermentation and serves as an excellent representation of the transformation that visualizes entropy, which embodies the "dust to dust" concept.

In virtual, codes serve as the fermenting process for objects. The phenomenon of entropy persists as these codes randomize the movements of particles as they break, collapse, and shatter. Through the process of digital reproduction, fermented structures can be iteratively recreated, with each iteration offering the potential for infinite expansion, providing a sense of the tangible and lively cosmos reminiscent of the human experience.

The research output includes documenting materials made from flour and fermentation and creating an installation with digital representations showcasing the material's dynamic, living qualities. To conclude, the project balances physical exploration and digital experimentation as feedback loops to visualize the entropic regeneration concept.

Dissimulating and Disheveling Matter

Advisors: Bédard, Eversole, Larsen

# The Spatial Implications of Architecture Within Law and Policy
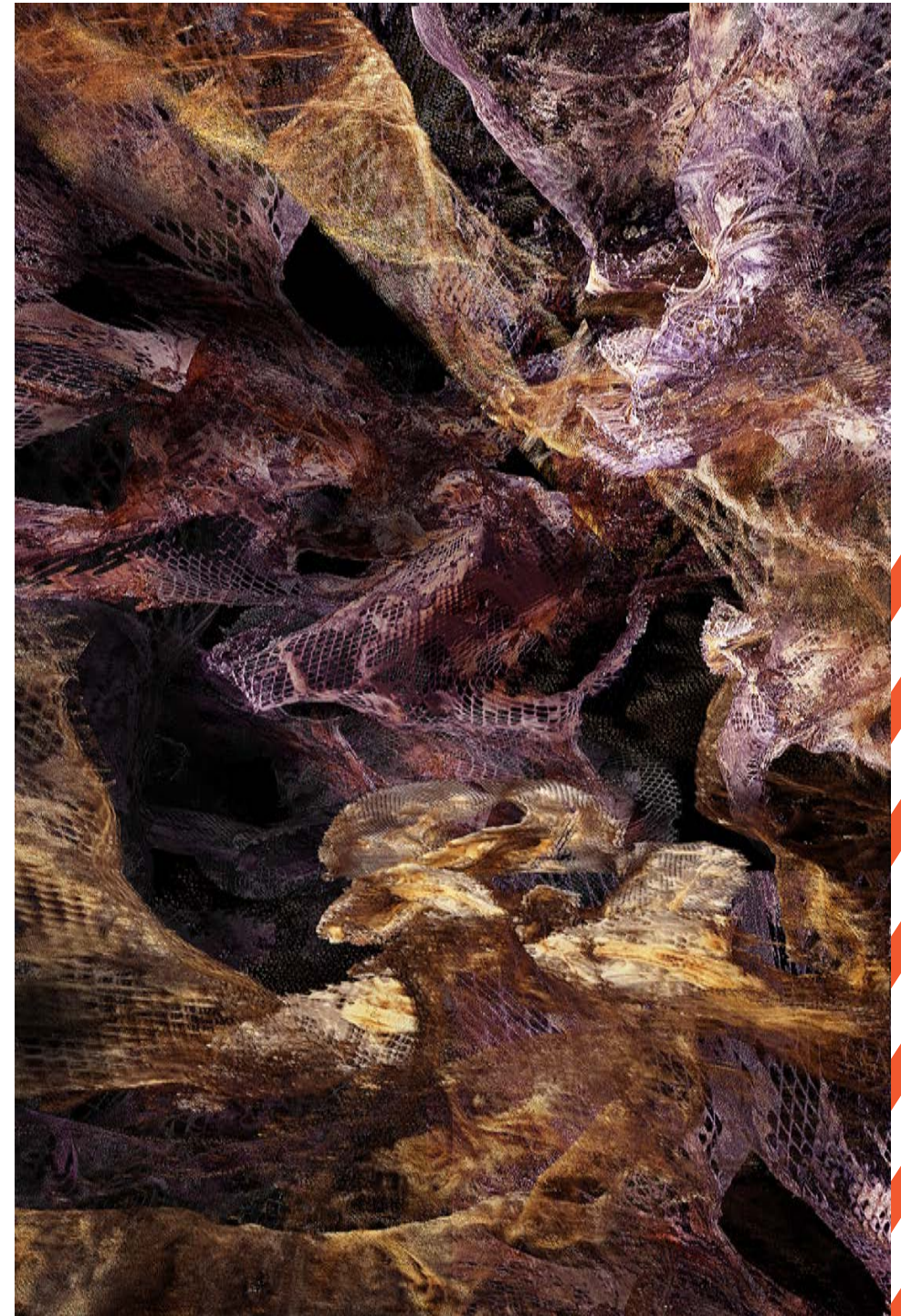
Law and policy structure our world—they define the ways in which we live, where we can live, and often how we live. But where is architecture within these governing bodies and the spaces designed to represent and reinforce these power relations? How can architecture not just follow the laws and policies established, but actively participate in their creation, evolution, or even contestation? Architecture must participate more actively in forging relationships with law and policy to have a part in creating the legal frameworks that architects respond to. This thesis advisory group explored intersections among architecture, policy, and law—and speculated upon ways that architecture can become more instrumental in spatial oversight and governance, and potential futures of intersection. The group participated in a year-long university colloquia series I organized that brought in lawyers, scholars, and creative researchers; this formed the intellectual foundations for the group. As my own research, public engagement and activism are centered on contested spaces that are currently under threat, I asked that students take one pressing issue with spatial ramifications for their year-long research project. There was really no limit to what this may be—the environment, land rights, racial justice, immigration, housing...it was wide open.

Advisor: Lori Brown

Spatial Implications of Architecture Wihtin Law and Policy

Advisor: Brown

Image: Redesign of a Pilot Project Shows Policy Merits
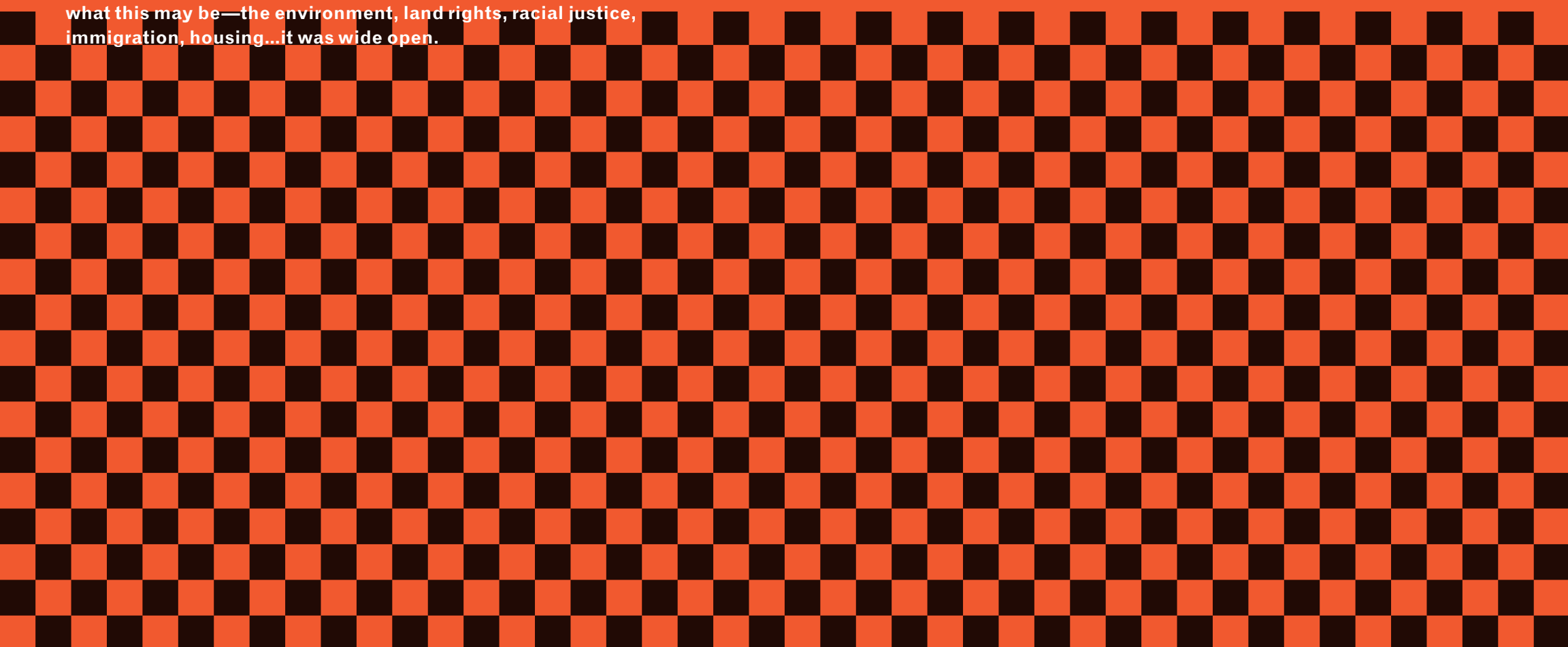
The COVID-19 pandemic has largely changed the way humans in all spheres of society interact with their environment. The most detrimental of these have been seen in dense urban areas where types of programs such as office, retail and restaurant spaces are increasingly staying vacant as companies adjust to the new societal role of online work and resulting effects on its supporting programs engendered by the pandemic. The cities facing this problem also face issues of overpopulation, housing crises, and environmental impacts, and simultaneously have zoning policies that disincentivize adaptive reuse.

This thesis investigates the areas experiencing this increase of vacant space and how housing as well as the surrounding programs that support it can be implemented to alleviate these issues. Simultaneously comparing this type of development to that encouraged by existing zoning policies, the thesis attempts to examine how adaptive reuse in design can be used to reshape the zoning protocols to create a system in which the changes in human behavior can influence the development of the city in a less constrained way. Such an investigation can set a precedent for redevelopment in which design becomes a medium for the practices and needs of modern society that should be precipitating policies that govern development in a post-Covid society.
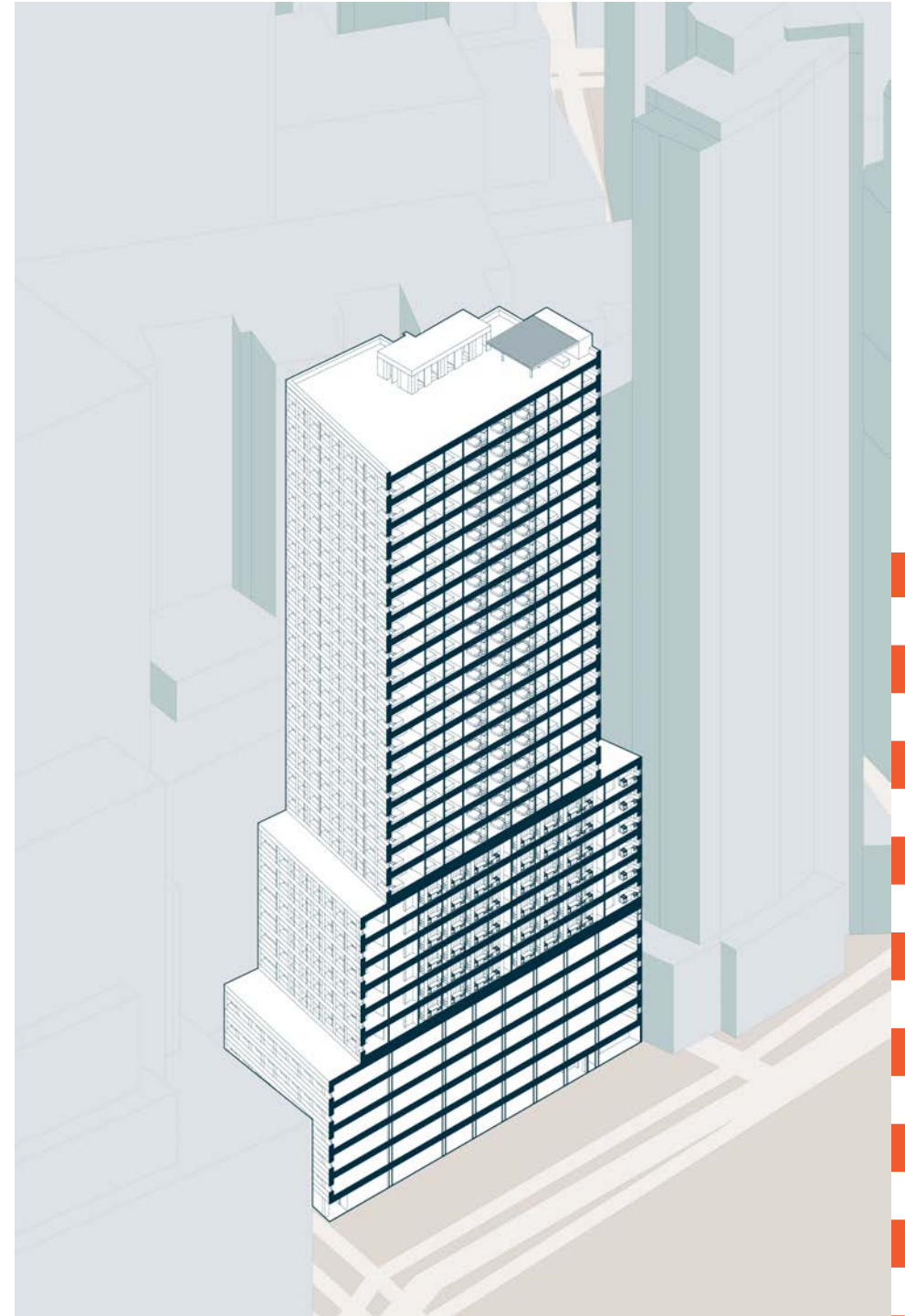
Spatial Implications of Architecture Wihtin Law and Policy

Advisor: Brown

Image: Collage of Mojud Rail-trail Taking over Parking Lots

The role of the modern architect has diminished. Prioritizing the minimization of risk, while maximizing technology to deliver the most cost-effective project that conforms to market norms, leaves architects with less creative freedom and influence. Managing risks and costs while providing a marketable product effectively is essential in every industry. But when decision-making in the many disciplines architects interact with—developers, contractors, municipal agencies, planners, lawyers, etc.—prioritizes low risk to achieve high profit, architects lose agency.

As a result, municipal planning and real estate development have become unambiguous. Rather than being on the leading edge of project development, architects are no more than a step in that process. This thesis proposes that architecture can gain this agency and impact back through a better understanding of the business of real estate development, allowing architects to not only participate throughout the entire process but also be invested in the process. This thesis navigates and analyzes the dichotomy between architecture and real estate development to understand better how these two professions can work side-by-side to deliver a fully informed design.

Accessibility is considered an integral aspect of the design process in the architectural discipline. Its focus is on how a person with dis/ability accesses and experiences a site. These concerns, however imperative, are understood through a code-based lens. The American Disabilities Act is the standard by which the discipline addresses these concerns and often as an afterthought or a supplemental layer of specialty features. This understanding of inclusivity limits the immersive experience of those who cannot interact with the merely visual to a series of numbers and dimensions. Exploring ways in which the discipline can embrace all five senses while designing in a meaningful way should be the baseline, not going above and beyond.

The spectrum of dis/abilities known to the public is vast and can range from physical and visual, to invisible dis/abilities. It can also include conditions not ordinarily under the umbrella of dis/ability such as allergies or aging. The lives and experiences of those living with dis/abilities vary individually but contain consistent overlaps that provide windows of opportunity to explore the intersections.

Autism, visual and hearing dis/abilities form one of the many possible groupings that allow for new understandings of how people experience space. As public servants, architects cater to the needs of their users and often use public opinion to guide design decisions. A series of simulation representations is created to emphasize these values, documenting the narrative experiences of people with dis/abilities. They illustrate the redefining, shuffling, blurring and/or erasing of our normal understanding of how users interact with their environment from an architectural perspective. This creates the foundation for a real critique of the way architects design. The spatial implications change from choosing a material for aesthetic purposes to choosing one with textural characteristics that allow for things like clear identification of space.

Having a starting point that is truly rooted in the user-centered experience allows the research of the thesis to explore ways in which the discipline can embrace dis/ability as a creative generator of design.

Spatial Implications of Architecture Within Law and Policy

Advisor: Brown

Image: Simulation of an Autistic Perspective of Bodily Boundaries

HOT

COLD

INFARED ← VISIBLE LIGHT → ULTRAVIOLET

How are communities defined? They are characterized by their residents—their culture, their daily lives, and their shared interests. Why, at times, do external conditions outweigh the people as the defining factors? Boundaries, ranging from geographical borders to man-made structures, have been defining and redefining neighborhoods and their residents. These self-imposed limits influence human identity, mobility, and belonging, directly affecting community lifestyles, socioeconomic statuses, demographics, and opportunities for success. As "invisible borders," they have a very real, material, and tangible presence and consequences for residents who live within, alongside, and across them. Segregation. Isolation. Apartheid. Redlining. Exclusion. These are all contemporary consequences of said boundaries. As a society, why is it acceptable for such issues to occur and coexist, amidst discussions of inclusivity and free will?

This thesis questions such recurrent practices in order to imagine a more cohesive and integrated present without its external conditions. It is critical to analyze thoroughly the types of boundaries causing such effects on communities, along with the demographics and housing typologies. Research, through the examination of case studies, laws and policies, historical data, and typological and housing analyses, informs this thesis on the necessary actions that need to be taken to benefit such neighborhoods. Analysis of communities before and after the imposition of "invisible borders" will further clarify its impacts. As a society, there is a need to look past the barriers that are breaking down communities and establish a stronger sense of belonging and identity.

Spatial Implications of Architecture Within Law and Policy

Advisor: Brown

Image: Art District of Community of Calidonia in Panama

Aqueous Grounds

"Aqueous Grounds" presents the New College 2060 Challenge as the site of inquiry for projects across category, scale, and time. The Challenge asks students from eight universities across disciplines to rethink the future of New College, a progressive liberal arts school located on the gulf coast of Florida, at the time of its centennial. At the sponsor's invitation, Syracuse Architecture projects possible futures through the student work of this thesis advisory group.

New College is a small honors college for the State University System of Florida. Since its inception in 1960, the college has fostered an experimental pedagogical approach wherein students develop their own multidisciplinary course of study. Within this framework, students are encouraged to investigate the world around them using non-traditional methods to encourage experimentation and nurture curiosity. On its centennial, the college is revisiting its tenets as it prepares itself to face the urgencies of ecological crisis, climate change and rising sea level. The goals include: "Re-imagining the campus and its built and natural environments to better support and inspire the campus and Sarasota-Bradenton, Florida, communities; providing spaces and places to grow its alternative learning paradigm for training future generations of unconventional thinkers and leaders; and offering a distinct approach to liberal arts education predicated on applied learning and research that engages partners to help address global challenges that will shape the latter part of the 21st century."

Students pursued areas of interest that range from the future of the American campus to design in response to sea level rise. Scales of intervention range from urban design to landscape installations but were required to address the threat and potential of water in research and architectural design. How can architecture, in the way that it relates to ecology, facilitate novel learning opportunities in the experimental framework of New College? In turn, how might this Challenge foster experimental design thinking towards possible futures?

Advisors: Ted Brown, Aurélie Frolet

How Aquatic Fields Impact Educational Experience

Building on the research of neuroarchitecture that posits design as based on human experience, and on cognitive and emotional response, this thesis proposes the "aquatic field" as the lens through which to design for humans and non-humans. The vehicle for this investigation is the New College 2060 Challenge.

Research on the New College of Florida found that only around two out of ten students continue their education past the first year. Furthermore, only around three out of ten students finish their four-year degree after a generous six-year period. The explanation of this issue may lie in the need for more community, spatial unity, and physical separation of the campus from the nearby aquatic field.

It is vital to start rethinking environments from a cognitive perspective. Most cultures embrace the positive effects of landscapes, gardens, and vegetation on mental health. Less often considered are the effects of water. Aqueous ground, particularly in coastal regions, has an immersive effect on human beings. The exposure to the push and pull of the tides and waves and the enormous oceanic ecosystem puts one's life into perspective, causing a powerful shift towards a cognitive state leading to significantly higher mental well-being than that caused by vegetation alone.

With its coastal location, the future design of New College of Florida's campus has an opportunity to embrace water. This thesis proposes achieving this by activating underutilized spaces with shell middens inspired by preceding indigenous groups, and with tensile structures used during the Ringling Circus Museum in the historic area. Water is topographically drawn into the campus, unifying these nodes with tensile structures. Fundamentally, the project explores the relation-ships among mind, body, and aquatic fields, and blurs the boundaries among human settlement, vegetation, and water.

Producing and interfacing with the aquatic field and its edge conditions creates opportunities for intersections of middens and tensile structures, delivering therapeutic atmospheric and sensory experiences, and allowing New College of Florida to evolve into an experiential campus that enhances the way we think about education and improves life on campus as a whole.

Image: Pathway through a Cognitive Landscape   Advisors: Brown, Frolet   Aqueous Grounds
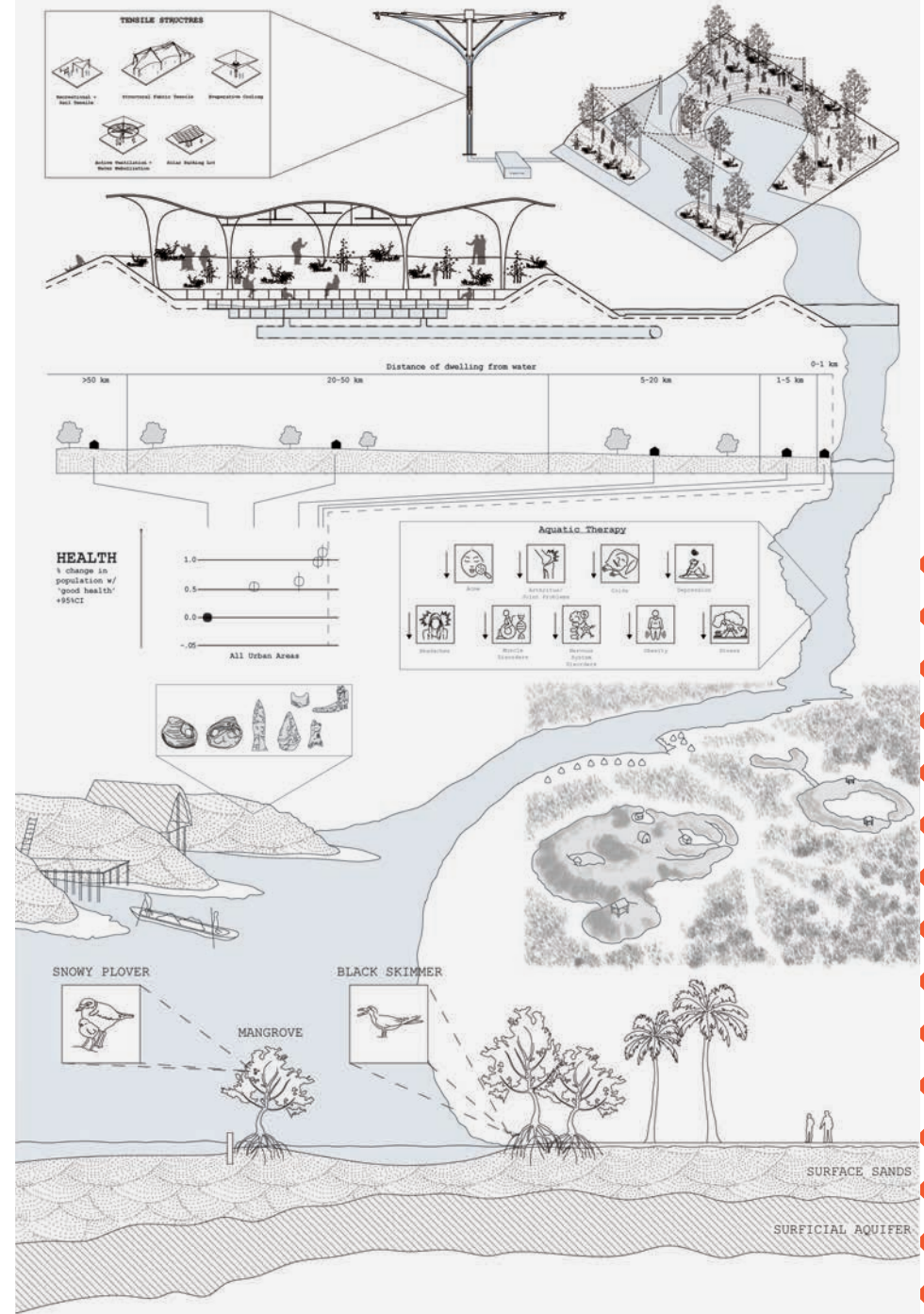
In today's world, we are no strangers to the developing concerns surrounding climate change. Whether it be taking notice of warmer summers or the increase in hazardous weather patterns, it is clear that climate change is having severe consequences on the environment and on our society. One major issue in particular is the rising of ocean levels. This project explores a futuristic take on the adaptation of the ever-evolving amusement park destination that is Coney Island, in a world where climate change has caused ocean levels to drastically rise and submerge coastal areas. Since the development of early New York City, Coney Island has been a center of cultural, social, and economic focal points throughout the area. Taking inspiration from the ambition behind Dreamland's ideology of the Globe Tower, the new attraction exists in a vertical typology above the now submerged location. This new park aims to provide an escape from the conditions brought about by climate change to a place that was intended for such purpose.

Image: Coney Tower   Advisor: Brown, Shanks   Aqueous Grounds
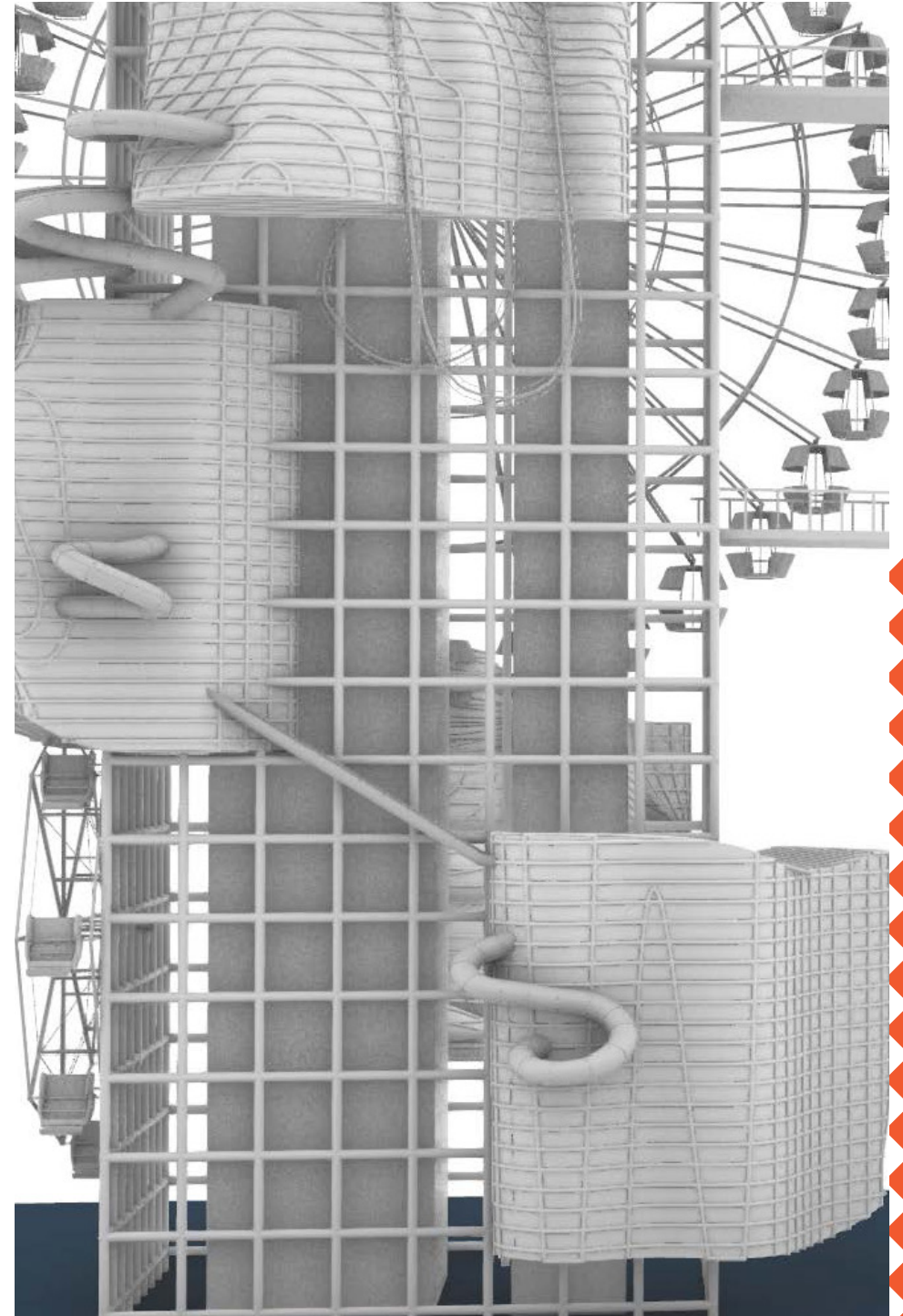
This project mines the Metabolist movement for its concepts, organizational strategies, and relationship to water, and studies contemporary coastal resiliency initiatives to contextualize sea level rise, stormwater management, and 21st century social planning. These theories are brought to bear at the Florida coastline. At New College, this project envisions the future of the campus through the repair and redesign of the coastal edge, and the reorganization of the infrastructure—hard and soft— to serve the campus community.

The Metabolists' approach was based on the idea that architecture should behave like living organisms. They employed these ideas through broad-reaching, master-planned infrastructural systems that organize human movement. These ideas are augmented through research on 21st-century projects that address soft landscape tactics to redesign coastlines in response to sea level rise and stormwater management.

At the New College campus, the ground, the water, and the social lives of students all intersect in complex ways. As this site continues to be faced with sea level rise and stormwater influx, it is imperative to turn to natural materials like organic soils and native plant species to redesign and redefine coastal relationships with water. This thesis will reprogram and reorganize the campus to aid in social connectedness, and ease navigation between academic spaces. These designs will prepare New College for a productive and social future within sustainable resilience strategies.
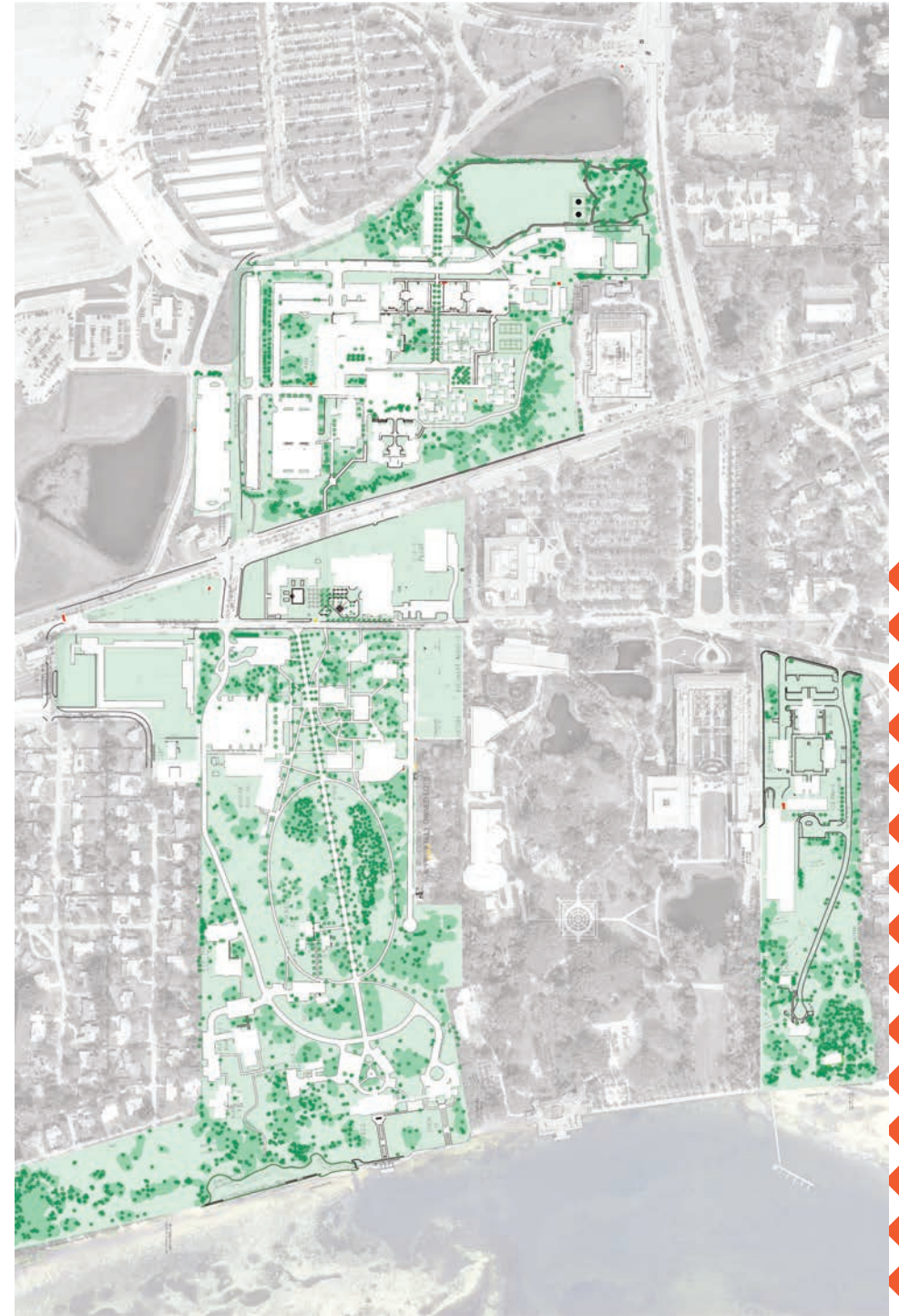
Image: Pervious Surfaces   Advisors: Brown, Frolet   Aqueous Grounds

This thesis explores relationships around water as permanent cohabitation among actors—the built environment, public space, human and non-human species—as well as varied water elements and bodies. The state of water is understood as a gradient, a temporal edge that offers unique interfaces—not merely a juxtaposition of on/off states, flooded or not flooded. Sea-level rise and coastal flooding create an opportunity to introduce interfaces among actors, an edge to be constructed and explored, in anticipation of an imagined, inundated built environment. How does the built environment and the ground we occupy survive increasingly extreme water events as our water infrastructure faces unexpected challenges? The project interrogates the ground in relation to water—submerged, lifted, floating, resisting—towards levels of interactive occupation. The direct relationship between water and ground, as it is occupied by human actors, can become a multilayered and multifaceted state that creates constant shifts in program, habitation, and movement, driven by the merging of varied water flows.

New College is the vehicle to test the thesis. Responding to the design challenge issued by New College, Sarasota, Florida in which the future of the campus is explored (New College 2060), Sarasota is framed as an amalgamation of temporal shifts—tidal flats, seagrass fields, and storm basins that shift with the flow of water—juxtaposed with efforts to control the environment—built seawalls, extensive stormwater management—and efforts to prevent coastal shifts or erosion. The city is understood through the movement of water, both natural and artificial, and is connected to the concept of the intertidal zone and tide pools. Defined as the area between the lowest low tide and highest high tide of a body of water, this zone puts its inhabitants, often concentrated in tidal pools, through extreme daily cycles and controls possible interactions based on water level. The intertidal zone has the potential to transform from a buffer between the built environment and water to an encompassing element, tying into campus elements and organization while storm water flows create a new boundary of reservoirs and systems. The campus and coast become integrated and inseparable.

Image: City as an Occupation of Water   Advisors: Brown, Frolet   Aqueous Grounds

Two-thirds of the world's population (4 billion people) live within 250 miles of a coast, with most of our large cities being coastal megalopolises ("Living Ocean | Science Mission Directorate" n.d.). With mangroves and similar coastal vegetation proven to provide the most protection in more intense storms of 100-, 200- and 500-year return periods, one must question why our shorelines are becoming concrete forests. As a band-aid to the issue, architects have recognized the negative effects of coastal building practices and ushered in methods for "sustainable design." Rather than encouraging healing, many sustainable design practices focus on slowing the damage of the coastal environment rather than regenerating the human-nature connection and exploring natural coastal protection options (seawall vs. mangrove). This establishes a need to find creative solutions to coastal resilience that deploy regenerative architecture practices at multiple scales, not only slowing the destruction of these communities but healing and returning the natural environment while re-establishing a stronger relationship between human, non-human, and the natural environment.

The outlook of future architecture must move from "sustainable" to "regenerative," as sustainable design's low standards build for the problems of today, ignoring the problems of tomorrow. Regenerative architecture reconnects humans to their life-places and catches these problems in advance. The land provides a healthy, connected existence and, in return, the humans exist as positive contributors to the place. Without the balance and equilibrium that nature has provided, humans would not exist.

This thesis uses the New College challenge as a vehicle to think about the way we regenerate our communities at the social, natural, and architectural levels. IF we think of our coastal communities as three connective interfaces, THEN we can link humans and non-humans to nature via methods of regeneration and natural coastal stabilizers, maintaining equilibrium in our coastal communities moving forward.

Aqueous Grounds

Advisors: Brown, Frolet

Image: Analysis of Future New College Bayfront Density

Image: Repurposed Land for Bamboo Plantations   Advisors: Brown, Frolet   Aqueous Grounds

The thesis explores design and development of housing typologies along the Florida coastline that address the pervasive housing crisis. Developing local construction techniques that are sustainable, resilient, and adaptable, alternative housing models are developed toward innovative, affordable solutions in response to the dynamics of a modern household.

The design process starts with hazard and risk identification and includes all important building regulations or requirements that are location-specific. By utilizing sources from FEMA and others, a necessary set of measures and rules is established which is essential to the coastal development design. The thesis hopes to present ideal designs to start conversations regarding disaster-resilient architecture and mitigate relevant design curricula among architecture institutions.

Looking into bamboo as a primary source of construction, housing typologies are developed that are affordable and easy to build. With New College as the primary site of interference, new housing and exhibition spaces are developed that enhance student living and communal well-being. Spatial strategies are developed that activate student life and resolve the existing disconnect between the campuses.
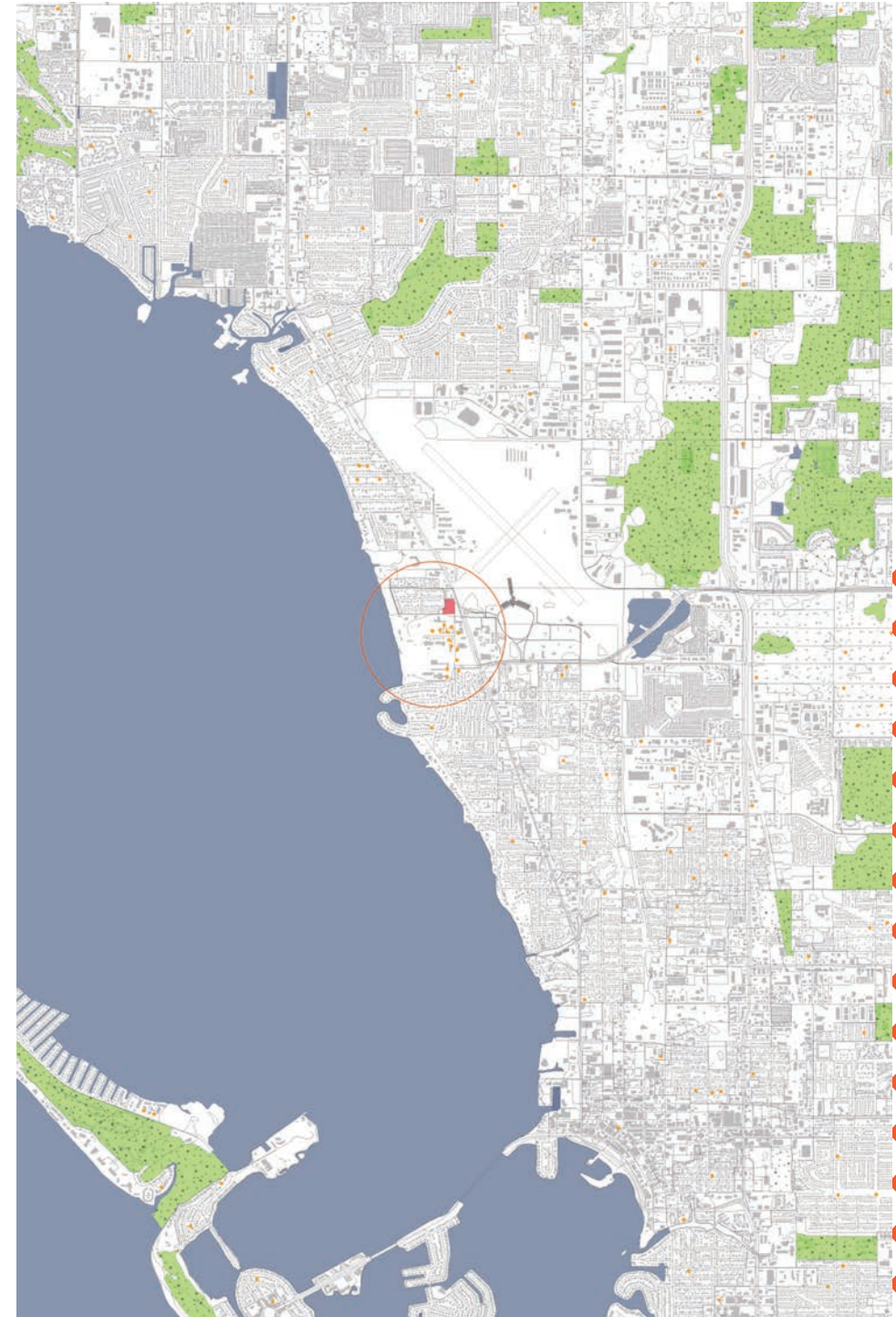
This thesis advisory group's theme opens the dynamic between architecture and historical research, providing an opportunity to enrich the design process through in-depth study of historical contexts and to encourage studies that employ design strategies in the study of history. It welcomed topics focusing on any period, geography, or scale of historical inquiry, assuming any position in the dynamic between the study and design processes, whether investigating those processes or initiating them.

The resulting projects address a wide range of historical questions, time frames and methods, and are geographically wide-ranging. The subjects extend from a psychogeographic mapping of the Silk Road, to monumentalization of the encounter between indigenous and settler colonial communities in Massachusetts; the political uses of spolia in Ayodhya; housing and community infrastructure in New York City's Chinatown; megastructures in central China; and an analysis of public and domestic space in Kuwait.

History

Advisors: Lawrence Chua, Susan Henderson
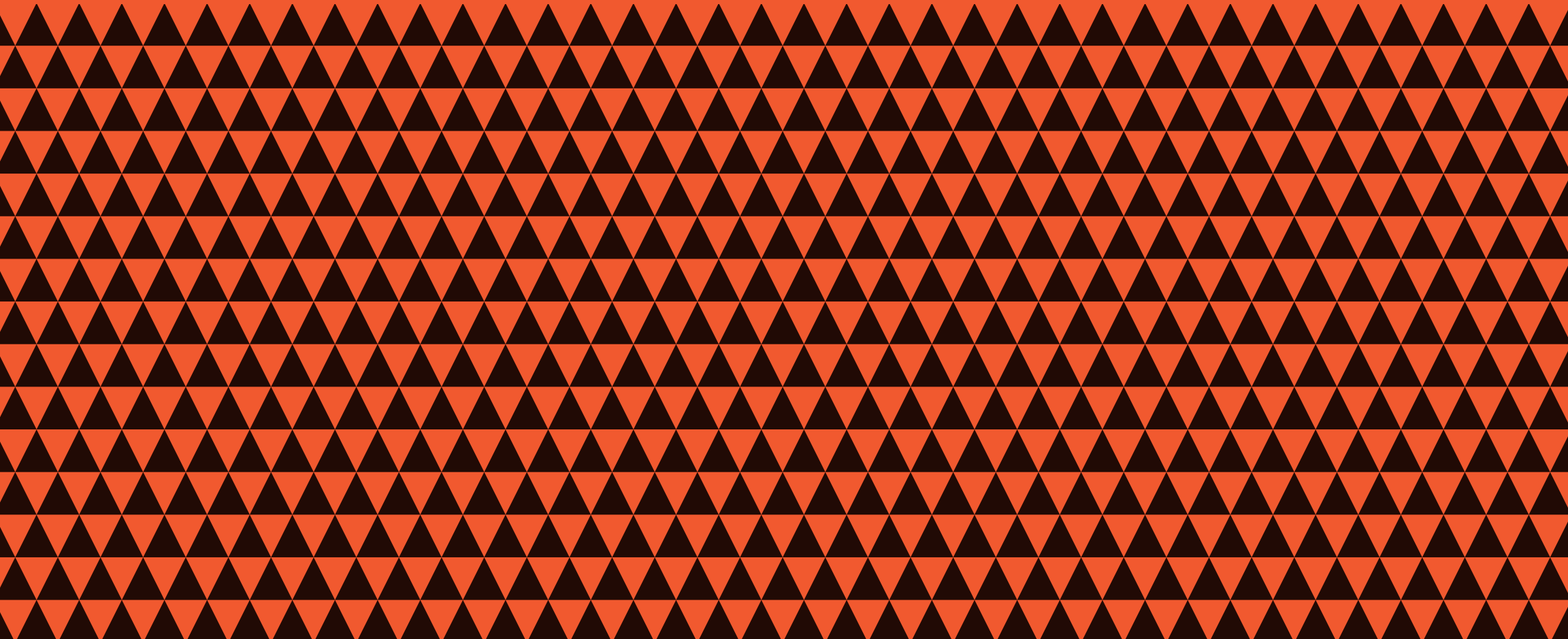
Tale of the Temple
Exploring the Changing Meaning of Architecture

Khushee Chauhan

Historically in South Asia, architecture has been used to make political statements, with almost every ruler using it to legitimize their position in the subcontinent and visually strengthen their rule. The same holds true today. Since India became independent, Ayodhya has been a disputed site due to the discrepancy between the grand physical mosque, Babri Masjid, and the mythical association of the town with the Ramayana. The demolition of Babri mosque and the subsequent construction of the grand Ram Temple at the same site is being celebrated as a global win for Hindutva and used as a symbol of grandeur for India by the Modi government. Built on the same site as the demolished Babri mosque, this temple is an attempt at overwriting history and setting a specific national narrative for Hindu religiosity. This divisive narrative privileges the already privileged, tries to innovate while being bound by tradition, and sets a political architectural narrative in the religious fabric of India. Since this sociopolitical move is being implemented through architecture, it is only fair to critique it with the same.

The feminist temple is dedicated to Sita, the female protagonist of the Ramayana, who suffered through the epic due to men in her life making decisions for her. This design takes a stance against the patriarchal narrative of Hindutva that enforces the dominance of the man by attempting to focus worship on the divine feminine and reinforce the cultural and religious respect for the feminine.

The innovative temple of the future is dedicated to Nala, the monkey architect in the Ramayana, who was instrumental in Ram's rescue of Sita. This design reintroduces the learning aspect of temple visits that has been lost to busier lives by creating an augmented experience of storytelling along with the usual worship.

The Nehruvian temple is dedicated to Ram, just like the Modi temple, sidestepping Ram as a character and focusing on the ideals of the Ramayana that align with Nehru's. This design focuses on reintroducing the concept of discourse at the temple and reinforcing the secular nature of morality and unity in the country.
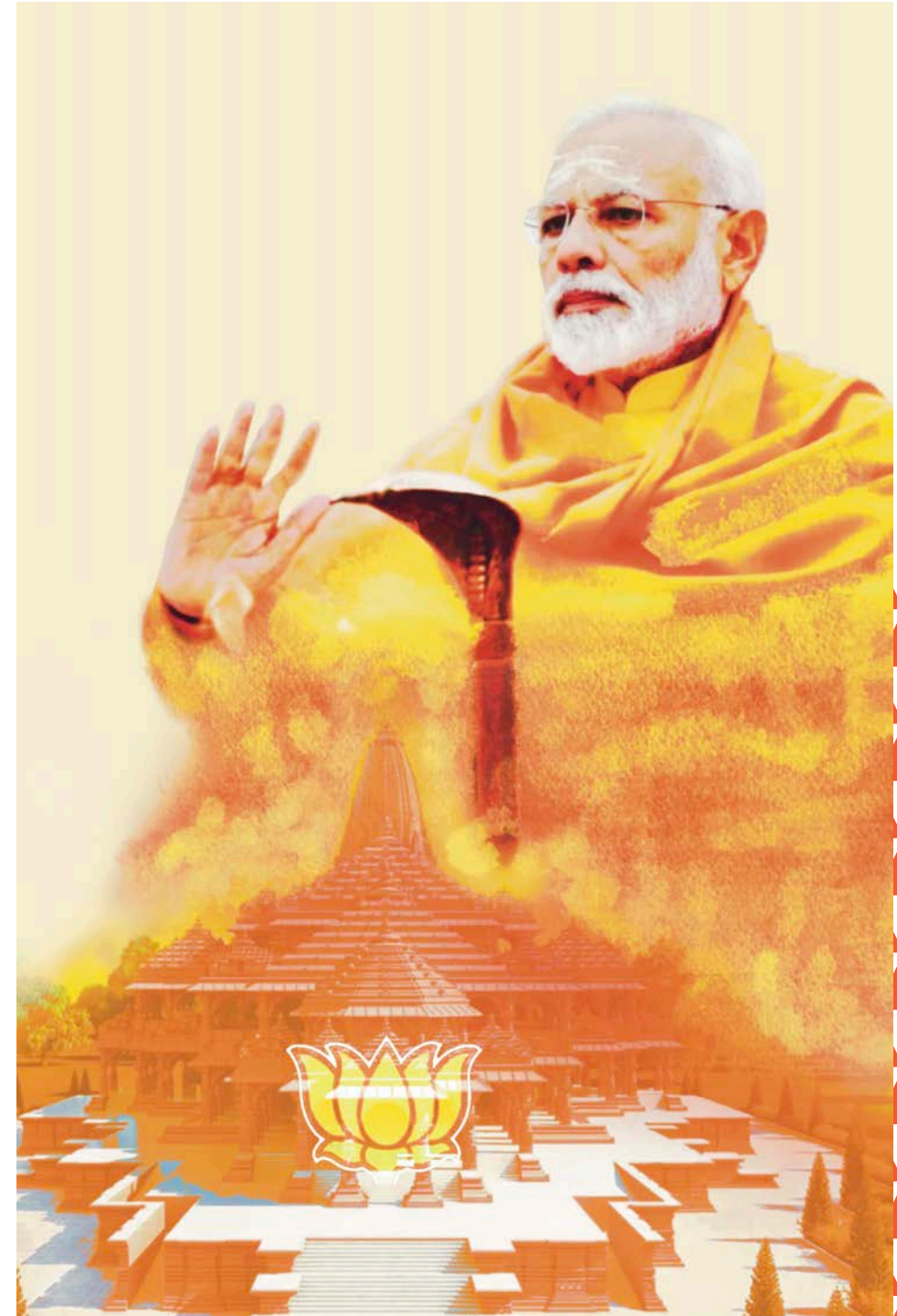
History

Advisors: Chua, Henderson

Image: Modi's Mandir

Manhattan's Chinatown has the most densely concentrated population of Chinese immigrants in America. Nearly 100,000 individuals reside in tenement homes and single-room occupancy hotels. Case studies show families crammed into a single bedroom, retaining many of the housing conditions found in the 1800s. Many do not have private bathrooms, bedrooms, kitchens or gathering spaces. Forced into these circumstances, the residents find the needs of a home through the neighborhood.

The thesis centers around the reimagining of vernacular understandings of architecture and designing a methodology that will activate and revitalize public spaces in Manhattan's Chinatown. It investigates the spatial and social takeaways designers and architects can learn from a population that deals with abnormal density. An analysis of private and public infrastructures within Chinatown demonstrates that the people of this neighborhood define and use the same objects differently from others in Manhattan. Chinatown residents form cultural significance for these built infrastructures through the memories and events that occur in conjunction with these objects. Public infrastructures such as a park table, a bench, even a bus station, become the programs and spaces that homes lack. The design would translate and combine the adaptability and flexibility of the objects into a modular installation. These installations will be small-scale and a temporary representation of possible architectural concepts for other Chinatowns and cities. This thesis sits at the intersection of sociology and architecture, beginning the quest of learning from a population that is lost in ethnocentrism.

History

Advisors: Chua, Henderson

Image: Historical Newspaper Clippings about Chinatowns

Model for Patchwork Urbanism
Redefining the Countryside
through the Masterplan

Maximilian Horkenbach & Junming Liao

This thesis aims to challenge the long-held Western under-standing of "rural" and "urban" as conditions divided by city walls; the boundary of the Chinese metropolis has always been more complicated. Due to one of the largest internal migrations in history, Chinese cities are exploding in population as the government embarks on large-scale urban expansion and "rural revitalization" (which has largely taken the form of demolition). Despite megacities growing to swallow up the surrounding villages, this prioritization of the city that started in the late 1970s with Deng Xiaoping's "Opening Up" has actually seen increased interconnectivity between the rural and the urban.

Although often thought of as dichotomous conditions (the city is new, modern, and connected while the rural is old, backwards, and isolated), the two are converging both in physical proximity and economic dependence. Heavy infrastructure investment has brought these two "opposites" closer together than ever. Through an analysis of existing spatial phenomena, this thesis argues that an alternative model of urbanism is present within China, one that is more of a patchwork relationship than a gradient or linear binary.

By utilizing the masterplan, a political tool with a long lineage dating back to the beginning of the PRC, this thesis takes the state's favorite instrument for instigating social reform and uses it to redefine and make visible the contemporary co-dependent relationship between rural and urban. With Chongqing's status as the gateway city to the Chinese hinterland, its relationship with the rural condition has become a critical focus of the government in part of its program to ameliorate the rural-urban divide. Through a patchwork condition of urbanism, one where urban and rural intermingle within a rigid grid, the project will serve as a symbol of Chongqing as a unifying city between the city and the countryside.

History

Advisors: Chua, Henderson

Image: Rural Urban Convergence

After the discovery of oil, Kuwait underwent drastic changes that altered lifestyles, traditions, and the country's primary architectural language. The urban form mimicked the sudden growth in wealth, moving the population away from the sea, Kuwait's previous source of income, and dispersing them to a more zoned land layout. Consequently, the communal life that Kuwaitis partook in was divided, creating class differentiation and a lack of deep social value within the neighborhood.

Furthermore, labor-intensive professions such as pearl diving and dhow-building were diminished and replaced by desk jobs of higher financial worth. An increase in income enabled families to contribute to the change by transforming their vernacular homes to satisfy Western trends, such as classified zones and Eurocentric-inspired public spaces. The government prioritized the role of international proficiency over the local to create a new image that prefers a closed-off and socially limited culture.

As a result, this thesis will recognize the effects of modernization on the relationship of the inhabitants with their surrounding environment. To strengthen the connection within the community, traditional Kuwaiti weaving, known as the Sadu, will be reviewed, and incorporated by its reinterpretation and abstraction. Since most of the social and cultural harm occurred along the streets of residential areas due to the addition of parking with the absence of walkable pavement, the thesis will experiment with ideas that promote collective interaction and neighborly expansion by studying possible temporal methods within the existing and overlooked communal block units.

Moreover, it will reevaluate the meaning of contemporary Kuwaiti spaces of engagement and critique their significant role in determining the production of a more close-knit society. Additionally, it will examine the understanding of social gathering—its possible flexibilities and boundaries—through experimentation with shape, material, and color, while simultaneously weaving positive elements of past and present socialization to reactivate current undesired designated areas and produce a more collaborative canvas that complements all aspects of Kuwaiti routine.

History   Advisors: Chua, Henderson

Image: Weaving Collaborative Spaces of Interaction

The beginning of American history is the clash between two cultures, Western settlers and Native American tribes across the eastern seaboard. The current narrative of history describes the West's triumph over the continent's original inhabitants, and their race vanishing. Their history is absent in our built landscape, despite the fact that America's Native American population continues to exist and live. That absence is a choice by the power brokers of our built space, not an eventuality. This thesis uncovers and illustrates the history that has been "lost" while interrogating what the form of a memorial should be for a history that is ultimately circular. This investigation is brought out of a 17th-century praying town which saw Native American and Western culture first mix and mingle. Today the town, Natick, is a quiet Massachusetts suburb.

Natick was originally conceived as a town to convert indigenous Algonquin people from various tribes to Christianity. It was founded by a group of Nipmuc Native Americans and the missionary John Eliot. It succeeded in its mission and was one of 14 "praying towns" established in the 17th century that successfully created generations of independent Christian Native American towns. Ultimately all these towns "failed" in the 18th century, however their people and traditions have continued despite the claims of their defeat. This thesis seeks to reconstruct and represent the history of Natick in the town's former center through memorialization and installation. These histories are important and often overlooked narratives of Massachusetts and the nation that continue to reveal themselves in the present day.
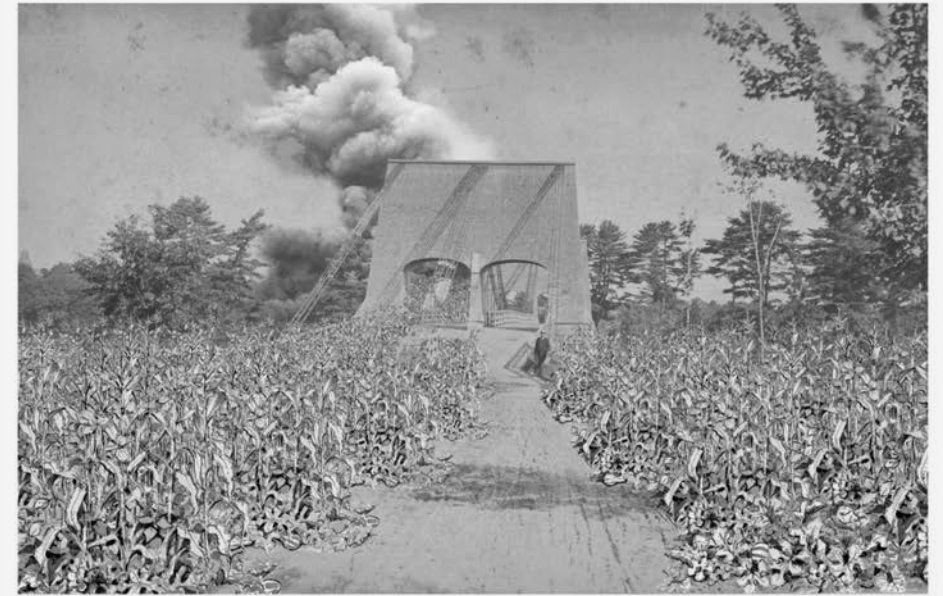
Image: Post Cards from Deer Island   Advisors: Chua, Henderson   History

OLD BURIAL GROUND, SOUTH NATICK, MASS.   1936

CHAIN BRIDGE LOOKING TOWARD DEER ISLAND, NEWBURYPORT, MASS.   1908

ELIOT CHURCH, SOUTH NATICK, MASS.   2022

Viewing sites and infrastructure through the lens of geographical borders conforms to the conventions of architectural thinking. This project instead views infrastructure through individual memories and recollection within tales and literature. It explores the layers of narratives that construct historical "truths" of Silk Road cities, focusing on the city of Samarkand and its infamous Ulugh Beg Observatory.

History itself is a tale, and a tale is an act of "world-making." Post-colonial scholars such as Pheng Cheah use the term "world-making" to challenge the convention of observing the world through spatial terms. Cheah advocates for storytelling as a worlding process, attempting to reframe narratives previously silenced by established socio-political boundaries.

This project adopts the concept of "world-making," understanding it as an integral part of historical studies where there is no objective truth. The project presents itself in the form of an illustrated whimsical tale featuring layered perspectives of Samarkand through time, bringing in fantastical casts and crews from well-known literature such as the One Thousand and One Arabian Nights, Ibn Battuta's Rihla, The Travels of Marco Polo, the Iskandarnama, and the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. The characters come together to formulate the ultimate plan for a heist, but face the challenge of determining the objective reality of Samarkand as each experiences different narratives presented by historical complexities.
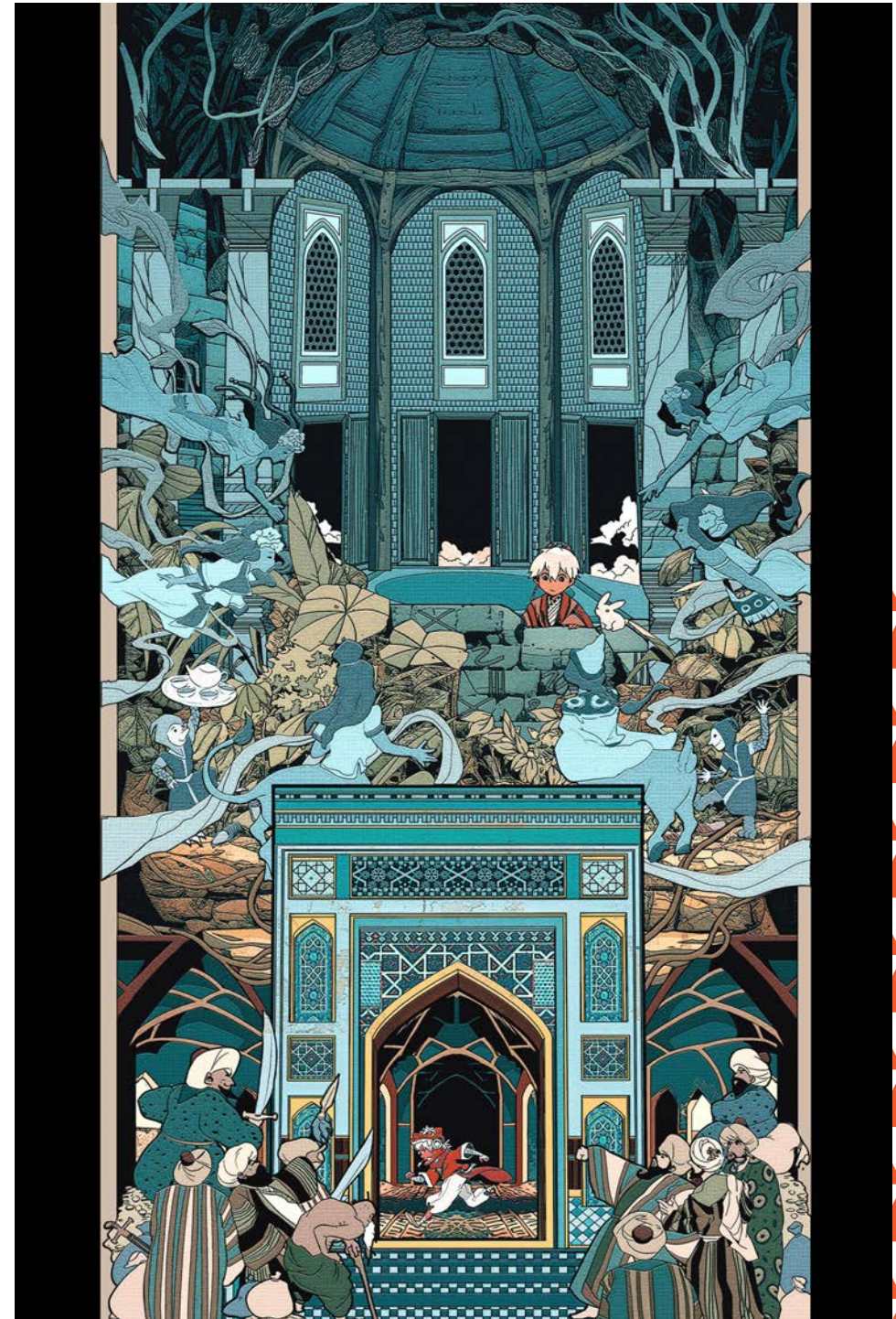
Architectured Material in Architecture and Structure

Advisor: Junho Chun

We live in a world with a finite supply of natural resources, yet our society continues its destructive use of these resources and generates waste products such as gas emissions that result in climate change and reduced biological diversity. In light of these globally shared concerns, one of the most important challenges for the building and construction industry is sustainability. As architects and engineers, we cannot be detached from cornerstone research on sustainable building materials, additive manufactured (architectured) metamaterials, reuse of industrial wastes, CO_2 emission reduction, and energy conservation. Architectural and structural design strategies need to increase sustainability, incorporate resourcefulness, and plan for effective recovery of functionality in cases of failure. To that end, use of limited resources must be understood by multiple disciplines that cross technical, theoretical and quantitative approaches to achieve environmentally responsible and sustainable objectives. This comprehensive design philosophy continues to evolve and grow among engineers, architects, and research communities.

New material types engineered at the micro/macro scale should be explored as alternatives that will address architectural and structural design. Advances in digital design and additive manufacturing have enabled engineers and architects to create diverse geometries with numerous material options. This provides a unique opportunity for novel design solutions with improved sustainability and infrastructural integrity. Sharing knowledge and interests gleaned from multidisciplinary approaches facilitates the invention of manufactured materials and allows for their combined use with limited resources to construct sustainability and resilience.

The research-design projects in this thesis advisory group investigate the current state of the art, and the trends and limitations across diverse fields that expand our understanding of how additives can be applied to the development of new materials to increase the resilience of buildings and imagine enhanced material sustainability.

College students often face significant pressure and negative emotions due to academic, social, and personal challenges. In response to this issue, this research proposes an innovative approach to improving mental health outcomes through the use of virtual reality (VR) technology to create supportive and therapeutic environments within the interior space of architecture.

The research will draw on both primary and secondary sources, including a survey of college students to identify common sources of pressure, scenarios that induce negative emotions, and past experiences with consulting. Additionally, a review of relevant research articles will be conducted to explore the potential of VR technology to reduce stress, anxiety and depression in various contexts.

To understand the design factors that impact user (college student) mental health in a VR environment, the research will conduct a series of experiments using a prototype VR environment. The design factors that will be explored include lighting, materials, and scale. The experiment will focus on evaluating the effectiveness of different design factors on improving mental health outcomes among college students, with the aim of determining the optimal design parameters that can be used by architects and designers to create supportive and therapeutic environments for college students.

The research aims to contribute to the field of architecture and mental health by demonstrating the potential of VR technology as a tool for reducing negative emotions and providing insights into the design factors that impact user mental health. The ultimate goal of this research is to create a range of design parameters for architects and designers to improve mental health outcomes in college students and create supportive and therapeutic environments that promote well-being.
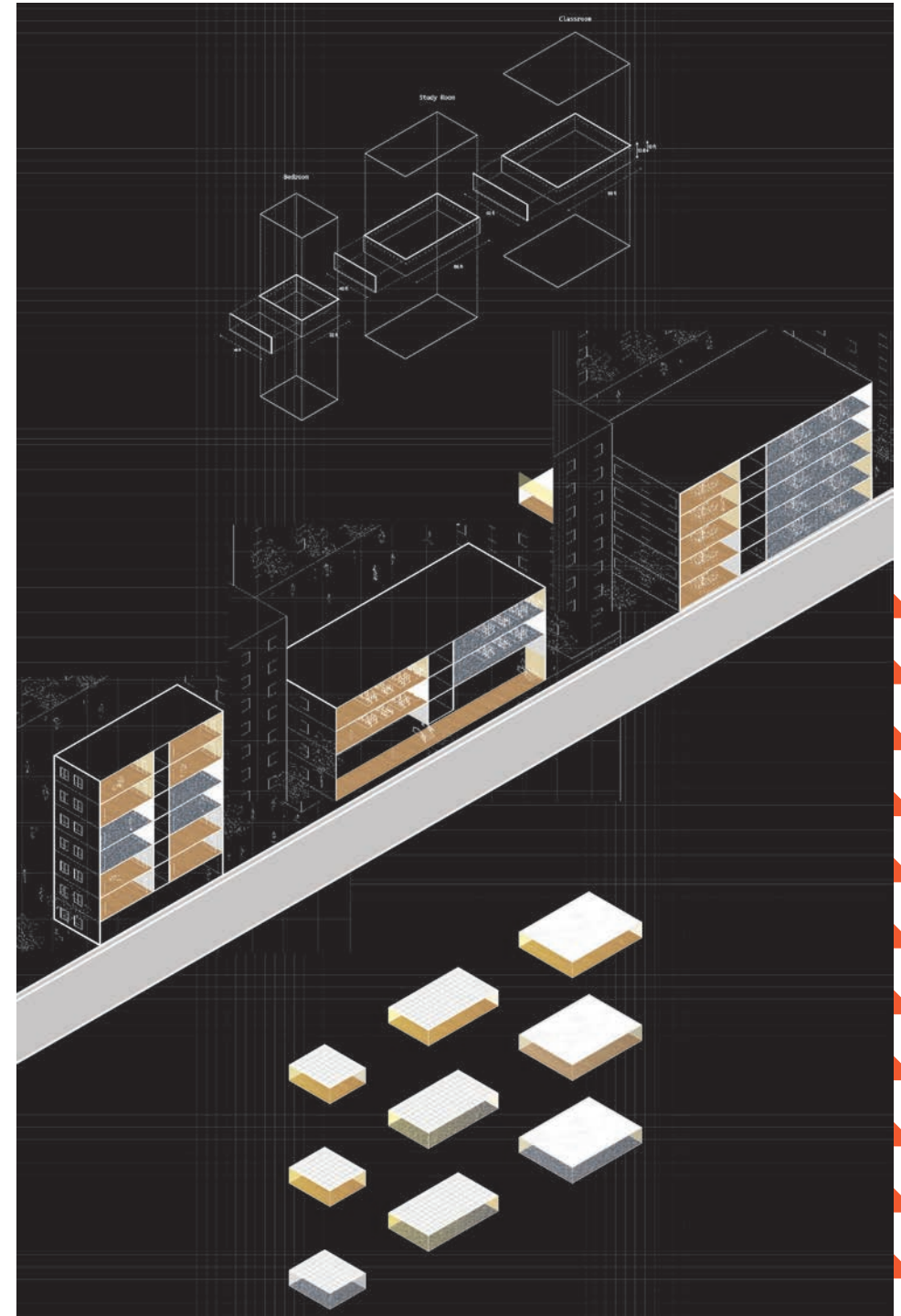
Image: Adjustable Elements: Light, Material, Scale   Advisor: Chun   Architectured Material in Architecture and Structure

Alternative Architect
A New Method to Cooperate with A.I.

84

85

Yiming Jiao

This thesis will focus on how the geometric outline of architecture influences its performance, including circulation, façade, structure, programmatic arrangement, and more. By analyzing specific stages in architectural design and constructing algorithmic models, we aim to explain how the geometric outline impacts architecture's performance. Such a model would provide architects with a prototype for further understanding during the conceptual stage.

The relationship between circulation and the geometric outline of architecture is crucial to understand when considering the various elements impacted by geometry. While structure is directly affected by the geometric outline, programmatic arrangement and spatial construction also depend on proper fitting and sizing relative to the geometry. Once the spatial construction is complete, the efficient connection of circulation is required to establish a reasonable connection between the interior and exterior of the building. The geometric outline of the building shapes the placement and shape of the circulation paths, which can significantly impact the flow of movement within the building. The façade of the building, representing the design to the public, is closely related to the geometric outline. While other architectural elements explore the volume of the geometry, the façade explores the surface of the geometry. Overall, the relationship between circulation and the geometric outline is essential for architects to consider in the design process to ensure an efficiently functioning building.

The role of geometry in architecture has evolved alongside advances in physics, engineering and computer technology. Geometry is no longer just about proportion; it offers architects the opportunity to explore more radical, complex, and unusual designs. However, this can pose a challenge—how can we evaluate the performance of these designs? Can we predict the outcome without experiencing the entire design process and investing significant time in a flawed design? Artificial intelligence could offer a solution, but first, we need to understand how architectural elements are impacted by the geometric outline.

Advisor: Chun   Architectured Material in Architecture and Structure

Image: Predicted Program Arrangements Output Based on Geometry Outline Input
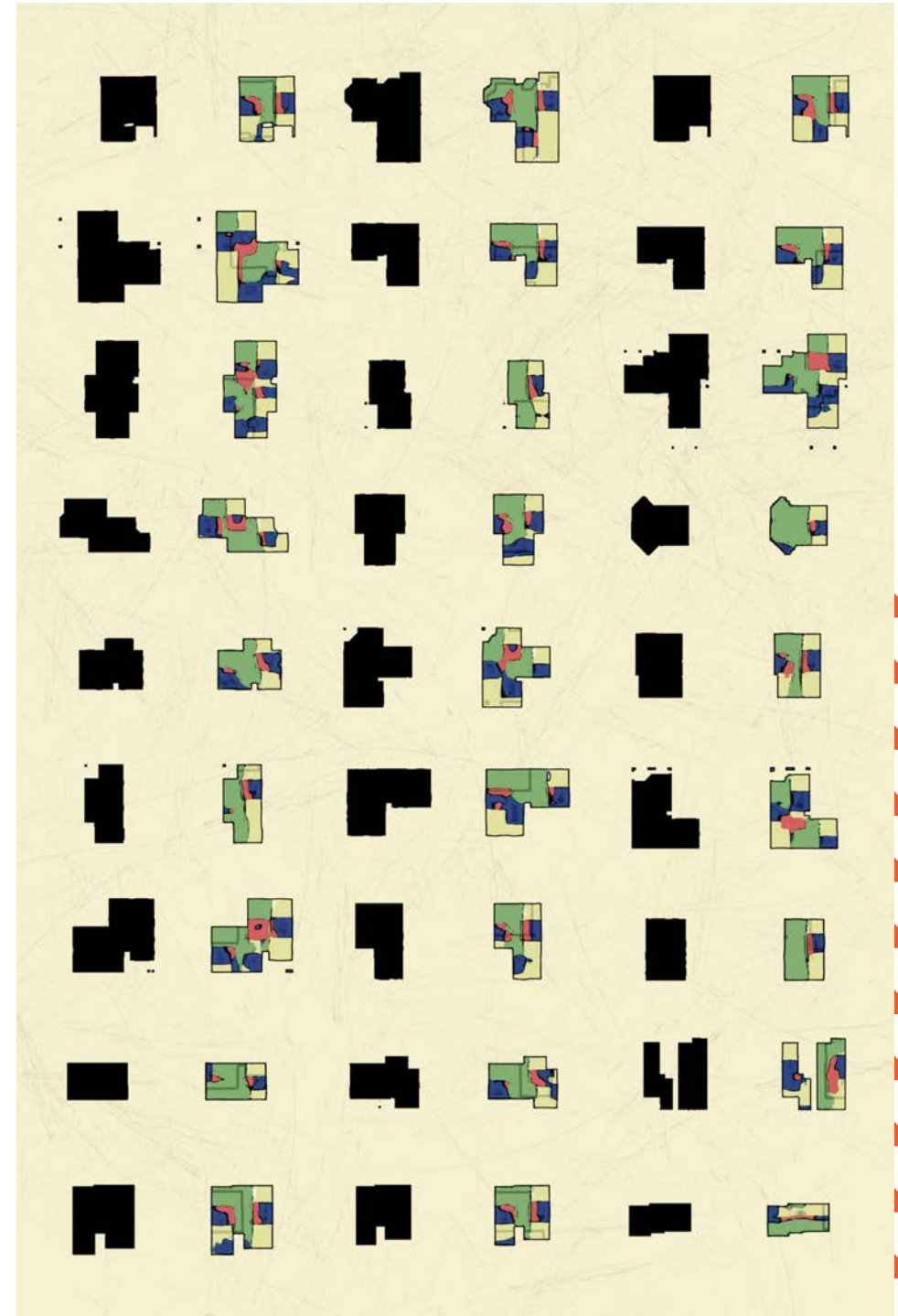
When thinking about the afterlife of architecture, one might imagine architecture's inability to maintain its form due to its deterioration. Humans tear down buildings to construct new buildings, or update buildings by replacing damaged parts. In either situation, humans are the ones who can fully control the fate of architecture's afterlife. Such a relationship between humans and architecture has lasted a long time and seems unchangeable.

However, recent studies indicate that the traditional human-architecture relationship will end in the near future due to population decrease and global warming. As humans lose more and more habitable lands, the remaining architecture on uninhabitable lands will be abandoned. This raises the question of who, then, decides the fate of the abandoned architecture. This thesis sees weathering as the answer to the question and reimagines the human-architecture relationship through the lens of weathering.

This thesis project is interested in proposing an architectural design that accepts weathering. Ultimately, weathering architecture converts conventional modern architecture—which has been consumed for a certain program and demolished afterward—to architecture that embraces slow degeneration while interacting with its changing context. The objective of the proposed study is to explore the process of architectural materials being weathered within a certain time frame to contemplate how weathered architecture would fit in a future society.

Oyster shells are the key material for the weathering architecture because of their ability to accommodate the marine ecosystem. Their porous surfaces play various roles in each weathering stage, from air purification to fertilizer for eelgrass. The changing roles are determined by their relationship to the context and specific human activities. The concept of letting architecture components remain the same while changing their functions is based on the project's design philosophy that human operations will not become the decider of the weathering architecture.

Architectured Material in Architecture and Structure

Advisor: Chun

Image: Weathered Context with Remaining Traces

As one of the most famous tourist countries in the Arctic Circle, Iceland has many beautiful natural sights, such as the Aurora Borealis. At the beginning of the 20th century, Iceland was a poor country, but is now one of the most developed countries in the world. Iceland's economic and energy development depend mainly on natural resources (fishing, hydroelectricity, geothermal energy). Such rapid development can lead to changes in the natural environment; light pollution is one of them.

The importance of light as part of human existence cannot be ignored, but light pollution is a particularly easy problem for the general public to ignore. Most of us are familiar with air, water, and land pollution, but most people are not aware of the dangers of light pollution because they believe there is no real physical damage from light. However, the inappropriate or excessive use of artificial light can negatively affect our climate, animals, and people. So controlling light pollution is a very serious problem.

The population of Reykjavik, Iceland's capital, is growing at a rate of 1.62% per year. A city government report indicates that Reykjavik plans to develop the city, increase urban density, attract permanent residents and tourists, and thus boost tourism and economic development. Increasing the density of the city means that the urban environment—the form of buildings, transportation connections, and the design of public spaces—will all change, and these changes will bring about light pollution.

The key to solving the problem of light pollution is to understand how it is formed. The three main forms of light pollution are glare, skylights, and light trespass. Especially in Iceland, an extremely cold region, extreme days, extreme nights, or heavy snow can produce amplified light pollution effects. Some studies show that the diffuse reflection of snow increases light pollution by about 10%. This proposal hopes to control and reduce light pollution through space, façade, material, structure, and light source in urban buildings or spaces with increased density.
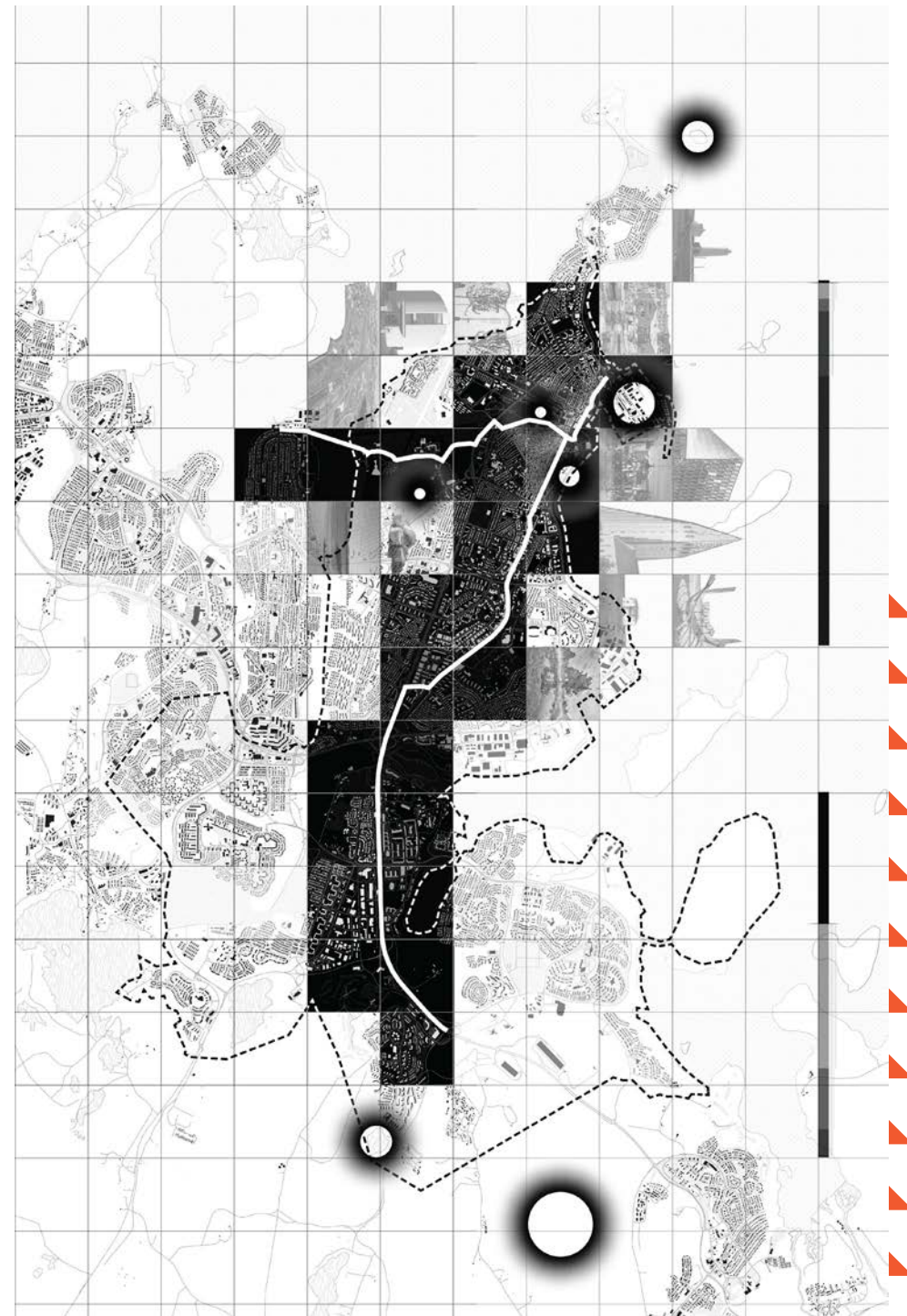
Image: Future Urban Planning and Environmental Conditions in Reykjavik   Advisor: Chun   Architectured Material in Architecture and Structure

This project aims to create a sustainable system that addresses waste management issues in urban areas by examining the functionality of recycling infrastructures and how they can be integrated. The system will absorb waste and convert it into renewable energy to support a field station in Tibet, where self-sustainability is critical due to the remote location. Architects often demonstrate their understanding of sustainability through various means such as integration, passive/energy-saving, and natural architecture. This thesis argues that sustainable systems, such as CopenHill, can exemplify the combination of green-manifested design and recycling content as a sustainable cycle that supports human-nature interaction.

The project's focus on the field station's sustainable infrastructure aims to support a self-sustainable and comfortable life for the people researching and working in the area. The design of the field station is actively responding to the natural conditions in the remote no-man's land in Tibet. By leveraging the site's unique features and exploring how sustainable systems can be integrated with the natural environment, the project demonstrates how these systems can be extended beyond urban areas and into remote locations. The selection of materials and program strategizing will play a crucial role in determining the success of sustainable infrastructure integration with nature. These details will be reiteratively tested to ensure the sustainable system's efficacy.

The project's approach to sustainable infrastructure integration with nature takes into account the site's natural conditions and seeks to create a self-sustaining and comfortable life that complements the research activities. This project's focus on sustainability is crucial given the pressing environmental concerns, along with rapid technological and industrial advancements.

Architectured Material in Architecture and Structure

Advisor: Chun

Image: The Mechanism of Infrastructure Systems

Latent Landscapes
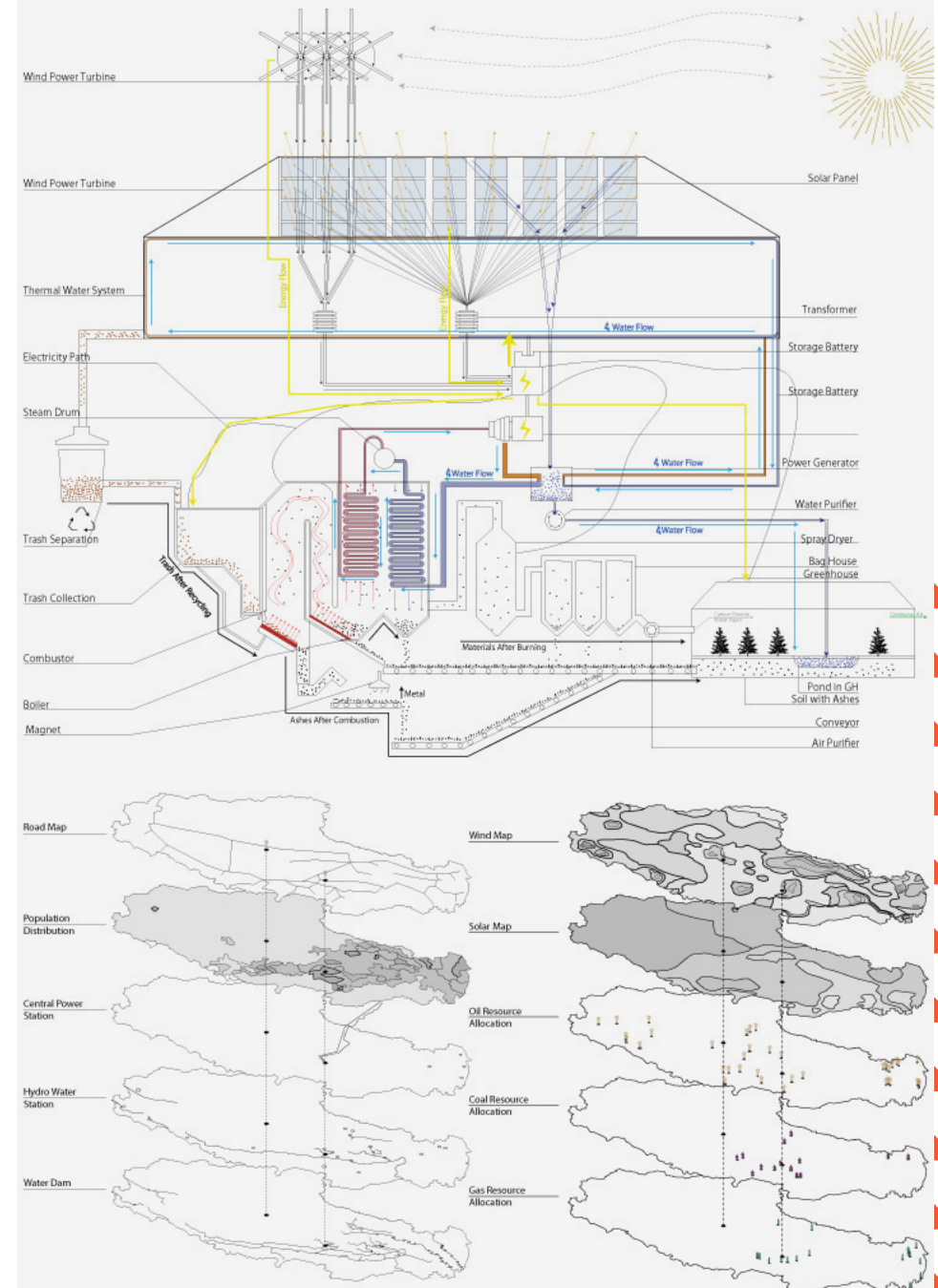
This thesis advisory group maintains a particular interest in formal, material, and spatial interventions in space, and their ability to illuminate broader cultural, environmental, political, and social concerns of a place. Extra-architectural affiliations provided critical foundations for design projects that explore how architecture manifests and reveals latent systems that offer positive change and spectacular experience.

When we consider the architectural objects and surfaces we design as part of a landscape, we acknowledge the larger ecological, infrastructural, social, aesthetic and atmospheric contexts they operate within. In so doing, we invite new and ambiguous hybridizations, alliances, frictions and conflicts to influence our designs while simultaneously leveraging how our designs affect existing systemic networks.

As much as built interventions reflect culture and provide critical commentary on the particularities of the context, they can also project new readings of place—revealing hidden narratives, uncovering latent possibilities, or imagining alternative futures. Interventions at a variety of scales within constructed landscapes connect to and are in many cases dependent upon the broader infrastructures of place. These projects capture the public imaginary by engaging pressing issues; embracing the overlap between culture and form; privileging form-making; and recombining conventional practices into new and delirious possibilities.

Advisors: Greg Corso, Molly Hunker, Joel Kerner, Cait McCarthy

The organization of the built environment has the effect of shaping the way its populace leads their lives. Radburn, NJ is an exception to this. Radburn is a designed suburban model that sought to separate the pedestrian from the automobile. Leveraging systems such as a superblock of housing wherein houses faced shared courtyards as opposed to streets, this organizational concept was seemingly anachronistic for its de-emphasis on the automobile during the early 20th century. However, development was prematurely halted due to effects of the Great Depression. By the time development resumed decades later, new density metrics had to be met; the codification of new zoning legislation and building codes set Radburn on a course towards a form of suburban sprawl we see all too often today. Modern suburban infrastructures are beholden to the building codes and zoning laws that guide their organization as low-density residential zones separate from vital businesses and services. This study of Radburn and suburbs is particularly relevant today, as worldwide there are increasing issues of density and housing. Since suburbs are currently outpacing urban centers with regard to population growth, if this building-code-informed suburban sprawl persists, this crisis will only worsen.

Considering the building codes and zoning legislation apropos of these suburbs, we as designers are forced to look for nuanced ways in which to operate within these constraints. The modalities of intervention take the form of code "hacks" that subvert the intended built effects of the legislation structures. Through an understanding of not just what is allowed, but also what is not disallowed by the language of the code, a new sense of agency in design emerges and allows for an expanded sense of how we may take back control over the built environment. Through this effective "hacking" of the building code, this thesis seeks to form the basis for ways in which the suburban fabric may be reshaped while evoking the design intent of Radburn, namely in providing a dependable form of suburban infrastructure that is in service of the pedestrian.

Modern, post-colonial Indian architecture is in a constant dialogue between Western ideals imposed by British occupation and the many different eras of architecture throughout India's extensive cultures. Examples of projects that span the Indian and Western synthesis can be seen in architecture designed by Charles Correa and B.V. Doshi. Both architects effectively synthesize things they learned in India or picked up as vernacular as a result of residing there, but their formal training comes from a Western lens. Their constructions, while successful, do not expand or evolve the architectural syntax of an Indian design. How do we create a new Indian architecture that reflects the rich past of its culture, while still utilizing the Western ideologies that guide current works of architecture?

India has roots in ancient civilizations, ranging from the Indus Valley civilization, who were masters of urban planning, to Mughal India before British colonization. Each of these eras has its own architectural syntax, so generalizing what Indian architecture is would erase the difficult considerations and ideas of these eras. Despite this complexity, British colonial architects hand-picked and absorbed elements of Indian architecture that they liked, creating their government structures with mere decorations as an homage to the context in which they reside. Rather than just utilizing ornament to situate a Western building in a South Asian context, more recent works of architecture begin to re-introduce specific Indian principles into new constructions that begin a dialogue between specific religious ideologies held by many Indian-American immigrants.

Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: What is an Indian-American Architecture?
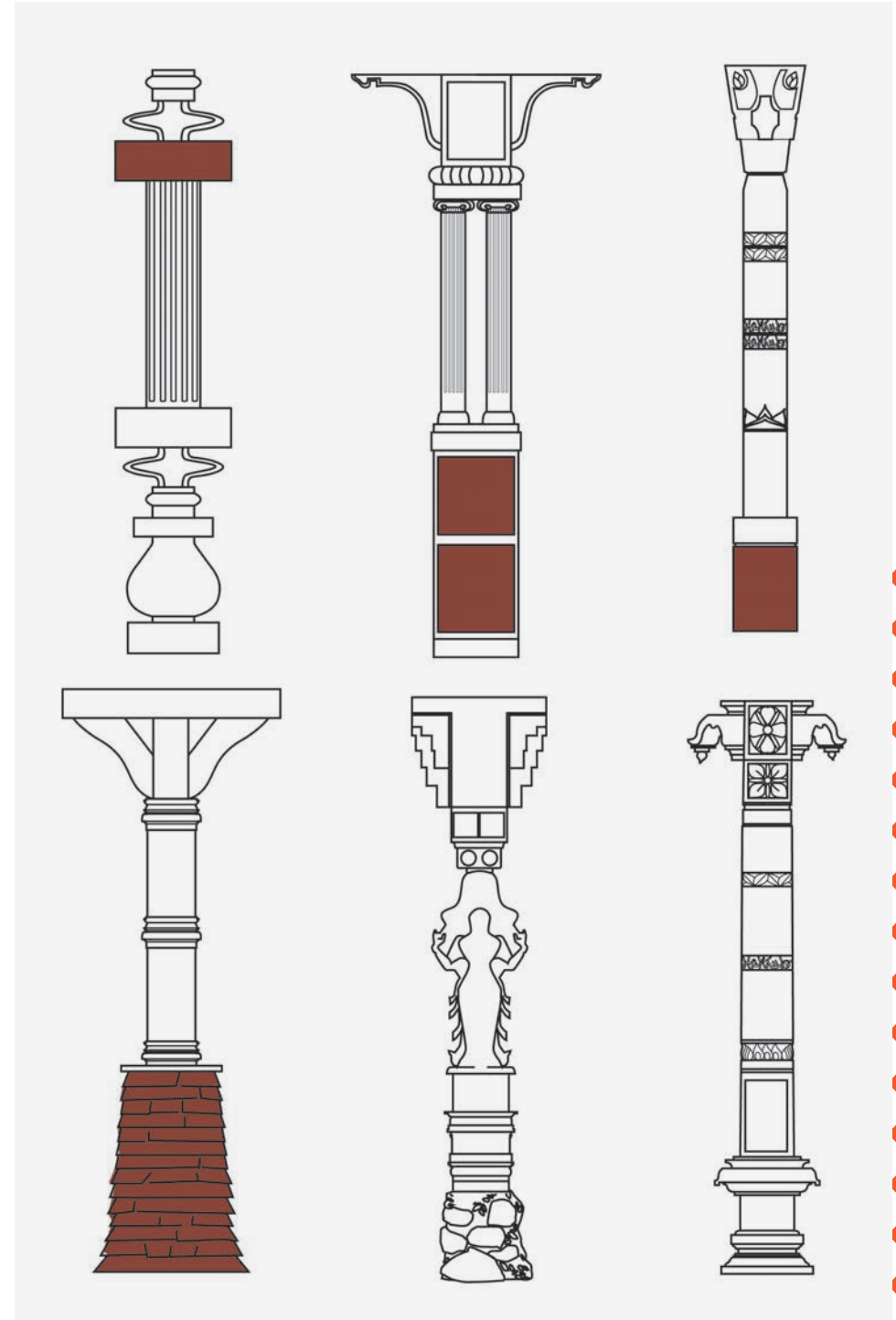
We fluctuate between rejecting and trying to "save" nature, viewing nature as "other," separate from us. This thesis aims to reconstruct this narrative of control and rejection between humans and nature through direct exposure to information and intervention with the surrounding ecosystem.

As society modernized, the built environment scarred the "natural" environment. The negative effect of humanity is now evident. Rejecting nature by developing the means to live in one place despite seasonal changes enabled us to propagate on the decimation of natural habitats and deforestation through built habitation and resource depletion.

Built infrastructure is producing pollutants and greenhouse gasses, increasing temperatures and leading to events like drought. Built constructs deplete natural resources. Today, some government bodies embrace green initiatives, net-zero emissions, and scientific research for solutions. The architect constructs civilization's built infrastructure and thus has agency in improving the condition of our planet by developing with an awareness of nature and its ecosystems. As pressing as the climate crisis is, society has yet to accept the state of the world because the built environment restricts people's views towards select beautified sections of green space. David Gissen refers to this form of green urbanism as neo-Victorian and neo-Hausmannite, implying the use of nature as an instrument in achieving a built environment benefiting humans and describing greening as a cover of mending our relationship with the natural while increasing the power of urban wealth. These concepts contrast the cohesion of nature with the built environment and deny that we exist as equals to other organisms in our ecosystem. Donna Haraway's term, chthulucene, speaks to understanding life as existing for every organism individually with each having its own influence and agency.

The project is in Bakersfield, CA, home to oil and gas refineries and experiencing drought. It plans to remediate the 25-million-square-foot, devastated site of the Big West Oil Refinery in Bakersfield. Transformed into a new heart of the city, it will serve as a central parkscape for connection and interaction between humans and the natural, allowing reclamation of this area through rewilding.

Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: A Rewilded and Remediated Bakersfield. What is Natural?

As the conversation about school violence becomes dominant, the government is forced to respond but, unfortunately, we have not seen legislation attempt to do so. Instead, society has found another way to take action in the form of school hardening, the integration of safety features such as metal detectors, security cameras, and bulletproof glass, among many others. School hardening has spoken surveillance and fear through the creation of prison-like environments that have proven to subconsciously instill fear in students. A main factor contributing to this response is the lack of funding to create secure environments that also promote learning, although there are various grants and funds designated for safe school design. Standard public schools are typically planned in zones and do not stray beyond the traditional school typologies we have come to know. Amidst the conversation about school violence in the U.S., children face countless acts of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment, and threats. This has not only created an epidemic of mental health issues among students but also dramatically affected academic performance. Children no longer have the freedom to feel safe despite being surrounded by technological features put in place for this primary purpose.

The idea of safety is defined as a form of protection. This differs from security, which is a state in which someone feels free of danger. We have seen school hardening take the approach of safety without accomplishing security. With this in mind, the intent of this thesis is to investigate how architecture can create feelings of security within space. Identifying this as a root problem, schools have now begun to address mental health in other ways. Various teaching models like Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) have gained attention for their ability to improve students' mental health; however, the traditional school environment may not allow these programs to reach their full potential. This thesis will introduce a catalog of strategies to be implemented in elementary schools as well as a complementary theoretical school design.
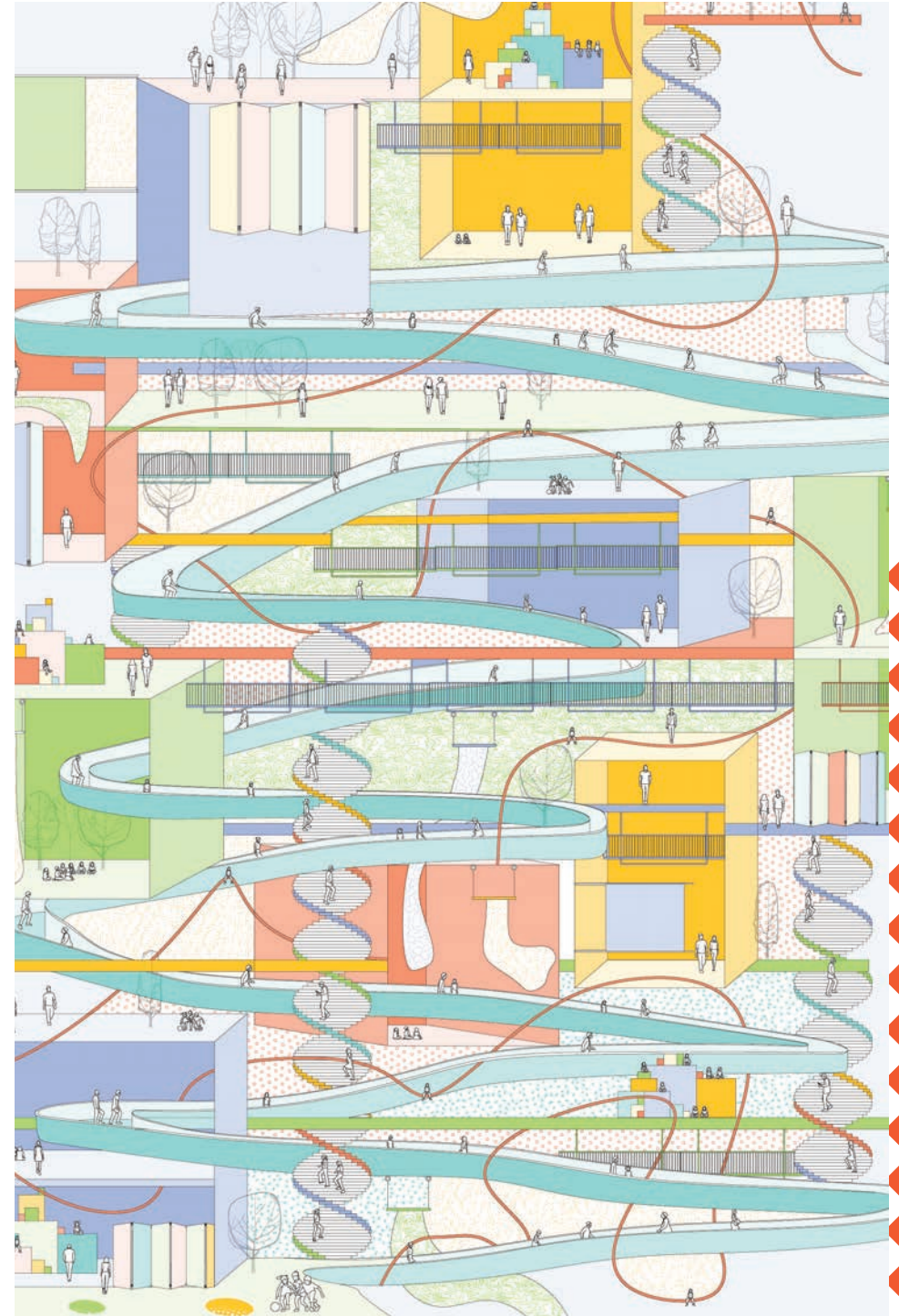
Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: Imagination Incubator: A Compilation of Strategies

The Right to Housing
Leveraging Modular Construction in Los Angeles

Despite the work of countless organizations, progress toward mediating the homelessness crisis has remained relatively stagnant. Many solutions are being proposed, from pallet shelter units to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), but none of these options provides long-term sustainability and it is difficult to find contractors. Dr. Cameron Parsell explains that this is a result of the way we currently treat this issue. As of now, homelessness is understood as a result of the individual rather than a lack of affordable housing. By shifting our mindset we can begin to actually address the issue. Interviews carried out as part of this research have reinforced the quantitative data showing that the current stigma facing individuals experiencing homelessness is false. Most individuals experience homelessness as a result of greater societal issues. Mental illness and addiction are simply the product of life on the streets. As architects, we are unable to solve this crisis, but we can begin to address this lack of affordable housing.

One location where this is particularly prevalent is Los Angeles, CA. This city has an evident contrast between the ultra-rich and individuals experiencing poverty. Los Angeles is home to some of the highest property values in the entire country, as well as 10% of the nation's homeless population. There is a direct connection between these statistics, but the current solution is to toss an individual into an overcrowded shelter. While these spaces may get someone off the street for a night, they are merely hiding the issue. Instead, this thesis explores a new approach that is affordable and permanent. Using robotic, modular construction in conjunction with various support services, not only can housing costs be reduced, but individuals can recover rather than solely being housed. This eliminates the need for contractors while simultaneously producing houses at a much more efficient rate and developing a community of individuals seeking to better their lives. Housing is not a luxury; it is a human necessity and a right.

Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy
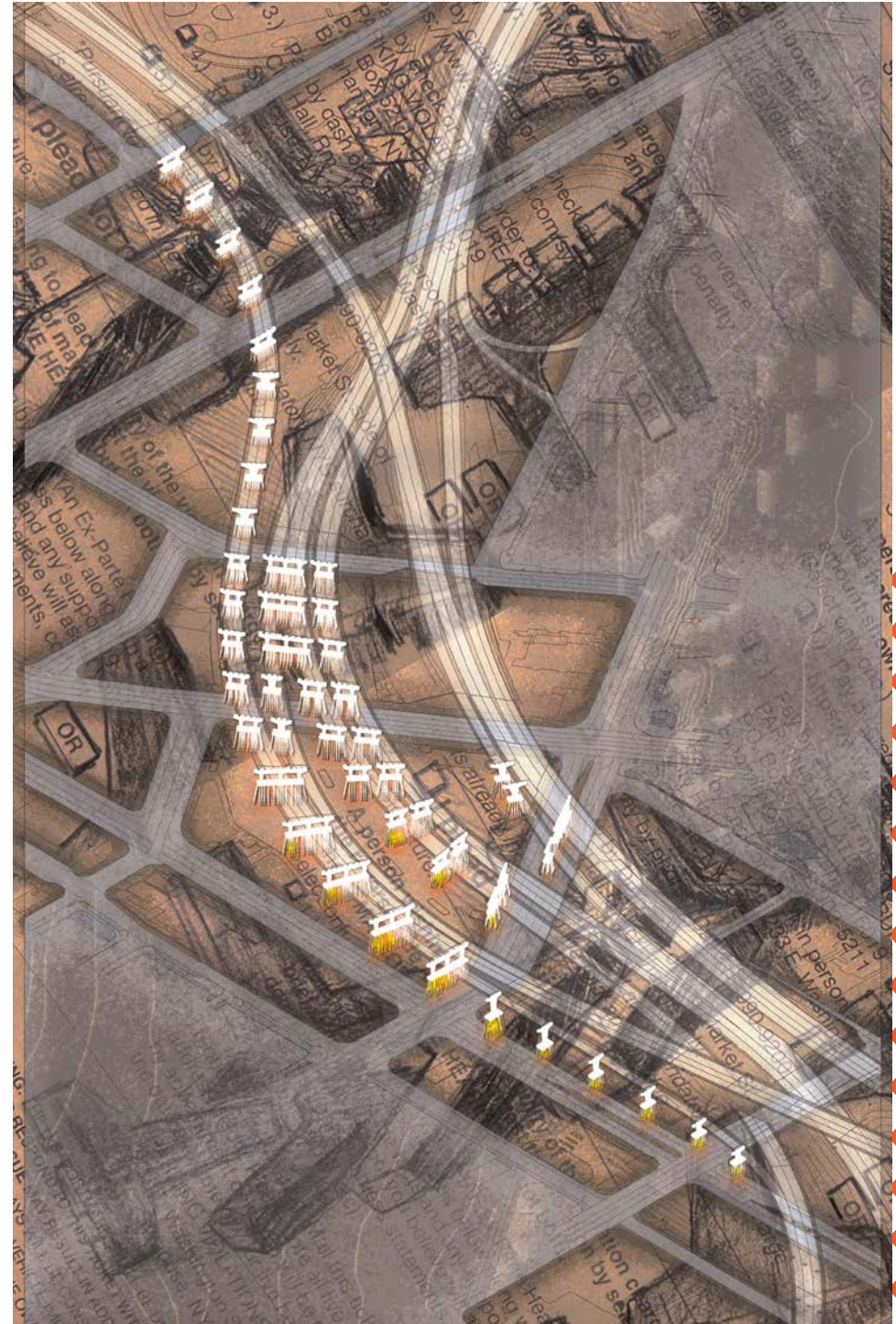
Image: The Neighborhood in the Sky

In the national consciousness, no project has represented such overt social, political, and formal ambition as Eisenhower's Interstate system. From its inception, the "highway" as both a cultural apparatus in popular imagination and a physical reminder of transportation-oriented placemaking has dominated American architecture. Placemaking derived by these patterns of movement is widespread and paradoxical, a self-contradictory tension between evanescent and archaeological, of a place and without it.

With an architecture rooted in transience, spatial agency is registered through a context of motion, ephemerality and speed. In a process of iterative fragmentation, new connectivities compete and antiquate their predecessors, imbuing places with artifactual monuments of these transportation ideologies. Formalism thus becomes uniquely tied to its anthropological and geographic landscapes at the cost of immaterial history and memory.

As midcentury urban highways deteriorate, they are subject to the same demolition practices that initially gave rise to these forms. To erase these structures without engaging their troubled histories stunts new cultural production derived from a place. As these sinister reminders of the suburbanized city are dismantled in pursuit of more connected urbanism, one must contemplate the ramifications of unapologetic demolition. Landform or building, the formalism of this infrastructure accesses the natural and anthropological histories in a wholly unparalleled way as a condensed reading of implied territory and locality at once.

The urban American highway has potential for establishing an historically authentic yet wholly imaginative architectural language. Grafting and layering the memories of the site yields a way of reading place by the trace infrastructure that defined it. Through understanding "the highway" as appropriable structures—in form and narrative—its incursive histories can be properly reconciled for more consciously diverse and localized placemaking. Subverting the abrasive formalism of the interstate can remediate the traumatic histories this infrastructure supposes. This thesis explores a new design language both in dialogue with the forgotten histories and in search of the architectural imagination of the site to come.

Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: In Process: Appropriating Highways as Past and Projective

The project explores the pasar as a unique market typology with inherent dynamicity, informality and local particularity, especially as the system of the pasar is driven by communal experiences and agreements. They are built upon tentative equilibriums within their chronological, spatial, economical, legal and social aspects that shape the larger economy. The pasar fulfills its role as a space of integration and reinvention dictated by the economic needs of its diverse users which, in exchange, should be better served by its architecture.

Jakarta is a center of the archipelago's politics, which derived from its economy. This was attributed to a long line of various empires and accentuated by the **D**utch colonial efforts to take control through the exclusion of others from their economy. However, outside these walls, markets would still appear to serve the lives of the community out of "informality." In turn, urbanization grew along these commercial networks through inhabitation by locals and migrants who had previously been excluded by the political barrier.

The state, in whatever form, tried to domesticate the pasars with new systems enabling them to govern, organize, and profit from these spaces. This was also done by the present Indonesian state through projects pursued in the name of economic progress and justice. However, they are often uneven, as communities are systematically reordered or even uprooted in service of "modern" systems.

Thus, the distinction between modernism and traditionalism is dangerous. **C**ommunal relationships and entrepreneurship should not be an exception but rather the norm. **T**he thesis critiques the legitimacy of "modernization" as a basis for repressing people. The pasars' role in the city should be based more on communal agreements as proven by time. Thus, the thesis proposes the reacknowledgement of such communal systems through architectural intervention—that is, by identifying and giving form to spaces of self-governance and mobility. **P**asar Jembatan Lima is used as the site with the mentioned distance between the official building and its street. **T**he proposal pushes the space to be more inclusive and resilient or in other words, more pasaran.
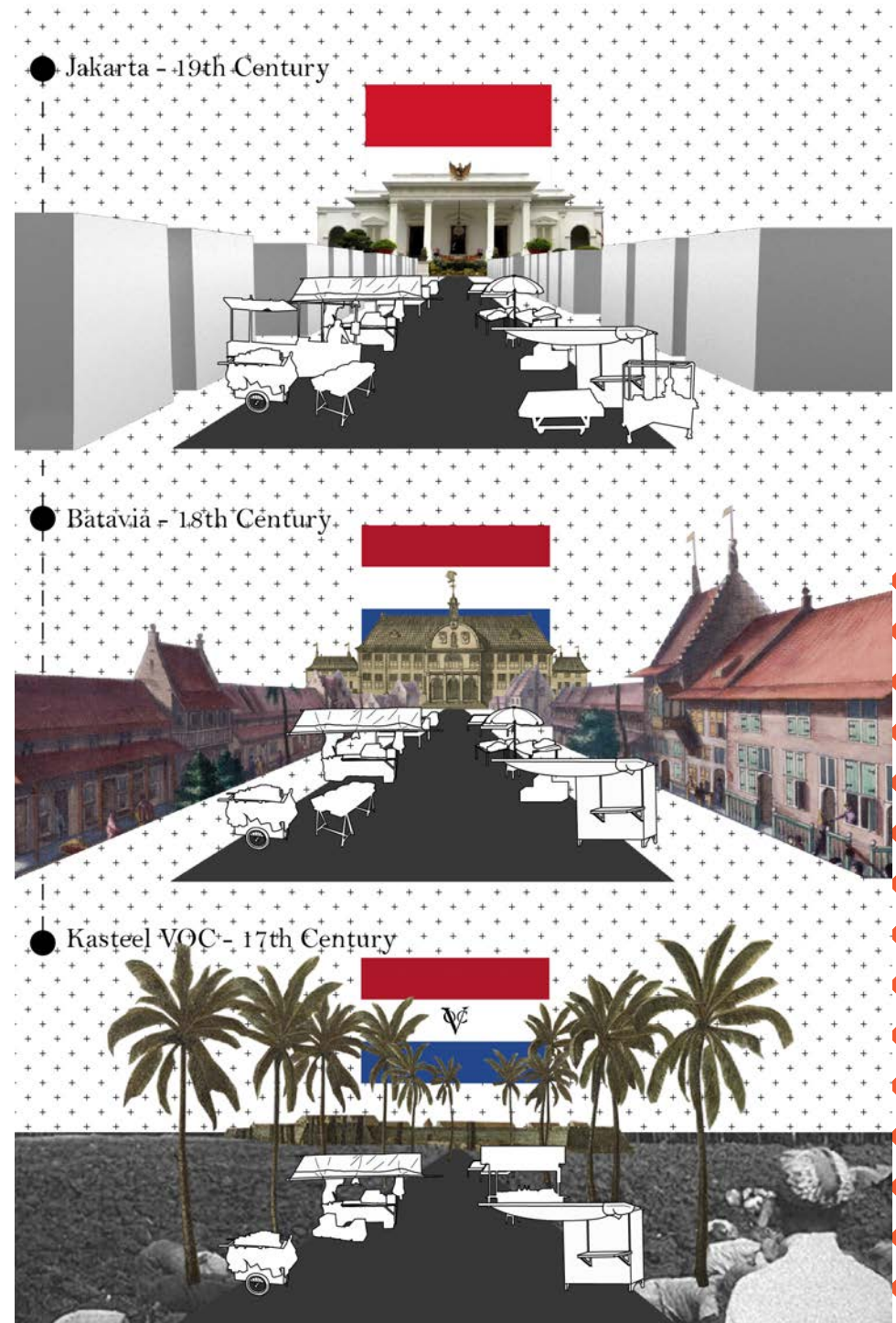
Jakarta – 19th Century

Batavia – 18th Century

Kasteel VOC – 17th Century

Rebalance
Creating Sacred Space + Materializing Spirituality

This thesis project is focused on creating sacred space and materializing spirituality. It examines how, through architecture, spaces can be formed that people identify as sacred through their own personal experience of the space and how they choose to use it. The context for exploring this topic has to do with a concern around the lack and accessibility of spaces that embody personal retreat and spirituality outside of religion. An excess of spaces intended for profit and a lack of spaces whose primary intention is peace and reflection—especially in the urban contexts that informed the location of the project site—is one of the reasons for unbalance in a society ruled by capitalism.

There is a relationship between the physical decay of architecture and public spaces due to capitalism and the personal decay of individuals and society at an intimate level, also due to capitalism. The lack of exploration of spirituality involves the fact that we don't make room for sacred and meditative spaces in our everyday lives. In this project, the journey towards rebalance involves using decay to understand wholeness and understanding spirituality as a path of detachment in order to find one's own path.

The project is intervening on a site of decay. The transformed abandoned site will serve as a symbolic representation of journey, and revitalization is the key strategy towards rebalance. Imagery of decay is used as a tool to start imagining possibilities of reprogramming these spaces and utilizing their existing forms rather than demolishing. The project employs adaptive reuse in the transformation of an abandoned industrial site into a public park designed for individual exploration and moments for community gathering. Development of sacred and spiritual physical spaces is explored through a path that reflects detachment, where the user starts off on the journey on their own, gets led into communal spaces and then can make the decision to break away from the collective and walk along different paths, along the way discovering various spaces with experiences defined by sensory elements.
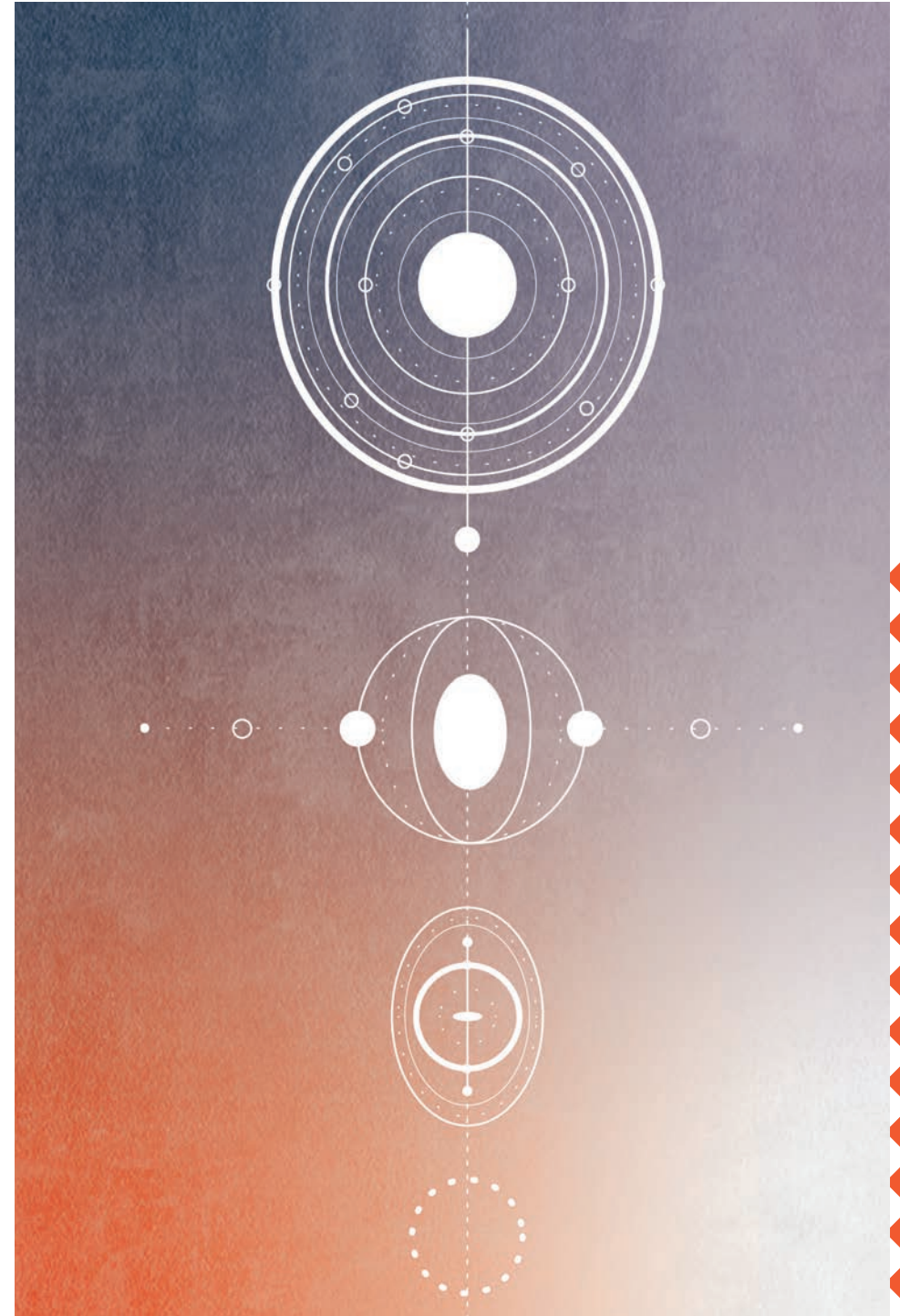
Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: Spiritual Journey. Individual vs. Collective

Contemporary urban design is an important movement since it plays a large role in how people circulate and experience the built environment. There has been a lot of progress in the approach to urban design, moving toward a less car-centric approach. However, this progress has yet to reach the suburbs, where suburban communities have created their own city centers and downtown districts. Due to the effects of urban sprawl, these suburban cities are more dependent on vehicular circulation, leading to car-centric design, not considering the effects it will cause in the future. Today, small suburban cities are beginning to fail as people leave for larger urban environments that are pushing to be more walkable and designed.

This project uses downtown Auburn, NY as the subject to analyze and test its interventions because it carries many conditions that can be tested and manipulated. During urban renewal in the 1970s, Auburn went through heavy changes to their urban environment, specifically to the downtown area (now categorized as the BID district). This resulted in the addition of the Arterial and Loop Road, both adjacent to this area, leading to a real downturn for this small suburban community. Today, the downtown environment is neglected, with increased vacancies and lack of space for social engagement in the downtown area.

This project aims to add a new system of design for specific urban environments to address the limitations and faults of current methods. More specifically, this project focuses on small-scale suburban environments and manipulates elements implemented in larger urban cities to fit the needs of a suburban community. The project aims for greater involvement and interaction from the residents of the community. More than simply reactivating a site, this will aid in the struggles seen after the urban renewal and mend the heartbreak of the local community. The goal is to start a discussion for designers to consider alternative ways to think about urban design, specifically as it relates to the design and activation of a space specifically in a small suburban downtown, as opposed to centralizing this design to larger metropolitan areas.

Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: Public Urban Spaces as the Object of Intervention

This thesis focuses on everyday architecture to examine "architecture" in our daily lives. **D**aily architecture can be any indoor or outdoor spaces where we reside, stay, stop by, or pass by every day. Every place we go, everything we see impacts how we feel and behave. **W**e subconsciously adjust our behaviors based on the environment of the architecture around us.

As people keep moving to cities, the impact of the urban environment on their mental health and well-being is ever-increasing. Especially during the pandemic, mental health problems escalated globally. According to the **NIH**, the rates of anxiety, depression, and substance use disorders have increased since the beginning of the pandemic. **T**he pandemic led to social distancing and lockdowns, which resulted in increased feelings of social isolation and loneliness. In addition, in city life, meaningful social interactions that are crucial for mental health do not come easily. **S**ocial isolation is recognized by urban authorities as one of the major risk factors for many illnesses.

How then could everyday architecture in the city improve people's mental health?

This thesis imagines the city as a playground. Playgrounds often have equipment designed to encourage diverse types of activities. **T**he term "playground" can be used metaphorically to describe any space or environment where people can engage in playful activities. In a general sense, "play" refers to any activity for enjoyment, pleasure, or leisure, without a specific end goal or purpose. Playfulness can improve mental health in a variety of ways. It can relieve stress, improve cognitive function, foster resilience, improve social connection, and keep people feeling energetic.

The site for this project is **J**ackson Heights-Broadway/74th Street Station in Queens, NY. It is a crowded bus and subway station complex and one of the everyday architectures in a bustling, commercially dense neighborhood that is one of the most diverse in the country.

This thesis reimagines the transportation station as a playground hosting a variety of playful activities to inspire users within the space, promote social interaction, and encourage them to engage in the city.

Latent Landscapes

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy

Image: The Playful Public Station for Enjoyment in Daily Life

We live in a world that is enabled by, and in many ways shaped by, the ability to control and localize energy. It provides us with the temperatures we need to live, the means to preserve food, the ability to travel vast distances, and increasingly much of our symbolic content. As Elisa Iturbe writes in her essay "Architecture and the Death of Carbon Modernity," "Our current built environment, designed under the premise of abundant energy, has created spatial configurations that enmesh the cultural, economic, and political aspects of social life within an energy-intensive network of space and form." This period of stored energy abundance, and the realization that it cannot continue in its current state, has brought to the foreground the idea that architecture has always been shaped by energy, although without the intentionality that has commonly been afforded to structure, symbol, and space.

Taking the energetic as a core viewpoint, architecture is perhaps always a form of shelter, which is to say it is always a form of environmental difference, or a form of energetic difference. Energy creates small worlds within a larger one, miniature spheres with an internal dynamism and animated, fluctuating boundaries. While this function is often ignored, the patterns of energy that flow through architecture can both address urgent problems that the planet faces and provide a source of meaning for the design of buildings.

Working at the scale of the home, this thesis will explore a form of architecture that takes the shaping of energy as a first-order design consideration, speculating on new ways of living that might emerge from a new energetic architecture.

Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy   Latent Landscapes
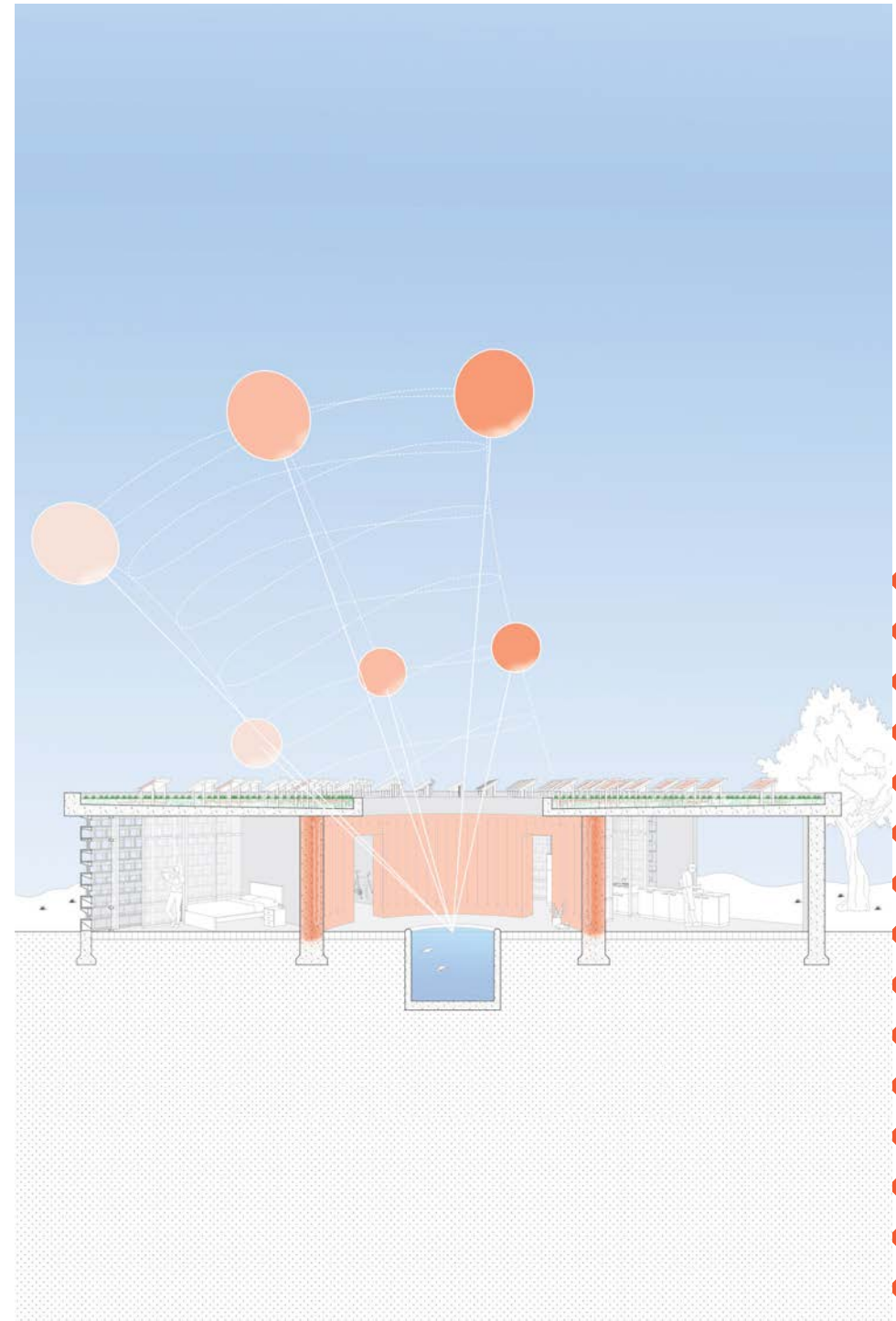
This thesis project is focused on the redesign of an elementary school to better accommodate students experiencing physical and mental instabilities. In turn, this redesign will also promote educational development for the students, while alleviating some of the stresses from the faculty who mediate both the students' education and well-being. The project grew out of research presented by the CDC, which summarizes that 80% of students in the K – 4 grade range experience some form of depression, 50% display signs of behavioral disorders, and 60% show signs of anxiety. Understanding the strategies used by professionals in the mental and physical health field, and implementing them at a larger architectural scale, will help to create a successful educational environment that will develop the global youth into future leaders and academic scholars.

The redesign of this new era of schools is in reference to five sensory toolkits that help alleviate various forms of mental and physical instabilities. Through a careful examination of the Sensory Toolkit by Nicolette Bodowes, Alma Therapy Dolls by Yaara Nusboim, Sand Tray Therapy by Dora Kalff, Froebel Blocks by Frederich Froebel, 3D Pin Art Board, and Push Pop Bubble Fidget, the redesigned school will display the successful qualities of each kit at various scales. Qualities such as rotational movement, paired with the sensory experience of touch, will be replicated throughout the school's redesign. With the variety of qualities deployed into a single entity, the school will become an experiential environment accommodating the needs of its inhabitants.

The goal of this project is to not be designated to one specific site, but rather to be a designed foundation that can be implemented anywhere. Since these instabilities are experienced globally, some regions may undergo some instabilities more heavily than others. Not being site-specific allows the school redesign to be flexible and adaptable to any region. Understanding these mental and physical instabilities and implementing them as large-scale architecture will allow a more productive treatment for the K – 4 age group, with the goal of allowing them to achieve academic success paired with personal development.
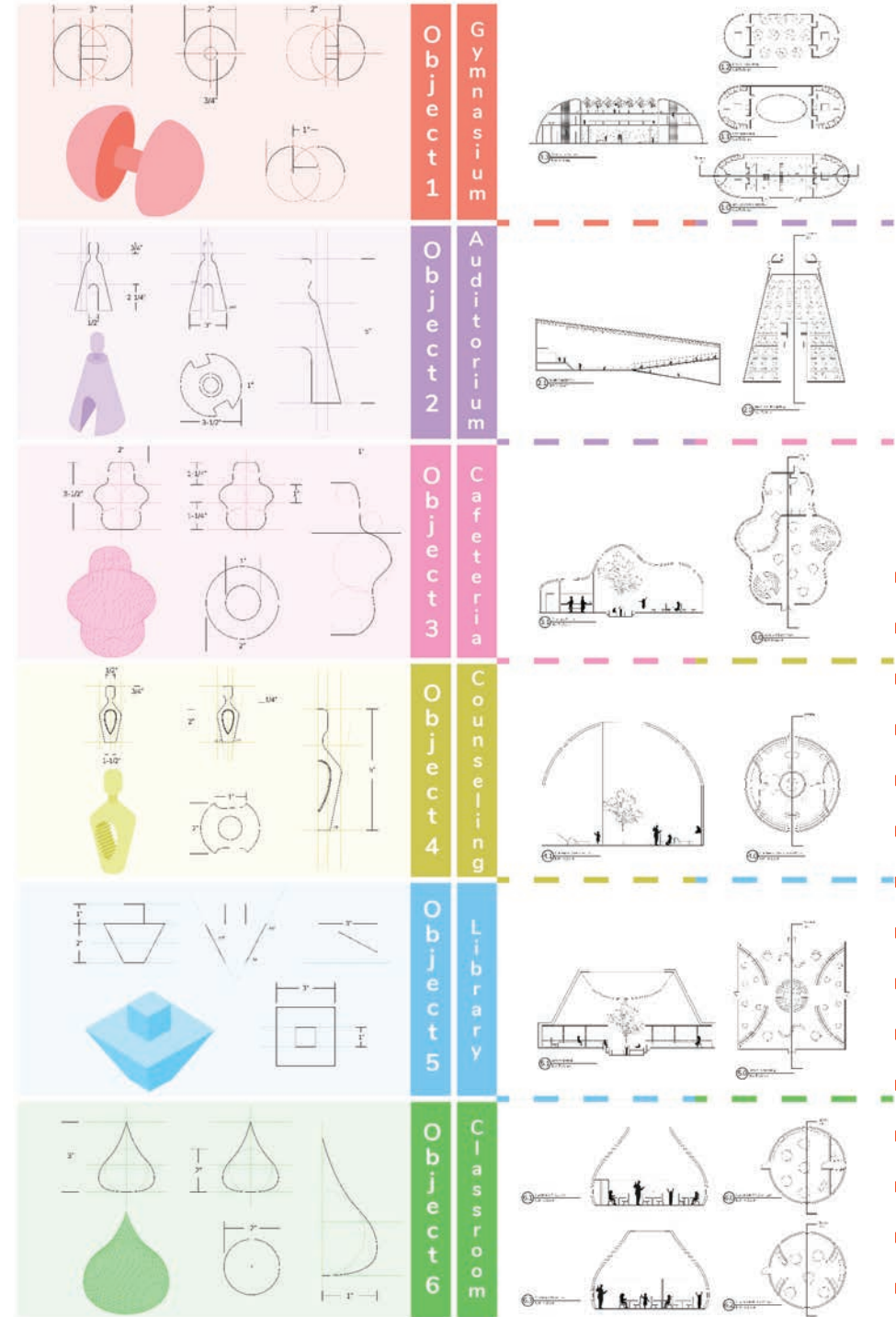
Image: Sensory Toolkit Architecturalized   Advisors: Corso, Hunker, Kerner, McCarthy   Latent Landscapes

The Architecture of the Scattered City

This thesis advisory group conducted architectural and urban research and developed design tactics to be applied to "suburban" and "exurban" areas to create a distinct kind of high-density, low- to medium-rise urban form that we call "the scattered city." Los Angeles and other southern Californian built environments were used as subjects of this research to provoke a better understanding and rethinking of the diffuse nature of contemporary urbanization that is found across most of North America. In the spring semester, students applied the knowledge produced in the fall research semester to develop and test new arrangements of "scattered city" form and space through residential or civic programs of their choice.

While each project has its own context of inquiry, ultimately the fall research and spring design work as a group pursued the following questions:

— How can the settled texture of historic "suburbs" and
   larger diffuse cities be rethought and renewed?
— How can the private world of the conventional European
   American suburb be more public?
— How can new and existing civic institutions stimulate
   increased social interaction?
— How does one define (or re-define) the term "urban"?

Advisors: Lawrence Davis, Terrance Goode

This thesis reveals narratives within the sprawling city of Los Angeles. The average tourist experience misinterprets the relationship between citizens and their landscape. The true life of the city has been concealed, leaving little to no engagement with the local social ecologies. Because of the inaccurate portrayal of L.A.'s lifestyle, many are indifferent to the deviant attitudes present in these scattered conditions. In reality, infrastructure systems are consistently subjected to an array of multifunctionality to accommodate activities beyond their planned use. Therefore, a deviant act can be defined as a human interaction with architecture in an unanticipated function.

The attitudes of L.A.'s inhabitants illustrate the enthusiastic exploitation of architecture and its elements. Sidewalks are more than just a means for transportation. They become opportunities for informal housing, food culture, and exhibitions—all of which go against their intended application. Communities serve as the agent for adaptive environments, causing unique narratives through their deviant acts.

This project proposes an alternative to the predictable tours encountered throughout L.A. to help accentuate the influence of urban sprawl on communities. The true life of the city showcases the unavoidable deviant attitudes of the inhabitants. It is imperative to provide insight into the variety of architecture present in L.A. because each location contributes to a new social ecology.

Experiencing these different locations advocates insight into deviant gestures with the surrounding architecture, curating narratives that are frequently disguised. Much like the persistent adaptation of cities throughout history, these acts are in constant irregularity depending on location and time.

Architecture that anticipates and hosts these deviant actions promotes relations between tourists and locals, offering a new awareness of the city. The intersection of these hidden narratives also presents an opportunity to explore the potential of architecture's form, aesthetic and material, which ultimately frames the engagement between tourists and local residents.

Architecture of the Scattered City

Advisors: Davis, Goode

Image: Uncovering Social Ecologies of the Sprawling City

Does Permanence Matter?
Recoding the Fragmentary
Nature of Koreatown, L.A.

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Chenhao Leo Luo & Zhi Zheng (Zhong Yun)

Designed for a managerial elite's comfort, society is now being built around continuous flows of capital, information, technology, and organizations, whose built form merges in spatially discontinuous nodes and hubs that are purposefully homogeneous. Cities with these hubs are becoming more similar in terms of their spatial fragmentation, functional separation, and social isolation as a result of these flows.

Koreatown consists of a set of contradictory elements and logics, a complexity that cannot be solved, but only managed to seek a state of unstable equilibrium. This thesis intensifies and rearranges the potential existing experience brought by immigrants to create culturally vibrant and socially active spaces that are flexible and open to change. It occupies the leftover space (urban surfaces between the buildings, on the back of the building, top of the building, parking lot, etc.) with ephemeral actions, events and activities to promote shared relations within a micro-urban ecosystem. Each of these reversible interventions invites users to engage with their formal, spatial, and material qualities and helps bridge the current social, economic, and cultural divide between the north and south, Asian and Hispanic, entrepreneur and laborer of Koreatown. This study hopes to open a broader discussion of how current international integration can provide a re-learned possibility to redefine the cultural flexibility of today's urbanism.

This thesis proposes an architectural intervention on Rodeo Drive, the popular high-end shopping street in Beverly Hills, CA. It underlines the existing conditions of exhibitionism—a tendency toward extravagant behavior aimed at captivating attention—and embraces a consumerist approach to voyeurism, the act of observing an unsuspecting individual in an apparently private space.

Los Angeles is where people generally want to be seen and admired; it is the home of countless celebrities and individuals seeking fame and fortune. Rodeo Drive is an environment where publicly consuming luxury goods is a chance to flaunt wealth. The fetishized objects of high-fashion brands such as Gucci, Versace, Prada, and more are condensed into only one-third of the Rodeo Drive Strip. Boulevard/strip becomes an integral element of the city that stimulates commercial enterprise, social interaction, and visibility. The thoroughfares of L.A. become fast-paced corridors of visual consumption that entice both passing voyeurs and exhibitionists into the interior.

Architecture intentionally or unintentionally expresses the desire to see and be seen. The design must utilize exhibitionist strategies to entice the patron into the space, much like the window display. The architecture capitalizes on human nature by offering the patron as the subject of the voyeur's gaze, just as social media influencers act as visual commodities for the masses. The design must exhibit an enticement for voyeurs while simultaneously incorporating an air of mystery for the unsuspecting individuals who will act as their subjects.

This intervention on Rodeo Drive will function as a fashion boutique that critiques the consumeristic conditions of society. Moments are designed for both the voyeur, who chooses what they see and the exhibitionist, who determines what they reveal. The front façade and back alleyways provide two separate consumerist experiences. Framing, unveiling, masking, and depth will encourage movement and orientation in space. The boutique offers the individual as its subject, situating human nature on a peculiar stage to be observed and critiqued.
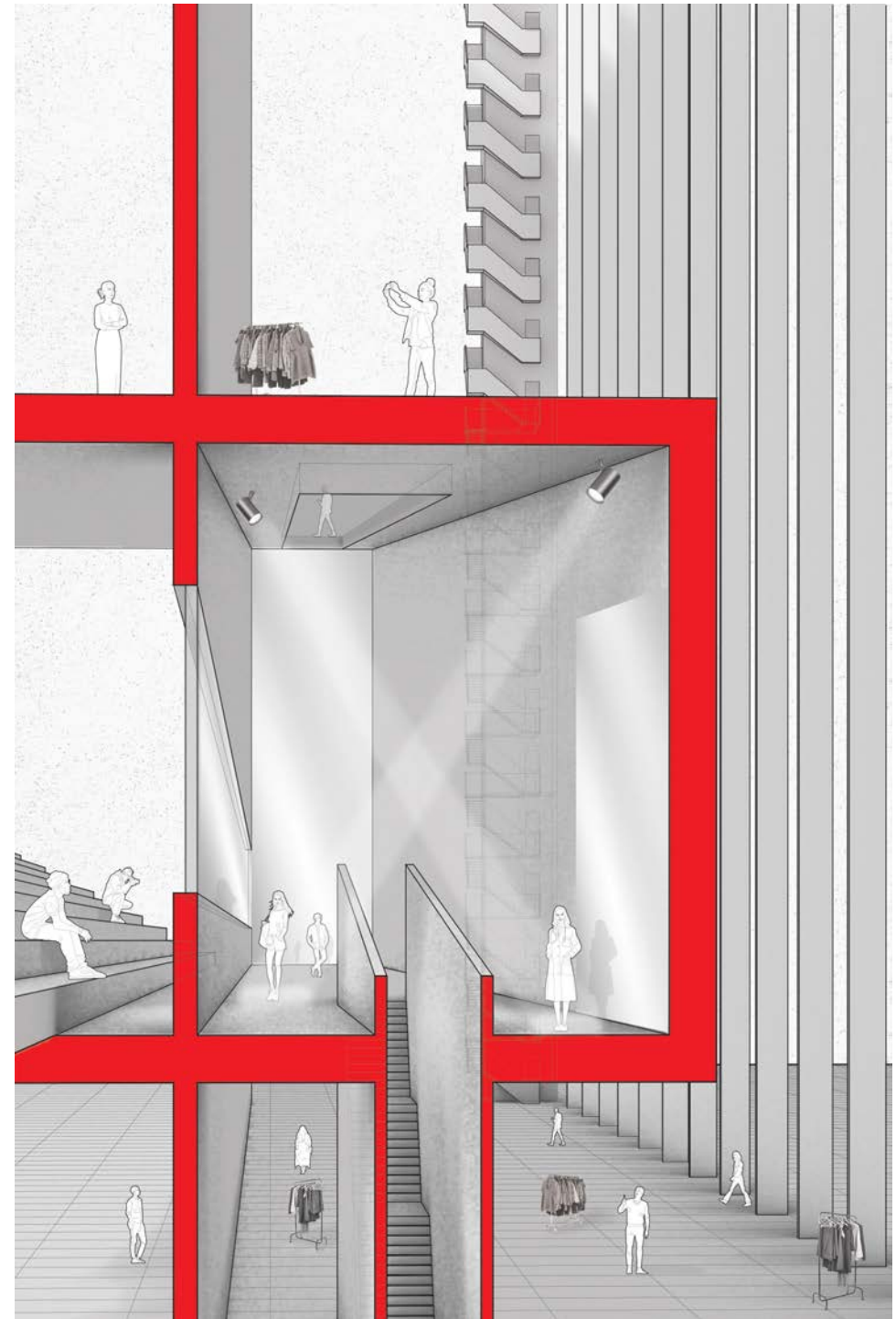
Architecture of the Scattered City

Advisors: Davis, Goode

Image: The Theater and Runway of Visual Consumption

Scattered city, an iconic pattern of urban development that was fostered during the era of rapid economic growth, is notoriously decorated by isolated buildings of cement concrete mass, embellished with monotonous urban views, and uncoordinated with piercing city noises. Its presence illustrates great movement in history, but its constantly evolving development also exposes a long-existing issue and creates a stereotype: its architectural and urban planning doesn't incubate space for human interaction or spark chances of creating pleasant sonic experiences. However, not all scattered cities live out these preconceived notions. Many corners in scattered cities exhibit a pleasant resonance of sonic harmony and architectural aesthetics and inspire cultural vibrancy. These engaging interactions between the background sonics and architectural geometries serve as a unique signature that is deeply cherished and preserved as a lifetime memory of residents. These attractive corners act as isolated oases of auditory harmony and visual beauty in the deserts of scattered cities. Platform Park, a semi-outdoor park located under a light rail, a hub of bus stops, and a rail station in Los Angeles, proves to be a perfect example where sound and space can interact pleasantly to attract pedestrians to linger and instill good impressions.

This thesis proposes a point-line-plane urban sound-space renovation/extension plan. Starting from a single isolated corner like Platform Park, the original sound signatures are well recorded and analyzed to locate the spots with the most balanced sound-space harmonics. Architectural renovation designs that can enhance the sound-space harmonics, block unpleasant noises, increase the architectural aesthetics, and guide pedestrians to pleasant spots will be installed in the park. This "oasis" renovation approach will be replicated at different corners/traffic hubs of a scattered city, connecting these renovated sound-space oases by multi-tier/multimode transportation systems like bike trails, light rails and subways. The original recorded sound patterns of each "oasis" will be modified and remixed; they can be not only displayed in studios as an art presentation showing an acoustic representation of the city, but also replayed in the multimode transportation systems to make the whole journey of commuters an enjoyable and nostalgic one.

Architecture of the Scattered City

Advisors: Davis, Goode

Image: The Urban Sound-Space Interaction Configuration

Found Objects

Projects developed in this thesis advisory group examine and transform acclaimed, deteriorated, discarded, exemplary, hidden, lost, ordinary, repaired, and unusual architectural and extra-architectural objects. Appearing as mediums (e.g. drawings, models, texts) and/or matter (e.g. furniture, rooms, megastructures), these objects are catalysts for formal-spatial research that links disciplinary knowledge to culture, economics, politics and society, asserting that space is inherently social; that politics and economies have aesthetics; and that building is a socio-cultural act. As such, projects in this group apply, transform, and invent architectural design techniques that produce spatial provocations from non-spatial interests unique to each student. Ultimately, design research yields spatial constructs that demonstrate the value of design in a variety of contexts, culminating in architectural objects that address issues of scale, inhabitation, tectonics, and perception. These projects embrace the overlap between culture and form; capture the public imaginary and sustain attention through awe-inspiring formal-spatial provocations; and explore the latent architectural implications of cultural, environmental and technological phenomena.

Advisors: Iman Fayyad,
Kyle Miller, Edgar Rodriguez

According to the standard measures of affordability, there is no U.S. state where a full-time minimum wage worker can afford to rent or own a one-bedroom dwelling. The politics of housing involve a larger set of actors and interests than is considered by policy makers, urban planners, and those in governmental positions. The spatial politics (everything from affordability to development to policy) of the inhabitant and the dwelling are precisely what will begin to address the broader issues of housing, such as who and what is housing for, who controls it, who it empowers, and who it oppresses—in essence, who can/can't provide a roof over their head and who/what prevents them from doing so.

This thesis project analyzes and transforms homelessness and public housing in the city of Chicago. It considers the multicultural, socio-economic, mental health, planning, developmental and other policies involved in the creation of a housing project in Chicago's urban fabric, past and present. Using transformative and speculative additions to re-imagine housing projects, the housing complex can become something productive instead of harmful, as public housing so often is to marginalized groups. Housing inevitably raises issues of power, inequality, and justice, not to mention ideas of commodification, alienation, exploitation, oppression, and liberation. The project negotiates with the current conditions on the site of the infamous former Cabrini-Green Housing Project to situate itself within the discourse of housing inequities in Chicago. By thoroughly scrutinizing this notorious project and the current Gensler master plan for the site—its storied life and destruction, spatial ramifications, and the effects of displacement on an urban scale—one can begin to piece together the dos and don'ts for a re-imagined housing infrastructure. Through specifically programmed roof additions, the project challenges and supplements the Gensler master plan and investigates what it could mean to reconnect displaced communities with their home and community. This thesis aims to deconstruct and reconstruct affordable housing as a "roof over your head," making it an accessible and affordable right instead of an insecurity as it stands today.
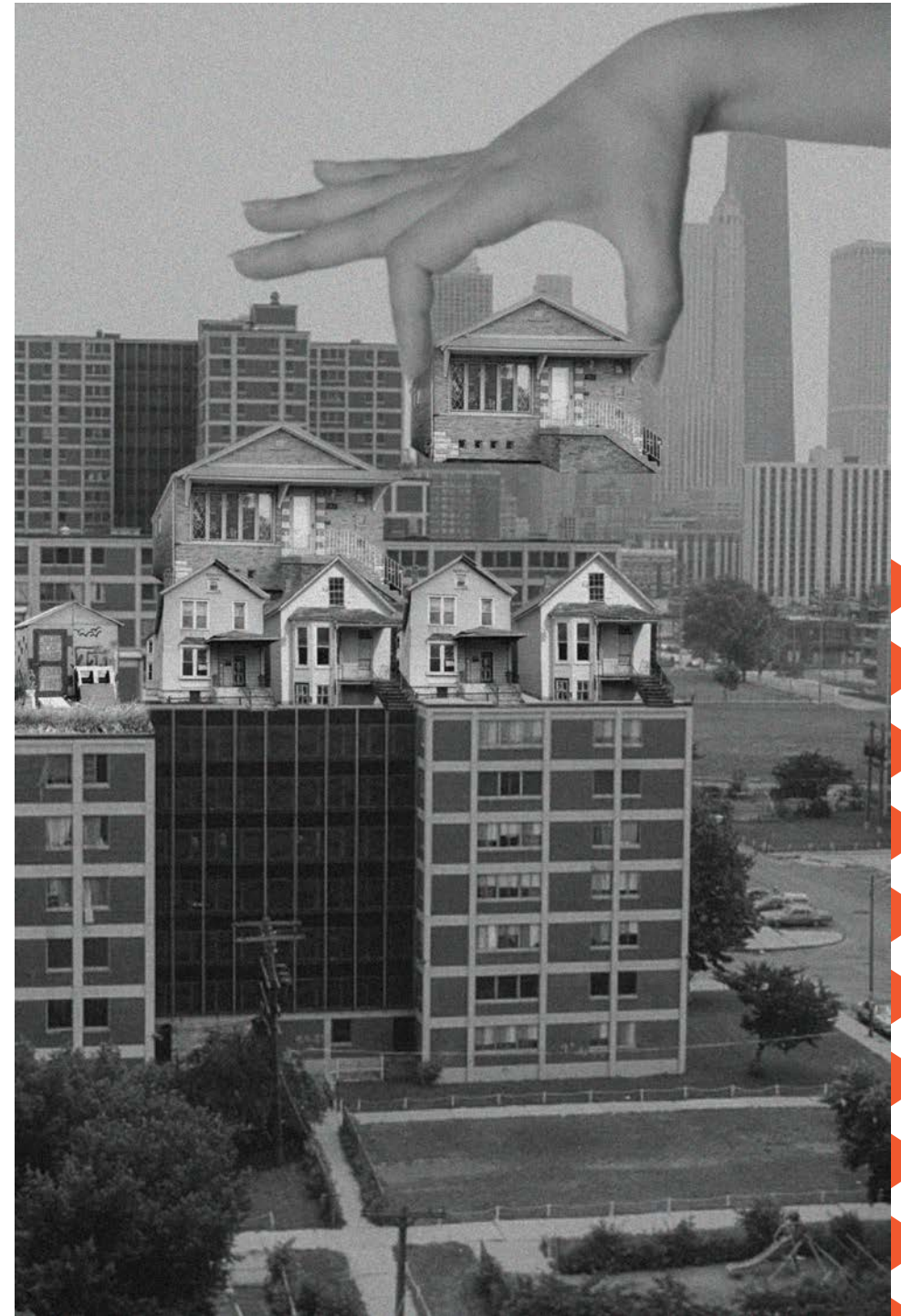
Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Cabrini-Green Re-imagined: Equitable Housing Typologies as Roof Condition

Public transportation is one of the most significant infrastructures embedded in cities. It substantially promotes the steady operation of society and economic development; at the same time, public transportation also impacts individuals.

As commuters, not all people are familiar with the entire terminal station. Confused or lost first-time visitors are common. This thesis seeks to discover how to use architectural elements to define and regulate spaces and form a smooth circulation to guide travelers to their waiting area. As a public space, a transit hub is designed for bus or train commuters. Other people may also have connections with it, such as shopping, dining, relaxing, sheltering, or even receiving medical care in the transit terminal. This project uses architectural elements to deconstruct a large space into many smaller ones, then rearrange them to fit different uses, ultimately achieving the goal of sharing public spaces.

The Syracuse Transit Hub is chosen as the site. The research explores its history, current condition, user types, bus lines, the income of surrounding residents, infrastructure, and potential for future regional economic development. The project further investigates the impact of human behaviors in small to large scales of interior spaces and the relationship between architectural elements and spaces, asking the following questions: How can architectural elements guide and improve circulation flow? What kind of transit terminal should this be, and how will it adapt to future needs?

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez   Found Objects

Domestic space has an especially significant affinity with its inhabitant, acting as an extension of the self and consequently a medium that collects, stores, and expresses the subconscious in a uniquely visceral manner. Remarkably, this argument is instrumental to the curation of unhomeliness. It challenges the association of the inanimate with passivity, thus instilling an impression of uncertainty. The unknown nature of the impending "activity" of the home is often portrayed as malignant in narratives of horror and the uncanny. Furthermore, horror narratives that operate in the domestic realm often are associated with female identity and the trauma of womanhood.

This thesis studies the sentience of the home through its relationship with the American housewife. The societal assertion that a woman's place is in the home has been encoded into domestic architectural typologies for centuries. Two acute examples of this phenomenon are visible in the Victorian country house of the 19th century and the suburban ranch house of the 1950s. In these circumstances, the relationship between housewife and home are that of two semi-intelligent apparatuses that exist to create a comforting environment for the husband, children, and guests.

The home and its housewife become object-companions: the woman is reduced to object status through her expected complacency. Additionally, she is confined to the perimeter of the house, thus separating her from the pursuit of human interaction. What she has left for companionship is the house itself, whose very design is to perpetuate the societal structure that entraps her.

Infamous horror narratives such as Shirley Jackson's The Haunting of Hill House portray technical architectural elements of the house such as interior layout and ornamentation as means of expression for the house's intentions. The main character, Eleanor, is endangered by the prospect that the house will absorb her, and she will be convinced to let it.

This thesis will use case studies of the aforementioned typologies as objects to study, dissect, and rearrange into new domestic typologies. The objective of these exercises will be to design a home with a specific intention, and to construct corresponding narratives where those intentions are revealed.
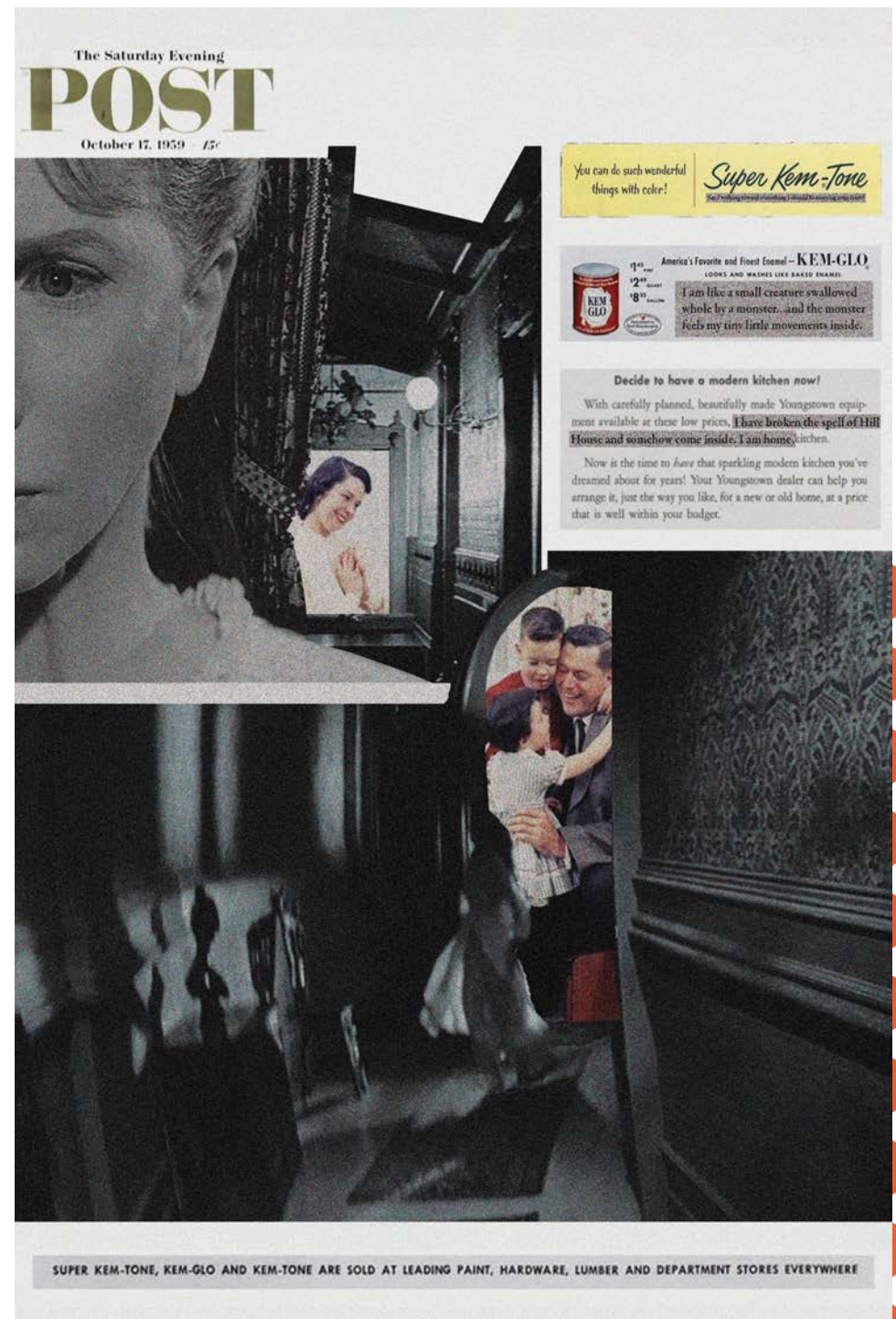
Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: The Housewife Archetype Portrayed through the Domestic Realm

SUPER KEM-TONE, KEM-GLO AND KEM-TONE ARE SOLD AT LEADING PAINT, HARDWARE, LUMBER AND DEPARTMENT STORES EVERYWHERE

Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Retrofitted Seagram Building Following Proposed New POPS Policy

In New York City, people lack access to public facilities because of the neglect of public demand and exclusivity of existing public spaces, especially privately owned public space (POPS). This thesis takes advantage of the prevalence of POPS but also proposes new laws to make a more functional, accessible, and democratic prototype of public space. The Seagram building as the origin of the POPS policy is the subject of this project's execution of the new laws. By inserting highly in-demand public facilities into the building and connecting them with a signature circulation, the accessibility of the public space and the democracy of the city are both improved.

Patios Compartidos
Assessing Monterrey's Reliance on Cars

Enrique Arturo Garcia Gonzalez

Monterrey is a city in northeastern Mexico whose development was dictated by an industrial boom in the beginning of the 20th century, turning the small town into the second largest metropolitan area in Mexico. This rapid growth was defined by the prominent Modernist urban planning ideas prevalent in the Americas. Modernist attitudes and a widespread adoption of the car within the city culture have led to heavy reliance on the automobile; this is visible through the widespread lack of attention to pedestrian infrastructures.

Developers in Monterrey, like those in other rapidly developing cities across the world, tend to replicate projects deemed successful. Gated communities, and workers' colonies before them, are typologies that have been copied and pasted across the metropolitan area. In the early 21st century the city saw its first high-rise apartment building, a typology that has seen widespread economic success. This led to the creation of neighborhoods such as Loma Larga, composed primarily of high-rise apartment buildings. Regulations for the construction of apartment buildings require a portion of the lot to remain unoccupied, which in the case of Loma Larga, is left undeveloped due to the harsh terrain. This leads to a fractured urban condition that isolates the residents of the apartment complexes, a condition only perpetuated by the singular zoning of the area, which is dominated by residential and administrative programs.

Developments like this, while successful on paper, are not conducive to overall growth and evolution since they perpetuate the reliance on cars through the underdevelopment of pedestrian infrastructures. This thesis proposes an intervention critiquing the profit-driven developmental style of apartment buildings and zoning practices. It achieves this through the re-densification of the site that re-connects the lots to the greater urban context by implementing an interconnected series of courtyards of varying scales that promote the otherwise non-existent sense of community and pedestrian culture. The new development scheme learns from Monterrey Centro, emulating the programmatic patchwork that is generated by the varying scales of public space throughout the city, in turn placing an emphasis on the human occupation of space rather than the creation of vehicular networks.

Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Interconnected Courts

Re-Interrogating the Slow House in Contemporaneity

The home is the site of conflict and war, internalizing the issues of society and manifesting them in an intimate and personable scale. Architecture, in its ability to disseminate pervasive ideas in society and discourse, often uses the site of the home to interrogate complex issues and their proximity to everyday life. Those issues are central to ideologies and the operations of society at large, by dismantling/reinforcing/questioning topics of family structure, privacy, identity, religion, routine, technology, etc.

This thesis will be a series of investigations into the Slow House ('91) [as an architectural object], by Diller + Scofidio, that is interested in the construct of rituals of westernized contemporaneity. As a commentary on the grandeur of the project within architectural discourse today, this project will interrogate the central issue that the home is designed to resolve, facilitating new conceptions, or provocations, on contemporaneity and ritual.

Using OMA's exhibition of "Casa Palestra" as a precedent, this investigation will seek to re-conceptualize existing archi- tectural discourse through the re-imagination, or perversion, of the iconic project. New readings of the design have the ability to be catalyzed through techniques of interior reorganization, contextual repositioning, altered materiality, and other provocations.

As a result of these research and design methodologies, there will be an exhibition of the updated provocation to the Slow House, designed in accordance with contemporary life. Through a series of transformations/alterations to this canonical home across plan and section, the deconstruction and reconstruction of specific moments within the home will allow for the re-conception of a new project today.

This thesis aims to be a critical commentary on dis- course relative to the intimacy of ritual, within the scope of contemporaneity, and relative to the ability for the practice to facilitate progressive and radical interpretations of the built environment through representation. This will be to demonstrate how provocations of design, formally, can reframe existence as we know it, and how the context in which they are conceived can offer potentials for them to no longer be static and fixed, but active and transitive.

Image: Slow House Artifact (1991), Redrawn (2023)   Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez   Found Objects

Though it has been more than three years since the explosion of COVID-19, the effects of the pandemic haven't passed and may last longer than most people expected. Responding to the situation, different countries chose different methods, which also shifted over time based on public and medical conditions. Since so much has been lost in this pandemic and given its dramatic impact on the lives of people all over the world, a COVID Memorial Museum seems essential to memorialize this surreal reality and to archive the specific moment and respond to post-pandemic lifestyles worldwide. This thesis explores the potential of architectural narrative and sequences as a unique experience to create and re-imagine the memorial for interpreting the experience of pandemic all over the world, especially in China.

The sequence of camera, the interaction between camera and actors, and shifts in lens depth bring unique experiences to the audience The project archives the significant moments in the movies that feature aspect-ratio differences or long takes and summarize the camera process as a space-narrative language. Videos are then created with narrative languages that can be combined and adapted based on the sequence and programs in the memorial. The arrangement of space-narrative language helps build circulation throughout the memorial space and collects special moments in the pandemic—such as 14-day quarantines and 6-foot minimum distance—as an installation or architectural moment for people to experience. This memorial is not a critique of any method or rule of a specific country, but a document and comparison of the variety of measures and responses to the pandemic all over the world.

Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Individual Discomfort Re-experience

Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Functions of Existing Fashion Spaces
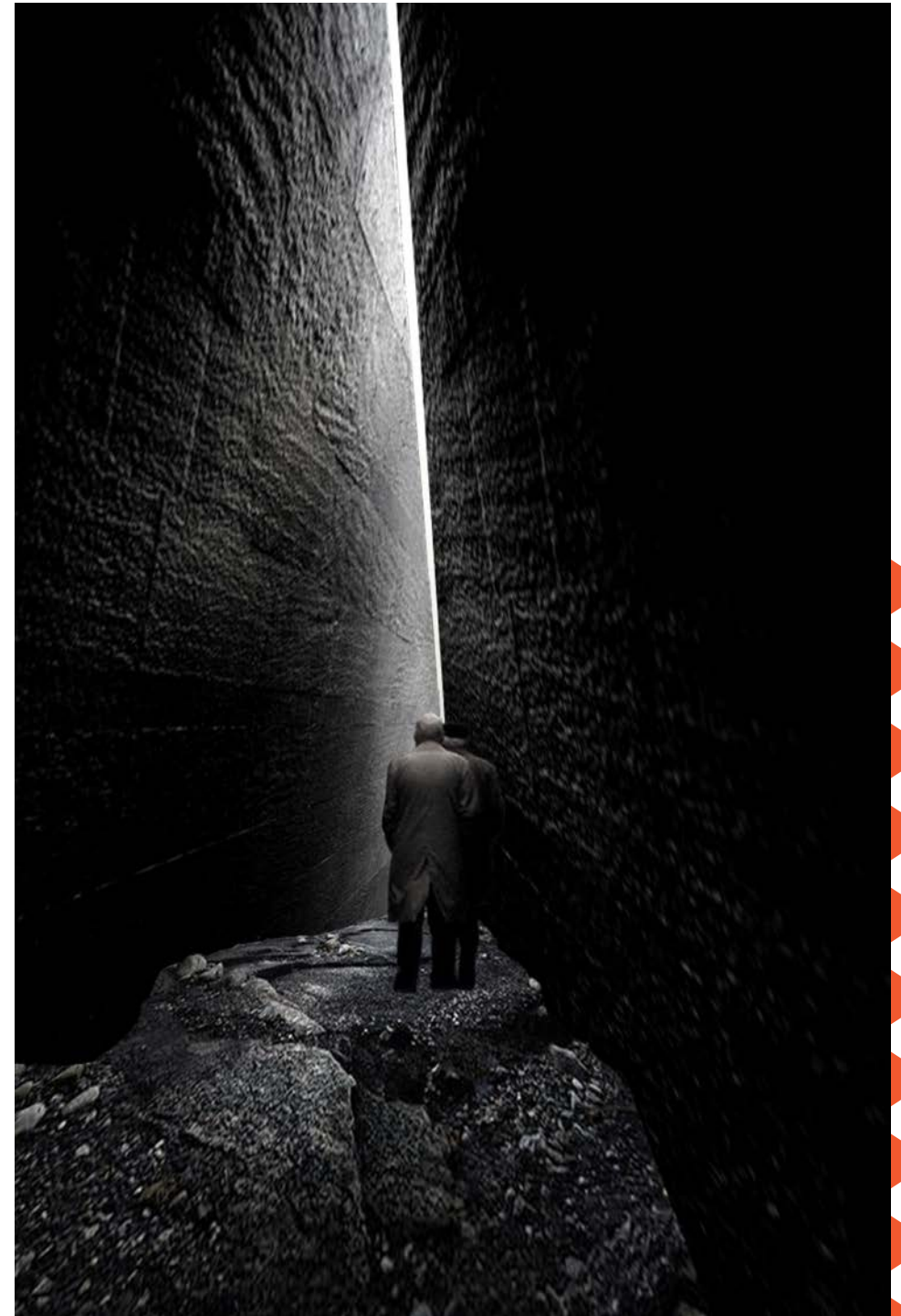
Closed-door events such as Seoul Fashion Week that require large-scale permanent infrastructures limit the city's ability to adapt to changing spatial needs and to produce exciting new urban interventions across the whole city. And while these permanent structures provide all the space functions the events require, they often do very little to add value to the surrounding community.

Dongdaemun Design Plaza, or DDP, is a symbolic venue for fans of South Korean fashion and culture. Designed by Zaha Hadid in 2014, the structure hosts almost all Seoul Fashion Week runways, events, and exhibitions. Despite this, outside of fashion week periods, the building is significantly underutilized. Most citizens in Seoul see the structure as a foreign object residing in a local, historic neighborhood. Opening up the venue, or expanding outwards, invites new opportunities for creative programmatic use and community inclusion. Expanding beyond the pre-existing boundaries through temporary and semi-permanent structures can inspire the city to rethink Seoul Fashion Week in more creative, sustainable, and inviting ways. Pop-ups, pavilions, and installations can simultaneously highlight the sites they occupy and revitalize hidden aspects of the city in ways that permanent structures cannot.

Contemporary American housing is not a particular place, but a series of elements assembled repetitively across the country. Therefore, when considering new ornamental proposals, instead of trying to deny suburban materials, this thesis accepts them as a baseline to inform modifications of the vernacular.

This project provides additive accessories for the typical American homeowner to be applied in a DIY fashion through feasible fabrication tactics. It does so by focusing on the homogeneous surfaces that wrap American suburbs, such as plywood, vinyl siding, and wallpaper. To create a new ornament for the American home, designers should iterate incrementally based on materials familiar to the general public.

These proposals act as a progression of the standardized history of American housing, which has iterated upon common materials such as wood, siding, and wallpaper over the past centuries. Through translating these materials into the digital realm and back again, a contemporary iteration of cladding is produced as the simulacra intensifies. In the translation between the digital and physical, the loss of resolution allows for multiple interpretations of an object, playing into the Theseus paradox, where the extensive alteration of an object calls into question whether the end result is fundamentally perceived as the same object. Varied results in methods such as loss of resolution, inconsistencies of image transfer, and natural variation of wood grain, allow room for uniqueness, even if these techniques are standardized or mass produced. This leaves a human quality that evokes a nostalgia for the origin of such materials.

Ultimately, altered images of vinyl siding, plywood, and wallpaper are projected back onto the material itself. These overlays can be applied after the purchase of modular materials, or directly to surfaces of existing homes. Rather than needing an architect to reinterpret domestic ornament, this process allows for an intimate dialogue between the homeowner and their own home, while calling to mind a grander lineage of housing materials.

Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Wheat Pasted Vinyl Siding
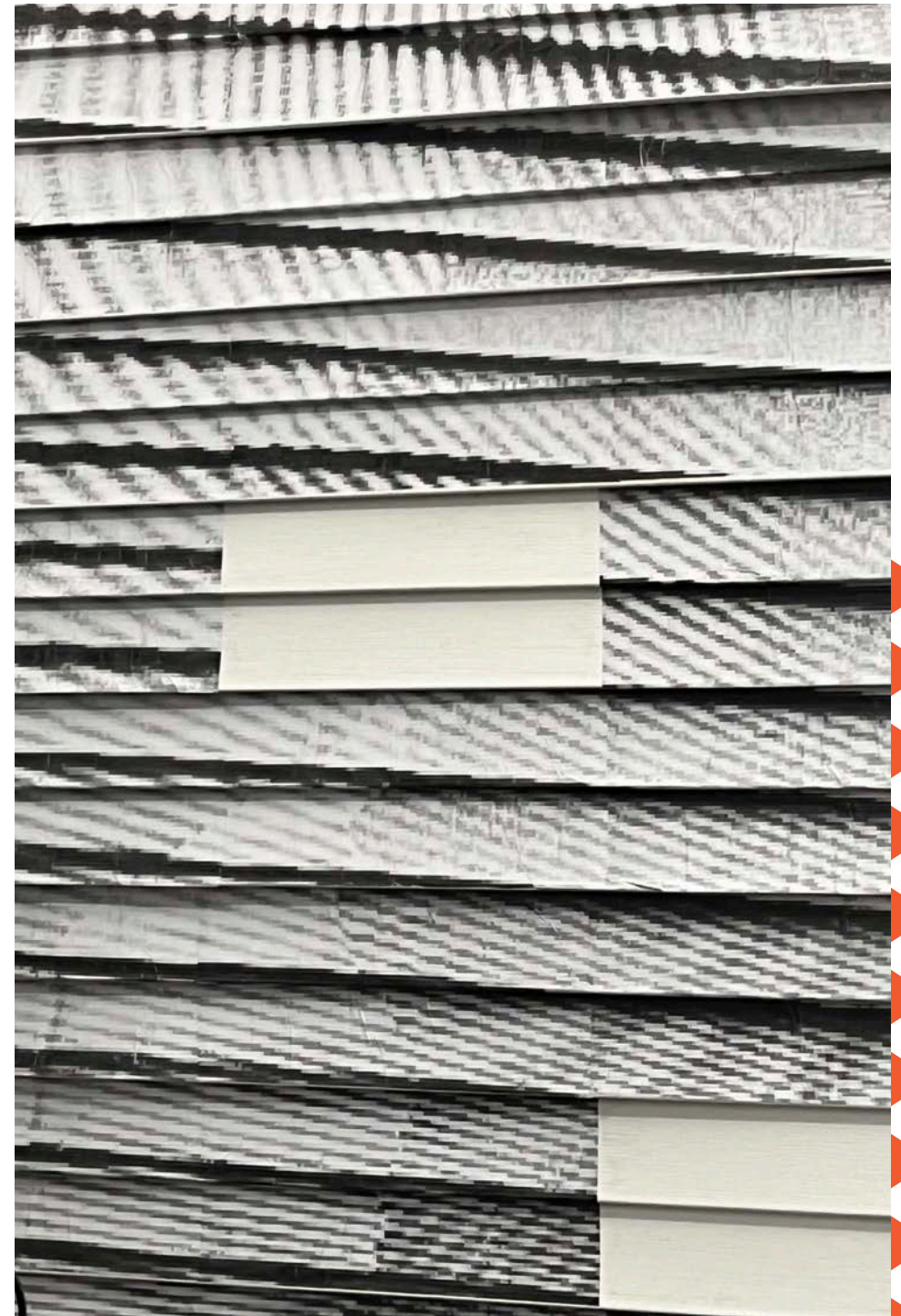
This thesis establishes itself on the backs of architects such as Lucy McRae, Rem Koolhaas, Virgil Abloh, and others who have used the medium of fashion to explore architectural ideas. Their success in this complementary design field is heavily dependent upon their acknowledgment of the body as the origin of all design, whether furniture, an article of clothing, or a building. Therefore, this thesis is situated at the intersection of two disciplines, establishing itself among the works of great architects and those of the major fashion house, Prada.

Prada initiated their collaboration, "Prada Invites," which reimagined their signature fabric, nylon. Their Spring/Summer Runway of 2019 enlisted three leading female architects, Elizabeth Diller, Kazuyo Sejima, and Cini Boeri, with a collection created by women, for women to expand upon the brand's ongoing fascination with multifaceted representations of contemporary femininity that toe the line between garments and travel accessories.

The success of this endeavor relied upon these architects' lived experiences as women and their architectural backgrounds. The mutual embracing of these subjects solidified the countless parallels between them, such as that between buildings and clothing with respect to materiality, performance, detailing, tectonics, surfacing, and form. There are numerous other techniques and qualities that apply to both disciplines; of particular interest are folding, seaming, and formlessness, as each allows for transformation.

This thesis positions itself among the work of these powerful women and continues the initiative set forth by Prada—to craft and utilize nylon to provide commentary on modern women and the diverse lives we live. Though it's been long considered that women cannot achieve work-life balance, we have constantly proven that there is such a thing as balance but that it doesn't necessarily need to be separated. What if the two worlds intermingled a bit more? This project achieves this through design of a garment and an accessory that serve both work and social environments—a blazer that unveils a dress, and a briefcase that collapses to reveal a clutch. No version of wear is limited in use; they can be mixed and matched to the heart's desire.

Found Objects

Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez

Image: Collaged Pattern Cuts of a Blazer and Dress
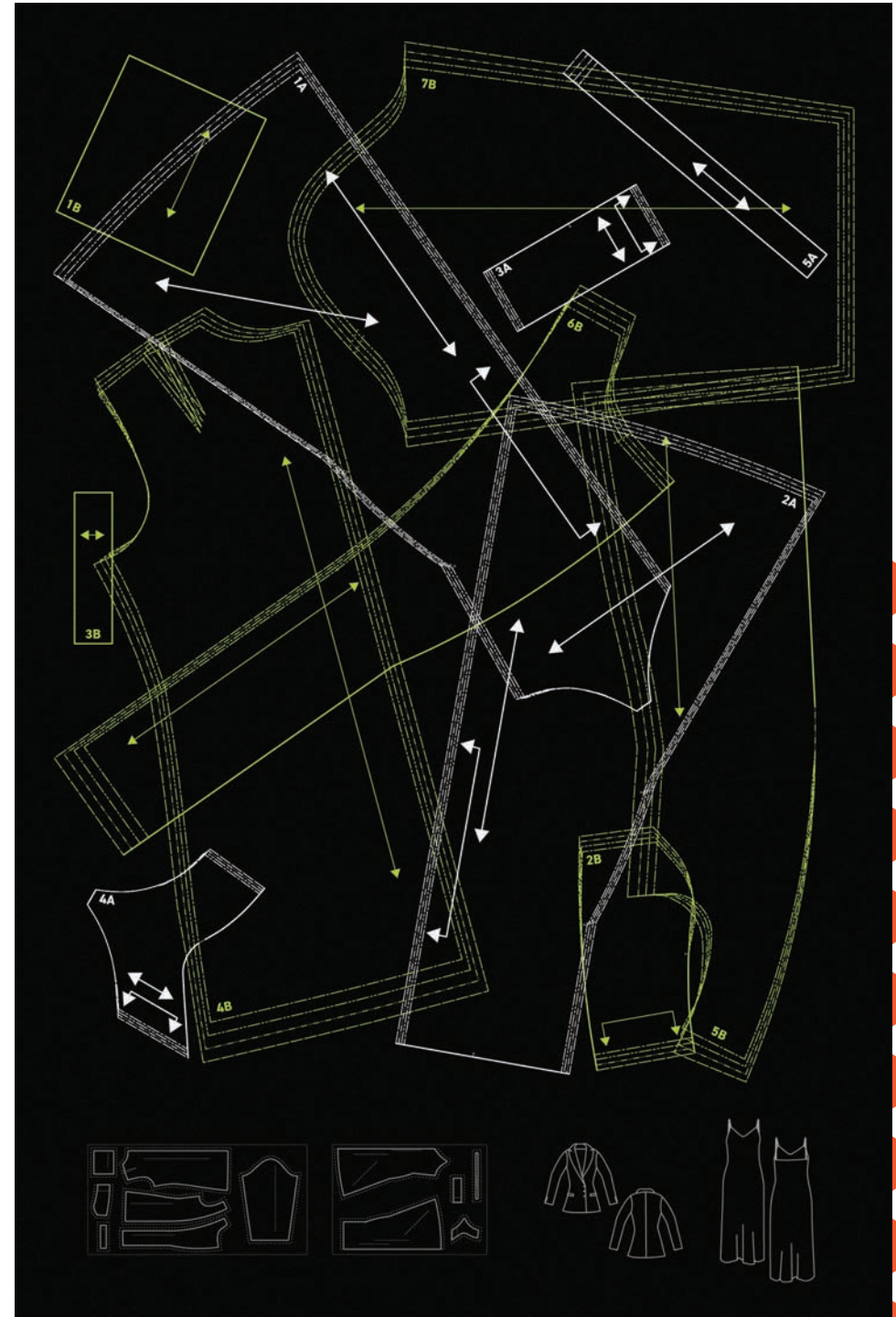
SUPERWALL
Redefining the Miesian Wall

Nicolas Ladino

Architecture's directive is the articulation and expression of ourselves. As a tool it has been used to control, oppress, and intimidate. To liberate architecture and thus humans has been an obsessive trait in modern architecture. When the free plan was introduced, the wall lost its structural existence. However, the wall gained a sour attribute after its temporary liberation. In the office, the wall turned into a physical manifestation of social power systems. It become a tool to separate groups and to enforce corporate hierarchies.

The liberation of the wall was a false notion in Miesian designs. The wall in the free plan of the Seagram Building became a representation of a sexist, masculine, and extremely rigid social order. This design continues today.

Immigrants are victims of this design method. In the many governmental buildings they encounter, the wall is a dividing element, separating them from the bureaucrats. Specifically, in the USCIS field office—a pervasive typology in the immigration system—the wall is a site of bureaucratic power and control. This thesis argues that the wall can instead serve as a site for social interaction, cultural exchange and political resistance. By leveraging the symbolic and material properties of walls, the design proposal aims to create a spatial experience that challenges visitors to question their assumptions about power, privilege and identity. Drawing upon the successes in the domestic by Mies Van Der Rohe in thickening and over-programming the wall, this thesis introduces a new object, SUPERWALL.

The wall now has a temporal existence, providing privacy when needed and communion when required. It becomes a tool of collection and of self-determination rather than contention. Its existence becomes more precise by containing an increasing number of building elements. The wall and the plan are now truly liberated.

Image: THE NATURALIZATION TEST, Reclaimed   Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez   Found Objects
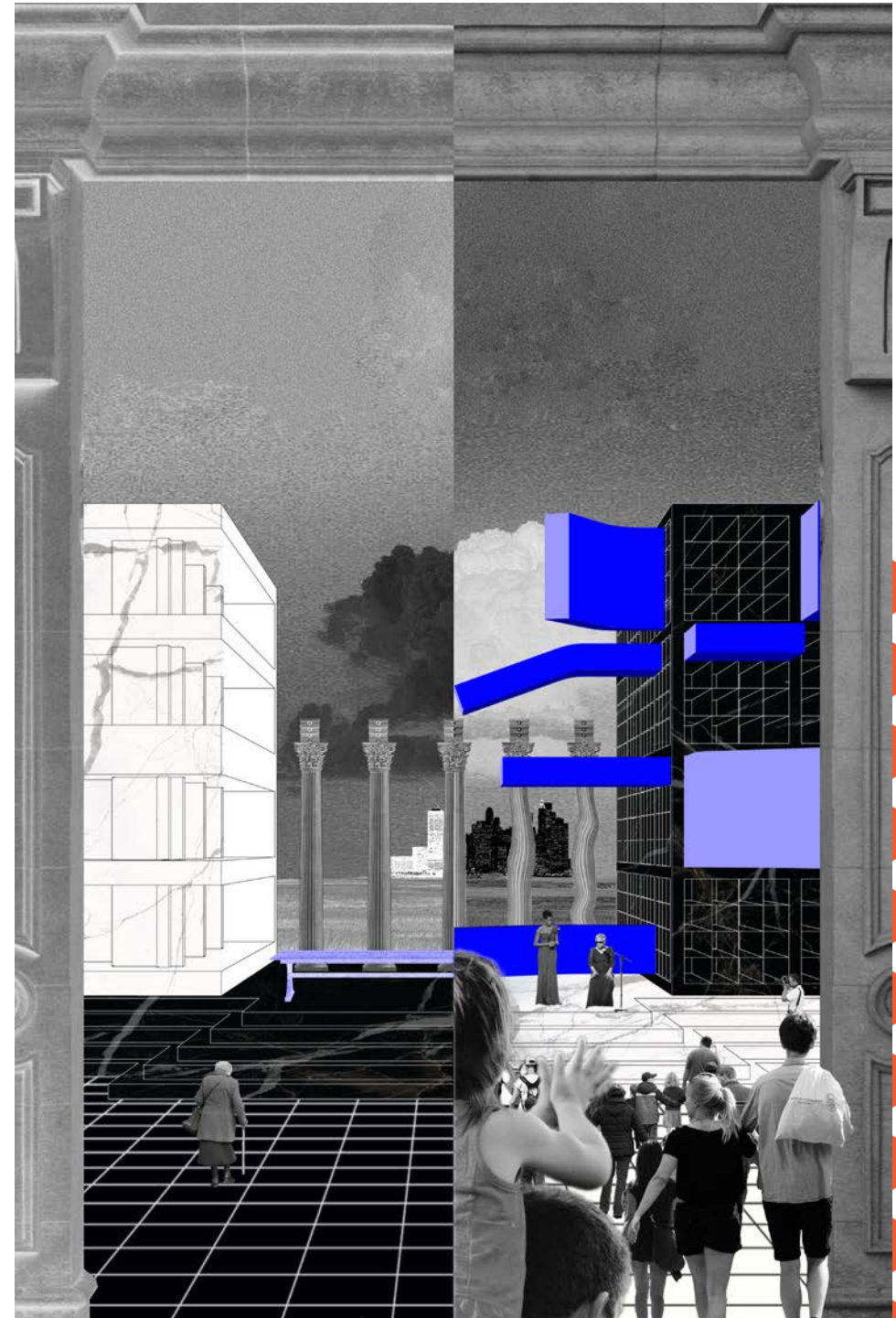
This thesis explores the creation of a new capitol building for the proposed state of Washington D.C. through the methods of copy, double, and twin. Ideas of D.C. statehood exist in today's political climate, creating a need to address spatially and architecturally the creation of defined boundaries and buildings. With any creation, it would be impossible to ignore the current government architecture in the city. So, rather than considering the existing context as a burden, this project allows it to become an opportunity to provoke.

The existence of twoness has existed across architecture but remains hard to define. A copy, double and twin all may produce similar assumptions of intent but cannot be used interchangeably since each term responds to differences in originality, time, and identity.

The Copy:
a second form of an original; identical; comes after the first; is an attempt to mimic the archetype

The Double:
the counter to an original; not necessarily identical but can be; can come after or at the same time as the original; the original acts as the prototype

The Twin:
direct relationship to its counter; either identical or not; comes at the same time as its twin; both are a version of the archetype

The methods of copying, doubling, and twinning not only allow new spatial possibilities to emerge for an icon city but also create a dialogue between the role and form of federal and state governments. To redefine a state's capitol building generates new possibilities for public engagement and participation. Formal qualities of twoness are explored and serve as a generator for public access and transparency.

Image: Twoness X Nine   Advisors: Fayyad, Miller, Rodriguez   Found Objects

New and Old Alterities
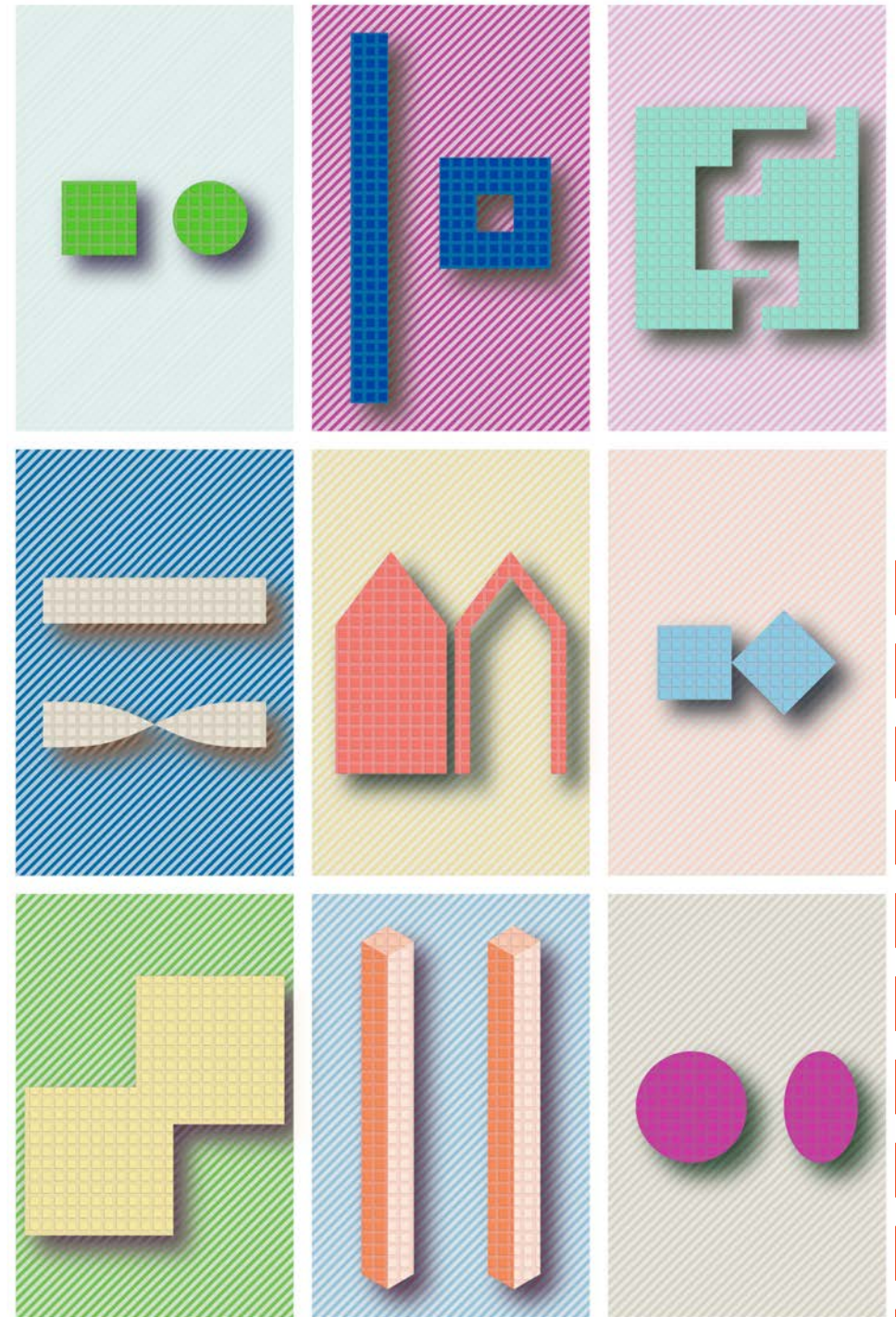
Things are not normal. They never were, though history provides countless examples of people understanding themselves through a contrast to a presumed "other." The other is understood as irrational, backwards, savage, and outside of the norm. Otherness is strange. Otherness is dangerous and a threat to the established order. The act of othering establishes normative practices and essentializes identities to culturally defined groups. Architecture has a long history of preserving and codifying the established order, despite claims of doing the opposite. In the face of current and impending catastrophes, architecture will need to be radically reimagined. Embracing alterity and the threat it poses to business-as-usual is therefore an existential necessity. We sense that those imagining the future will need to be much more diverse and inclusive and invited politically engaged projects that explore that possibility. This thesis advisory group speculated on the potentials of alterity to challenge conventional representation and built environments.

Advisor: Joseph Godlewski

In our day-to-day lives there is a compression of information, of data, and of knowledge of the world literally and figuratively at our fingertips. Even within the field of architecture, we are no longer bound to a drafting table with pen and paper. Instead, we are bound to our computers, to a digital realm that is forever trying to compress itself smaller and smaller. With its seemingly unlimited potential of branching networks, our overconsumption of data can lead to a loss of knowledge— an overstimulation of true and false all combined.

Presented with two antagonists that represent the apprehensions of the near future, this thesis plays out the interactions and possibilities both will have in their endeavor for knowledge. Through film and interpretive dance, the project grounds itself within the loose narrative of conflicts between digital and analog. Projection mapping amplifies the use of film within an architectural language. The project aims to simulate the multitude of opportunities that space and place have as they play across the built environment. Through a variety of tectonic blocks and planes, the project intends to interact and react with built surfaces in order to play out a new speculative consumption of data.

As architecture moves forward in its pursuit of knowledge and information it must remember its ultimate relation with the built environment.

Image: Colliding Perceptions of a Speculative Future   Advisor: Godlewski   New and Old Alterities
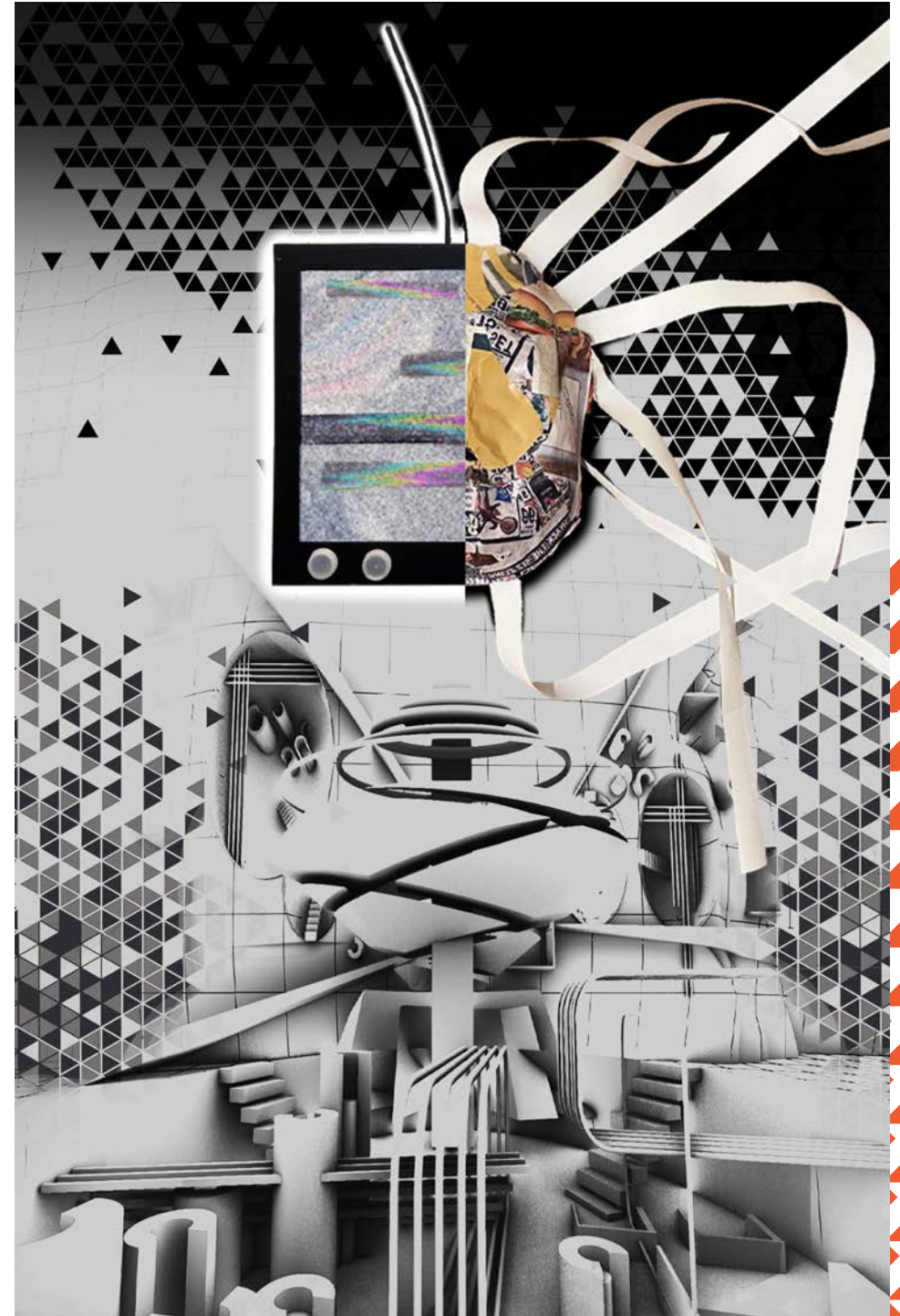
"It is a peculiar sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness—an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder."
— W.E.B. Du Bois, The Souls of Black Folk, p. 2

Blackness within the U.S. is often expressed in forms of architecture, urbanism and spatial constructs that are false representations. This thesis contends that Black space is not solely about space or defined by a particular building or style. It is about what the space allows for. It goes against restrictive atmospheres. Black space is about overcoming, healing, empowering, encouraging, experiencing joy and freedom. Black space is about intent and is unique to Black communities across the globe.

While acknowledging both negative and positive aspects of Black space, the thesis uses this context when allowing these spaces to take form. The site is within the mediation of W.E.B. Du Bois' idea of double consciousness. In this plurality of consciousness, methods of reconstruction, deconstruction, reforming and unbuilding are explored by challenging murals created by Vertis Hayes and Charles Alston. The murals act as rooms where the effects of colonialism are deconstructed because they have become a false representation of the African Diaspora. Black space is not linear; the sequences within the virtual reality environment interrupt this linearity because the past, present and future are intertwined. The space experiments with a diasporic approach to how Black space may take form.

The thesis explores this world within a virtual environment without the constraints of a physical location—the spatial aspects of what embodies Black space will not be compromised. Sensorial aspects of Black space are included, with the goal of giving these phantom imaginaries a physical form rather than remaining conceptual. Symbolism, messages, storytelling, audio, languages and other nonvisual aspects of Black space act as elements within the virtual environment.

Advisor: Godlewski   New and Old Alterities

A new notion of urban interactivity has emerged in the mega-cities of Japan and across most of East Asia that Caballero and Tsukamoto characterize as "dividual space," with apartments only serving as bedrooms and everything else available in the public realm. This is analogous to Oldenburg's description of third spaces as neutral grounds for sociability when protected from the "other" and each other. The third places that institutions of governance make visible to us are fetishizations of capitalism, consumerism, and other expressions of our apathy. Spatial experiences that do not fit into the status quo are ostracized into enclaves.

Shinjuku, Tokyo manifests this spectacle of consumerism by taking neon signage and other signifiers, and exaggerating them into sociocultural art. This inverts the supposition that signage reflects society into society being mirrored for the sign, thereby flattening histories, inequalities and conflicts, and displacing attention from the ideologically constructed political world, urging citizens towards bemusement and obliviousness. Fault lines divide consumerist urbanity and what this project characterizes as Godzilla urbanism—spatial practices that threaten normative perception yet are embraced as eye-catching and culturally engrained novelties that should be viewed from afar. That said, this binary in which only 50% of Shinjuku's territory is being activated at any given time has resulted in an urban derive that forces the body to traverse through "dead zones" characterized only by their inactivity or dormancy. The chronological and programmatic intermediacy between Consumerist and Godzilla is the site of intervention. The thesis contends that instead of shutting down parts of the urban fabric to complement another, hybrid dividual spaces or "0.5-programs" at the mezzo-cosmos scale can continue to hum at a reduced capacity so alternative translations against the dominant rhythm at play are still reflected.

Through first-person countermapping, analysis, and introduction of hybrid dividual architecture, the project examines how different contexts type, adapt, mutate objects, in specifying the visceral or symbolic experiences of each route as the literal iconoclash caused by marginalized/contained identities exploding out onto the field.

Image: 0.5 Dividual Hybrids at a Semi-vacant Big-box Store   Advisor: Godlewski   New and Old Alterities
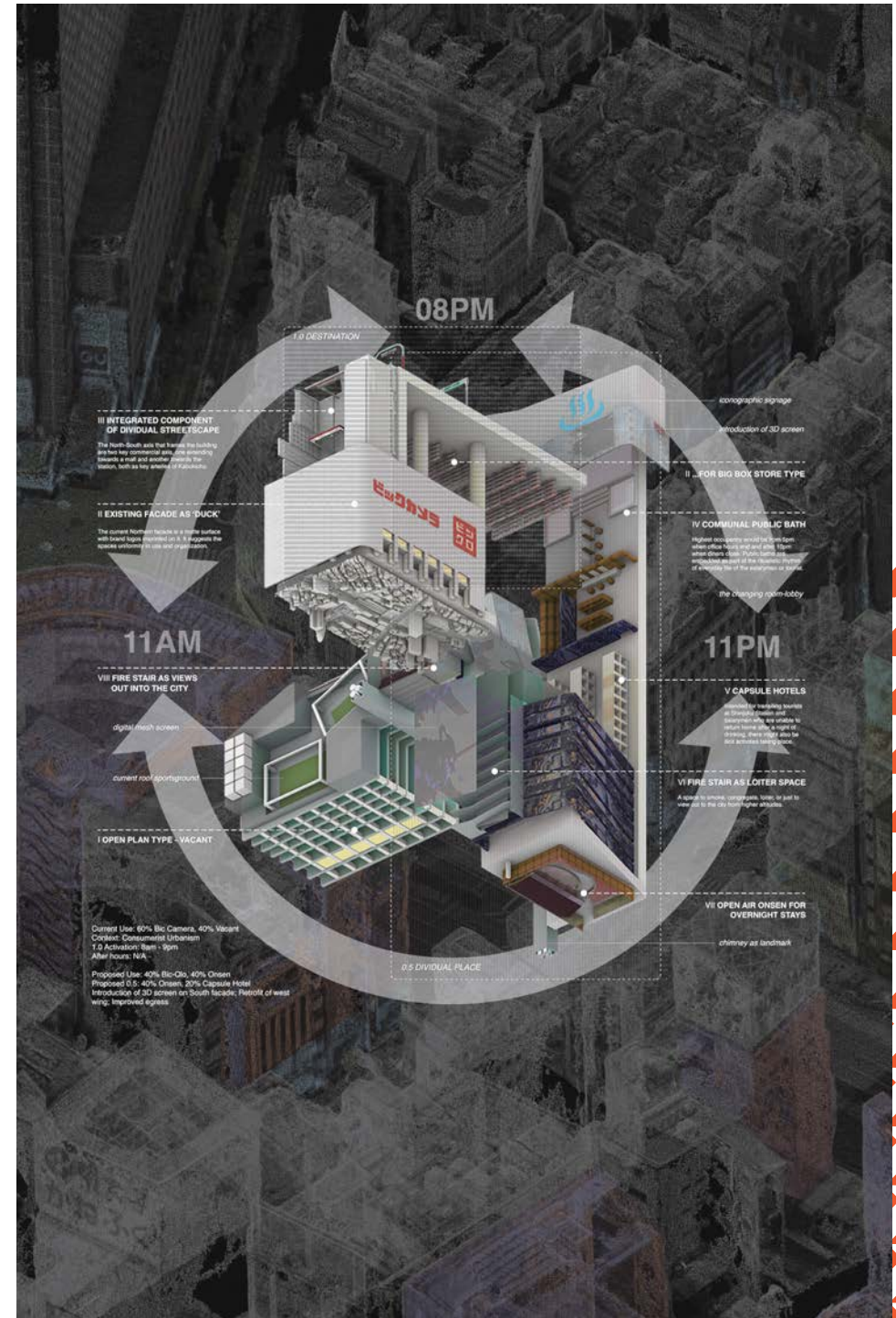
In the modern age of digital technology, form and drawings have become generative and efficient through 3D software, which brings a gravity-free space for architects to explore the different potentials of space and relationships. This efficiency allows the flourishing of modern cities which consist of multiple layers and complexity. However, every creation comes with destruction. In the current usage of 3D software, the process of design emphasizes performance, efficiency, fidelity, and control, letting the model output the image. A simple command brings not only efficiency but also the disappearance of a certain kind of orthographic consciousness. The model that is rendered through the pixel is ultimately about the potential and opportunity the void creates rather than the form.

This thesis aims to alter the current representation process of digital technology through the traditional ceramic process. Ceramics as a material consists of honesty in the process, as it memorizes every press, warp, joint, and movement. It celebrates the identity of the object it touches both digitally and through personal input. The duality of the mold and object traces the memory of the process, ultimately triggering alternative potentials for communicating space and time building on top of the current digital practice. As the void of the old and new ceramic and mold are juxtaposed, layered and clashed, they become allies of meaning and speak the history of the work.

New and Old Alterities

Advisor: Godlewski

Image: The Clash Memory of Slocum Core
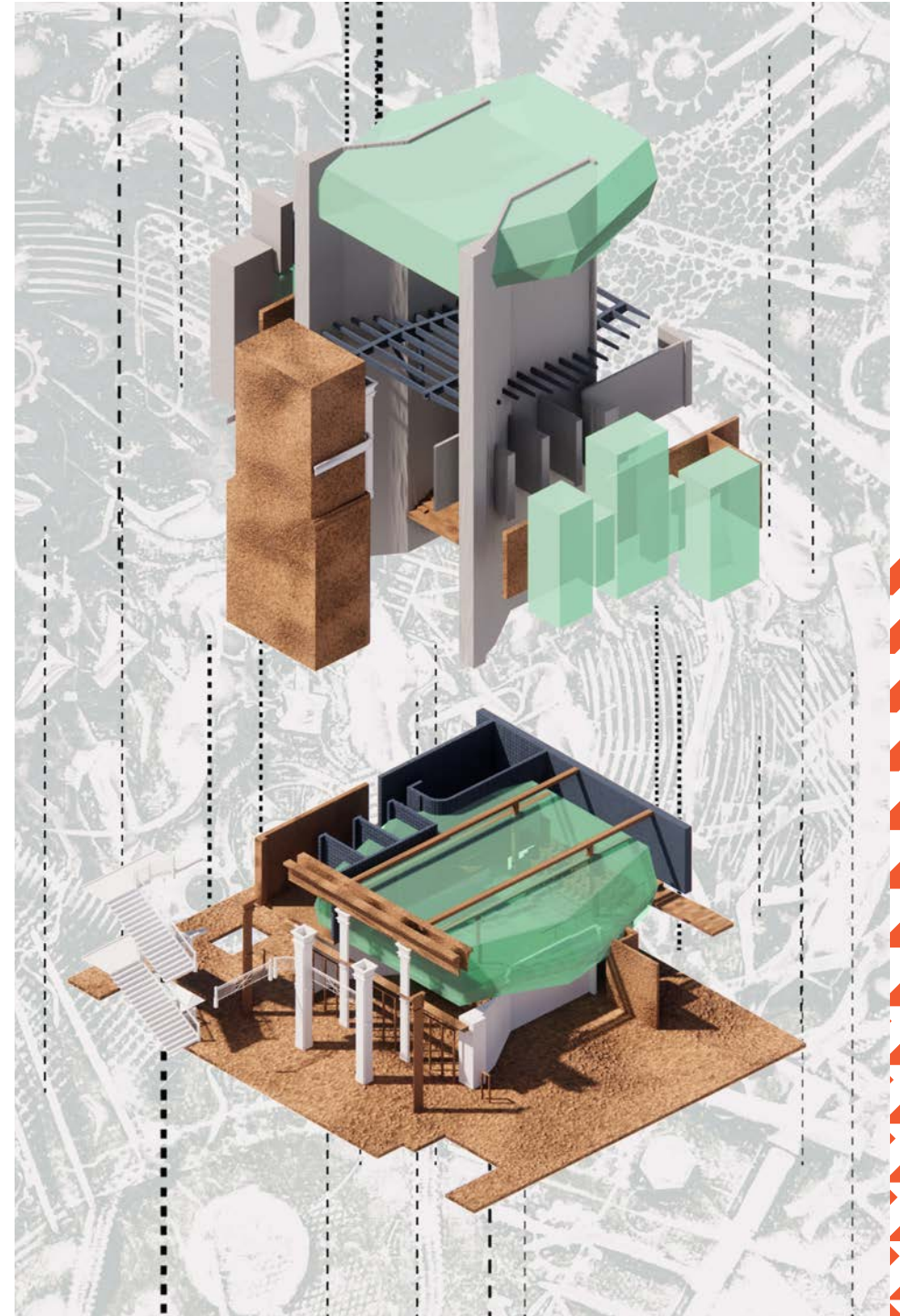
At a time when architecture's general disciplinary histories have fallen out of favor as the legitimizing agents for architectural practices, the field's relationship with history has shifted towards the more intimate scale of regional histories and historical structures that are specific to cultures, places, and ecologies. Injecting outdated buildings with contemporary interventions, adaptive reuse as a design paradigm promises historic structures renewed identities. This project responds to adaptive reuse's approach and proposes an opposite procedure where contemporary structures are destabilized by a resurrected past.

Adaptive misuse is a synthesized concept between adaptive reuse and creative misuse. Defined by historian David Rifkind, creative misuse is an approach of designing new structures through actively dissecting and misappropriating historical references. By integrating new intervention into old structures, adaptive reuse conserves and reinvigorates history in the most literal sense. Albeit utilitarian and visually compelling, it shapes a contemporary capitalistic landscape where selected historical structures of marketable value were rehabilitated while the "less redeemable" ones were demolished and repressed to make way for a generic scene that glosses over the past. History becomes a "neutral" background that was muted, neutralized, reduced to physical objects taken at face value, quietly presenting a seemingly stable and thriving present. The project takes issue with the prevalent approach to history and argues that the future of architectural practice's relationship with history is not merely about rehabilitation, but excavation: how do architects resurrect and reinvent a repressed past that destabilizes a rootless, benign, and seemingly stable present that is often a result of past chaos? In the book Experimental Preservation, historian Jorge Otero-Pailos warns against the tendency to ignore historical narratives that embody the cost of development for which governments and corporations seldom take responsibility. This project excavates such narratives, and recontextualizes existing generic buildings with their resurrected, site-specific pasts.

Image: Urban Excavation   Advisor: Godlewski   New and Old Alterities

Architecture as the Design of Buildings
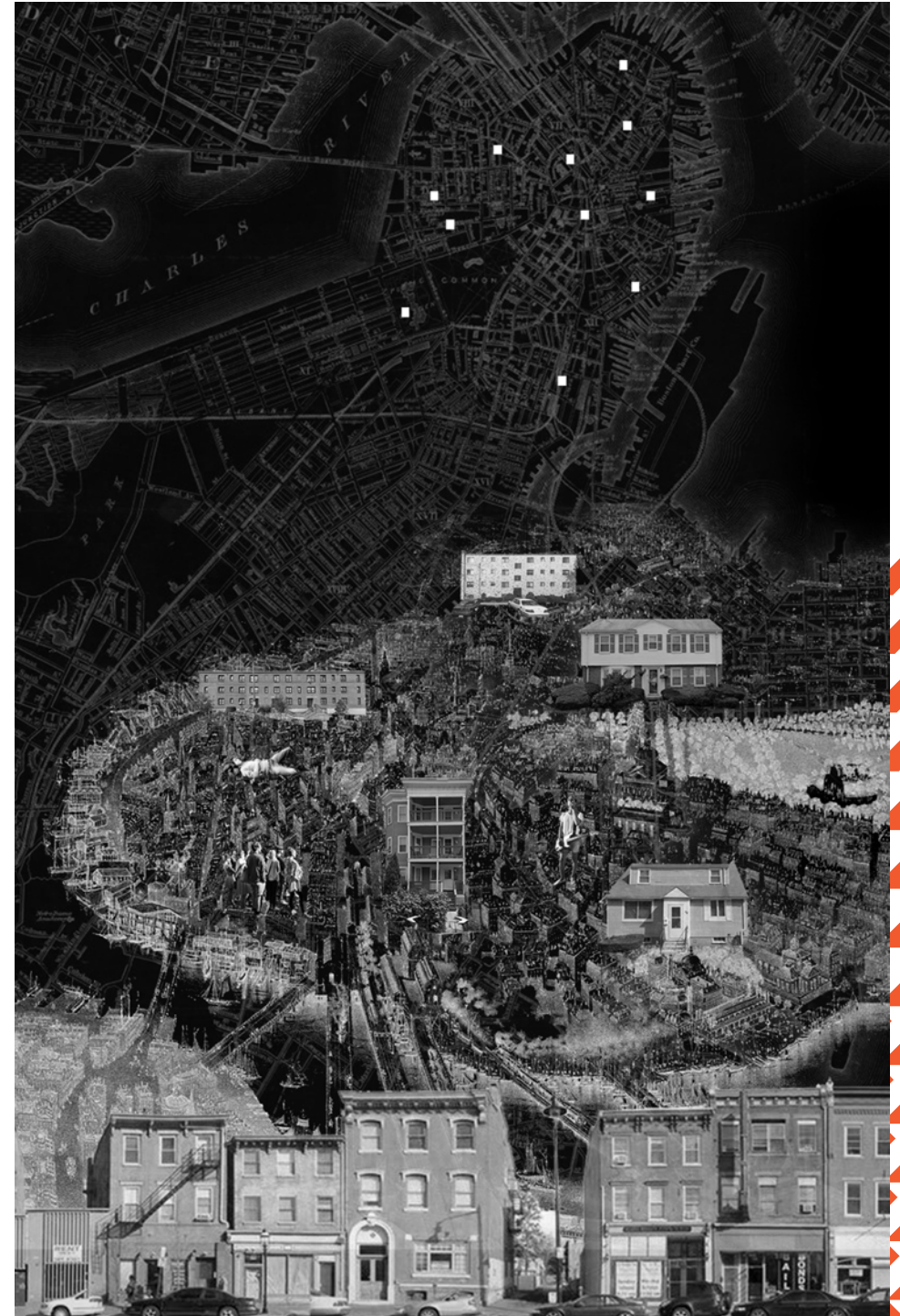
This thesis advisory group is concerned with the study and advancement of the notion of Architecture as the Design of Buildings as framed through one or more of four areas of focus:

— The Form | Content symbiosis re: Surface |
   Space | Structure | Symbol
— Image-Making | Experimental Representation |
   Technique | Drawing | Painting | Video
— Narrative | Memory | Sequence | Meaning
— History | Typology | Analysis | Civilization | City | Identity

The architectural thesis is the student's project and not the advisor's project. The core ideas, interests and ambitions are self-initiated by the student. This thesis advisory group is positioned to assist students in clarifying, evolving and "architecturalizing" their initial provocations. We worked to support the students' fundamental disciplinary topic within the study of the design of buildings and not to mold them according to our own preconceptions. We helped direct, refine and demystify the thesis to frame an architectural issue, contention or curiosity. We helped the student develop a more focused approach and ultimately realize a precise thesis statement that articulates the architectural issues endemic to the project. While the advisor's sensibilities influenced the work, the core values, goals and scope came from the student's...position, the basis for an eventual manifesto.

We looked things up, we read things, we drew things, we modeled things, we recorded discoveries and engaged in the parallel activity of speculation. We conducted analyses of both architectural and non-architectural content. We worked largely through making while grounding work in the appropriate areas of theoretical, historical and/or architectural discourse. We required that all "Architecture as the Design of Buildings" thesis endeavors were to be architectural design projects and that they contended with issues of context, utility, language, typology, space and the evolution of the architectural species, i.e., the making of Architecture.

Advisors: Valeria Herrera, Richard Rosa

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: Villa Stein de Monzie

The two greatest innovations in pictorial representation of the world around us are linear perspective and Cubism. Only Alberti's codification has been explored to an equal level of its significance.

This thesis contends that the medium of space and/or time in architecture has an equal if not greater potential for the use of Cubism as a spatial and metaphorical instigator as it does linear perspective.

Cubism can be read as a rhythmic modulation of space and/or the destruction of the singular view of time in painting. What Picasso intended may not be all that he accomplished.

Le Corbusier is the sole practitioner of these spatial games in architecture. Villa Stein de Monzie at Garches and the Carpenter Center at Harvard exemplify the formal logics of synthetic Cubism and Purism.

Through study and analysis of these seminal works of art and architecture this thesis will develop a spatial strategy that uses Cubism as a formal generator for design. The project will result in the design for an urban villa and garden in Florence.

There is an exhaustion that comes from day-to-day living: one that stems from unending activeness and the continual backwards-moving search for place, being, self, and meaning. In the space of the Commonplace, individuals are only a piece of the fabric of daily life that's always active and moving in the breeze. The individual must become the writer by physically separating from the world of the Commonplace altogether.

The Garden is the world removed, a pastoral-leaning, parallel world. The act of finding contemplation is an act of leisure. It is a theoretical extension of the "real" world, but only in thought, calling on the memory of the writer to recall the other world—similarly to the historic removal from the city to the countryside villa. It allows the writer to maintain a mental state grounded in the present, while simultaneously remembering the past and projecting into the future.

Contemplation is only possible once one experiences and subsequently reflects on the memories of those experiences and observations, which aren't the sole necessities for contemplation, but a necessary initial step. The second step is one's mental operation in response to the first. This step is impossible while still emerged in the space(s) of observation (this being generalized to the entirety of the "Commonplace" as the intense overlay of stimuli always needs observing), therefore an escape is necessary. The writer must pass through the threshold between worlds—the world of the forward-moving reality and the world of the garden, where the writer stands precariously between the consideration of their past and the projection into their future at the moment of the present.

The writing of one's autobiography is a key to focusing the contemplation of the space around the self and the self within the context of its surroundings. It visits the concepts of morals, relationships, experiences, and spirituality, all of which are about to be found within the garden and understood both individually and in the context of one another. Visiting, experiencing and participating in the garden sets the individual up to engage and experience the Commonplace in a grander way.

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: Abstracted Plan Image of the Forward-moving World
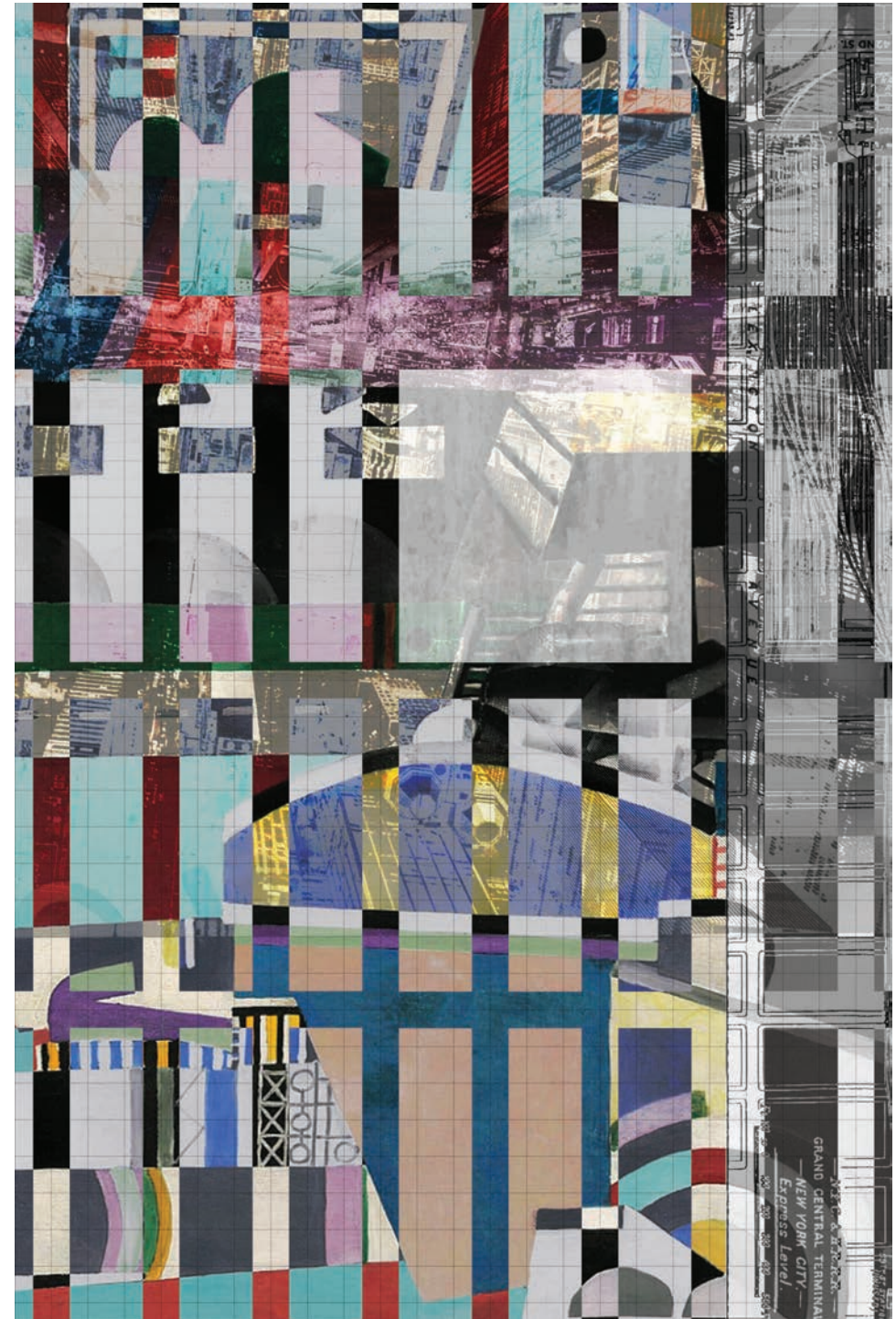
This thesis questions how a building and its fragmented dispersed elements are able to embrace multiple time periods and conditions, capturing a changing perception of a place and creating an alternate universe. Using the idea of theatrical components and fragmented frameworks, a narrative of Detroit's past will be told within abandoned existing buildings (such as the Central Michigan Station). Detroit has experienced both grandeur and a turbulent history. The prosperity of the automobile industry not only brought great success to the American economy and increased capitalist demand, but also was one of the main reasons Detroit has diminished itself: people exited the city into the suburbs and out of the state using the very cars they manufactured. The booming condition versus the current abandoned condition of the state tells a contradictory story like no other and leaves the architectural state so drastically changed and damaged. The position of the city seems unreal / illusory / fictitious and has a notion of being "out of a movie." With this idea of working on Detroit soil and within existing buildings comes the question of what is to remain, and what can be intervened? Preservation versus intervention is also a topic that occurs within this thesis.

   This project does not aim to resolve the heavy issues within Detroit but works between the viewer and the object being viewed (being Detroit and its ruins) as a realm of intermediary, and an alternate universe. Visitors will then be confronted with scenes of the city in its past, present and future. Some key words for the project are: transitions, distorted perception, positive entropy, symbolic fragments, examining the soul and character of a place, and a site as a theatrical setting.

Image: Framed Scenes Interventions   Advisors: Herrera, Rosa   Architecture as the Design of Buildings
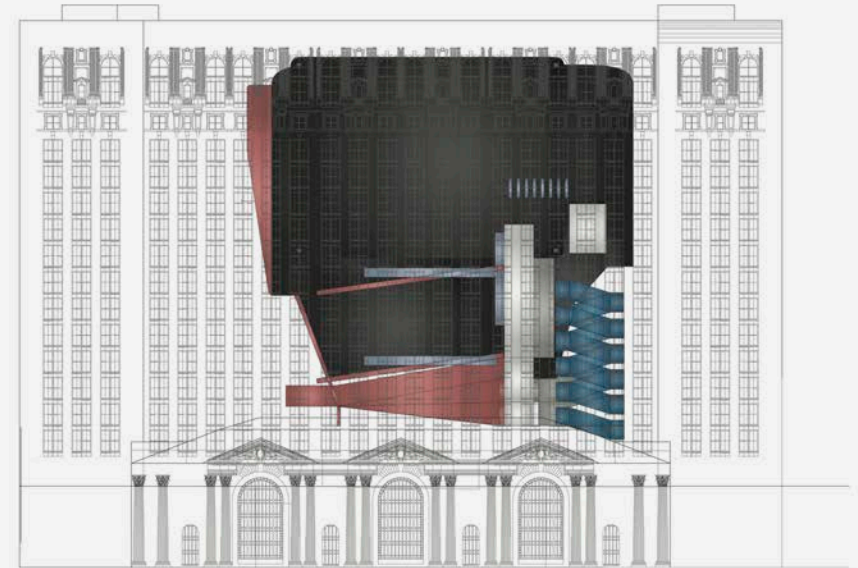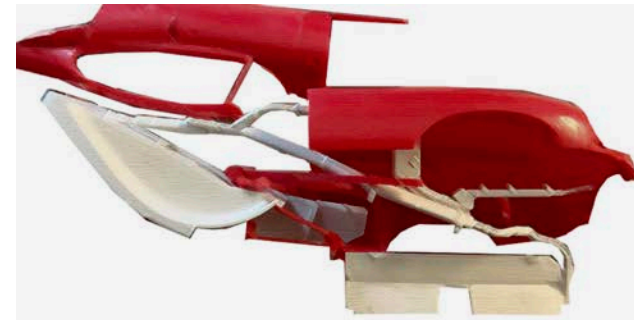
This thesis is contextualized as a memorial for the LGBTQ+ Holocaust victims and used as an attempt to confront + re-write their place back into the erased pages of history. As the ability to evoke not only acknowledgement, but also emotion, is unique to memorials, this proposal is therefore intended to deconstruct the path of suppression in order to construct a concrete place of remembrance for those who never received full liberation.

The memorial, which manifests as an educational, memorial, and emotional tripartite programmatic excursion, is embedded throughout the city of Berlin: a museum located in axial relationship to the Topography of Terror, a memorial parallel + perpendicular to the Nollendorfplatz railway, and an archive along the Spree River. Each programmatic intervention is designed as a standard, inherent, or isolated experience, together contributing to a triangular narrative of memory.

With a clear lack of documents, museums, memorials and emphasis, the LGBTQ+ community's position within the Holocaust has been hidden long enough. The memorial will therefore act as both an emotional acknowledgment and a resource for victims and those wishing to learn. By focusing on the memorialization of these persons, this thesis hopes to bring attention to this erasure and ignite a deeper understanding of their experiences and never-ending suppression.

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: Collage Depicting the Final Experience of the Museum Intervention

This project constructs an architectural language for Acadia National Park. The natural features of this land and its surrounding area continue to be scarred by human development. The design of a precise and contextual response to centuries of acontextual housing is crucial for the preservation of the sacred Acadia landscapes. Human intervention cannot be fully prevented, so it must instead rationally evolve to embody the glacially carved, mountainous forest and rugged coastline.

To explore relationships of building and environment, a house is proposed of the landscape and in a symbiotic relationship with its natural surroundings. It integrates geological systems that generate its form and are formed by the house. These systems act as ventilation and light controls, and use selective transparency to frame views of the landscape. The project constructs a dialogue between the building and the surrounding environment. The envelope of the residence is designed to operate at the command of the user; the structure responds to the natural context through a series of movable panels, and acts as an instrument that enhances the human experience. It breathes and adapts both to humans and to the site. The house is situated in the landscape and responds to conditions such as wind, water, snow, and ice. These climate conditions are allowed to penetrate the residence and its surrounding spaces to varying degrees, engaging occupants in a sequence of site-specific experiences. The house responds to the changing seasons and the polar-opposite weather conditions that come with them. Along with its site-responsive systems, the house also embodies the landscape through a rationalized biomimicry that fuses to and breaks from the rocky environment at specific moments. Sometimes a cave and sometimes an isolated timber frame, the house possesses a formal gradient that is reflective of the transition from forest to coastline edge. The residence is simultaneously integrated and suspended within its site, and moments of transparency lend a sense of ambiguity as to where the house ends and the outside begins. The structure is capable of freely adapting at the scale of the human and assimilating to both the existing geology and the temporal factors of the site's environmental forces.
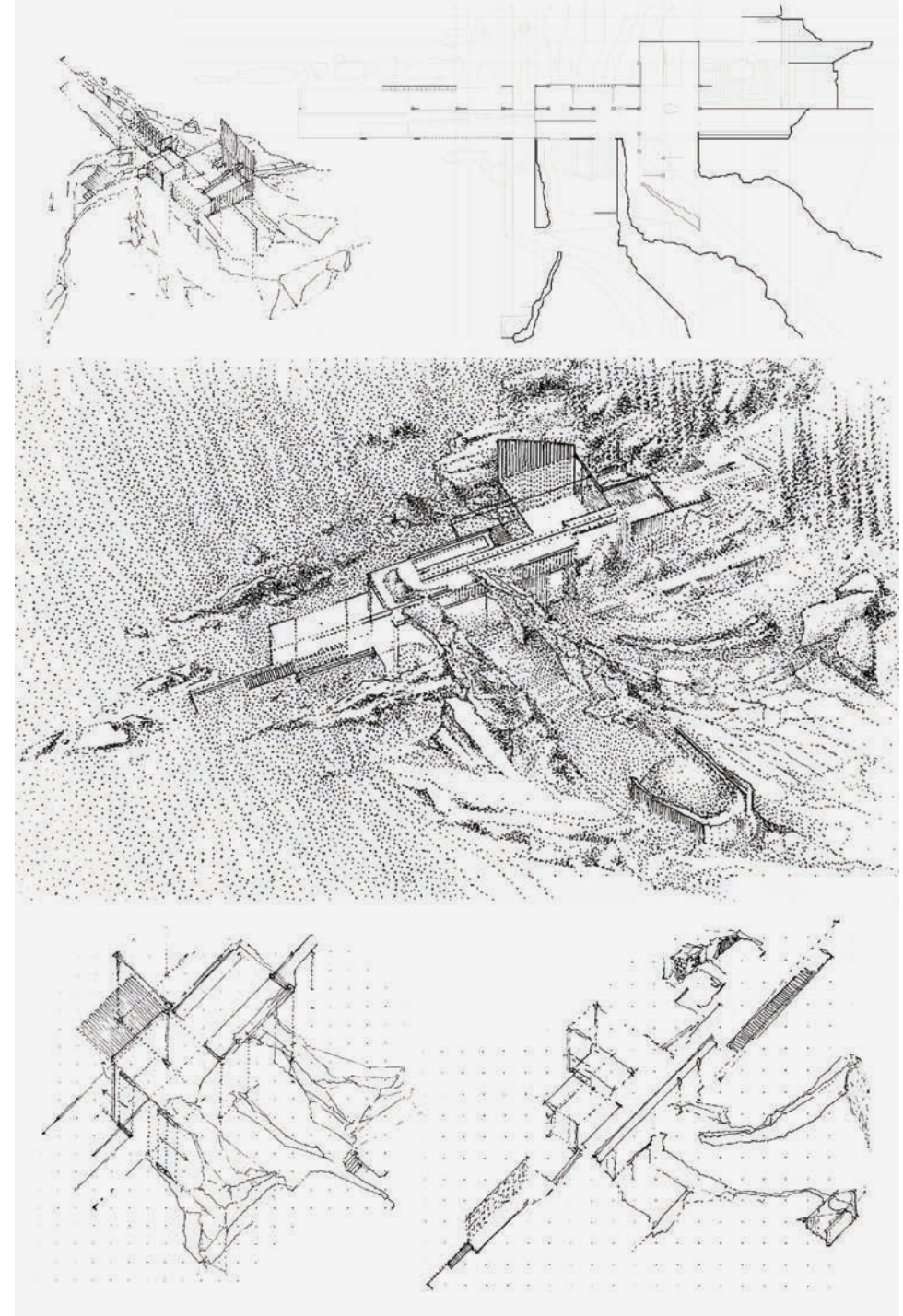
Architecture can be portrayed as the tangible pieces of a society's identity and a tool used to create or maintain national integrity. This inextricable relationship between the identity of architecture and culture has contributed to the quandary of whether architecture should be immutable or continuously evolving. Nigeria's architecture is a physical representation of its complicated history and dynamic people. The early 19th century was witness to the evolution of indigenous construction, the development of brick manufacturing, and the processing of tropical hardwood. The revolution of the construction industry in Nigeria became a catalyst for the introduction of the International style of building into the urban fabric. Nigeria became a cash crop economy, allowing the nation to rise to some economic stability under colonial British rule. With the coming of the missionaries and the British, the urban layout began to respond to different styles of the buildings they brought with them: Afro-Brazilian style and International style, which are both Modernist approaches to architecture.

This project contends with the relationship between Western and traditional architecture in Nigeria. It will investigate and address architecture that prioritizes conservation and preservation of history while responding to the change in era and modern architectural practices within a country with vast diversity like Nigeria. Through in-depth study and analysis of the historical, political, and economic context of two cities in Nigeria—Lagos (southern) and Abuja (northern)—the project hopes to design a housing complex that will embody and exist in the intersection between tropical modern and traditional vernacular architecture. In merging the two, the hope is to construct a Western coastal architectural language that applies to all forms of building, beyond housing.

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: Series of Paintings Highlighting Family, Marriage, Prayer and Death
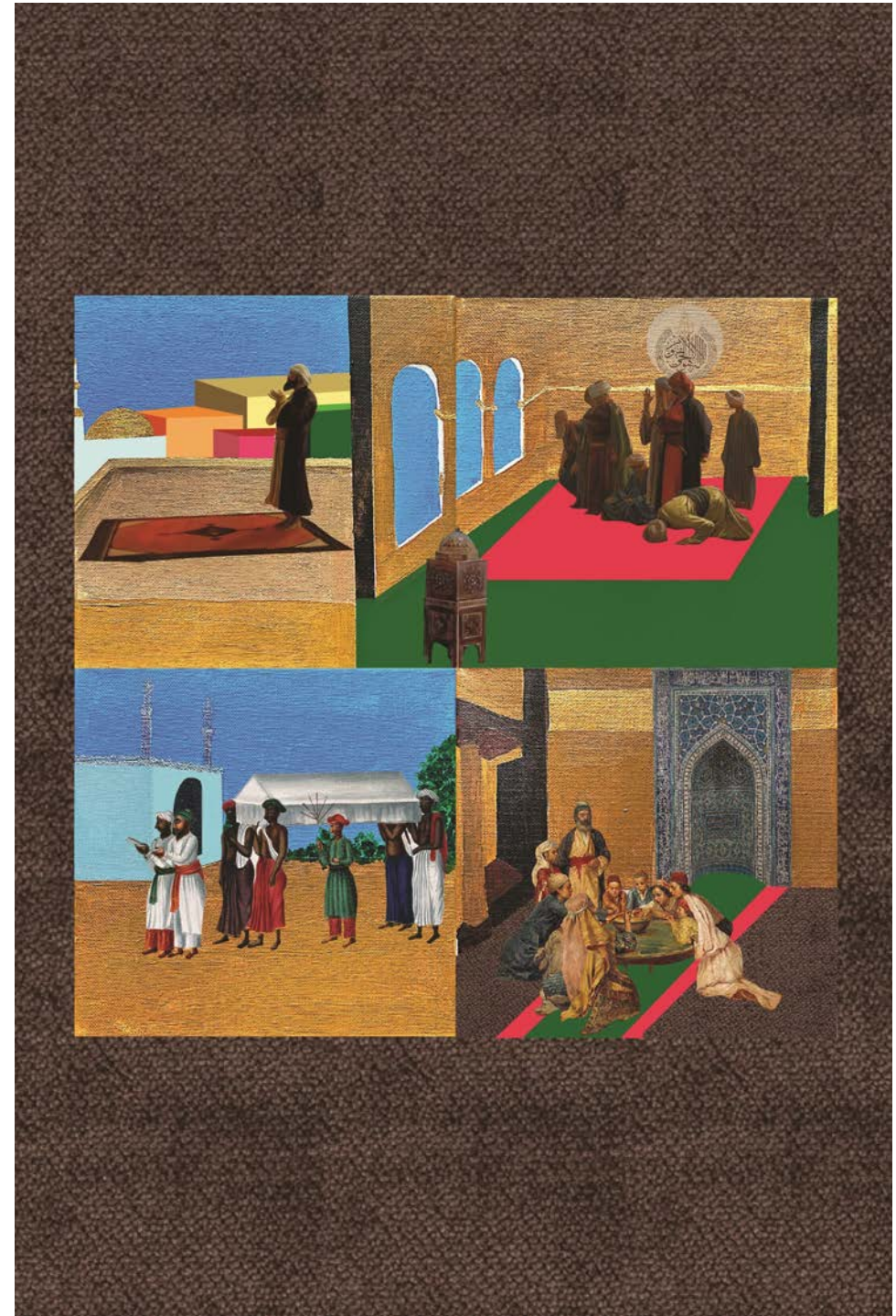
This thesis aims to create a new type of housing for the homeless that changes the public's perception about homeless people by building community and activating conversation. **T**here are currently four types of housing for homeless people: shelters, day centers, transitional housing and permanent supportive housing. **T**his new housing facility aims to be a mix of a shelter and a day center to provide housing for those who need immediate shelter and services for those who need a meal, a shower, or medical attention.

 This new type of housing uses six elements that are crucial when designing for homeless people, according to **H**omelessness and the **B**uilt **E**nvironment: **D**esigning for **U**nhoused **P**ersons: **1.** dignity and self-esteem, **2.** empowerment and personal control, **3.** security, privacy and personal space, **4.** stress management and coping, **5.** a sense of community, and **6.** beauty, meaning and order. **T**hese elements were derived from examining the difficulties that come with being homeless and gives insight into how spaces and environments can start to influence the well-being of a person.

 The project will be situated in a park named **P**ershing **S**quare in **L**os **A**ngeles, **CA**. **A**lthough there are many facilities in **L.A**. for homeless people, there are still **11,365** unsheltered homeless people. **T**he project hopes to create a facility where homeless people feel safe and understood so they can recover from homelessness, while still having the option to build community with the public and other homeless people.

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: Typical vs. Atypical for Housing the Homeless
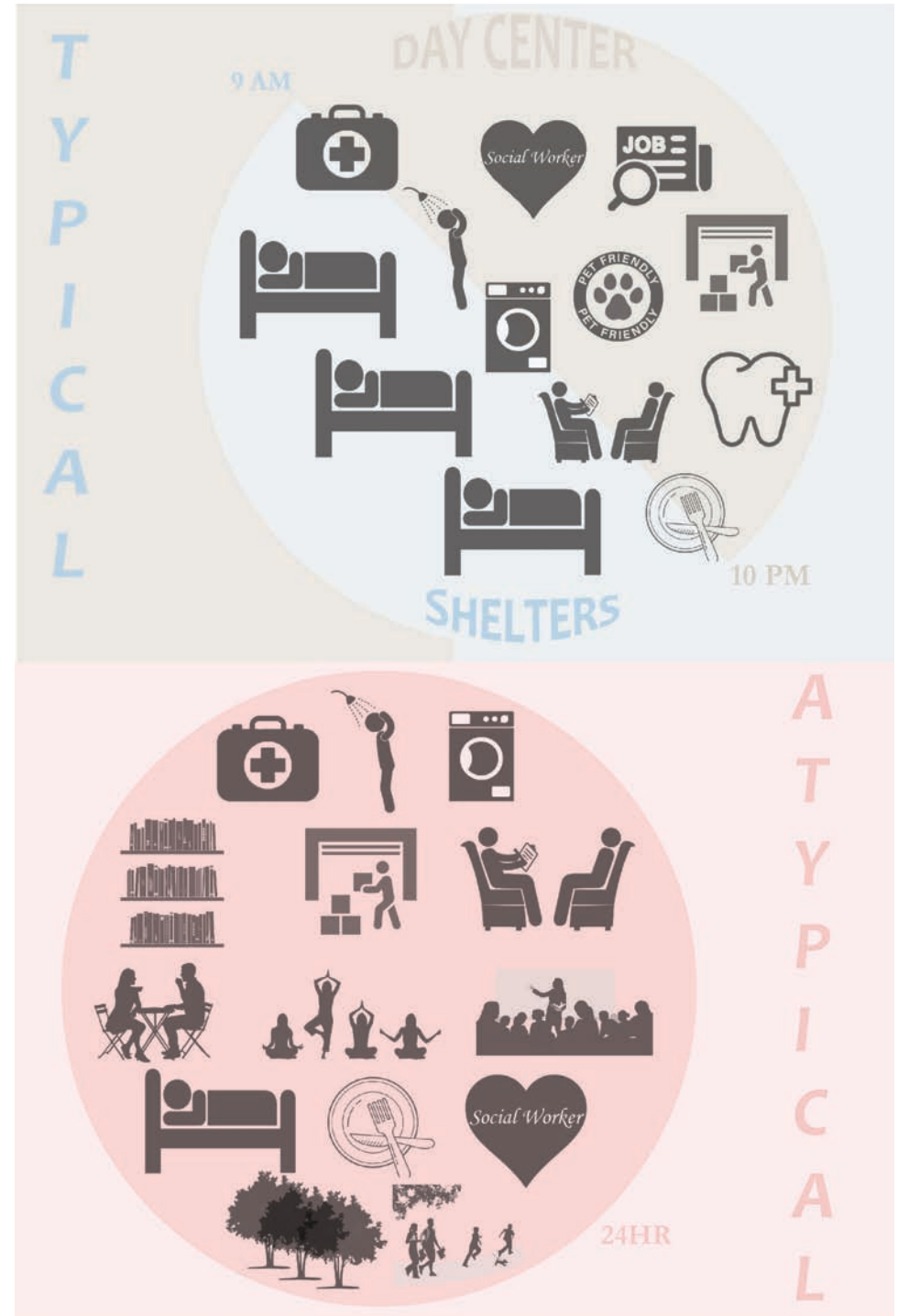
Museum of the Mechanical Eye
The Phenomenology of
Perception in Architecture

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Isabel Sierra

Since ancient times, philosophers have tied knowledge to clear vision. Sight has been deemed the most important sense to mankind. Plato said vision was "humanity's greatest gift." It is human nature to make optical conclusions, to reify, to totalize, to control. What is seen is assumed to be certain because of the uncontested and unexplored optical gray areas upheld by our rational and technological culture. We solidified our ocular-centric society by creating vision-generated understandings of knowledge, truth, and reality. Architecture, along with art and film, deals directly with human existence in space. Architecture is the construction of human perception.

The universe is uncertain and unsettled. Photos and film prove that what you saw was relative to your position in time and space. The invention of the perspective drawing organized reality into an ideal perception where man was in the middle. The invention of the camera proved there is no center. There are gray areas between our glimpses of reality; this project aims to highlight the possibilities of the space between space allowing for human contemplation of our optical understanding.

Like a painting or photograph, architecture is composed of fragments, parts, or fabrications. A perceiver looking at a painting, film, or photograph allows the mind to come up with every possible reality that composed it. The same can be found in architecture. There are as many realities as there are perceivers. Everything visual is a collection of fragmented parts; with every step, the composition changes. These optical dynamics call for a complex fragmentation or kaleidoscopic architecture to question our optical realities.

This thesis contends with the homogeneity of vision and explores the notion of fragmenting the singular linear perception in architecture to critically understand human existence in space. Through a series of optical episodes in Ultrecht's canal-lined park landscape, the architecture highlights and dramatizes our awareness of possible perceptions by constructing our mechanisms of perception and then cinematically shifting, altering, distorting, and complicating the visual experience.

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: The Space between Perception

Architecture as the Design of Buildings

Advisors: Herrera, Rosa

Image: Exploring Forces, Relationships, Movement between Earth and Moon

The thesis is an exploration of the symbiotic relationship between Earth and the Moon through the conceptualization of two libraries, connected through the fabric of space and time. The two libraries, one on Earth and one on the Moon, are to be formally expressed through a mitosis-like interdependency, where both libraries are in constant architectural dialogue with each other despite their separation which occurred some time ago...The Earth-library will serve as a device to understand and position oneself in the context of the universe and everything un-earthly, whereas the lunar library will serve as a device to understand and position oneself in the context of our home planet, the city and society. This juxtaposition of our physical place in the universe versus our experiential place in the universe will be explored deeply.

The thesis positions itself in the architectural discourse through the rigorous study and analysis of the library typology throughout history, to both symbolize meaning and ritualize one's experience of acquiring knowledge. This understanding of the library typology will be tackled through the cataloging of various crucial libraries throughout the history of the discipline, a catalogue that studies structural, programmatic, circulation, and bookshelf systems of these projects. From this analysis, the conceptualization of a terrestrial and lunar library in a dance can be explored, achieved, and heightened.

The Earth site chosen is the research facility of Station Nord, a site near the North Pole that is also the northeastern-most point of Greenland—a site on a cliff isolated from civilization, one that sits at the edge of the world. The lunar site was chosen with help from the Clementine Moon Atlas, located on the 59th parcel on the Earth-facing side of the Moon. The site is located near the geographic center of the face of the Moon, near the crater "Bode." This site allows for a centered position of the lunar-library that is in constant dialogue with the surface of the Earth.

Urban Fields

Societies and their cities are messy. In part and in whole, culture, labor, ritual and politics are at stake in the evolution of cities and their architectures. The city is the arena in which architecture resides. Plato discussed "city" as the moment two people construct society and economy, but contemporary urban environments are far more complex and the possibility for architectural-urban intervention is rich.

About and within such urban contexts, architects conceptualize, strategize, and articulate form systems—they are shifted, provisional and recombinant. Constructing and situating form creates new relationships among extant figures and fields and changes our physical, cultural and political environments.

Urban Fields was dedicated to the construction and advancement of architectural projects situated in the city that explored, expanded, dissected, or diagnosed form questions in relation to a broad variety of topics. Students addressed urban-related topics: how urban identity and culture are constructed in the context of popular film; the relationship between zoning, racism and poverty; sustainable architecture in near-equatorial, urban environments; constructing public space for marginalized populations; identity and institutions in post-colonial Africa; and urban housing and environmental performance. In each case, the authors were inspired by cities with which they are familiar and the possibility of imagining them anew to redefine the ways we collectively inhabit and construct urbanity. The projects are speculative, sometimes enter the realm of "real," and project a future even more complex than the one we encounter today.

Advisors: Elizabeth Kamell, Timothy Stenson

In Seoul, the residential environments where many young people live have been created by rapid urbanization. As a result, many houses where young people live do not meet even minimum living conditions. This thesis aims to make it easier for young people to engage in self-development or social activities by providing architecturally better living spaces. The goal is to design a space where they can live affluent lives, even if the space is small, by providing somewhere they can express their diversity and social life, rather than just a place to sleep.

Seoul has always played a pivotal role in the history of Korea. Especially in modern history, it has experienced colonial rule, the Korean war, cold war, and rapid development during the mid-20th to early-21st century. The urbanization of Seoul has been greatly influenced by these historical events. Most of the social infrastructure was destroyed during the Korean War in 1950-53, and the government had to start over from nothing. At that time, Korea's position was on the front line close to socialist countries, which brought support from democratic countries, especially the U.S. , helping Korea achieve fast development. The city has changed tremendously over the past 70 years; however, due to rapid urbanization and develop-ment, the South Korean government failed to guarantee its citizens stable living spaces. As a result, many shantytowns or uninhabitable residential complexes began to appear. Population centralization brought many economic benefits to South Korea, but also many urban housing problems. Most residential types in Seoul are uniform, making it difficult to find diversity.

The main site is Gwanak-gu District in Seoul, one of the districts where the largest number of young people live in Seoul due to the high density of academic spaces. In the 1980s, Seoul National University expanded their campus to a large site in Gwanak-gu. Gwanak-gu, once mainly farming fields, began to have many houses in poor condition due to the rapidly increasing population. Later, in modern times, many old houses built at that time became residential space for young people due to the cheap rent.

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson   Urban Fields

COLLAGE KOREA
DEVELOPMENT OF SEOUL & PARASITE
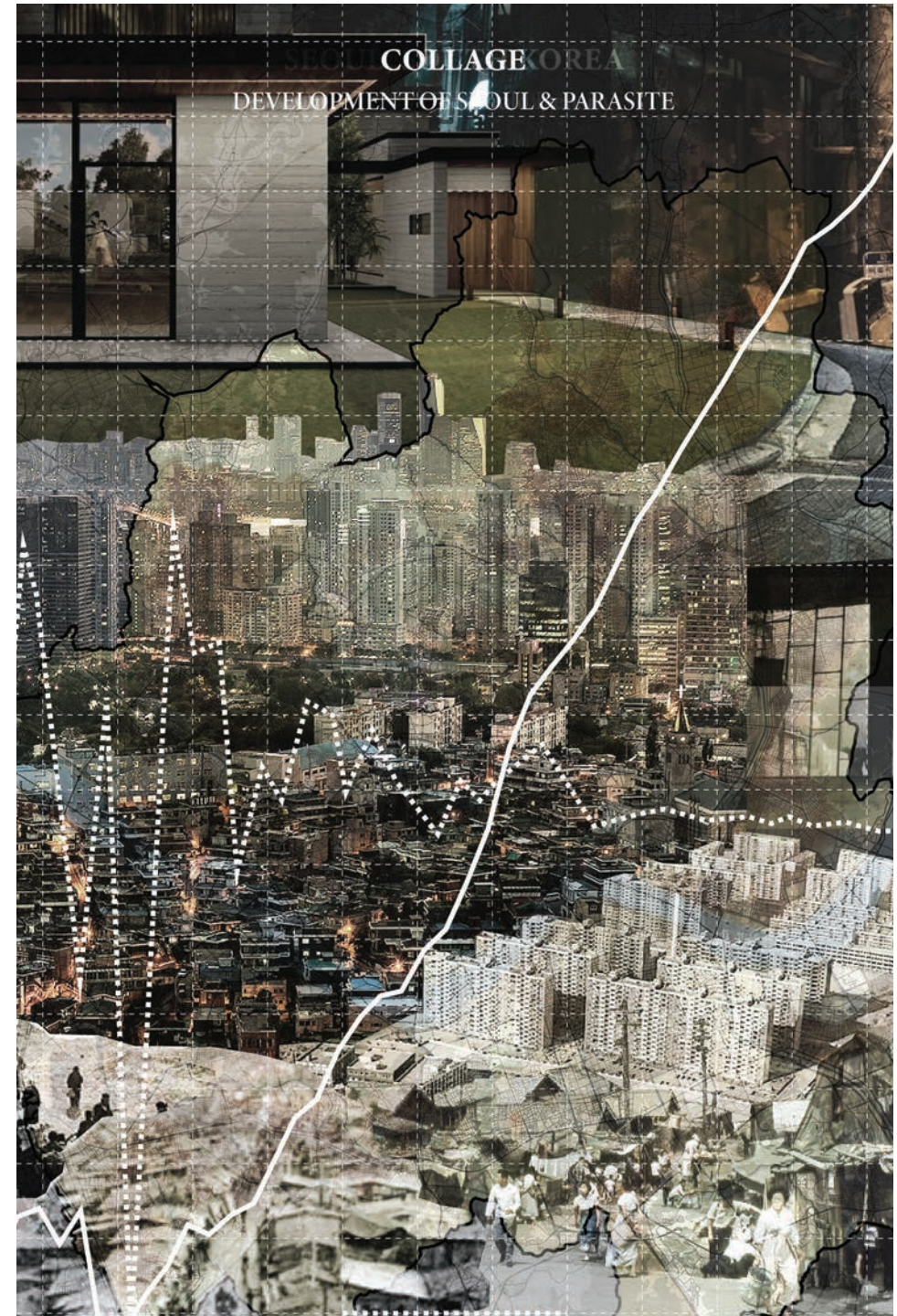
This thesis aims to construct an urbanism that creates a cinematic consumer fantasy of Hong Kong and Taipei. Consumer fantasy represents people's desire to escape from reality by consuming fantastical, almost hallucinatory architectural experiences through the lens of nostalgic local films. By designing a network of urban acupuncture, this multiscalar spatial transformation will respond directly to the impact that was depicted through film. The collective memories and nostalgia will repackage and rebrand these two cities in a reimagined panorama. The consumer fantasy of Urban Commödities is a reimagined urban panorama where people desire to be in a world consuming the experiences on film—an escape from reality and a physical manifestation of cinematic impact.

Cinema, the moving image, has the potential to enhance or distort the understanding of the living realities of an environment. Using the unsuspecting city as its backdrop, it unintentionally markets its location by fueling new interests in its audience. With Taipei's and Hong Kong's historical and cultural ties to film phenomena and production, spatial developments that transform due to cinematic urbanism will be the instigator of this projection.

The research is grouped into three thematic narratives: city as backdrop, city as nostalgia, and city as consumption. The project insists on and participates in a cycle of re-rendering of the city. An in-depth analysis of the impacts of nostalgic Gang Feng films was instrumental in shifting urban change in its real-life locations. The production of images, imaging of the city, acted as the catalyst through cinematic urbanism and/or cultural artifacts. Through the cinematic intervention in these locations, the constructing of urban imaginaries due to public curiosity caused urban change that promoted redevelopment and revitalization.

Urban Fields

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson

Image: Multiscalar Infrastructural Network: Cinematic-Urban Impact, Hong Kong & Taipei
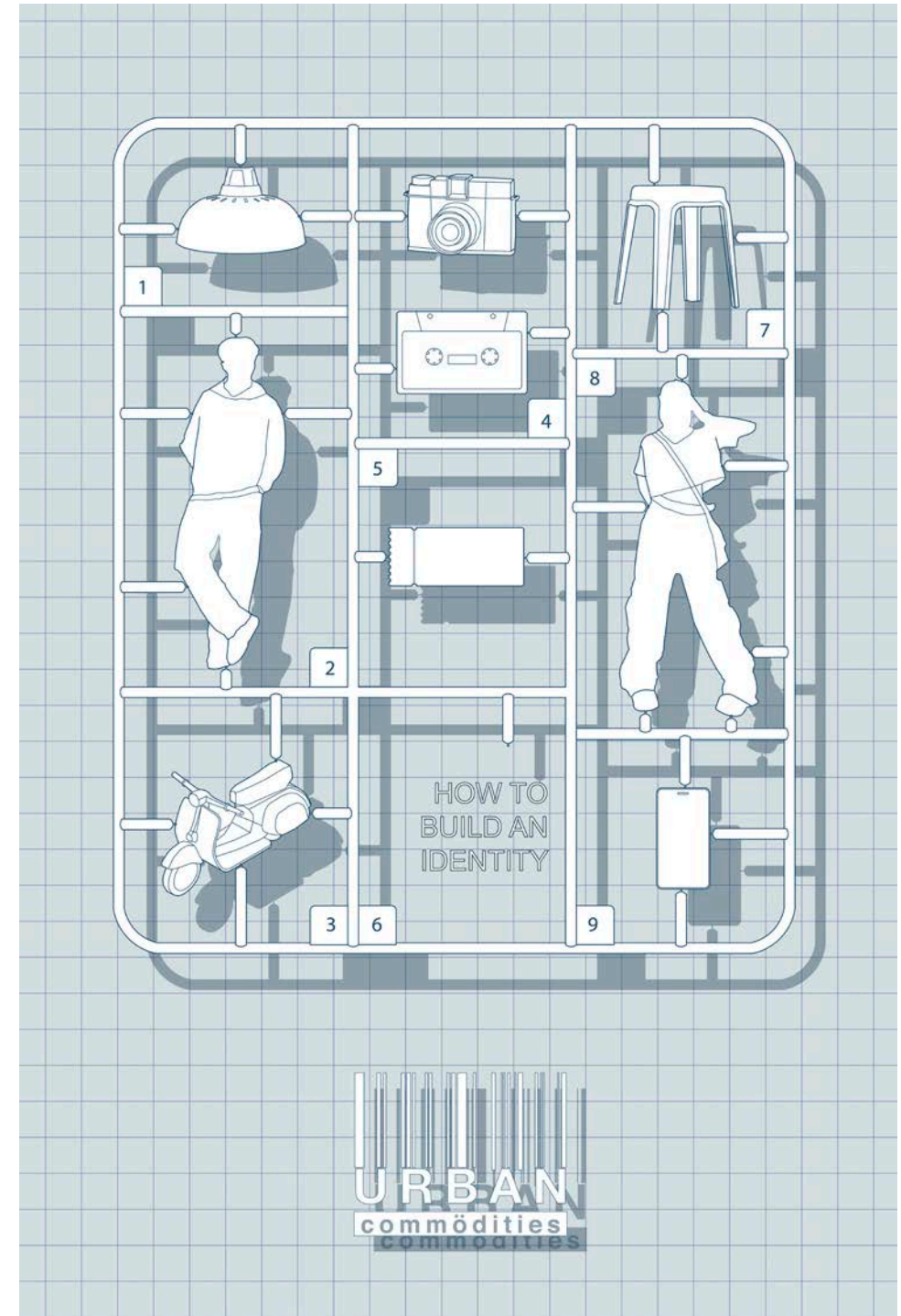
One can define "sustainable urbanism" as a discipline to orient our built environment for the well-being of this planet and its inhabitants with due consideration of climate and naturally available resources. Sadly, the urban fabric of Dubai does not align with these ideologies. In the words of Peter Buitenhuis, "It must be every inch a proud and soaring thing, rising in sheer exultation that from bottom to top it is a unit without a single dissenting line—that it is a new, the unexpected, the eloquent peroration of most bald, most sinister, most forbidding conditions." The rapid growth of the economy resulted in the construction of a parade of skyscrapers, using architecture to establish power, without any thought given to the consequences on the micro-climate of the area.

The last three objectives of Dubai's 2040 Urban Master Plan are: to enhance environmental sustainability; safeguard the emirate's cultural and urban heritage and strengthen citizens' attachment to older neighborhoods; and develop comprehensive legislation and plan a governance model to support sustainable development and growth.

Considering all of this, this project focuses on dissecting the existing built environment, concentrating on the Sheik Zayed Road (SZR), which is home to the entire strip of skyscrapers in Dubai. Going further, the research includes climate analysis and building performance using various environmental performance analysis software. Building performance analysis includes the study of Almas Tower (the first skyscraper of the strip on Sheik Zayed Road) and façade redesign using the environmental performance analysis data with building context using climate-conscious materials, construction techniques, and redesign of a passive cooling system in the structure.

Urban Fields

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson

Image: Intervention of Green Architecture in Skyscrapers

The Benin Empire, also known as the Edo Kingdom or the Kingdom of Benin, was founded by the ancient Benin People in the tropical rainforest on the southern flank of what is now the Federal Republic of Nigeria. Ancient Benin had their capital in Edo, presently known as Benin City in Edo State. One of the oldest and longest-lasting monarchies in the world, the historic Benin Kingdom was built around the 11th century A.D. and lasted until 1897 when British soldiers annexed it.

Viewing the sites and infrastructure of present-day Benin City, it is clear that the city has lost its great identity, culture, and architectural values. The culture of the Benin Kingdom is gradually being lost. The kingdom was widely known for its civilization, use of art and sculpture, and its history of exporting materials like palm oil to advance its economy.

This project aims to use the criticism from Francis Kere, Gando Primary School, and Sir David Adjaye's ideology on local architecture, which has kept the use of local traditional forms in their building while proposing a new modern architectural language for the people of Benin. The data collected in this project are drawings and photographs of the people of Benin's culture and their historical housing typology (plans and sections). The project asks: Can we re-sign a language? The project concludes by proposing a new form, language and building typology that the people of Benin can identify with, giving hope and continuity to the culture. The proposed building is a vocational school that teaches and helps young kids maintain the heritage and culture of the Benin people.

Urban Fields

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson

Image: Benin Kingdom Art

Many cities seemingly set out to make urban locations resilient to demonstrations from the outset. As a result, the construction of a public voice has always remained a spatial concern. The nature of demonstration has shifted towards protests as a collective formation that breeds antagonism and adversity, transforming civic agency into a form that is no longer a true expression of thoughts and beliefs. This leads to the reality that the only way to gain attention and acknowledgement of current issues is through manipulative means, often in the form of a physical shift of architectural space and objects, particularly in the urban setting. Protests themselves are temporal events, though transforming the city so as to develop a new interpretation of such an event implies that it belongs to the greater public while also challenging the construction of possibility. The creation of such a space would begin to encourage the responsiveness and expressiveness of its voices.

The thesis looks at Manhattan, the financial capital of the world, and aims to construct a greater public presence in one of the world's most influential cities. Much like the ambitions of the "Occupy Wall Street" movement and Living Theatre's "Paradise Now," the project seeks to install itself into and completely transform the civic space of Manhattan to generate a space of friction and expression, acting against the capitalist system of governance that favors privatization. Public space that has been "tamed" would instead become an opportunity where activism and public expression can flourish.

Spaces of protest frequently carry a sense of conflict and dissonance that makes them unacceptable in the larger spectrum of society and urban space. A space that promotes protests as peaceful yet powerful public experiences has the potential to influence the pacing of urban function within the city while also altering its flow. This new interpretation creates a dramatic display that encourages both a change in existing views and conditions and the expression of concern about the current condition of society through the radicalization of spectacle.

Urban Fields

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson

Image: The City Becomes a Center of Theatrics
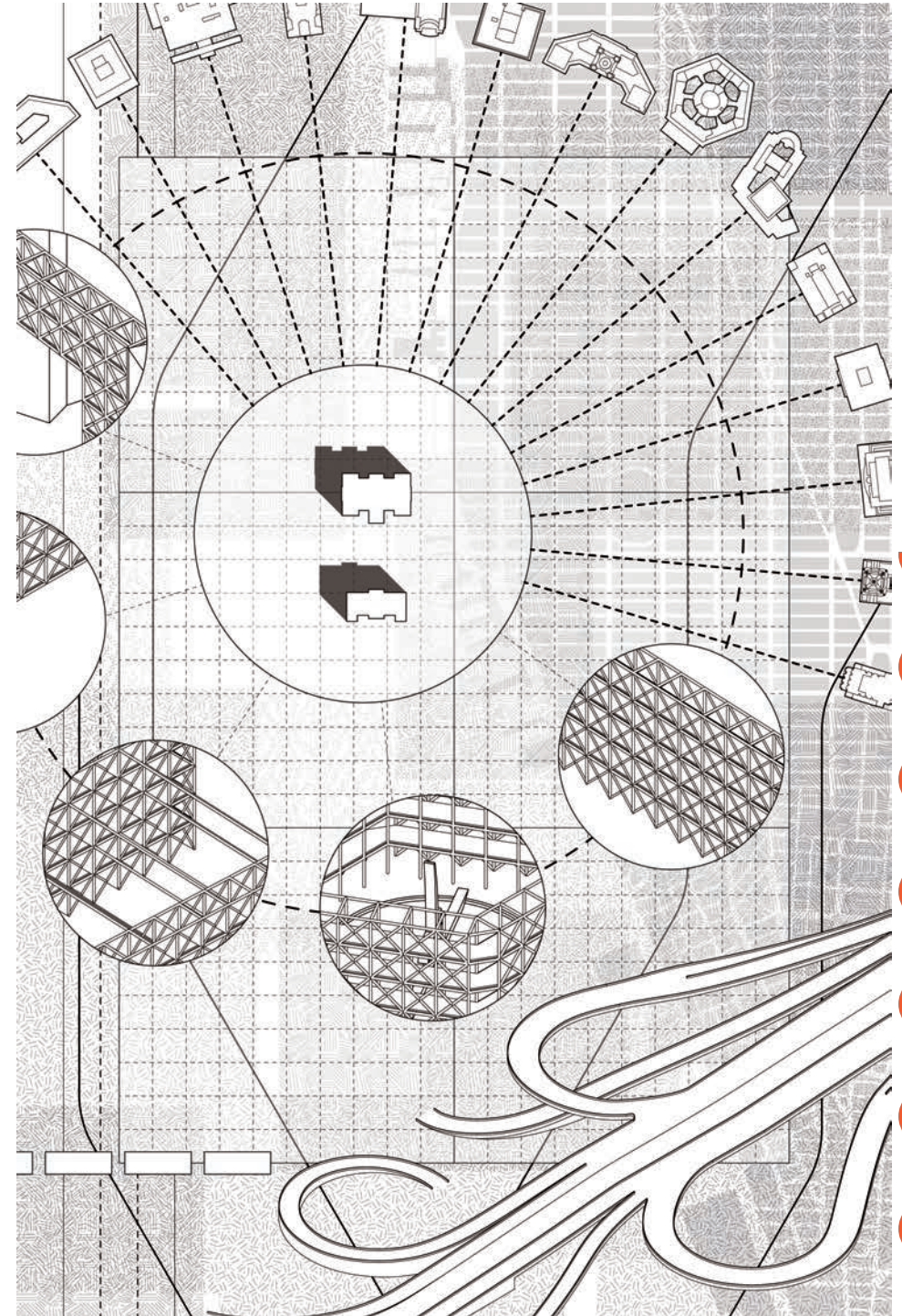
Impromptu Ad-Hoc Cardboard City
Representation through Overwriting
the Urban Surface

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Calvin Leung

Self-expression is the most important component of public space. Public space is crucial to all but especially to those most marginalized in society, as this might be one of the only outlets where they can represent themselves.

On Sunday, it is common to see many Filipino domestic workers gathering around the public plazas and roads of Hong Kong, chatting, sharing food, singing, dancing...This temporary transformation overwrites the city surface and completely disregards the existing boundaries and rules, creating its own ad hoc system that piggybacks off the existing infrastructure of the city.

This culture of having domestic maids is ingrained within the very architecture and design of flats in Hong Kong; most flats above a certain square-footage have built-in maid quarters, which are typically separated from the main living area and usually located at the back of the kitchen and laundry room.

These maids work six days a week, for up to 10 hours a day, with time off only during Sundays and public holidays, so the cardboard city becomes the act of protest. Through the overwriting of the central business district of Hong Kong, they create form, presence, and representation—the only time they can finally construct a domesticity of their own and, in a way, their only outlet for self-expression, their only opportunity to push back against the system of oppression and exploitation.

The goal of this thesis is to unite the currently fragmented systems, allowing foreign domestic workers to amplify and legitimize their ability to make Place in the city. Through the development of a new system using the existing material palette of found materials, and the design and use of minimal and simple tools, they will be equipped to collectively build a new architectural identity. These places and objects will allow Filipino domestic workers to gain recognition and the feeling of belonging, and to recolonize the colonial monuments of Hong Kong, to create a temporary but completely new surface of the city.

Image: The Recolonisation of Colonial Monuments   Advisors: Kamell, Stenson   Urban Fields
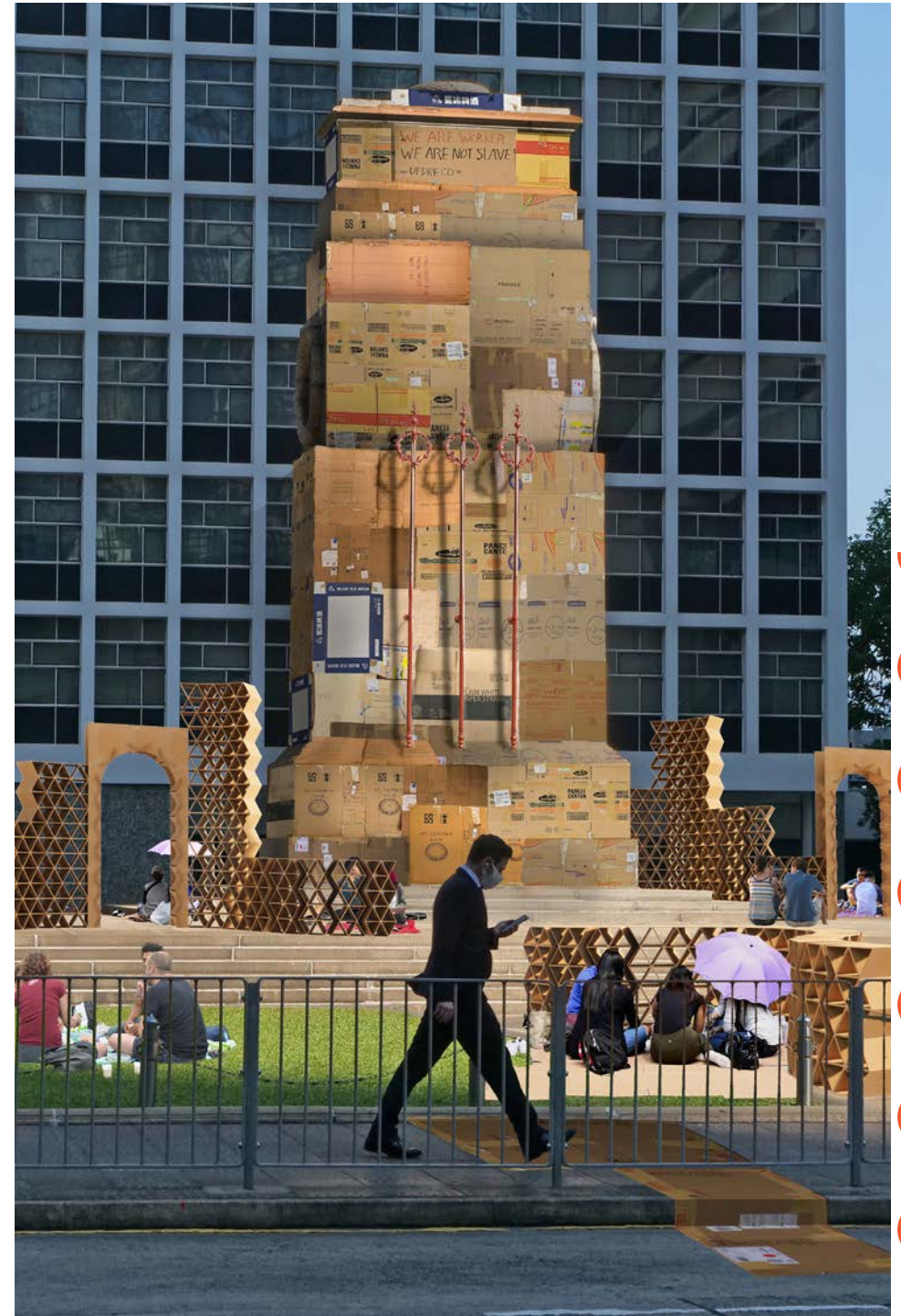
The row house is not native to the **U.S.** but was influenced by **British** Georgian-style townhouses. **The** first style of row house in this country was the **Federal** style, which became popular and dominated the housing market between the **Revolutionary War** and the 1830s. **The** row houses were designed to serve as single-family homes that could also accommodate servants in the building. **The** dimensions of the floor plans vary, with widths between 20 and 25 feet and depths between 35 and 40 feet with the addition of a backyard/garden on a typical 100-foot lot. **All** levels are connected by a single stairway; some row houses might have a service stairway at the rear. **The** floor plan of the **Federal**-style row houses became the foundation of the row houses that still exist today in many cities, predominantly on the **East** coast of the **U.S.**

    The typology and concept of row houses were praised by many as one of the characteristics of **New York City**, the "city of houses." **As** we enter a new era driven by the ideas of resiliency and sustainability, row houses and their façades, interiors and building systems are becoming obsolete as they cannot satisfy current housing needs. **We** are also experiencing rapid population growth around greater **New York** that further pushes the concept of single-family style row houses to the edge. **This** thesis explores methods of retrofitting 19th-century row houses that can accommodate 21st-century needs for resettlement housing of much higher density.

Urban Fields

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson

Image: Possible Retrofit of Existing Row House

The city contains a multitude of programs, dynamic sections, and interchange of diverse peoples that interplay and constantly bring into perspective new understandings and viewpoints of the ever-evolving space. As the city developed, those programs and peoples were relegated and controlled into occupying various neighborhoods, driving the development of neighborhood identity as well as developing inequalities. **T**hese inequalities were exploited and used to further marginalize groups of people, utilizing city planning as the primary tool to divide the city and drive the narrative.

Through time, city planning techniques were then adapted to seek an undoing of the inequalities and neighborhood deficits they were responsible for. This led to a multitude of new approaches to moving people around in the city, developing corridors of connectivity and promoting the transfer of resources between neighborhoods. **H**owever, the financial deficits and associated inequalities remain, proving that city planning and development of transportation connectivity, or corridor development are simply not enough to address the larger echoing issue of inequality that years of city planning built and reinforced.

This thesis will investigate another way of addressing the inequalities of monetary investment and capital between neighborhoods in Syracuse, **NY**, analyzing the impact of planning practices over the past 70-plus years. **T**his thesis will identify the goals of previous planning techniques, understand their implementation, then draw conclusions on how the development of the neighborhoods or capital within them moved from census to census. **T**hen as an alternative to **REZONE S**yracuse, a current proposal for city planning, this thesis will propose a series of architectural interventions along the echoes of past city planning boundaries promoting the flow of people, capital, and diverse ideas between "have" neighborhoods and "have not" neighborhoods.

Urban Fields

Advisors: Kamell, Stenson

Image: City Planning in Syracuse over 70 Years

Medium Household Income 2020 USD

71,286 79,207

31,408

23,762

15,841

12,563

1980 1990 2000

N
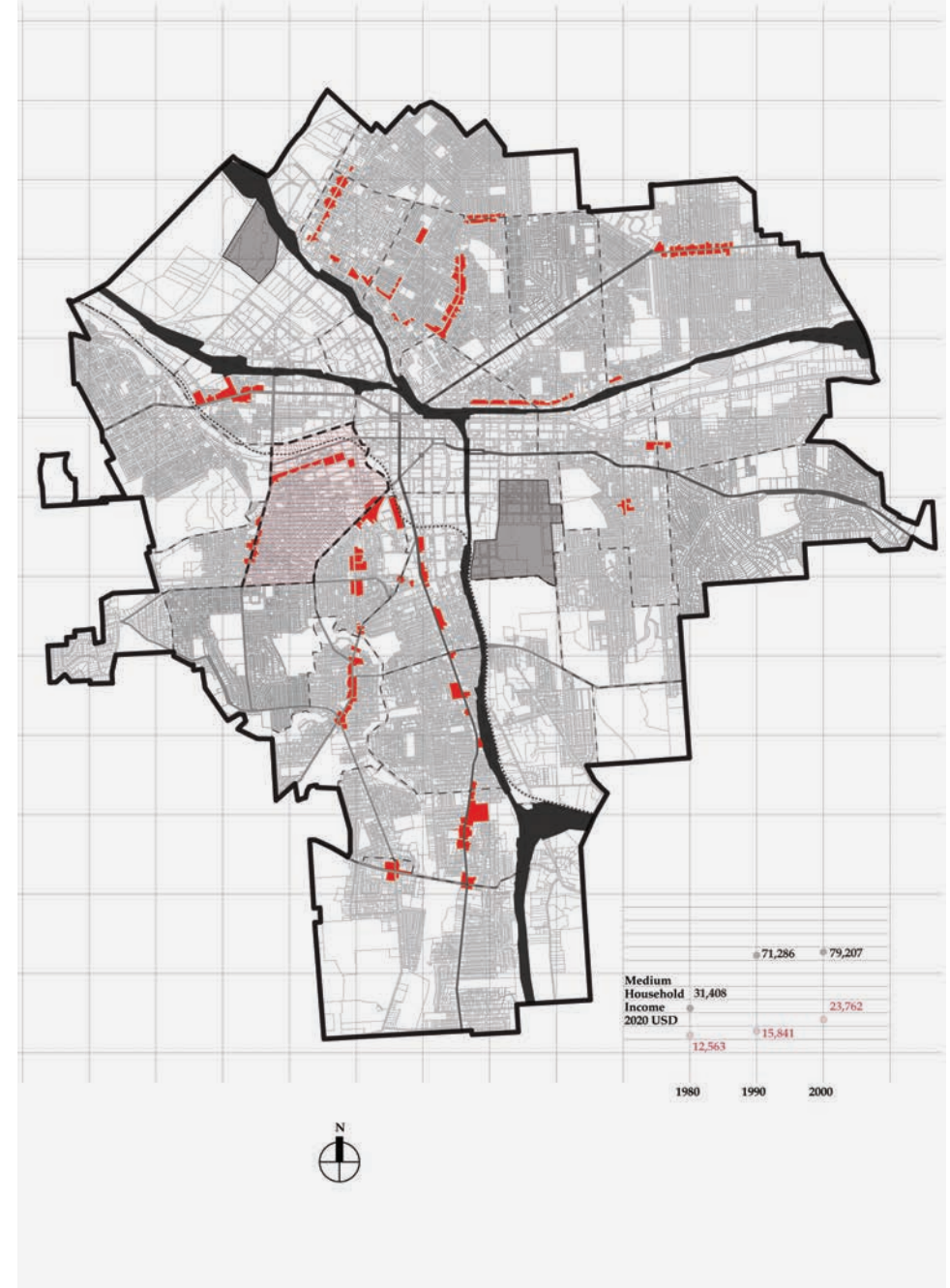
As a group, our research interests overlap at the intersection of the material, system, building, and community scales that compose the total built ecology—questioning the ways in which architecture reorganizes energy and matter to perform its role as mediator between uncontrolled and controlled environments; examining the role of architecture in a rapidly emerging future of resource depletion, climate change, and global economic disparity; bridging conventionally separate disciplinary silos and methodologies in order to engage in the modes of integrated thinking that will be required to design resilient human habitation for an imminent future characterized by extremes. Topically and methodologically, our interests occupy both the conventional core of design research and the bleeding edges that overlap with territories of energy systems, life sciences, human behavior, infrastructure, data, material science, philosophy, and taking action. Our research is conducted at multiple scales in the built environment, from **DNA** to whole urban constructs, while importance is placed on investigating critical systemic interdependencies and causations across enduring/stubborn spatio-temporal boundaries.

Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Bess Krietemeyer, Daekwon Park, Nina Sharifi, Yutaka Sho

Destruction Reconstruction
Reimagining Timber Demolition,
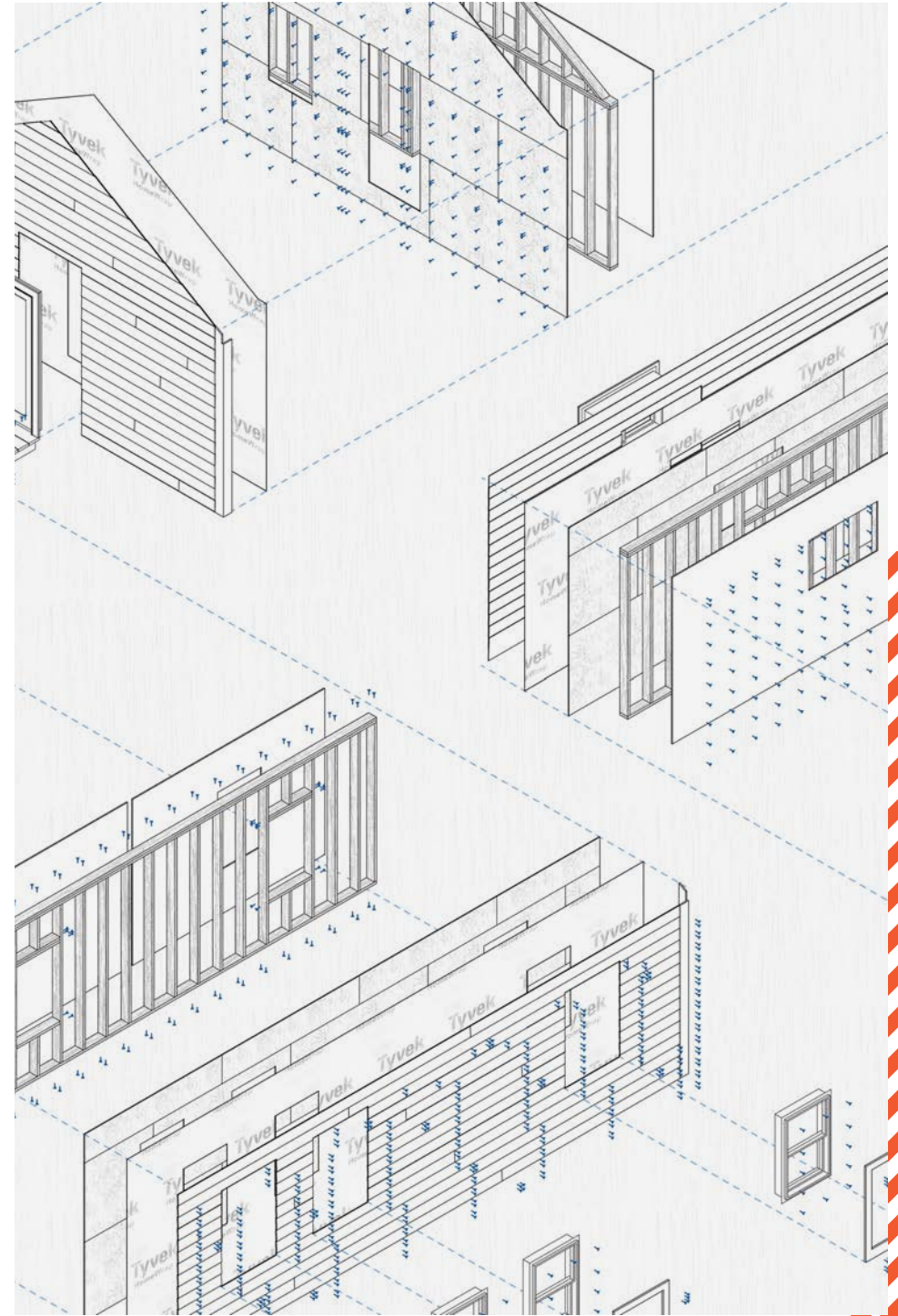Construction, and Lifecycle

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Thomas Brossi

Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Exploded Typical Timber Skeleton

In the pursuit of sustainable architecture there is a critical need to address the typically linear nature of the construction process and the usage of materials. The ambition of this thesis is to assess the reuse of wood and curate a tangible methodology for recycling. This exploration is needed, as about 75% of timber construction and demolition waste are typically subject to landfill, dismissing any opportunities for new uses and effectively cutting the lifecycle of the wood short.

One of the issues the thesis attempts to address is the logistical challenge of reusing wood. With about 90% of timber waste originating from demolition, the current process of removing nails and assessing wood is too labor-intensive and limiting in terms of the potential of the wood. Therein lie two issues to address: How do we make the process of denailing easier so that when current timber structures reach the end of their lives they aren't piled on the landfill? And how do we make future timber construction easier to disassemble?

Through hands-on experimentation and digital prototyping this thesis will begin to address the latter question with ideas for assembly that anticipates demolition and the passage of materials between generations and future architecture. Consequently, the project envisions timber construction that follows a nonlinear path of material usage and an extended lifespan.

White Picket Possibilities
Socially, Economically and
Environmentally Reshaping Suburbia

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Brendan Carroll

What does the future of suburbia look like? For much of its history suburbia marketed itself as a pillar of the American dream. While it could be argued that for many years owning a single-family home was an obtainable goal for most Americans, this is far from the case today. Suburbia has shifted from the housing type advertised for the masses to a housing type only obtainable by a fraction of Americans. Suburbia and the housing units within it do not match the social, economic, or environmental needs of today's society.

As the demand for suburban living remains at all-time highs, there is a need for a new suburbia that fits the need of today's society rather than that of the 1970s. Suburbia needs to begin to densify to reduce its massive per-resident carbon footprint when compared to that of cities. This need to densify gives designers an opportunity to decide what a new suburbia could look like. A suburbia with informal rentals such as Airbnb at the forefront of design, as a way to supplement income to make homeownership affordable, will continue to climb. This new suburbia must focus mainly on small units. When suburbia gained popularity after World War II, it made sense to focus on families since they were the most rapidly growing household type. Today a similar focus is needed for homeowners living alone, as they account for just over 35% of households yet are almost entirely ignored in current suburban design. Morristown, NJ is the chosen location for the design test, as it very closely represents many U.S. suburbs. While this new suburbia has a site for the sake of research and climate specialization, it strives to be an example of the evolution suburban towns must undergo to remain an integral part of society and culture, which they have been for much of the last century.

Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: A 21st-Century Cul-de-sac

Self-built/informal settlement is defined as an overcrowded urban district occupied by people with relatively low incomes. It is engraved in our brains as something bad, with negative social and economic connotations. This thesis defines informal settlement, often called by the socially constructed term "slum," as just another type of urban settlement. It intends to see the informal settlement as a naturally formed vernacular residential area that shows spatial patterns different from those of the conventional sequence of planning. Communities constructed by residents themselves have various forms of informality, allowing the neighborhoods to inherit values that are lacking in other urban peripheries. This thesis focuses on exploring that unique heritage to investigate what it means to "put things together" in the contemporary urban field.

The global urban population is dramatically increasing, and the number of people in self-built neighborhoods is rapidly growing. Informal settlements are the only areas in urban fields where the poor can settle down. It is undoubtedly critical for future cities to devise ways to manage their underserved communities. This thesis complicates the word "informal" with more than just its negative connotations by exploring its potential to become an ideal form of the affordable residential community.

In addressing the topic of "informal" human settlement, it is critical not to take the term "informal" for granted. This thesis defines and categorizes different forms of informality through a matrix and proposes a redevelopment project in an underserved neighborhood as an example of redefining it as a naturally formed human settlement that welcomes those who seek an affordable living environment.

Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Embracing "Informal" in the Urban Field
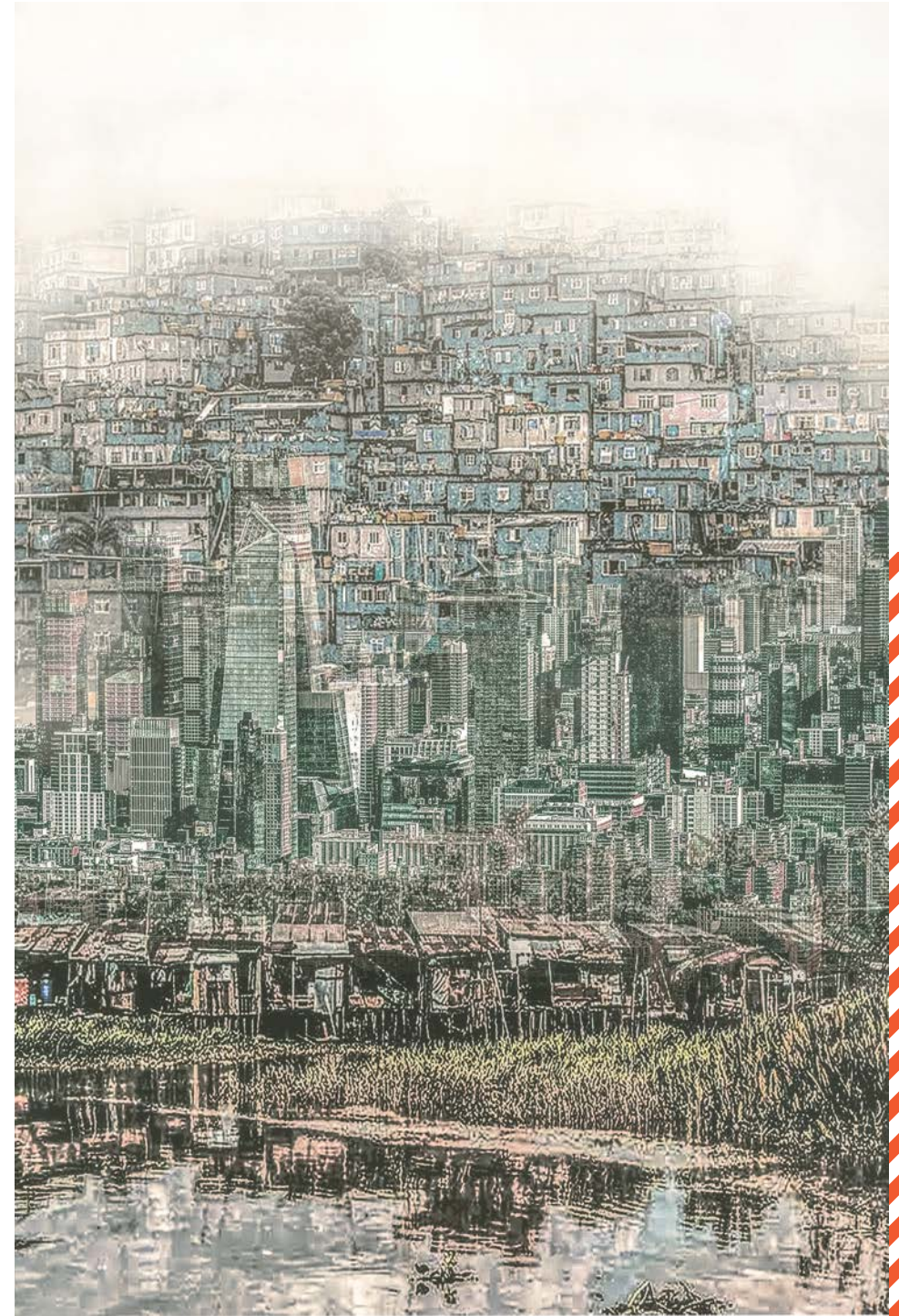
Quantum thinking involves a mode of abstract thinking that opposes our natural and classical understanding of the world. The field is dominated by ideas about superposition, duality, entanglement, and paradoxes. The notion that reality exists in multiple states, all at once, each directly influencing the other instantaneously through modes of recording and observation, are all ideas that can influence our understanding of the possibilities of space and time in the architectural discipline.

This thesis aims to challenge our normalized model of the world using principles taken from quantum physics. Within quantum physics, objects can behave in irrational ways, like simultaneously exhibiting behavior found in different states of matter. In our normalized world, objects are fixed and static. They are permanent and exist even outside of our awareness and presence. However, in a quantum environment, they can be intrinsically linked to our existence and awareness, one where our surroundings can only exist with our unique output of bodily data. Using this concept, the dynamism of a quantum environment can bring about new forms and designs that change according to the already dynamic nature of the world. With this new simulated model, the form of the architecture can adapt differently to every user, creating a tailored experience for every need.

The body is a complex collection of variable data, so to investigate more precisely, this part of the research focuses on the body's ability and the environment's accessibility. The aim is to dismantle the separation of spaces between abled-bodied and disabled-bodied people and to equalize the inequity of accessible routes for people with disabilities. In this way, the question becomes: how can we highlight accessibility in a building that we have taken for granted using these concepts of agency, dynamism, and adaptability (all inspired by concepts taken from quantum physics)? Can we challenge these notions of static existence by linking awareness to existence? And, does our unique input of data from our bodies have the power to put things in and out of existence?

Aftertives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Superposed Perspective of Responsive Spatial Forms to Viewer
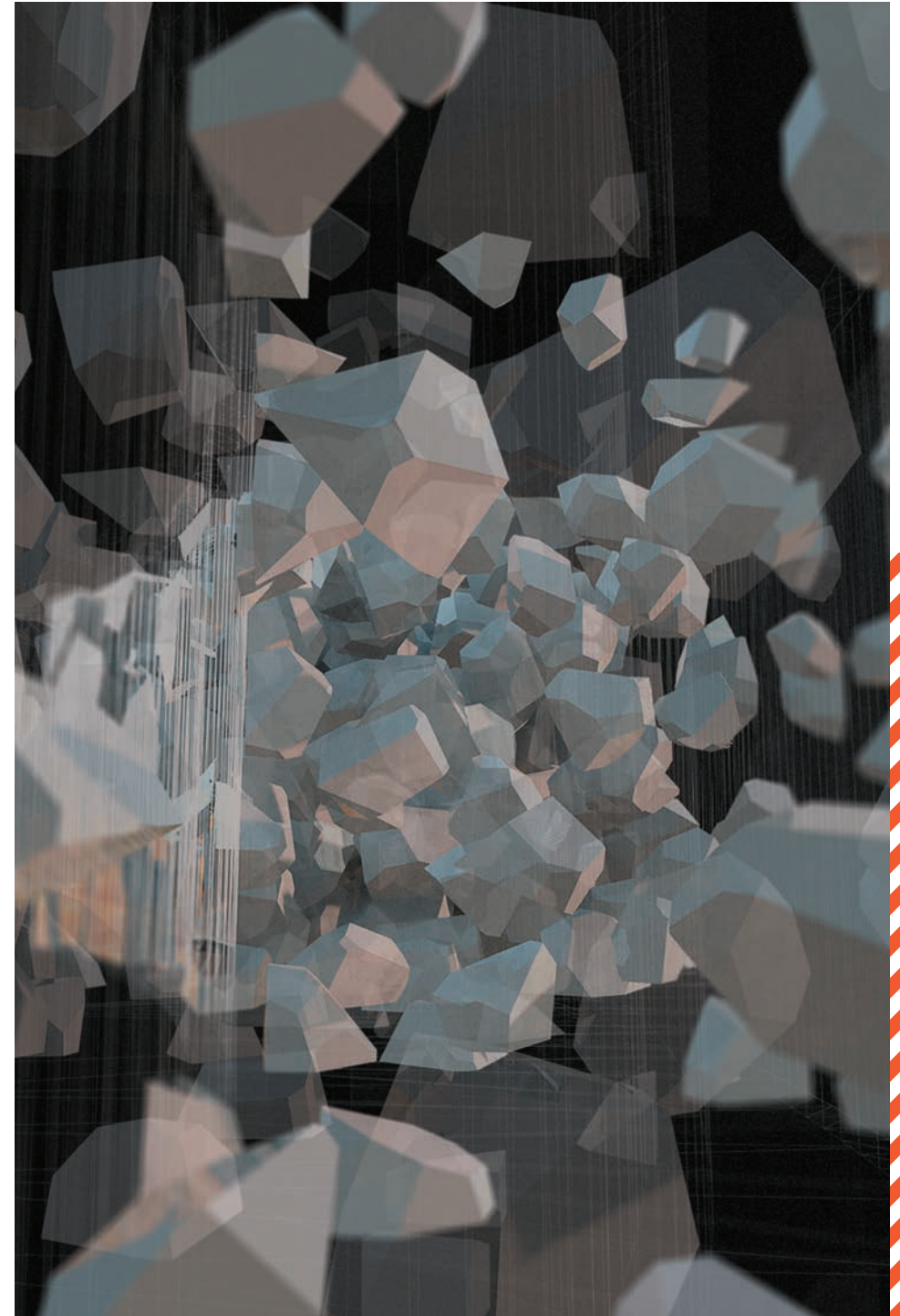
Disembodiment is endemic to digital media. Our typical engagements with computing and the internet perpetuate an underlying behavioral framework where neither individuals nor infrastructures are material. But there is architecture in digital mechanisms: sites where individuals, electricity, and many interconnected subspaces repeatedly and repeatably encounter one another. Most of those sites have simply been disguised, enlarged, shrunken, and relocated by industrialization. The rest are further concealed by an everyday logic of virtuality—what Pierre Bourdieu might call the technohabitus. But such a claim is difficult to convey in the present; contemporary, digital logics unavoidably shape our ability to perceive and communicate.

This project traces the technohabitus to the history of electroacoustical technologies, revealing the emergence of two techno-spatial practices: (1) Cospatial effects like reverberation were increasingly quantified, controlled, and optimized away via material and circuit design during the 19th and 20th centuries. Engineered phenomena subsequently normalized the electroacoustical principle of signal and noise—and thus a logic of "space without space." (2) Fixed-line and wireless telegrammetry, telephony, fax, etc. constructed, contradicted, and displaced forms of copresence (i.e., being with) during the 20th century. Telecommunications' proliferation and many variations introduced a contradiction between the logics of spatial extension and mediatic reproduction.

Correspondingly, one half of this project's methodology is evidentiary—drawn from academic literature (architectural history, anthropology, and science and technology) and con-temporary ephemera (cellphone photos, text messages, receipts, and other spare bits of data). The second half is interventionist. It begins with a range of small experiments—many of which preceded and/or guided the historical research—and concludes with four spatial situations designed to reoccupy the spaces which (1) and (2) elide—here named "contrapositive" spheres.

The resulting materials reveal a strange conundrum. To come together via phone calls, SMS, chat rooms, or even file-sharing is either profoundly lonely or radically interlinked. Architecture, in the electroacoustical age, is fragmentary (one person alone with their phone in a room) or everywhere between (the phone, the room, cables, satellites). Both; either.

The Great Lakes are the largest bodies of fresh water in the U.S. Even the smallest of the five, Lake Ontario, provides drinking water for 9 million people. However, because Lake Ontario is the smallest and all the Great Lakes flow through Lake Ontario, it is the most vulnerable and threatened. The lake has suffered significant pollution due to industrial dumping and pollution, as well as agricultural runoff.

Many small towns on Lake Ontario have been responsible for the lake's pollution. Many of these lake towns have historically dumped waste into the lake from mills, factories and agriculture. Due to this dumping into Lake Ontario, 20% of the 122 species of fish in Lake Ontario are listed as rare or extinct. The fish that are not rare or extinct are suffering from the polluted water and lack of food, causing shorter life spans. How can the revitalization of lake Ontario's natural ecology be used to drive small-town revitalization?

This project seeks to revitalize lake Ontario's ecosystems and the human awareness of this issue for future generations while creating a stronger connection between small towns and local ecologies. Ultimately, it aims to determine how a new fish farm and community public space can address the tensions and build stronger ties to Wilson, NY.

In the year 2100, history once again repeated itself with wealth and health disparities progressing to extremes. Billionaires, now called the space barons, took control of the space race, obsessed with the goal of conquering the solar system and detaching from other living organisms. Mars was developed as a colonized planet, exploited for its natural resources to create a lucrative business scheme. Moral questions were blurred not only by environmental destruction but also by gatekeeping of human health and comfort by the elites. Lower-class workers endured extensive mental and physical exploitation as members of the society, creating the "perfect machine." Due to the extreme effects of the alien environment, systematic exploitation, and environmental isolation, the workers ceased to be human at all. They themselves became alien, with their bodies changing in response to the environment and losing purpose in life. The consequences of the morphed workers and resource depletion made the colony unable to support human life. This anthropocentric mindset of the space barons caused an annihilation. They gave the illusion of human importance on a new planet which ultimately once again led to the destruction of the surrounding environment, the people and the system itself.

One lone architect survived and is now tasked with creating a new sustainable and equitable colony on the remains of the previous capitalist regime. The architect learned from the space barons' mistakes surrounding the anthropocentric way of life. Rejecting this outlook and implementing an ecocentric system considers a holistic approach of supporting life diversity to create a sustainable cycle of exchanges from human to nonhuman. The architect's goal is to optimize the colony design by using biomimetic inspiration and optimize human flourishing by introducing other life on this barren planet. Co-existing with organisms on Mars can foster a novel system of purpose, health, resourcefulness, beauty and moral values. By critiquing unethical capitalist design motives, this ecocentric colony strives to create a new way of building for space expansion, allowing the rebirth of people within this diverse ecosystem by 2150.

Aftertives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Existing within an Ecosystem on Mars

Humans and wildlife depend on one another. The loss of Riparian Forests has directly contributed to a decrease in the Southwestern Willow Flycatcher population. Willow Flycatchers are important for controlling the balance among trees, insects, animal populations, and food. Their song calls help decrease anxiety in a highly stressed Las Vegas environment. It is the community's responsibility to return land to Willow Flycatchers.

This thesis will design a system attached onto skyscraper façades for Willow Flycatchers to inhabit and for humans to use. The project will first investigate the Willow Flycatcher's behavioral patterns, such as prey and predators, ecological environment, and its daily and yearly routine. The dimensions of the bird and its predators are examined in their natural actions, such as sitting, standing, perching, and wing and body movements. The goal is to foster living spaces for endangered birds, providing an ecological setting that includes plants and prey, while preventing predators from entering the terrarium.

Next, the design will investigate methods of replacing parts of the façade and installing a new skin onto the wall structure. The building provides structural and water system support for both plants and animals. It will start from the tectonics, finding ways to install structure on façades. Then, a kit-of-parts will be developed for installation onto the skin, to improve the conditions in which Southwestern Willow Flycatchers will live.

The next step will be to install the façade system on the test site: New York-New York Las Vegas Casino. The modular façade will be redesigned to fit onto the test building. Future prospects include expanding onto multiple buildings across Las Vegas, accumulating into a larger ecological system.

Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Modular Bird Balconies on Façade
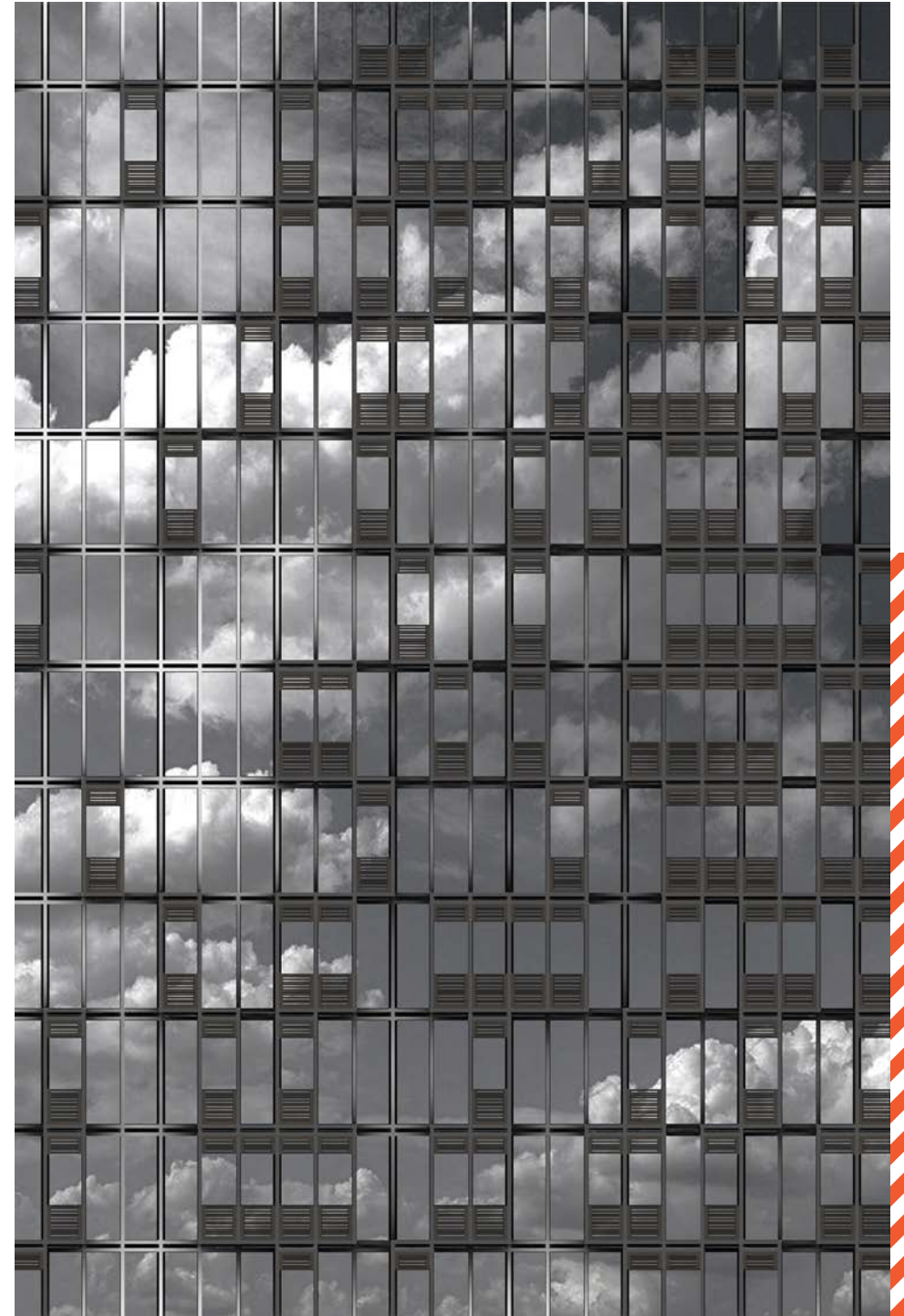
The impacts of climate change have become ever more apparent and are forcing people to leave their homes. The climate is going to shift dramatically in the next several decades, causing people to flee to the northern parts of the U.S. Heat, extreme weather and sea level rise will destroy large sections of the nation. Climate havens have been identified across the country that will be protected from anthropogenic climate change, one of which is Syracuse, NY.

Political instability and extreme weather tears the country apart, leading to the creation of new countries, such as the Great Lakes Republic. This new country is connected to the other divisions through high-speed rail. People, food, and goods will be sustainably transported to meet the demands of the influx of people in the new republic. Syracuse is in a new Silicon Valley stretching from Rochester to Utica, and a million people will be added to the city by the year 2100.

This thesis will build on knowledge through literature reviews, mapping, and visualizing the impacts of climate change. The main question of the thesis is: How can climate havens such as Syracuse redevelop for the mass influx of people by 2100 due to the constraints and challenges set by anthropomorphic climate change? By exploring this question, the thesis will not only ground itself in climate science and other fields, but also explore the impending situation of what our future will look like in less than 30 years. Extreme climate events have already begun irreversibly changing the Earth's climate, forcing people to migrate or consider migration. This mass exodus from coast lines and other uninhabitable places will displace millions of people into designated climate havens, which are currently unprepared for the number of people predicted to relocate. The thesis aims to illustrate a potential strategy as to how Syracuse can sustainably accommodate a million additional people through various urban design strategies while taking into account limited resources due to climate change.
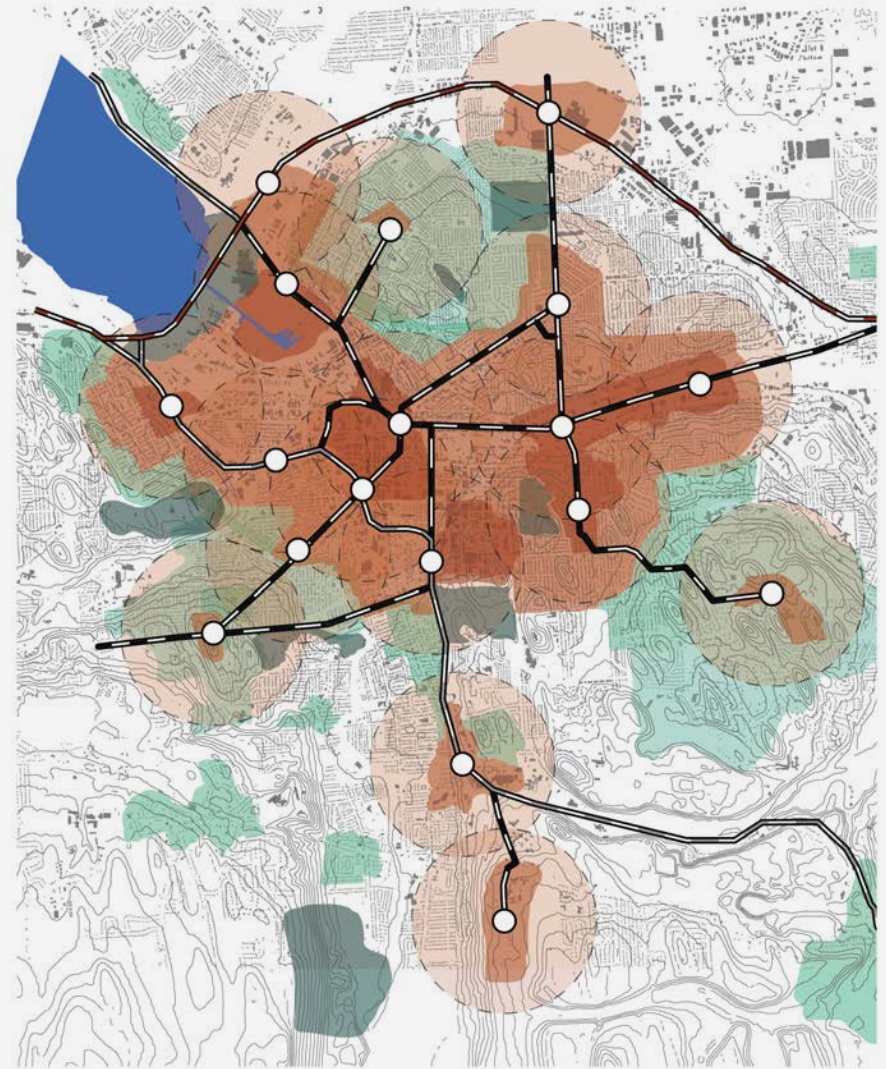
Climate-fueled disasters were the primary driver of internal displacement during the past decade, forcing around 20 million people a year from their homes. Housing unaffordability has been well documented as a threat to family and community well-being. Moreover, countries taking disaster risk-management measures often fail to consider their effects on vulnerable communities and their right to housing.

Flooding, as one of the most common and destructive disasters in recent years, urges the Philippines to become a compelling example with a rapid increase in frequency in recent years and a lack of resources economically and politically. With limited resources, the case of the BASECO compound, a reclamation land in the Metro-Manila Bay area, is a prime example of the current global situation under such climate disasters. The government's initiatives for enhancing the environmental, economic and social security of its cities also pose contradictory challenges to the environmental security of informal settlements and the human security needs of its most vulnerable population—the urban poor.

Flooding is becoming one of the most common and devastating issues in developing countries and is worsened by the housing crisis that led to the formation of informal settlements with shoddy construction and destabilized communities. This thesis aims to find an applicable approach to decrease the potential flooding damage to the Informal Settler Families (ISFs), and a balance between the limited resources and high population density to relieve the flooding issues architecturally.

The thesis aims to decrease the potential flooding damage to the ISFs while improving their living conditions under the existing urban structure and high population density in the BASECO Compound. To achieve this, the project will renovate local churches and introduce a bridge system, while adhering to a realistic approach that considers the limited budget and resources of local communities. This project will assist local families in evacuating or accessing safer spaces more quickly before or during floods and will improve the quality of the local families' lives, reframing the existing landscape of the site.
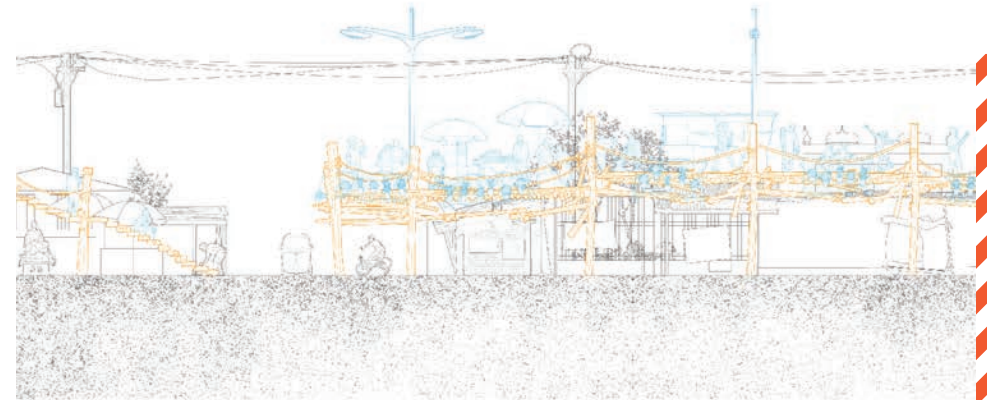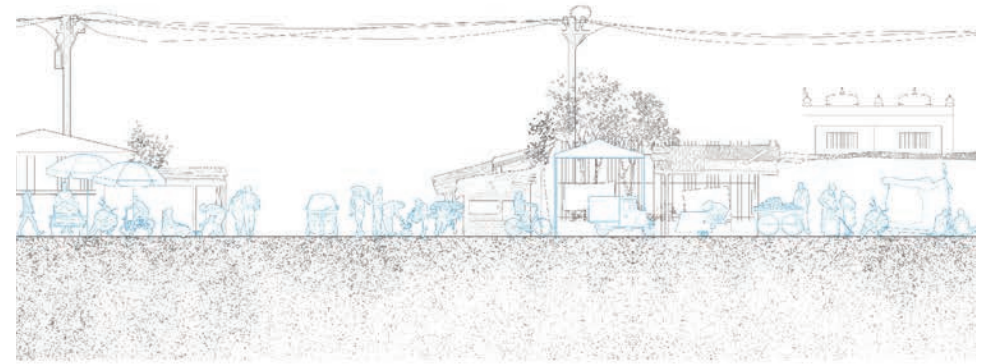
Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Phases of Prospective Development, Philippines
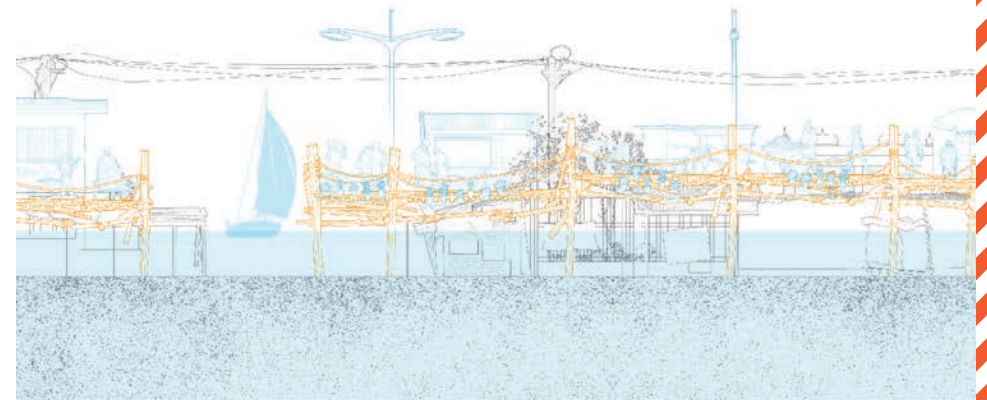
Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Painting the Multiplicity of Urban Villages in Xi'an

In the new century, the explosive growth of urban development has brought citizens, governments, urban planners and architects into a next level of urban environment. China has urbanized and modernized at an unprecedented speed with large-scale urban construction, which has become a catalyst to accelerate the high density of urban contexts. Consequently, the outcome of the undifferentiated urban fabric has been generated and dominated by a general culture of conformity and homogeneity. Urban villages, a creation of a serendipitous political decision, contain enormous tension, which also reveals a spatial production mechanism. Linear time is not involved in these heterotopias; indeed, citizens, landscape architecture, and built ecology become the protagonists from the spread of this differentiated temporality. Independent of normative master planning and parameterized solutions that are integrally conservative instead of prospect-oriented, the thesis strives to identify and understand the urban village typology in China, creating an integrated intervention with both conventional and non-conventional design methods. From a perspective as architects, the thesis seeks to circumvent further homogenization and urbanization with preservation and interpretation of the culture, diversity, and values of the urban village, proposing an alternative future for its development.

Childhood is a crucial time in human development, yet so many people view elementary school as relatively unimportant. With the overuse of technology among children and the standardization of education, even elementary school students are experiencing academic stress. What are some solutions to this problem? Although progressive education was conceptualized as early as the late 19th century, its implementation of hands-on, kinetic, and experience-driven instruction are rarely used today. What are alternatives to the traditional U.S. education system? How can we use gamification to visualize all the options for making the progressive education of Forest Schools accessible in any environment?

Forest Schools employ "child-centered inspirational processes focusing on holistic growth that support play, exploration and supported risk-taking, [developing] confidence and self-esteem through learner inspired, hands-on experiences in a natural setting." They allow progressive educational concepts to be expanded into the built environment, so school buildings become more than merely structures hosting learning activities. Forest Schools can challenge what we consider learning opportunities through architecture that is not simply areas with program but part of the experience itself.

If progressive education and organizations such as Forest Schools are the way of the future, how can they be applied in more dense and urban settings? This project redefines and radicalizes primary education by creating a built environment conducive to "kids being kids." Experiential learning is a concept essential to progressive education; it will be pushed to its limit with this thesis. Beyond a science classroom within a bird's nest, the entire urban landscape may be transformed. This progressive architecture will merge, blur, and interweave the threshold between building and natural environment. Creating these special tactile-spatial interactions between building, person, and even animal will require extensive research on "organic" materials, urban spaces, elementary education, children's psychology and precedent play spaces. Reconnecting children with the (natural) world around them will provide a more holistic education for our future generations.
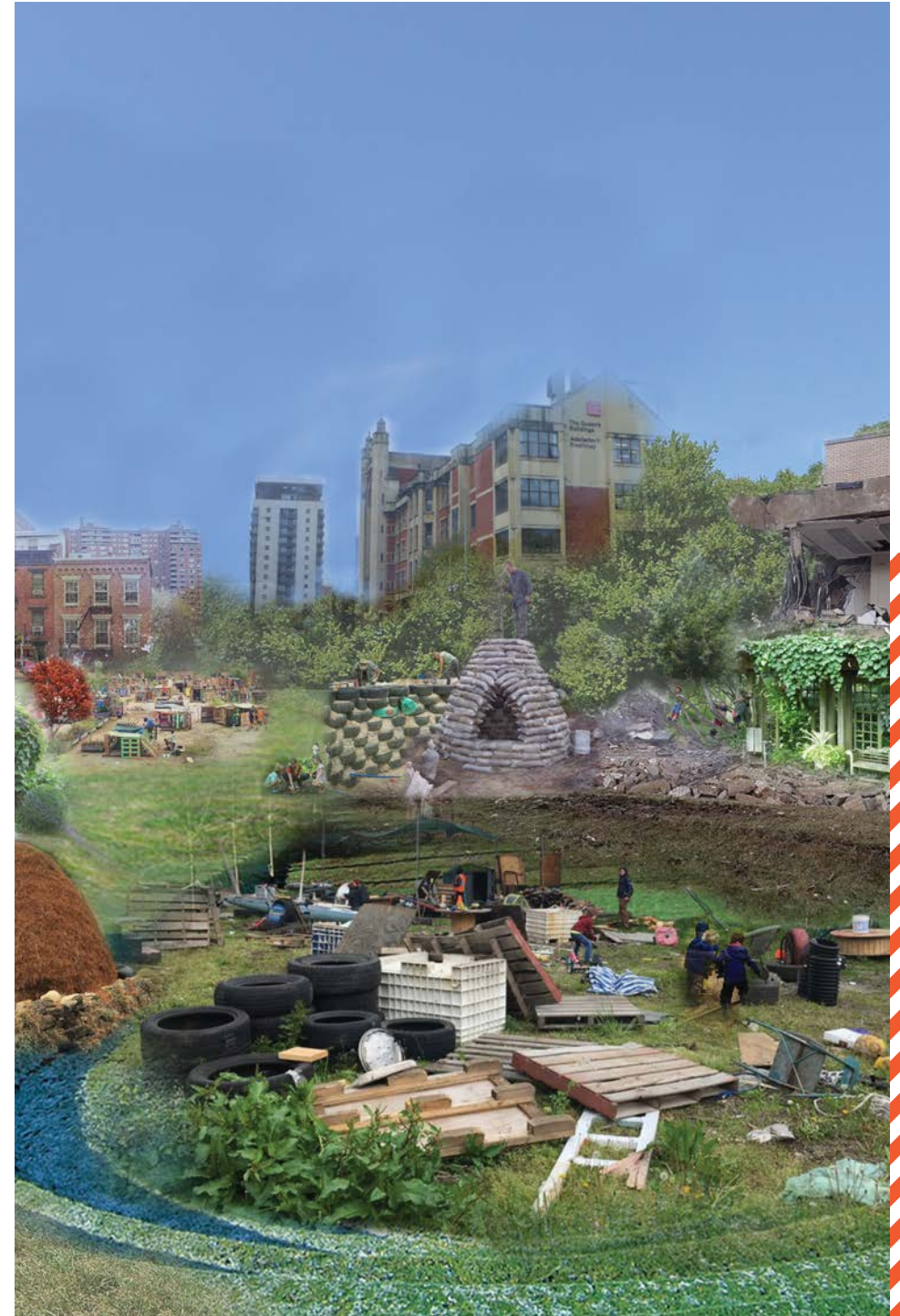
This thesis documents the temporal nuances of natural Light in relation to mass and material surface through the investigation of form in space.

Light is the creator, and sustainer, of all living things on Earth, and is an eternal reminder of our individual existence and significance. It keeps our natural biological rhythms in balance, and it is impossible to artificially replicate this effect. Eyes are designed to receive Light, and we are gifted the ability to experience the material world in three dimensions while simultaneously observing a spatial fourth dimension in time. The transcendental quality of Light is a generator of curiosity and wonder that there is something more and beyond our comprehension. It feeds the inherent social ambition of humans that would be lost in an otherwise lifeless world. Society has slowly drifted toward a complete disconnect with the environment which is analogous to the decline in social health and motivation, or desire.

Man-made objects are placed in space to be observed, or revealed, in the Light. Natural Light connects the physical object with the phenomenological, or intimacies of nature. Architecture has a responsibility to strengthen this connection in the built environment through the skillful integration and orchestration of form and Light. Architects, and designers, should be masters of this to achieve the ultimate task of architecture: inducing a positive response on the sensorial emotions of the people that inhabit their spaces. Individual, and collective, memory can be the result of how Light was penetrating a space that day and the atmosphere it produced. A single opening, or formal expression, can have multiple ways that Light penetrates it due to its ephemeral quality, producing a purely subjective experience or reality. Solid Light represents more of an absolute time or moment, whereas delicate, translucent, or painted Light has more of a transient quality. These Light spectacles slowly morph over time, tempting the occupant to slow down and reevaluate or contemplate. Architecture devoid of Light denies it a metaphysical presence, or reality.

Advisor: Park   Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies
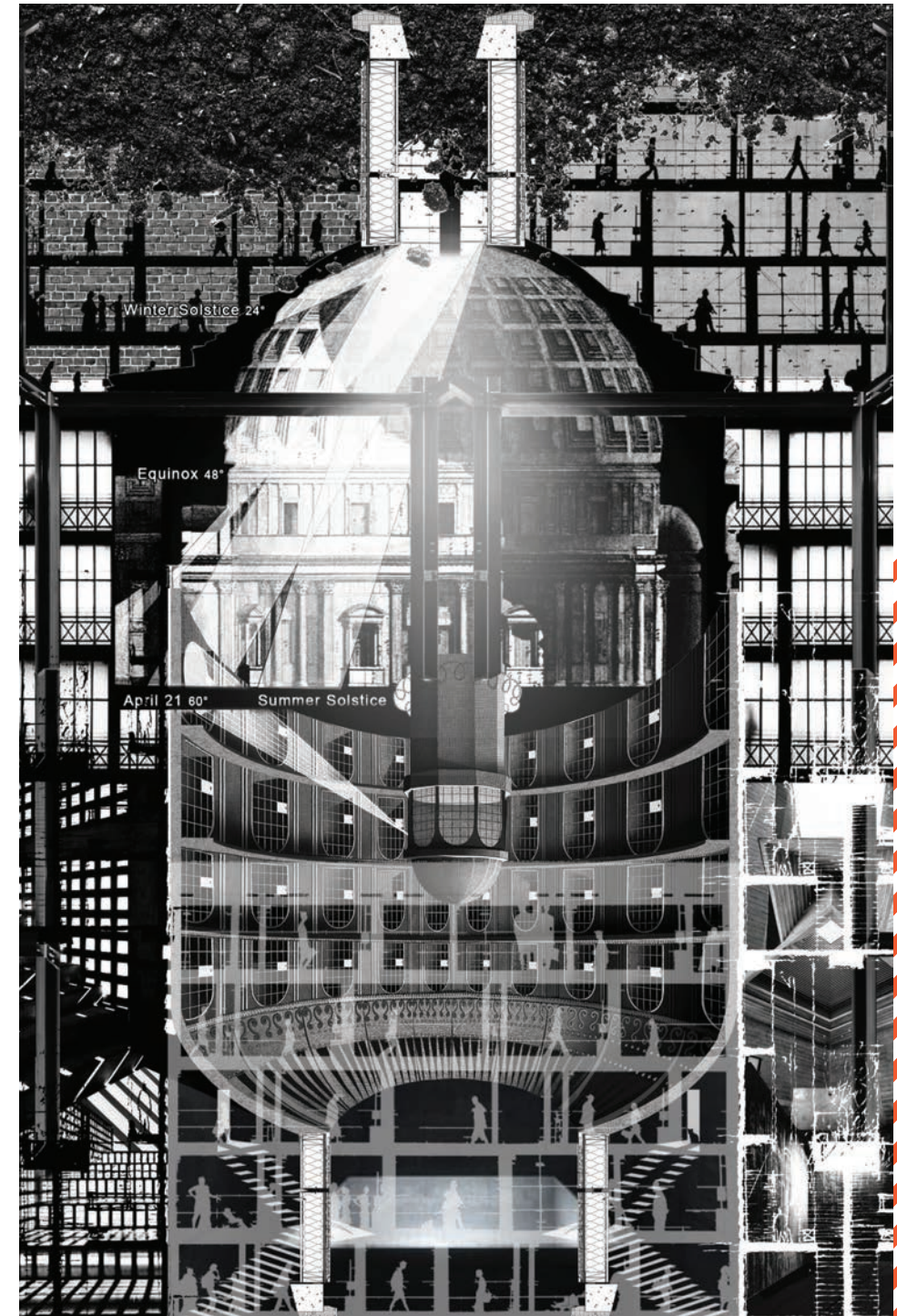
Hyper-capitalism and a lack of awareness of our natural environment have encouraged the development of cities along the coastline. According to the United Nations, about 40% of the world's population (2.4 billion) currently live within 100km of a coast. This pattern applies to Puerto Rico, where 66.7% of the population lives in coastal communities. This thesis critically examines the endangered existing condition of the neighborhood of Condado, PR, which presents a unique case because of its proximity to the beach, serious erosion, sewage issues, shortage of pumps, destruction of dunes, and lack of breakwaters. An analysis of the socio-cultural and historical aspects of the region has revealed that the current architectural landscape is not adequately responsive or appropriate to the specific site and its exigencies.

This project proposes an adaptive design that takes into consideration people's daily routines and traditions through a top-down approach that suggests a middle ground between living by the sea without the displacement of the community already established in the area. Furthermore, it explores domesticity and collectivity by creating a communal space that does not jeopardize individuality and prioritizes cultural practices. The interventions entail the construction of a canal system, a bioengineered wetland, a farming area, and a communal kitchen. The canal system will give excess water a space, mitigating floods and bringing water to communities in need. Ultimately, the design aims to alter how we live in relationship to water and the environment, while simultaneously enhancing cultural distinctions that demonstrate the richness of Puerto Rican society through its traditions, food, and geography.

Aftetlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho
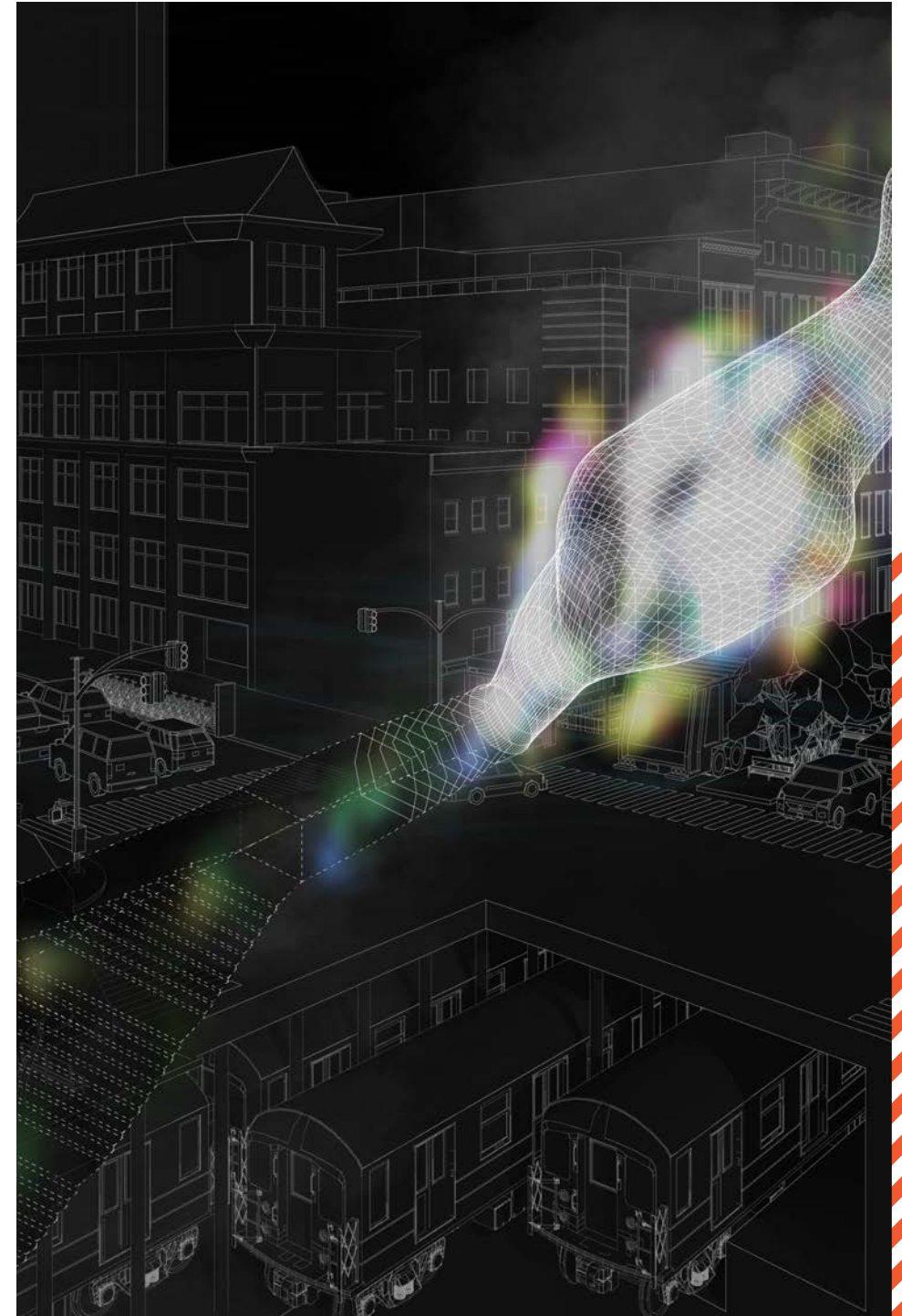
Image: Conceptual Drawing of Living by Water
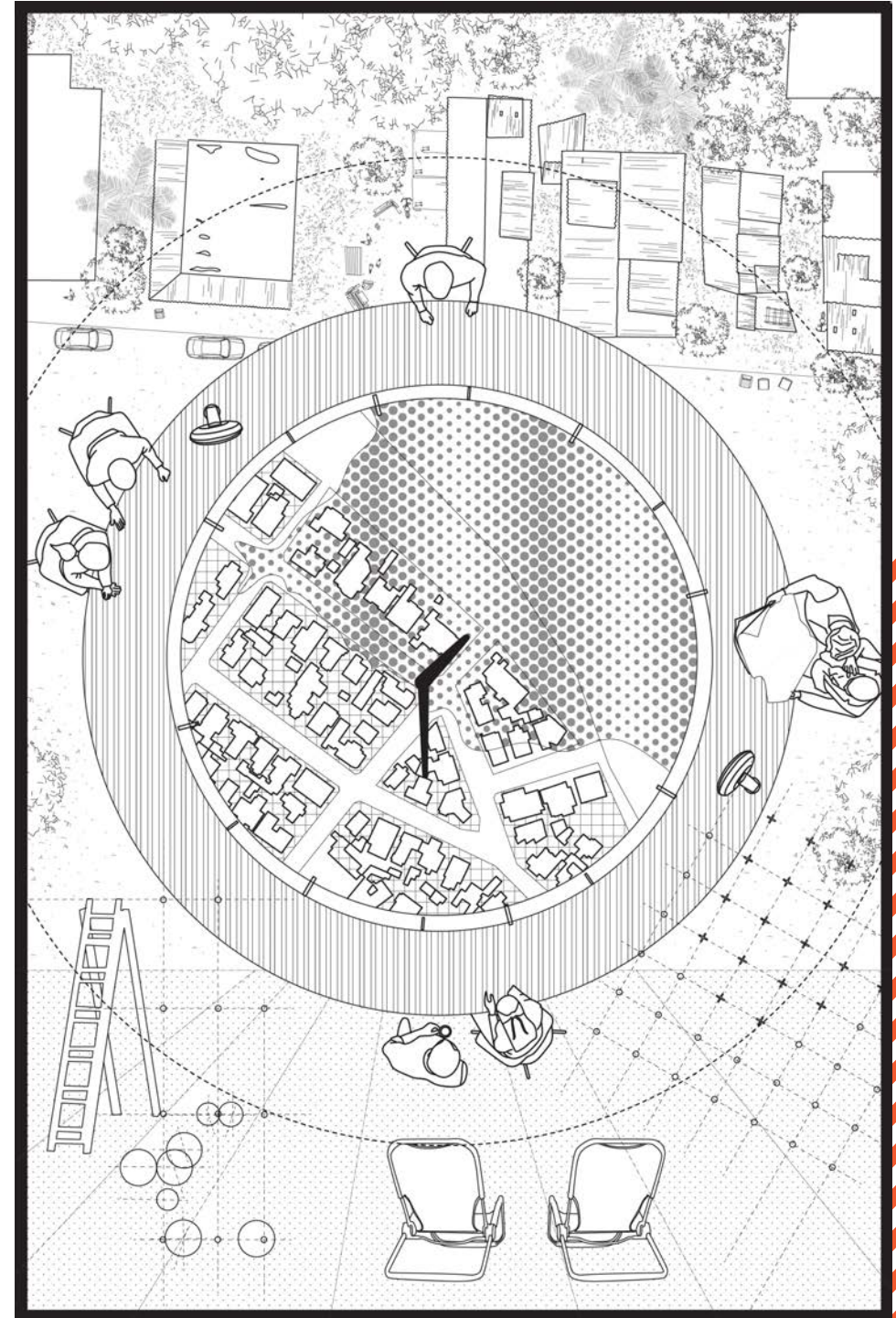
Grief, in contemporary societies, holds a certain ambiguity that is often avoided and trivialized. However, due to the pandemic, we are now immersed in this overwhelming feeling and lack safe spaces and forums to allow such emotions to be processed. The city is an agent of a counterproductive sensory overload which only negates and numbs out the possibility of acknowledging grief. This thesis proposes an intersectionality between the immersive busyness of the city and vessels of alternate sensory overload, with the purpose of stimulating opposite physiological and psychological reactions within such intersections.

     The thesis presents a discourse between psychoanalytic theory and design as a way of thoroughly understanding the ways in which body and mind are stimulated through the senses. Such discourse would also begin to point at certain misconceptions about inclusive and immersive design that fail to address the larger impact that spatial recognition and association has on its users. For example, the vessels act as intersections within the public realm and cause fluctuations between negative and positive sensory overload reactions, such fluctuations possibly causing either pleasing or disruptive happenings. In that sense, these fluctuations become an alteration of reality and the associative capabilities that people have in relation to architecture. Being able to recognize the sensual qualities of space, knowingly and unknowingly, becomes the given task for the user; being able to create specific stimuli along an anticipated reaction would become the target of the designer.

This research posits that a revitalization of indigenous earth architecture practices in a contemporary context can mitigate the immense waste and embodied carbon in the construction industry while engaging practices of land reclamation and return. Earth materials are the focus of this research because they are locally sourced, abundantly available, and can be reused or returned to the natural environment, when utilized in a circular consumption cycle. Designing for reuse reduces the impact of construction waste on the burgeoning issue of environmental degradation and resource depletion.

The structural viability and environmental enclosure capabilities of soil throughout its lifecycle are tested in forms derived geomorphically from the tectonic structure of earth materials. Across scales—from material sample to landform to territory—tectonic logic is analyzed and adapted to produce new spatial experiences. Material experimentation is used to develop threshold conditions between the proposed earth architecture and existing built infrastructure. Connection details are designed with a focus on the dichotomy of found and built structures and tectonic systems.

Sustainable construction practices, structural limitations, material culture, and site history are examined through the lens of soil. Geomorphology studies set the framework for material property analysis, textural and tactile experimentation, and tectonic logic adaptation. These studies inform the design of a new earth architectural technique derived from both indigenous practices and contemporary influences. While built from primarily earth materials, the new style connects to both geological and man-made structures found on site. This technique will be applied at quarries, the sites of previous extractive industries, to revitalize abandoned spaces and attempt to mitigate the negative impact these processes had on the local community, existing ecologies, and material sourcing.

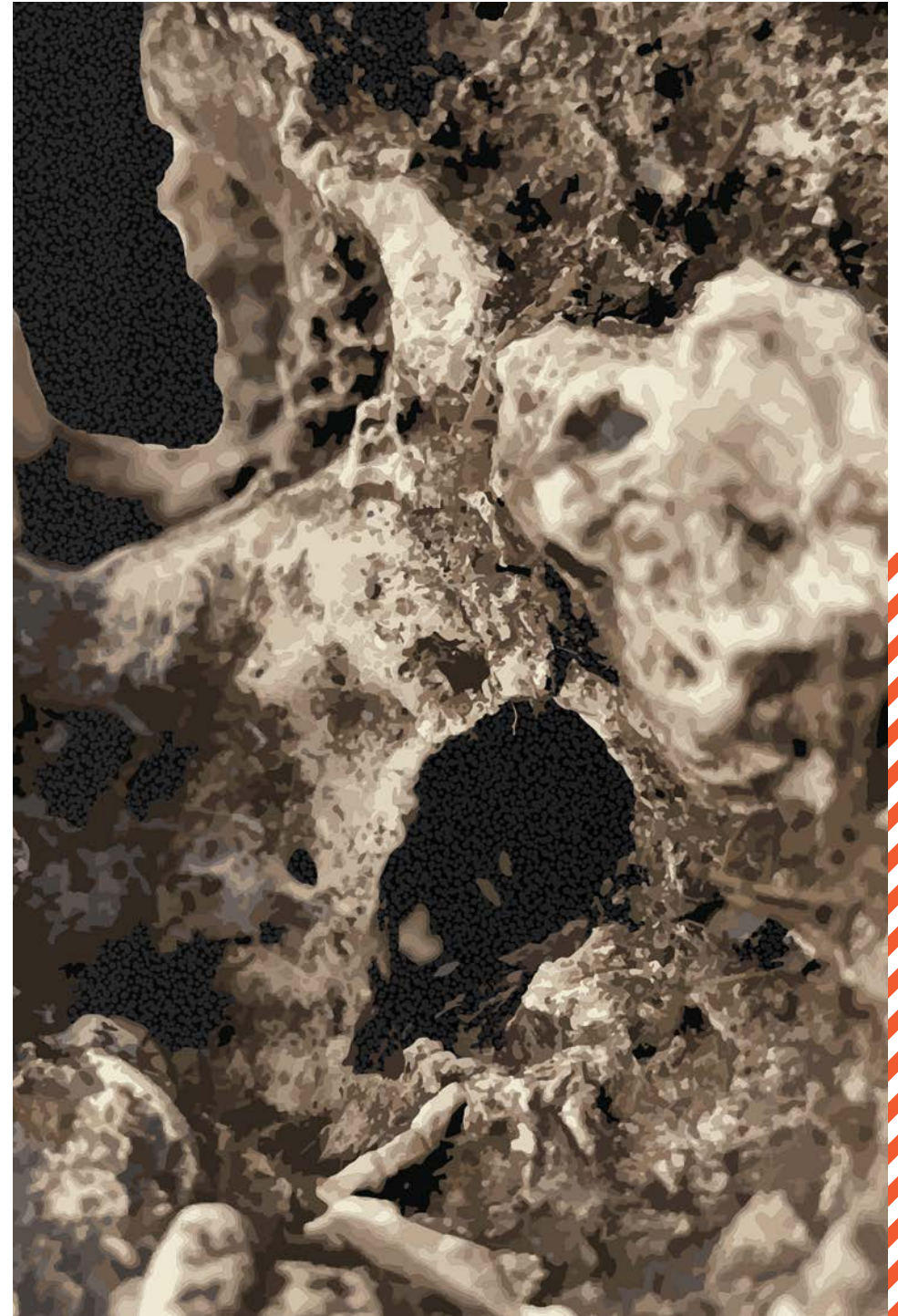Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Material Views between Found and Built Tectonic Systems

Mankind is by nature inquisitive and driven to explore the unknown, expand new frontiers, and advance scientific and technical limits through our own ingenuity. We belong to a long continuum of human progress perpetuated by the desire to innovate and adapt to changing habitats. In anticipation of making humanity multi-planetary, **NASA** has been challenged to develop infrastructure and technology that supports human habitation beyond Earth's protective atmosphere and resources. **NASA's ARTEMIS** mission and the Mars 2020 **Perseverance Rover** were tasked to survey the climate and geology on Mars in preparation for the next great leap in human space exploration, the Martian habitat. Yet, the current design for space colonization is confined to prioritizing practical needs with maximum efficiency while lacking consideration for spatial experiences. In search of an opportunity for the long-term survival of human civilization, habitation on the higher frontier demands a critical re-evaluation of existing standards for extraterrestrial living.

The development of space colonization could lead to advancements in architectural design, discovering alternative integration of ecology into the regenerative life support system, and furthermore developing technocentric resiliency strategies that are essential for human survival. To say mankind will one day inhabit Mars is to challenge architecture's ability to contend with extreme surface conditions like oxygen-less air, extreme cold, and high radiation levels. This thesis reimagines the Mars habitat through the design of mobile architecture, which resembles the human drive for exploration while allowing architects to explore new potentials of enclosed habitable spaces, supporting mankind's survival in the most hostile conditions of space.
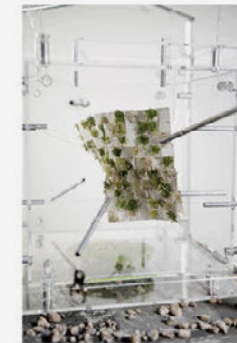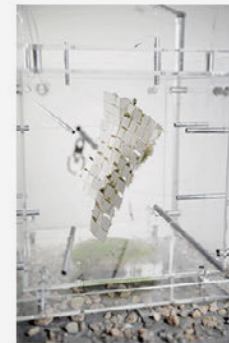
Afterlives: Regenerative Built Ecologies

Advisors: Krietemeyer, Park, Sharifi, Sho

Image: Encased Ecological Kinematics System

AI/ai

How can architecture build on recent advances in artificial imagination, machine learning, and synthetic intelligence to—productively and speculatively, practically and skeptically, knowingly and enthusiastically—construct, challenge, alter, and imagine actual architectural realities? Working collaboratively with machines and with one another, students in this thesis advisory group pursued design research into the sub-field of artificial intelligence known as artificial imagination. Ranging from machine vision to novel image generation using neural networks, artificial imagination strives to produce and interpret images in ways that not only mimic the complexities, powers, and applications of human vision and visual cognition, but also activate a synthetic (human/machine) dialogue. Artificial imagination, or synthetic intelligence, is as much an adventure in computational potential as research into the capacities of our brains to assemble visual information and to construct images—in perception or conception—as matters of processing and calculation. These emerging kinds of human-machine cognition are projective and affirmational but often in ways that refuse, or are opaque to, established and accepted logics and design thinking. Projects in this group creatively question and redefine the identities of architects in ways that re-imagine them as synthetic curators and editors of language, data, prompts, and imaging outputs. Each project aims to develop innovative uses of synthetic intelligence that challenge seemingly (but not actually) moribund issues such as authorship, authenticity, and representation by conducting real-time inquiry into the potential of artificial imagination. The image arrays presented here, as substitutes for the effects of time-based media used in many of these projects, demonstrate how collaborating with emerging technologies can fundamentally shift our ways of working, thinking, seeing, and imaging in this next stage of digital design which operates predominantly through processing, screening, scanning, seriality, affiliation, affect, and pattern.

Advisors: Mark Linder, Emily Smith Pellicano

Artificially Alternate Bauhaus
Gremlins of Function, Body, and Pattern

Human and machine intelligence has the potential to re-design objects and spaces of the past and generate an artificially alternate collection of reimagined (Bauhaus) images. Present A.I. technologies can operate as synthetic imaginations of historic Bauhaus principles and design ambitions to create a possible future. In imagining a possible future, the past becomes altered through our understanding of its contributions to an alternate present.

With the rapid development and accessibility of machine learning technologies, we are questioning what it means to be human and to be machine. The Bauhaus artistic response to rapid advances of machine technology and industrialization is applicable through visualization and production. This project is a response to radical advances in digital technology and visualization. This investigation is situated in three periods: pre-Bauhaus, Bauhaus, and post-Bauhaus. Pre-Bauhaus acknowledges both Henry Van de Velde's designs and Loie Fuller's dances. Van de Velde focused on craft to understand function beyond aristocratic life. Loie Fuller emphasized that the human body extends beyond the physical form. Under Walter Gropius, the Bauhaus questioned the human, body, consciousness, intelligence and how these compare to or are diminished by new technology. The Bauhauslers continued the evolution of design and ideas of production in new contexts after the closure of the Bauhaus school.

A.I. contributes to and extends the Bauhaus institution, exploring alternate versions of its dissemination through history and digitized gremlins of "Bauhaus" design. This alternate Bauhaus generates gremlins as disruptors that pose as originals through synthetic reimaginings of their function and materiality. The creation of gremlins is possible through the industrialized digitization of A.I. databases trained to find formal connections between images of Bauhaus chairs, bodies, and textiles and gremlins that represent the function of sitting, dancing, or weaving. With synthetic imagination, mass production of standardized objects is superseded by new iterations that are infinitely re-generated, disseminated, and experienced visually at a mass scale. This investigation is an effort to collaborate with A.I. as it challenges architectural notions of production and aesthetics.
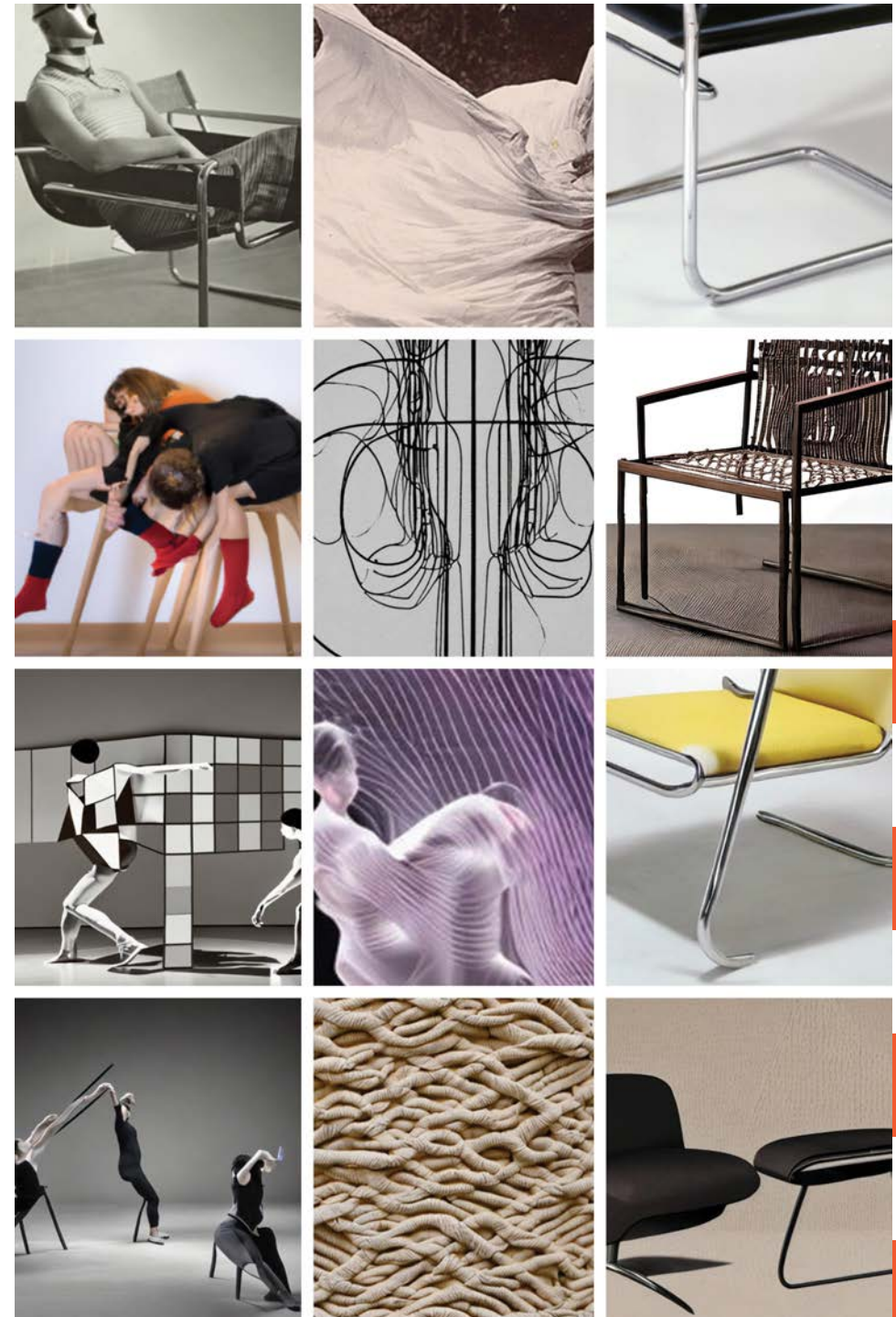
What if we were to release all preconceived familiarities with the built world and decide to reboot our vision with an emotionally charged lens? If tempted just enough in a new way, could we imagine something that we once saw as a stiff, still, brick shell, as a body made of charged matter, with a psyche and lifespan? This project uses Artificial Imagination (A.I.) to challenge the representation of architecture and reimagine it as a construction of reactive moods. A.I. becomes a visual medium that bridges the gap between ourselves and the inanimate. The project attempts to operate in the middle as an emotionally charged architectural experience. Synthetic (human/machine) dialogue is used as a tool to confront the possibility that how we see the world does not fully engage the world as it actually is. The project unveils the engineered emotional energy that is constantly running through our environments, creating moods like arousal, spine-chilling, zest, and heart-wrenching misery.

A.I. informs the study of these underlying realities because it is able to unfold the linear nature of our world and design in a limitless capacity. The machine's autonomous nature enables A.I. to design without protocol in mind, and because this emotionally charged lens is malleable—where the rules of time, space and physics are not bound by the same limitations as in the waking world—A.I. is an essential tool to inform this architecture. Moving from prompt to image to point-cloud, we image this architecture of emotion as a transparent narrative of the birth and movement of spaces and objects. These networks of images, texts, and points can map and visualize the scanning and construction of abstract information, allowing our consciousness to visualize the organismic curation of matter flying and resting all around us. This research into the inception of emotionally reactive architecture, where there is no distinction between the interior and exterior, will transform our environments into those that are authentically and genuinely symbiotic with the human experience.

Advisors: Linder, Pellicano   AI/ai

Image: Charged Fusions where Imagination and Reality Are Inseparable

Advances in Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) challenge us to rethink the theories and techniques of montage. Text-to-image generation isolates significant descriptors/data/pixels from a functional context and reinserts them into an artificially imagined context with another or additional meaning. The Art of Prompt is the basis of a new kind of montage that restructures the conventional meanings of, relationships among, presumed qualities of, and seams between those abstractions. The art of prompt writing involves a collaboration with A.I., in which these combined abstractions activate, amplify, and confront their underlying connotations to give them a new association and significance.

A.I. text-to-image generators are conventionally used to produce integrated montage and to conceal the heterogeneous sources of the generated image. This can be seen more explicitly through outpainting, which involves expanding an image with the instigation of a series of prompts to produce a conceptually fragmented output. A.I. suppresses the juxtaposition and seams between elements to create the illusion of homogenous, easily digestible outputs. However, when A.I. is challenged to interpret a language with which it is not familiar (such as Latin), idiosyncrasies and fissures in both the data and the technology are exposed. The outputs display the breaks and ruptures through peculiar and novel changes in subject, scale or perspective, while still deceptively concealing the seams. By collaborating with A.I. in an idiosyncratic way—prompts in Latin—this project taps into an uncanny, underdetermined imaginary space. The viewer is invited to critically break apart and analyze the dialectics of juxtaposed images, processing the shock through intellectual contemplation. The poetic function of A.I. can be used to view design as an assemblage of descriptors/data/pixels and "defamiliarize" that with which we are overly familiar—to "creatively deform" the normal, and in doing so, instill in us a new way of viewing language and design in a technologically evolving world.

AI/ai

Advisors: Linder, Pellicano

Image: A Series of Artificially Imagined Architectural Montages

This project uses Artificial Imagination (A.I.) to design a fictive architecture for the Inner Harbor in Syracuse, NY. Using now-ubiquitous technologies, it synthesizes a collision of imagery from three films, Stanley Kubrick's "The Shining," Wes Anderson's "The Grand Budapest Hotel," and Fritz Lang's "Metropolis." These films exemplify distinct historical moments, aesthetics, and genres of narrative that operate on the margins of psychological horror, magical realism, and science fiction. In all of them, interior and exterior architectural settings are not only crucial, they are often shot in very different ways. Exterior shots tend to use actual locations or models, while interior scenes are often shot separately in the studio. Yet the spatial effect suggests continuity, allowing the audience to reconstruct the physically separated spaces in their imaginations.

A.I. enables a new kind of mixture of reality and fiction. From the human perspective, the output of A.I. is fictional and unrealistic, yet the data and methods that A.I. is "trained" on— as processed by the software and hardware it utilizes—define their own reality.

This project follows an A.I.-generated script by imagining a first-person perspective documenting four spatial archetypes: apartment, hotel, machine hall, and promenade. Its settings are buildings with very different exteriors but extremely similar interiors. This synthesis of real and virtual reconfigures the boundaries between reality and imagination and between three very different films.
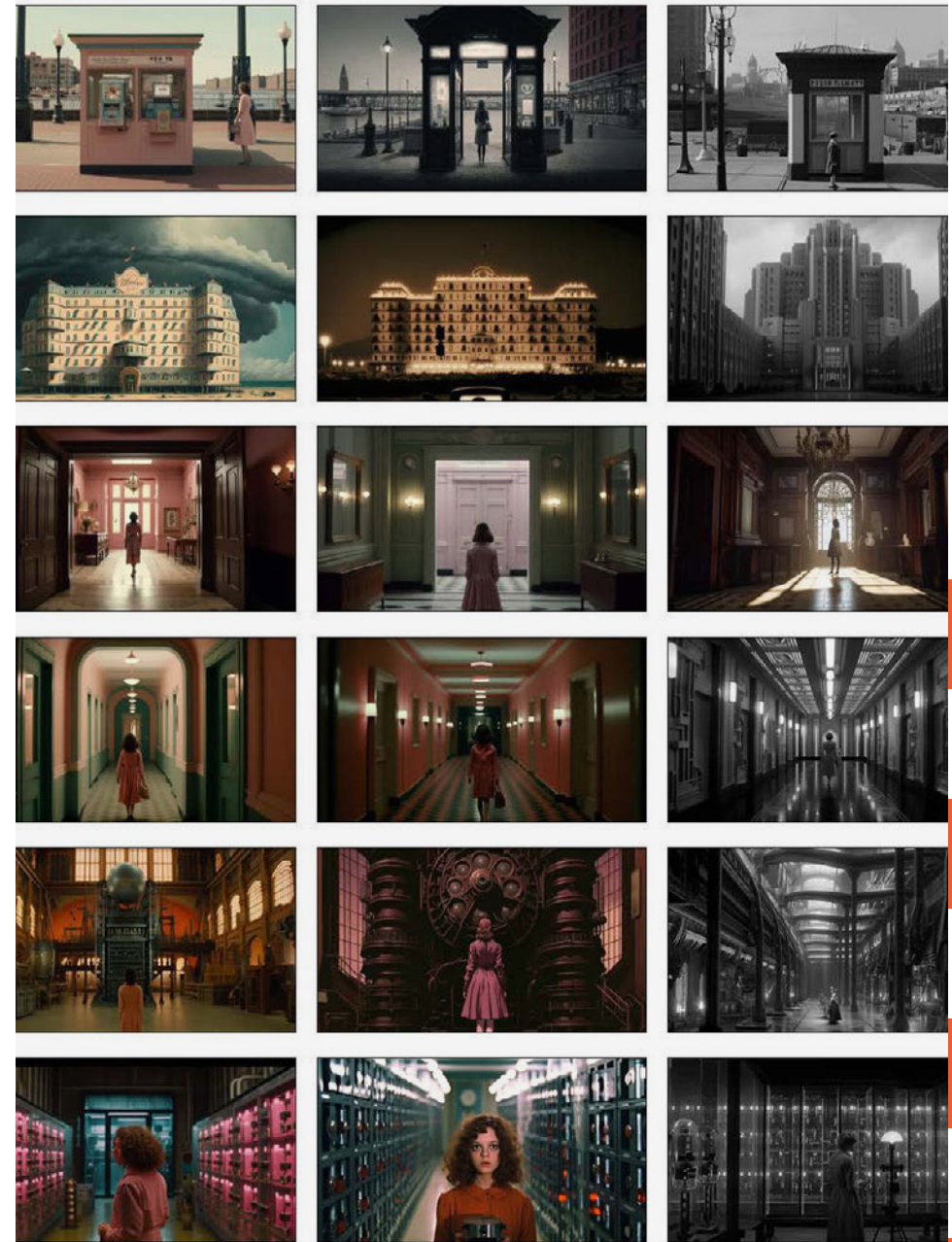
Artificial intelligence (A.I.) has tremendous potential to reimagine the latent potential of unbuilt architectural projects. Through innovative applications of and collaboration with emerging technologies, it is possible to generate a more profound understanding of an unrealized design as if re-covering or recollecting a memory. All architecture relies on human memories to facilitate the reactions and interactions that generate emotional responses and deepen one's connect-ion to and comprehension of architectural space. A.I. can be used to generate videos and images that creatively memorialize an unbuilt work and create a shared emotional space, a compelling experience, and new insights into the past.

Cedric Price's Fun Palace serves as an exemplary case study for exploring the use of A.I. in this way, as its design intent was to shape innovative and shared spatial experiences. This thesis explores how A.I. can create a shared experience of architecture as media, complementing traditional physical memorials with a new approach to commemoration. Through experimentation with flexible design frameworks and A.I. tools that allow direct collaboration among us, Price, and A.I., the goal is to generate a design that reimagines the kinds of shared emotional linkage between visitors and the space that inspired the design of Fun Palace. The program is generated from Price's own words. He was renowned for his charismatic and captivating speaking style that inspired and provoked his audiences. This project analyzes Price's lectures, interviews, and writings to understand how he might have introduced his Fun Palace project. A.I. is used to generate videos based on his words. Analysis of these videos guides further development of a coherent and unique video experience for visitors.

This project uses one architect's voice to guide another's, and to guide an audience visualizing a version of Fun Palace that Price couldn't have imagined but that he would, it is hoped, admire. This collaboration between Cedric Price and us, and between humans and machines, aims to increase visitors' sensitivity and curiosity about the project's potential, fostering a deeper connection with the architecture of Fun Palace. The project extracts the possibility of collecting the disowned memories scattered in the technological and built environment and turning them into bonds that connect individuals.

AI/ai

Advisors: Linder, Pellicano

Image: Experience the Excitement of a 21st-century Fun Palace
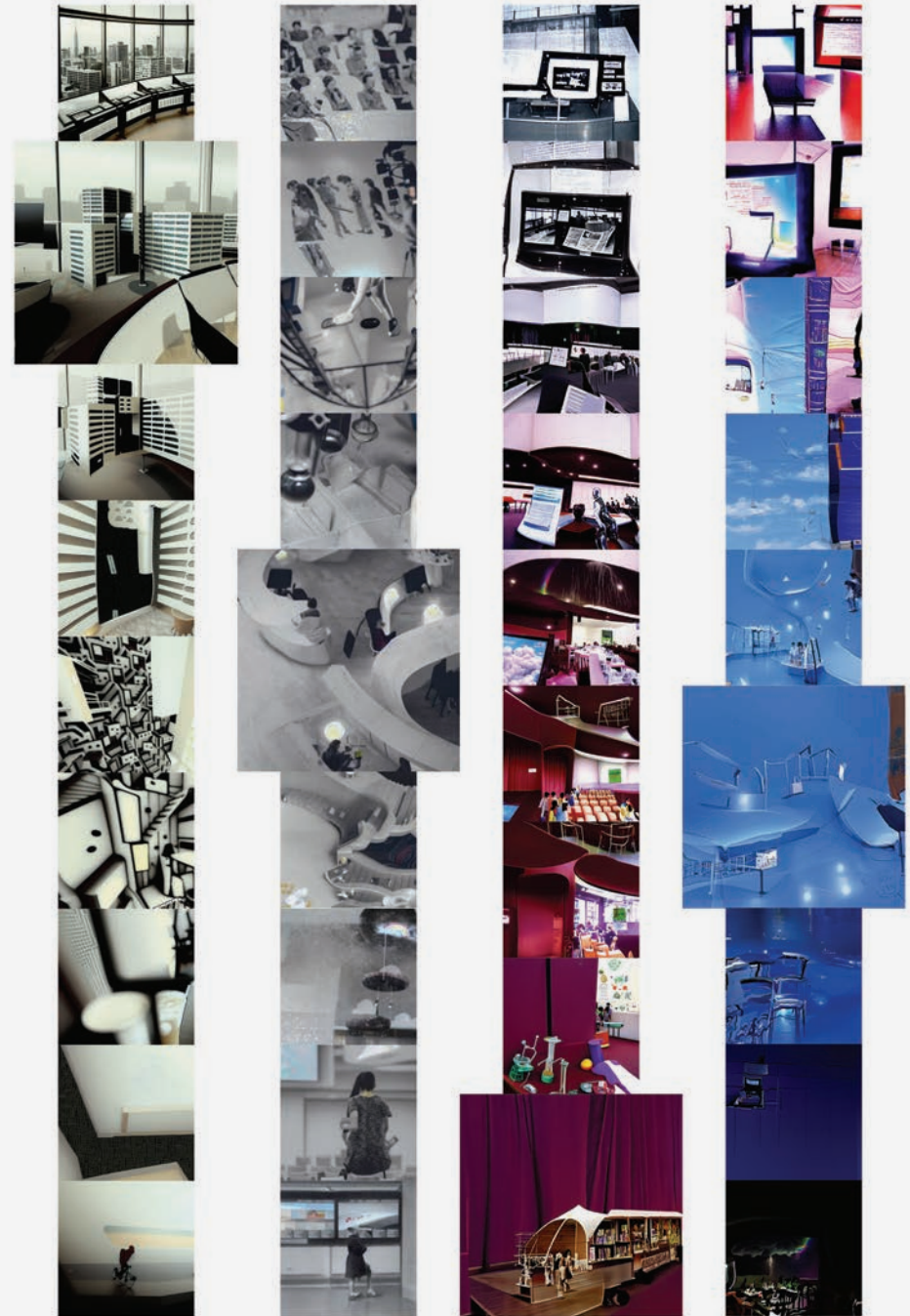
Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) alters our customary modes of everyday operation by exerting influence on our experiences and memories. A.I. actively participates in the production and imagination of collective spatial memory. It elaborates on human perception and alters our processing of reality. The ways spaces are visualized and imaged—by our minds and by our machines—grounds our experience of space in a reality, whether that be physical, virtual, or something else entirely. With each wave of anthropogenic technological advancement, the way humans and cultures remember the spaces they inhabit has been altered. By introducing A.I. and crowdsourced information—images, policy statements, personal accounts, geographical data, etc.—these intelligences can potentially democratize the design process. The possible futures that can be generated are almost limitless.

This thesis synthesizes human and artificial intelligences in a design process that reimagines the collective spatial memory of the qualities, elements, and organization of a devastated community. Historically, architects have been called upon to redesign lost spaces after disasters. Using Journey's End Mobile Home Park in Santa Rosa, CA as the site for exploration, this thesis uses A.I. in conjunction with human experience, documents, data, and sentiments as a spatial elaboration tool. Journey's End is a 13-acre site affected by the Tubbs Fire of 2017, which burned 116 of the 160 homes. A post-disaster site coalesces multiple confluences of discourse— voices from those directly affected by the wildfire and by the power and presumption of outsiders in both the private and public sectors, as well as the history of the site and those like it.

This project aims to generate possible futures using the sentiments, desires and memories of those most directly affected by the Tubbs Fire of 2017 as well as publicly available accounts in journalism, public policy statements, and development proposals. As these possible futures are generated, this thesis experiments with different formulas for this process. The images of abstracted memories produced operate in a space that carries vague resemblances to something we understand as reality, but is in fact a superficial likeness, blurring the line between illusion, perception and basic realities.

Advisors: Linder, Pellicano   AI/ai

Image: Outpainted Images, Portions of Journey's End Mobile Home Park

Strange [Juxta]positions
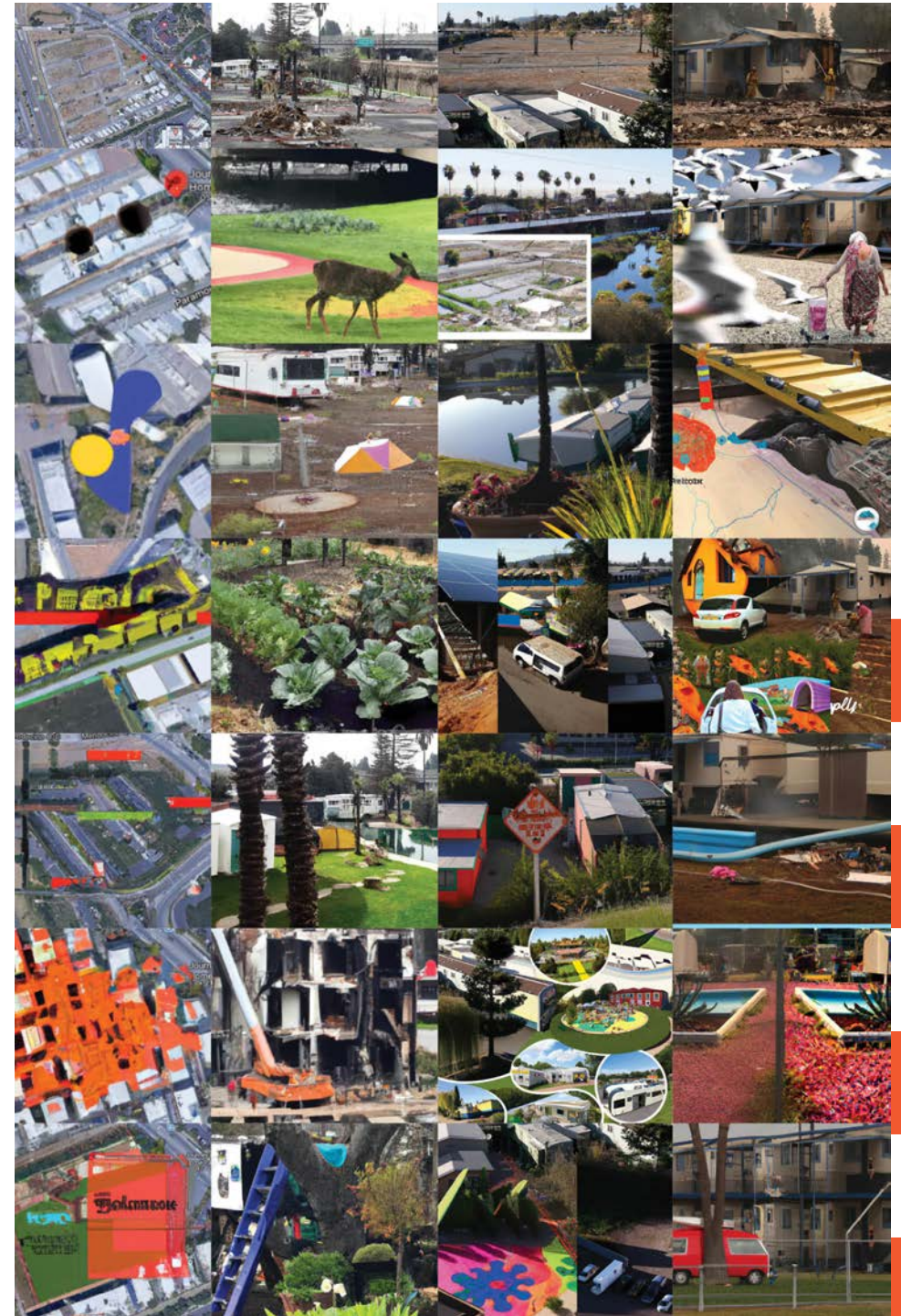
We use the art of juxtaposition to develop strange positions—positions that shock us out of complacency, undermine our everyday view of things, question received reality, and imagine alternatives. We do this by introducing narrative elements into architectural research to form critical positions toward contemporary issues. The potential for narrative to capture our imagination, and hold our attention, we view as a primary strength of a thesis project. Both architecture and literature are arts of world-building, and the infusion of literary elements into architectural thinking frees architecture to exist beyond a single edifice in a single, specific context, and to exert its impact on a broader audience. This physical, tangible world, with its imperfections and complications may be our reality, but by questioning its limitations we uncover new means with which to address or engage existing problems.

For inspiration we investigated Magical Realism, a literary genre known for its paradoxical elements, strange juxtapositions, and often "impossible" scenarios that "infuse the ordinary with a sense of mystery." Despite these marvelous eccentricities, Magical Realist works are grounded in precise, detailed, situational and historical contexts. They rely on the juxtaposition of the real and the imaginary to criticize the power structures of the real. Magical Realism is destabilizing, disjunctive, eclectic, exuberant, and allows us to venture beyond the constraints of our reality toward the sublime and the uncanny.

We studied Magical Realism in painting, literature and film to discover the ways in which they render the invisible visible to criticize structures of power. We explored the power of strange juxtapositions as we researched, diagrammed, collaged, rendered, designed, wrote, or otherwise crafted narratives that present precise, critical points of view relative to a specific contemporary issue, whether political, cultural, environmental, or any combination of the above.

Specific areas of research and inquiry were left to student discretion, as was the outcome of the thesis—whether constructible, speculative, imaginary or "real." As a thesis advisory group we explored the development of focused inquiry thorough research, detailed contextual analysis, and provocative architectural speculation.

Advisors: Hannibal Newsom,
Kiana Memaran Dadgar

Ancient and pre-colonial India has a history that is charged with both strengths and shortcomings. It had its own set of hierarchies, tensions and structures of power within a rich culture and value system which, given the opportunity, would have flourished into its own vibrant and volatile society. British influence, however, changed the course of this history into what is now modern-day India. This thesis speculates on the past in order to imagine an alternative present (and future) without this external influence. It focuses specifically on the sex industry and red-light districts, as these are spaces that are highly affected by the influence of colonial policies, suppression of common traditions, and the popularisation of purposefully mistranslated texts.

Unlike the culture of violence and shame in contemporary India, Indian history has a long and rich tradition of sex workers as important and respected members of society, and skilled purveyors of a vast variety of arts. Indian poets and writers have long sung praises of the "public woman" or the professional entertainer. They are recorded as having held essential roles in divine stories, religious rituals, royal courts, and in common everyday society.

Through the design of an allohistorical culture and urban space, this thesis reimagines the red-light industry as though it were allowed to develop without the influence of British colonial and military culture, looking at various spatial conditions that highlight the societal deficiencies in the existing urban fabric. This includes an emphasis on green public space; interweaving of "proper" and "improper" through structure; inclusion of ATMs; connection to the metro; bus stations; public-facing sex work infrastructure; and more humane spaces of dwelling. It will highlight both possible merits and inevitable frictions by basing its roots in historical, rather than modern, reality—recreating spaces that would be fraught with a "new" set of traditions, values, ideas and conflicts. The project aims to spark conversation and add to a discourse that is heavily subdued and often hidden from both Indian societies and the Western world.

Strange Juxtapositions

Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar

Image: Kamathipura, Mumbai — An Allohistory

This thesis aims to distort reality. Since the adoption of traditional architecture, designers have become less explorative in their design methods. Individuals tend to ignore their everyday environments, contradicting the design intention that architects have when creating a harmonious building experience. Architects design for comfort and ease; designing for discomfort is rarely explored. By utilizing the lens of the uncanny, defined by Sigmund Freud as the "unfamiliar familiar," the opportunity to capture the essence of exciting dread, unfamiliarity and intellectual uncertainty parallels the unpredictability of the modern world.

To keep up with the exponentially changing world, adaptability becomes the core principle as a means to better navigate and learn from our surroundings. The concept of increasing design adaptability aims to shed light on the chronic stillness that becomes the everyday. Individuals are ignorant of the possibilities of what could be—if only by looking at the world through different lenses as opposed to fighting this evolution.

Through the collective unconscious, a concept coined by Carl Jung, unconscious memories derived from experiences are shared by a large group of individuals. Slocum Hall represents a "collective familiar" for this project's audience. The project builds off the stagnant backdrop of the building as a means for centralizing uncanny interventions and spatial warping to disrupt a collective routine—breaking the boundaries of how we interact with our everyday environments. By exploring the act of deep faking architecture within the research, adaptation emerges, prompting the benefits of defamiliarization within the design realm. Exploring optical illusions and fabrications as means of transforming spaces, instances are created showing positive and negative impacts on the site and users. A set of tools emerges, serving as a new baseline and technique of design that can be implemented in other locations of routines and encouraging and exploring the use of uncanny design within our routines. Through the implementation of these tools and techniques, this thesis proposes a new way of design that strays away from the mundane and continuously adapts to the environment we encounter and adapt with.

Strange [Juxta]positions

Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar

Image: Lenticular Wall Distortion Installation

The metaverse is a network of virtual spaces where people can interact online. The process of technological development is irreversible; just as Moore's Law in the computer science field suggests, the transistors in a dense integrated circuit will be doubled each year. In other words, technology will affect the performance of products that will be made in the future. Metaverse, as a new way to connect people online via virtual environments, will eventually become a popular mainstream medium in the future, affecting people's lifestyles and changing their living space.

Climate change is a serious problem that all of humanity is facing. In this thesis design's imaginary future, those problems will be extremely severe. Effects brought by climate change will force human society to face various difficulties, such as extinction, food shortage, rising sea levels, habitat reduction, etc. The metaverse then becomes a perfect solution, providing people with an online platform to continue their daily activities such as study, work and entertainment. Metaverse also enables people to solve a problem they face in reality: the shortage of living spaces. Many people will participate in the metaverse in the future, seeing it as a response to the unavoidable impact of environmental problems.

With its super versatility and powerful propaganda, the metaverse has gained popularity; most of the population has abandoned the construction of the real world and moved to the virtual to continue their lives. The living space in reality has changed hugely based on the influence of the media, and there are two worlds existing at the same time. One is a wonderful virtual world full of hope; another is the real world which has long since fallen into disrepair.

However, is this the future we really want? The answer is obviously no. This thesis project casts doubt on the metaverse-guided future. Prosperity in the virtual world will just be an escape from reality.

Image: Collage of Metaverse City Poster   Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar   Strange [Juxta]positions

This project explores acoustic vibrations and frequencies. The built environment and those who occupy it are seen as a set of vibrations, where everything has an action and reaction to each other within multiple mediums. The question is: will an increase in alertness and communication improve safety in the home? Can common surfaces of our environment become adaptive feedback loops? Can we have isolated experiences of noise within separate spaces of our homes? These vibrations will be focused, redirected and used as a tool to direct signals and messages to household members about their surround-ings. This will be executed through the use of acoustic metamaterials. Metamaterials will allow unnatural vibration patterns because they are able to have a negative refractive index. The focus will be on the human scale by testing the hard vs. soft materials and porous vs. non-porous materials on the level of frequency transmitted and the level of control/ flexibility presented to its user.

Through these typologies, different options will be tested to improve safety, noise and community relations. The options will be carried out through the frame of acoustic architecture. Small-scale vibration and sound experiments will be conducted to show how vibration moves through different objects and how it can be changed to achieve a desired outcome. Applicable scenarios such as noise cancellation, security and isolation will also be created to demonstrate potential outcomes. The goals of this focused research and exploration are: safer natural senses of security; the production of sound-adaptive home types that change according to occupant needs; and better access to basic needs by improving the system of deliveries and visitors to communities. This research will be conducted through cymatic experiments to show vibration patterns in spaces. The study of human reaction to sound and a custom scale of emotion towards sound will be made to create a new acoustic system of spaces within the residential environment.

Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar   Strange Juxtalpositions
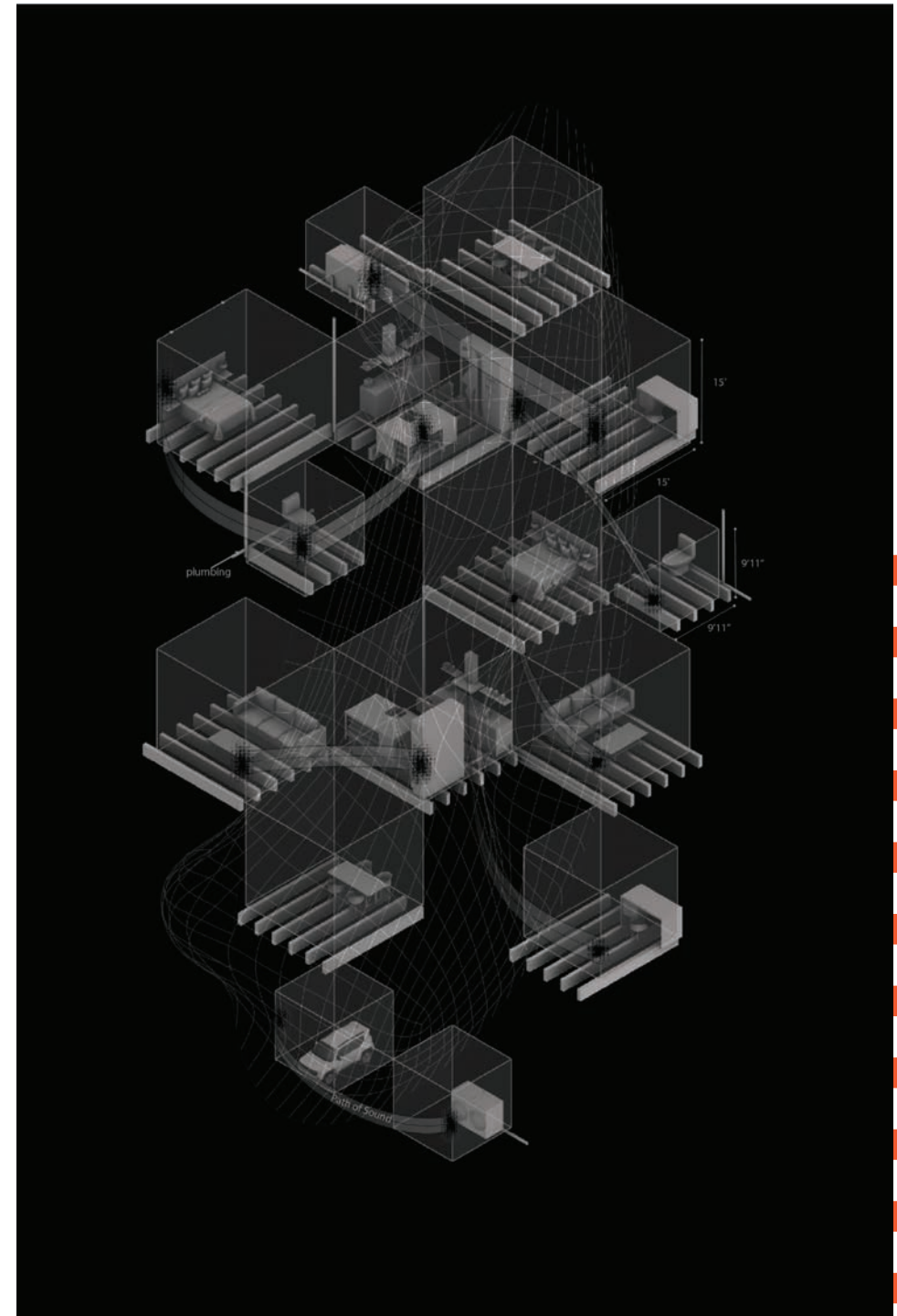
The term "myth" comes from the Greek word mûthos, meaning a narrative-based expression or phrase. However, the notion of myth has existed since the beginning of man's time on earth as a universal human experience, most often as a manifestation of our effort, as isolated communities, to explain the world and all its incomprehensible phenomena. This occurs as a process in which our imagination superimposes the inner and outer worlds, such that when these compositions made relative sense in both worlds, they evolved with us and were expanded upon into comprehensive cosmologies.

Today, the network is our unfulfilled myth of the digital age. By the end of the last century, the internet and the web seemed to be the bearers of a new era in which the integration of connectivity and digital devices would bring the workings of society closer to the workings of our minds. According to this narrative, especially starting from the 1990s, a new interdependent organization of knowledge, work and social life would be realized thanks to this distributed model of communication. However, two decades later, what was once forecast to be the golden age of networks has instead turned out to be an age in which networks have become a gold mine.

As the internet becomes omnipresent within society and culture, our identities begin to exist simultaneously, acting as a composite of our presence in both reality and digital space, becoming analogous to the merging of inner and outer worlds seen in primitive cultures. As technology progresses, the line between these dimensions becomes blurred, with behavior now more and more influenced by what is presented online as well as a rise in misinformation and post-truth.

So as the internet, occupying cyberspace, and inauthenticity become ubiquitous within society, it is not unlikely that the resulting digital phenomena will become no different to us than the forces of nature once were to ancient societies, their manifestation inherent to the evolution of the internet. Thus, myths will arise to rationalize these phenomena as fundamental elements of the human experience, just as they have for centuries.
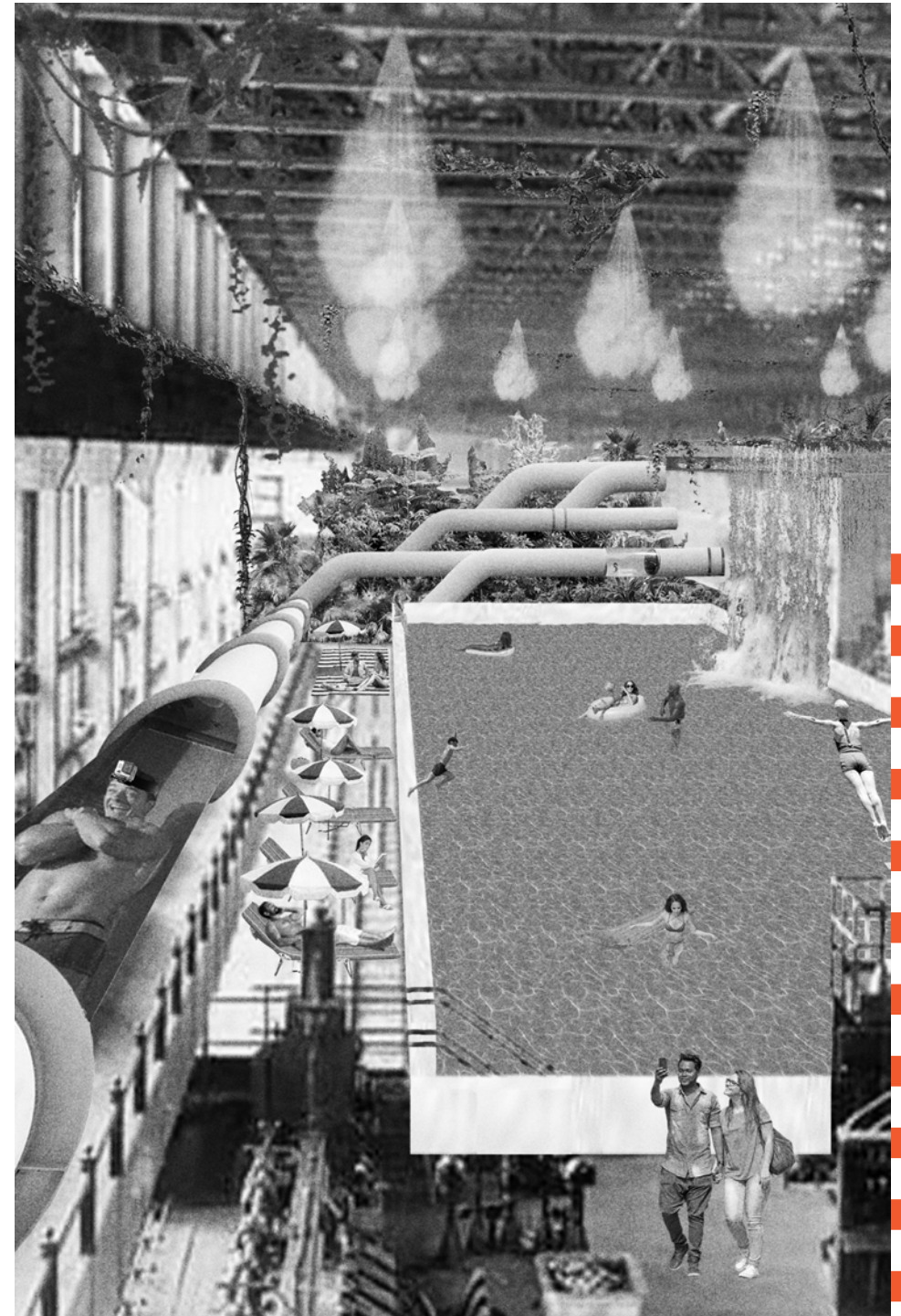
Strange [Juxta]positions

Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar

Image: Projection of the Counter-emplacement Manifested by Cyberspace

"**Welcome aboard the cruise ship!**" The propaganda you will see is a billboard that presents an immersive experience with the glory of heavenly typography comprising various entertaining infrastructures. The fantastical gesture of the screen's wonderland will extensively enrich your life and provide you with infinite possibilities to entertain yourself. This project criticizes the over-saturation of entertainment-oriented culture, displaying a burnout society that constantly processes/generates dopamine and assigns every network footprint a commercial value. People's attention is traded as economically valuable packets of data, so people then become commodities themselves.

Today's world has gradually moved toward the era of psych politics. Digital technology is transitioning from mere surveillance to active manipulation. Ubiquitous big data and neoliberal ethics have caused the transfer and expansion of capitalist power, especially the two-dimensional screen that constantly manipulates and disperses our attention. In such a ruling order, we actively confine ourselves inside the dimensions of the screen and thus fall deep into a whirlwind of depression; we project our desires onto all kinds of sensory interfaces, and we are constantly immersed in the noise of group discourse in social media but are unable to form any unified collective action for remediation. Therefore, the cruise ship is a place of collective misery because it reflects the contemporary ethical stretch between modern social metabolism and the power that was instilled in the entertainment-oriented economic system.

Inspired by the Magical Realism genre, which renders a layer of fantasy above reality, this project also situates itself in the speculative spectrum. The project uses script-based fairytale storytelling to criticize the entertainment-oriented medium and to reflect on how two-dimensional flat screens fundamentally blunt reality, profit from us, exacerbate the superficiality of culture, and ultimately achieve a technological monopoly at the end that razes social identity.

Strange Juxtapositions

Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar
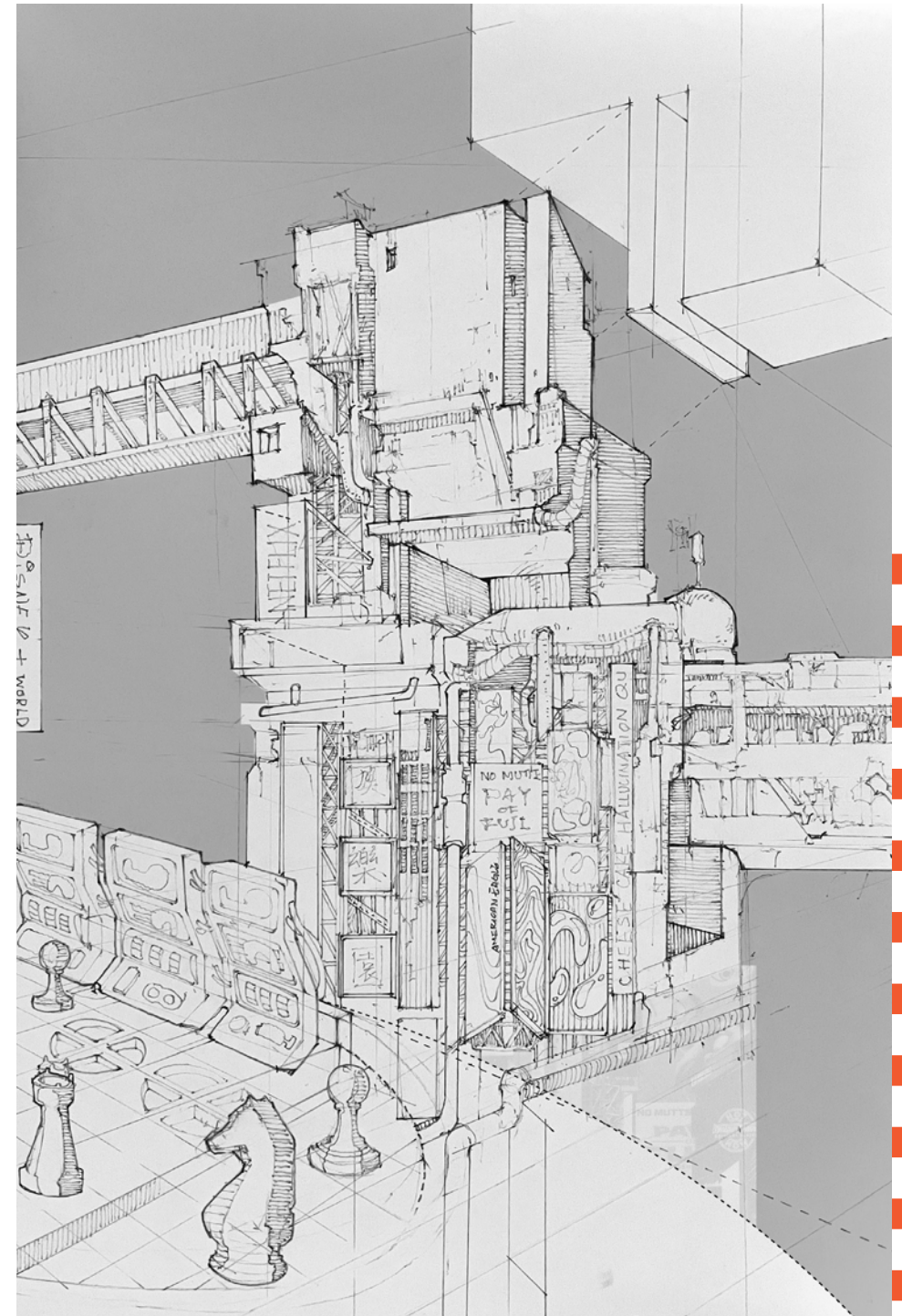
Image: The Screens

The uniform is a device defining distinctiveness and uniformity that works to indoctrinate conforming members of a group. This project investigates how articles of clothing, particularly school uniforms, become a tool for those with power to impose their ideologies on students to hold power over and overly sexualize and dehumanize them.

This thesis redesigns the school uniform (for the U.S., Thailand, and Japan) to make the argument that the choices we can or cannot make about what we wear and the deliberate designs of the uniforms result in the enforcement of power. The project will highlight how inequalities between genders are portrayed by over-exaggerating the given rules to make them unavoidable or by denying the constraints put in place by the institutions. The project will use photography, collaging, and model-making to juxtapose the sexualization of students in an educational setting.

A format of a storefront—the façade of a retail store on the street level—will display these redesigned uniforms to attract consumers in order to sell a product or message within a society where ideas are spread through commercial interactions. The storefront window display becomes a collection of work, which will then stand as a physical manifestation of the exaggerated ideas presented, becoming a framed stage, drawing the public to dive more deeply into the issues of sexualization within school systems in the over-commercialized society. The storefront window will be used to draw people into the discussion. The window creates a need for people to interact with and interpret the project in their own way without the message being verbally stated to them.

"Property Of" is meant to make people uncomfortable in hopes of spreading awareness and starting a conversation on feminism and the battle of women against the patriarchal culture that has objectified them. The project proposes uniforms as fashion and brings to attention the commercialized aspect of fashion and the structure of power reflected in the designs.
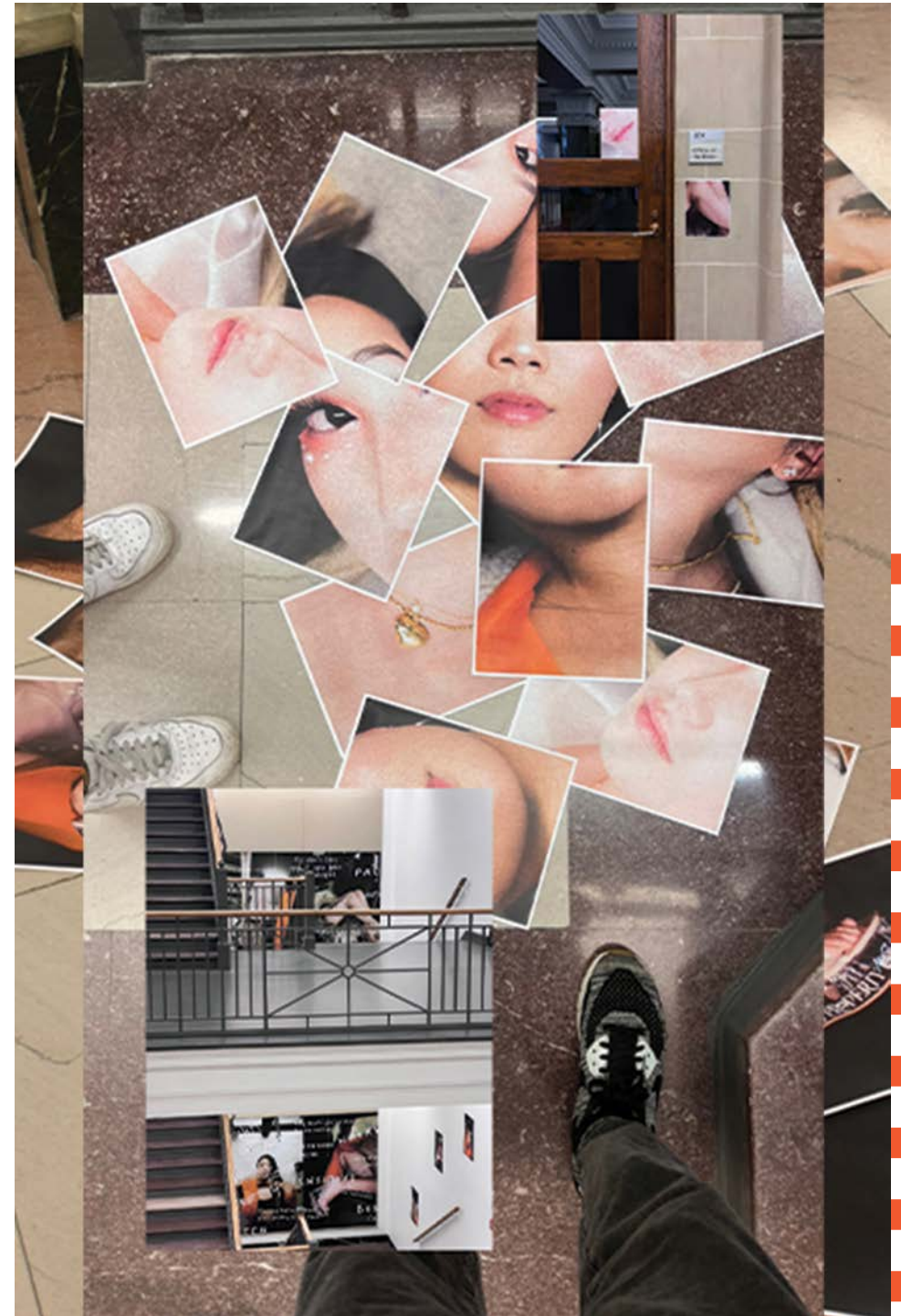
Strange [Juxta]positions

Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar

Image: Slocum Photo Exhibition

South Asia has an ancient history of queer identity. Religious script, mythology and architecture show evidence of gender and sexual fluidity, even among the divine, and although it was not the normative practice, there was social tolerance of queer identities. However, due to legislation under British rule, which criminalized both homosexual acts and the hijra community— a group of third-gender people who held social and religious status in ancient India—post-colonial South Asia has developed deep-rooted homophobia and transphobia. Colonial officials viewed queer identities such as hijras as ungovernable and a challenge to the colonial legal system, which was based on heterosexual, reproductive sexuality and the family—ideals that are upheld today in most societies.

In recent years there have been changes in some legislation, slowly giving legal rights back to queer communities in parts of South Asia, but there are still heavy socio-political and economic biases these communities face. In most South Asian societies, ironically, queerness is considered an influence of Western behaviors, foreign to the traditions of South Asian cultures. This has led to ideals that heavily impact queer South Asian individuals, who continue to struggle with their sexuality, culture and religion.

It is imperative that queer South Asian identity reclaims its deep historical, cultural and religious ties to queer narratives in physical and theoretical South Asian spaces, rejecting Western perceptions of their queerness, and battling native perceptions of their queerness. Exploring how the visual politics of queer art and media has generated its own language of living, expression and resurgence, (Be)Longings explores how architecture can act as a medium of exclusion, community and storytelling, creating spatial narratives unique to the experience of the queer South Asian diaspora in post-colonial public space. By superimposing queer bodies and narratives in both iconic and mundane architectural space, this thesis re-contextualizes the canon to include themes and depictions that have been historically omitted, offering imaginings of queer spaces.

Image: Queer Stained Glass   Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar   Strange Juxtapositions

Welcome to Pan!—a company striving for a better human future through endless predictive and advisory services and products using eight apps to collect and process data from a microchip implanted in human brains. The chip connects to the cranial nerves, accessing and manipulating the senses and personal information of the user. Life has never been easier. Let us do the analysis and provide the best suggestions for you!

The way our chip works is unprecedented and life-changing. Smartphones are no longer needed. Once you close your eyes, you enter the chip space, with several virtual interfaces that the chip projects into your vision through your optic nerves. In this chip space, you will be able to interact with any virtual elements the interfaces provide.

Explore the world through the eyes of others and relive your own memories with Panorama, which lets you view and revisit visions from the past. Wanna track your friends' locations, access your location history, and navigate the globe with confidence? Stay connected through Pangaea! Elevate your culinary experience with Pancake, which analyzes your taste preferences to provide personalized meal suggestions and seamless food delivery options. Take control of your health! Panacea monitors your body conditions, predicts potential illnesses and diseases, and provides personalized treatment options for optimal well-being.

Unleash your full athletic potential with Panther, the ultimate personal fitness coach that knows every detail of your sporting habits and body conditions. Bring your ideas to life with Pantheon simply by using the power of your own thoughts, for a truly immersive and unparalleled 3D modeling experience. Get ready to shop till you drop and let us manage your finances, thanks to Pandora. Are you ready to step into a whole new dimension of gaming? Panda allows you to explore countless possibilities in our groundbreaking metaverse gaming system.

…

"Hi, heard that you are interested in our Project Panopticon. We have ALL the information from our users. Now let's talk about price."

Strange [Juxta]positions   Advisors: Newsom, Dadgar   Image: Panopticon

As the title indicates, this thesis advisory group sought proposals that aimed to interrogate domestic space through a critical genealogy of domestication (understood as the process by which our industrial, capitalist civilization has been produced) and its corresponding architectures and ecologies.

Basically, the students sat the **HOME** (and therefore, the **HOUSE**) on the couch and asked it about its parents—which is a simple way to say that they tried to understand how, during the last 200 years, the domestic has been constructed as the very root of many social and economic issues and how, in our present moment, expanded notions of labor, agency, ownership, care and family are shaping the way we live, transforming not only the way housing is being (or should be) designed but the way it is seen and for whom it is meant.

By studying the evolution of the household alongside changing societal practices, these projects raise questions, on the one hand, about the need for a new spatiality to house our shifting social relationships, and on the other, about the political role of architects in shaping these alternative realities.

Space and Domestication: Home Dynamics as Sites for Architectural Intervention

Advisor: Marcos Parga

Modernization, globalization, and colonization have forced a domestic transplantation in neighborhoods globally, creating social segregation and individualistic living.

Kampungs are informal compound settlements that lie within the urban fabric of Jakarta. These are typically autonomous and built within the core values of neighboring communities that embody a sociable, intergenerational community. Due to their organic nature, kampungs are very flexible, promoting a system of a self-sustaining community that can economically generate and live; however, they are portrayed as "slum," dirty and undesirable. These systems of collective living have become neglected through factors of modernization, colonization and imported ideas of ownership that idealize a "Western" neighborhood prioritizing safety, security and elite living.

In Jakarta, this phenomenon manifests itself in the emergence of single-family houses and gated neighborhoods. The epitome of this is embodied in the phenomenon of the neighborhood on top of the mall. The urban creature exists as a machine of capitalism to foster an imagined (Western) reality for its inhabitants, created to be separated from the Indonesian streets. The kampungs or the compound village typically lie right outside this bubble.

This thesis examines the architectural tools that have devised this transformation by looking at social frameworks affecting ideas of program, safety and work, and revealing invisible power dynamics in the neighborhood. It asks what happens when an imported architectural system colonizes itself within the Indonesian domestic, erasing values of cohabitation, mutual assistance, autonomy, sociability, and intergenerational living—once intrinsic elements of the neighborhood. The project hacks this foreign phenomenon by creating new typologies. It studies and integrates the models and operations in kampungs and the vernacular Indonesian architecture that was once the core identity of the neighborhood, using it to provoke a new domestic typology. The project also recognizes the importance of learning from the new neoliberal city and speculates a system that supports and nurtures existing kampungs and communities.
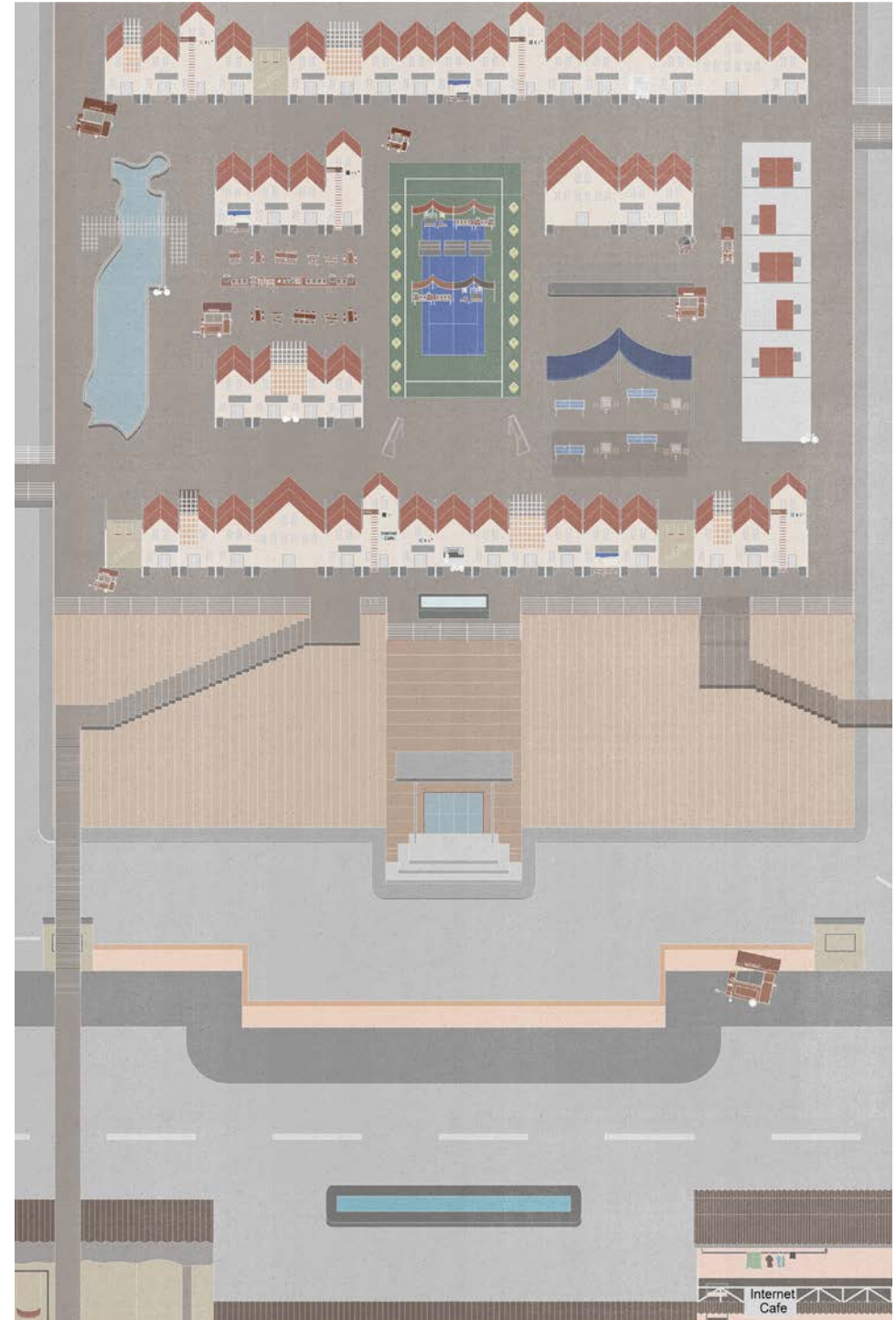
Space and Domestication

Advisor: Parga

Image: Glitching the Modern Home by Examining the Kampung

Humanity will end the 21st century as an entirely urban species. But urban environments are factories—sites of perpetual reproduction of services, interactions, urban and domestic spaces for capital accumulation, rather than the outcome of social processes. The conditions under which migrants have integrated into urban environments globally are thus characterized by the struggle for decent housing and work.

Globally, the squatting movement has responded by countering exclusionary forms of ownership and radically transforming urban and domestic conditions for migrants through two distinct operations: the illegal appropriation of vacant buildings and domestic interventions centered on the commons. They have produced extraordinary domestic and urban spaces for migrants and refugees utilizing collective labor, spatial activism, and alternative models of family and ownership.

In the Netherlands, gentrification and decline of the social housing stock drastically exacerbated the State's strictly regulated, migrant integration protocol. Amsterdam's squatter institutions responded. Amsterdam's squatting movement can be distinguished by its quasi-institutional, urban-scale operations critiquing the city's social hierarchies, housing speculation and political negligence. Thus, the integration of migrants and refugees into the urban environment was bottom-up and organic, enabling anyone, even migrants and refugees, to intervene in the urban environment according to their needs and reconstruct the city according to their desires.

In 2010, Amsterdam outlawed squatting entirely, further escalating its housing and refugee crises. This thesis proposes a new domestic prototype/typology through a reflection on the organic social and spatial commoning tactics of the squatters. Dubbed the Sharehouse, this domestic typology for migrants and refugees capitalizes on discomfort and friction, promotes negotiation, and leverages collective action to enable domestic assemblage. This thesis reconceptualizes domestic space as a process to co-produce and transform the city.

Space and Domestication

Advisor: Parga

Image: A Radical Migrant Domesticity Integrated into Urban Space

Beginning in the 17th century, revolutionized social conditions and an economically prosperous bourgeoisie influenced an increase in the degree of privacy of the typical dwelling. By the 19th century, the private home had evolved into an entity perceived as ideologically distinct from the public world. An increasing polarity between public and private transformed the meaning of home, especially in the growing consumerist context—living space became a retreat from both the workplace and the public realm. However, during the mid-20th century, a public condition re-emerged in the privacy of domestic space. As the epoch shifted towards an age of information, mass media began to infiltrate home life under the guise of promising technologies. Devices capable of transmitting and receiving information injected the private with an obscure public presence, consequently blurring the boundary that once distinguished life inside and outside the home.

Throughout the opening decades of the 21st century, the rapid rate of modernization, specifically in relation to emerging information technologies, has disturbed the traditional quality of domestic space. Quarantine during the recent pandemic has adjunctively revised the dichotomy between public and private—a desire for seclusion has been replaced by a fear of isolation, and the workplace has merged with living space. Despite these drastic changes, mass media in the dwelling have predominantly remained unsusceptible to the scrutiny of society, especially due to the expeditiousness with which they redefined normalcy.

Through allegorical portrayals of living environments containing domiciliary media, this thesis seeks to interrogate the repercussions of information technologies in the home. Five speculative dwellings are metaphorically represented as spaces that reflect the conditions that certain media engender. For instance, the first dwelling compares the character of a den to that of domestic space before the age of information. By contrast, the later dwellings chronologically exhibit information technologies popularized in the early 21st century, which include personal computers, voice assistants, and virtual reality.

Space and Domestication   Advisor: Parga   Image: Den of the Troglodyte

This thesis begins by identifying the historical issues and oppressions facing women and mothers to uncover the current realities women still face in the U.S. By using spatial mutations, targeted programmatic implementation and material feminist ideals, the project is acting as a statement against the patriarchy to make the hidden and systemic issues of women visible. In turn, this destabilizes the hold society has on women and dismantles the patriarchal culture that predominates in the U.S. today.

The patriarchal system [a system where men hold the power] has historically defined society and has negatively impacted women, particularly those of low income. The patriarchy has excluded them from the work force and power structure, while diminishing the value of their domestic labor. This system overburdens women, using the domestic space to enslave them and limit them economically. The architecture of the nuclear home has helped the patriarchal system by creating a system of spaces that keeps women in the kitchen and care roles, making it harder for them to progress in non-domestic fields.

Although this nuclear architecture has oppressed women and mothers for decades, this same architecture can be redefined to produce a counter typology, thereby using one of the main tools of the patriarchy against it. This would manifest not only as a living community for women and mothers, but also as an urban center for marginalized communities. Here individuals can develop skills and receive help and resources to improve their situations. Achieving this through architecture requires a gradient of programmed areas to enforce the idea and practice of community living by improving the distribution of waged and unwaged work, thereby hindering and dismantling the hold the patriarchy has on women's lives, time and energy.

Ultimately, this thesis can't solve all the problems the patriarchy created. However, it can be used as a statement to give feminism and material feminism a platform to be seen and understood. Furthermore, this project will provide visibility to the issues and women's labor that have historically been kept hidden, enabling us to acknowledge and understand their struggle.
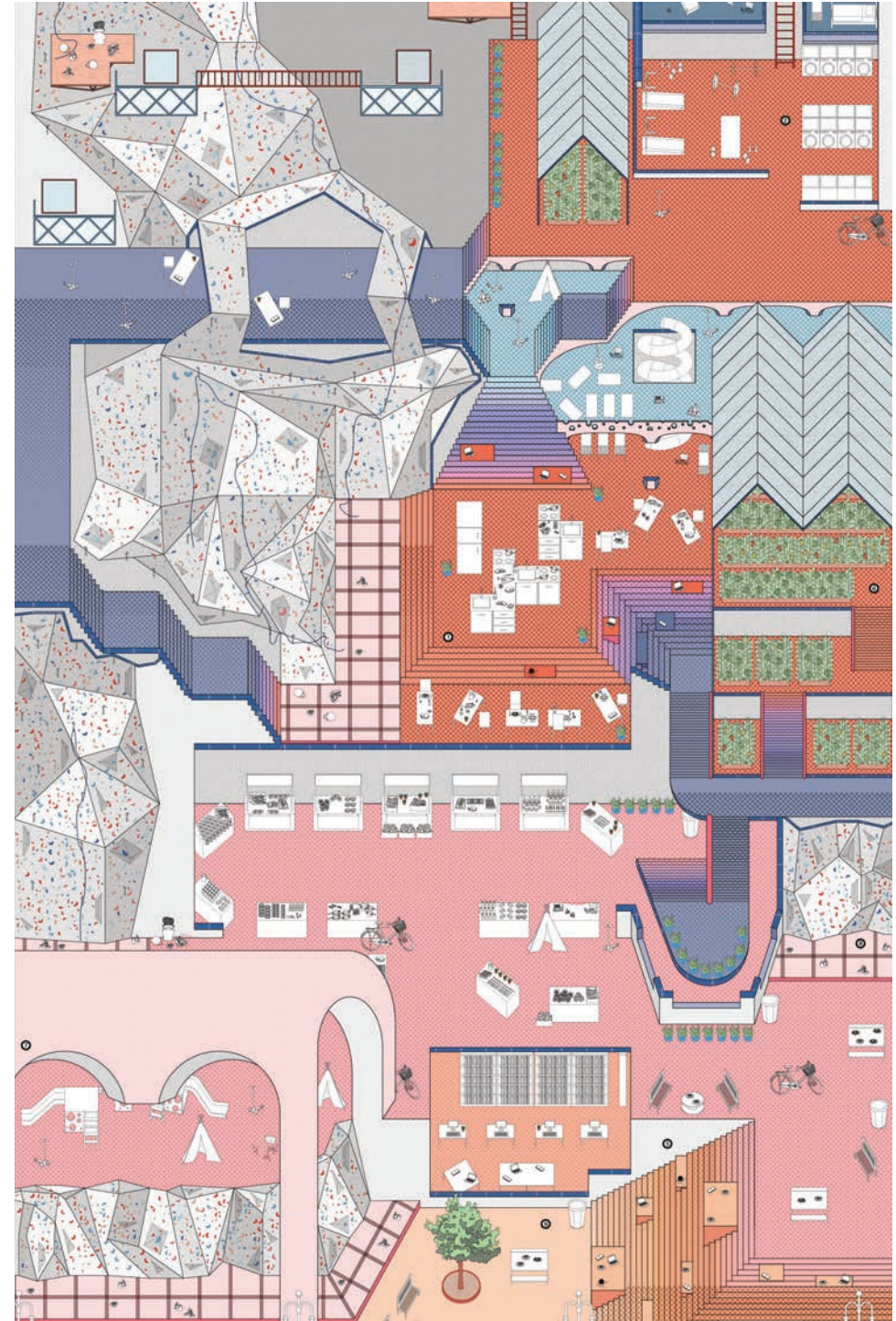
Space and Domestication

Advisor: Parga

Image: Abstracted Project Proposal; Exquisite Corpse

Large metropolises are facing issues of an economic gap, especially for younger generations joining the workforce. When they rent or buy a place, they often get a studio with all programs of a living environment mixed in together, or a shared apartment with barely a bathroom and a kitchen, and roommates they might not even like. Living in a metropolis has forced people to create new ways of living; younger people often go to places like Starbucks to leave that tiny space they can barely call home to feel at peace, enjoy some company, do work or study—to do things the domestic should be able to satisfy. This thesis aims to provide a home away from home by blurring limits between what seems urban and what seems domestic. It attempts to achieve a gradient of spaces where urban and domestic are not so clearly delimited but colonize each other.

Manhattan is used as a test city. It is a perfect contemporary example of how younger generations will sacrifice their living space to experience city life and avoid commuting. In response to this big influx of people wanting city life, the market takes advantage of the newcomers. Manhattan has had a steady decline in rental subsidies for low-income people and rent regulation laws have weakened since 1991. Rents have increased 12% since 2005, and over 10,000 buildings have lost rent-regulation. Another reason Manhattan was chosen as the site is the limited amount of space younger people can afford, and which they usually share, so what is considered their safe space is not necessarily providing the comfort a home should.

This thesis seeks a design that gives the user autonomy to create a space of their own, deciding whether they want to be in an enclosed space or not, or if they want to be in a group scenario or individual space. The design aims to highlight and bring to attention how the real estate industry develops buildings with a general idea and tries to make all residents adapt to what their "concept" of home should look and feel like.

Image: The Domestication of the City   Advisor: Parga   Space and Domestication

Countryside in Remaking

"While today, the countryside is largely off (our) radar, an ignored realm, considering its condition and future was a priority as recently as the last century—the Soviet Union, the New Deal, Nazi Germany, Mao, and the EU were experimenting with vast efforts to improve its accessibility and efficiency, and to shape its politics."
— Rem Koolhaas, Countryside: A Report (Köln: Taschen, 2020)

Koolhaas' systematic romanticization of the countryside may be controversial, but about one thing he is right: the countryside is an ignored realm in the field of architecture. In the past century, cities—especially the Western cities—have been the main locale for the harvest of architectural knowledge. To correct this imbalance, thesis students who are interested in the countryside were invited to work together in this thesis advisory group. Here, countryside is a spatial condition and a set of economic and social constructs. More importantly, it is a productive arena for architectural designers that offers the opportunity to reinvent their practices and reflect about the field of architecture at large.
        Students were expected to work on three major modules: 1) tracing the genealogy of design theories and practices of the countryside across the world; 2) learning and practicing methods such as ethnography , archival research, humanistic mapping, GIS mapping, and new media representation; and 3) developing research-design projects that speculate on the countryside across the globe. Students were encouraged to explore how varied forces—such as hybrid economic modes, state power, village organizations, rising civic spirits, new forms of collectivities, and human initiatives—together shape new forms of space, new methods of design, and new ways of living in the contemporary countryside.

Advisor: Jiong Abingo Wu

(re)Discovering Rural
Constructing Collective Memories
of Lost Chinese Villages

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Jack Guanting Chen

China is undergoing one of the fastest urbanization processes in the world, with over 60% of its population now residing in cities and towns, up from 30% just two decades ago. This migration is driven by the government's push for economic reform and has resulted in the decline of rural Chinese villages, with approximately 660,000 villages remaining today, down from 3.7 million in 2000. This rapid decline raises concerns about the preservation of the culture, history and traditions of these disappearing villages.

The purpose of this thesis is to document and explore the preservation of the cultural heritage of rural Chinese villages through the collective memory of their former residents. The study will first examine the reasons behind the rapid decline of rural villages in China, including government policies, economic factors, and the relocation of farmers to urban areas. This will provide a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by rural villages in the face of modernization.

The focus of the study will then shift to the preservation of a specific village, Aoshan, which is representative of the millions of villages that have been lost. The primary method for this research will involve conducting interviews with former residents of Aoshan to gather their memories and gain a holistic understanding of the village, including its cultural practices, social customs, and historical significance. Through these interviews, the thesis aims to build a collective memory of Aoshan and demonstrate the importance of preserving the cultural heritage of rural Chinese villages.

Finally, the thesis will provide a comprehensive analysis of the number of villages that have been lost in China and suggest ways to preserve their collective memories on a larger scale. This could include the creation of archives, museums, and other cultural heritage institutions that can preserve the memory of rural Chinese villages for future generations. Additionally, the thesis will explore the role of communities, government, and civil society organizations in preserving the cultural heritage of rural villages and ensuring that their memories are not lost forever.

Countryside in Remaking

Advisor: Wu

Image: Village Memory Reconstruction, Kit-of-Parts

"Reality" largely depends on how humans (or other creatures) perceive the world, rather than on objective existence or operation of matter. In most architectural works, "vision" is the dominant medium to transfer designed elements into "reality" while the other types of perception are substantially neglected. In this case, how could "sound" connect to reality in terms of understanding, designing, and challenging, both theoretically and practically?

As precedents, Murray Schafer attempted to study "soundscape," which investigated the sound as a landscape; Zimoun created an illusion of nature with artificial sound; and Yugo Nakamura constructed space with the fusion of vision and sound. Learning from these references, the steps of the thesis consist of researching the qualities of sound; breaking the existing link between sound, human, space and reality; then experimenting with new narratives between sound and reality.

The potential outcome will include a series of installations illustrating how the sound peculiarly defines, challenges, and reconstructs the space and perceived reality. Through the exhibition, new understandings and methodologies about the role of sound in architecture could be reimagined as conclusions. Composing the new relationship between sound and space could not only provide another dimension for practical architectural design, but also challenge the definition, scope, and limitation of reality.
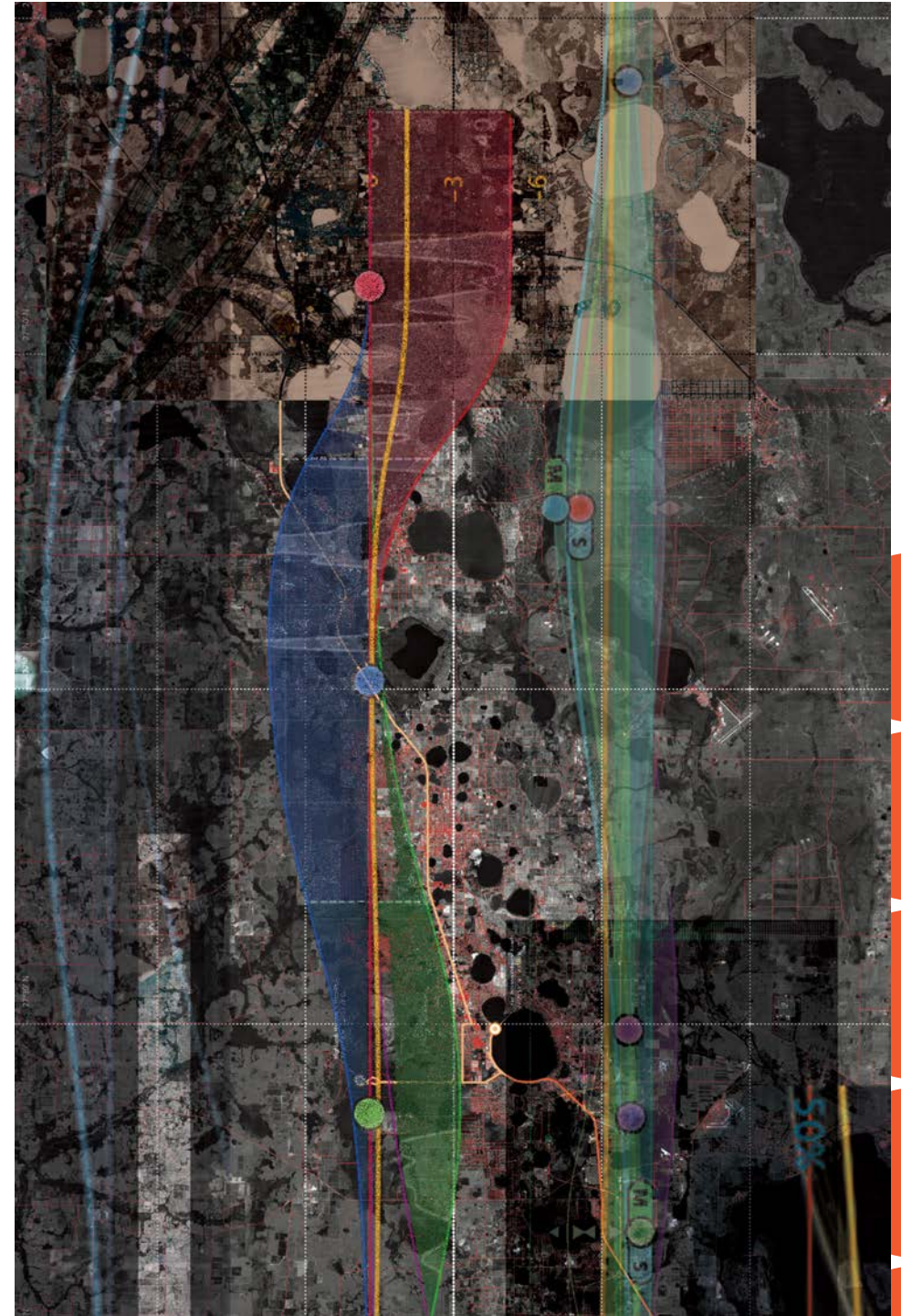
Countryside in Remaking

Advisor: Wu

Image: Soundscape of Florida

Urbanization originates from countryside, and rural histories enrich a country's culture and development. However, the importance of rural cultures is often forgotten by the fast-paced society. Agricultural revolution expanded the global population, stimulating the Industrial Revolution. Farmlands were transformed into factories and high-rise buildings, creating jobs and new construction materials. Countless young people sought rapidly increasing job opportunities and migrated from rural areas into cities. Consequently, massive rural landscapes have been left to the elders, whose physical disadvantages prevent them from giving the countryside any agricultural or architectural value.

Political and economic reform in the 1980s boosted the Chinese economy, making China a distinct example of rapid urbanization with obvious traits of rural-to-urban migration. Chinese villages became empty architectural shells and traditional rituals began to disappear along with the aging elders. Hence, the Chinese government promoted the 1.8-billion-acre farmland policy, which restricts the use of farmlands in designated areas for profit. This exposes opportunities to revitalize additional rural villages and to remind society of these forgotten realms.

Thus, this project seeks to revitalize rural lifestyles and create a development guide for the Chinese countryside. The new style of vernacular architecture originates from the existing housing and will elucidate and commemorate countryside rituals, enact care for the rural society and its residents, and encourage a balance between metropolitan and suburban lives in future generations.

Advisor: Wu   Countryside in Remaking

The built environment is inherently designed to resist fire. While controlled fires bring warmth and light, uncontrolled fires indicate a level of danger and destruction. This thesis rethinks the paradoxical nature of timber as a material for construction or combustion through the lens of wildfires by challenging the notion of suppression and designing within the fire cycle. When juxtaposed, the seemingly opposing forces of building and burning exhibit how architecture can work with this tension to create a continuous model of construction and destruction. Modern discourse uses the duality of incomplete and complete to ration success and provide a clear resolution to a project. This mindset perpetuates the idea that there are only two states of being during the life cycle of a project, with incomplete being seen as bad or not finished and complete being seen as good and accomplished. The life cycle of a project should be seen as an infinite continuum that blurs the boundaries of what it means to be unfinished by convention through the means of controlled and uncontrolled forces and actions.

Through a layering of diverse, locally sourced timber materials and flora native to the Oregon Cascade Mountains, the design proposal functions as a monument and repository for ecologically managed forests. The process of collecting and assembling materials can happen at any stage of the fire cycle, acting as both structure and archeological evidence. After the initial framework is constructed, other explorers are invited to engage with and further shape the structure. As it burns away over time, new layers are revealed, and regrowth occurs. Designed as a prototype, this intervention is intended to be adapted to multiple sites along the Pacific Crest Trail which is situated between different types of forests and wildfire hazard zones, many of which have been previously affected by fire. This site leverages its fire-resilient characteristics with the productive and renewable qualities of periodic wildfires. By embracing these dualities in a continuous cycle, a new method of creating space emerges and hypothesizes on the convergence of landscape and material sustainable design.

Countryside in Remaking

Advisor: Wu

Image: The Architectural Fire Cycle Shaping Forest Mosaics
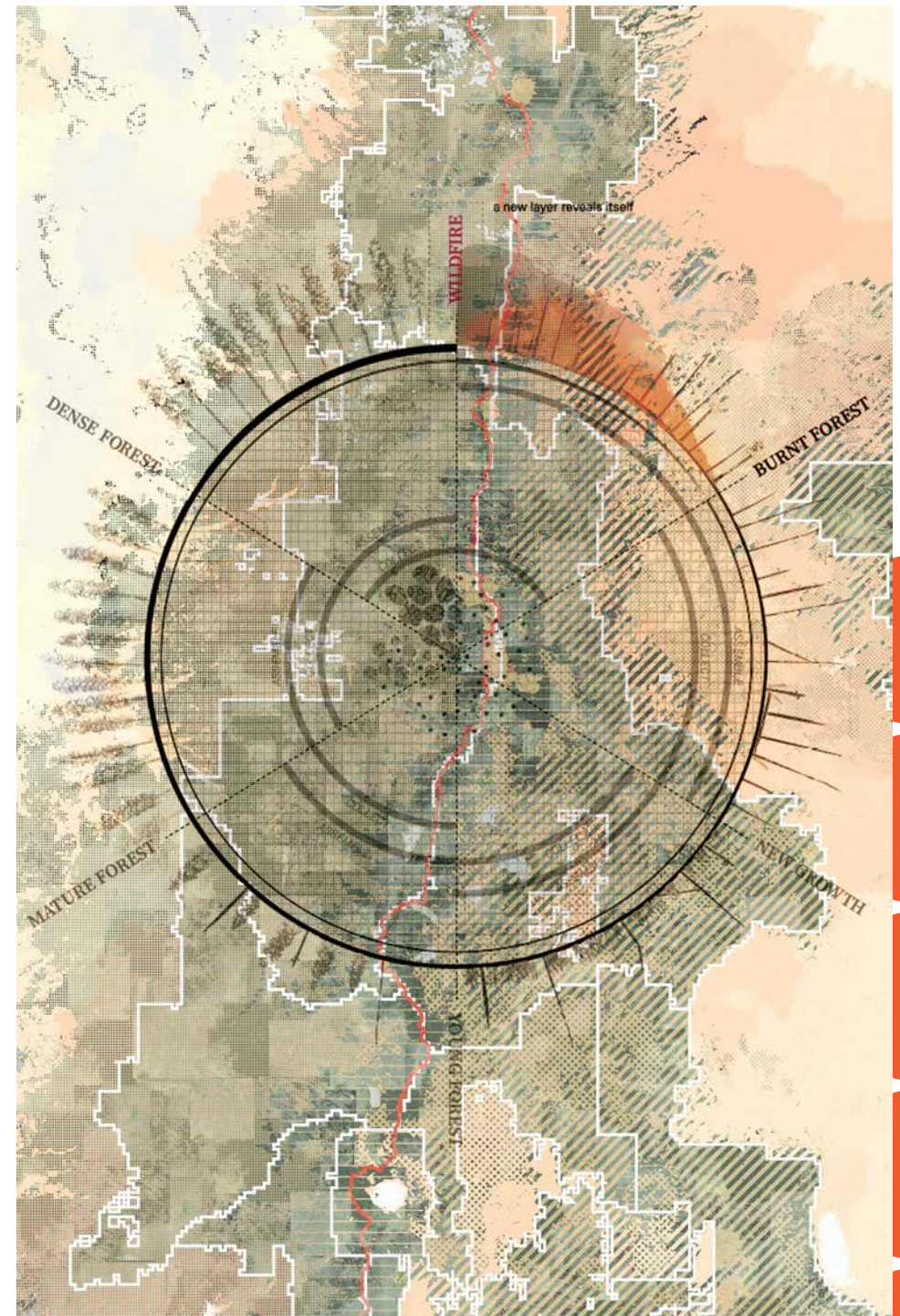
In states of temporality, convention can be challenged and reimagined. Ephemeral architecture responds to fluctuating conditions and is often built with lightweight, recycled materials that allow for reconfiguration and reinvention. Melas, Sanskrit for "gatherings," are a lens through which ephemeral architecture can be further explored in its most idealized form. Melas include gatherings of all scales that are commercial, celebratory, or religious. The crowds and temporary nature of these events allow for thoughtful ephemeral configurations to be tried and tested.

The largest mela in the world is the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, India. This religious pilgrimage creates an alternate reality by temporarily diminishing differences in social and economic classes and bringing people together through a shared spiritual belief. The rapid construction and disassembly make the city surreal. For a few moments each year, this is the densest city in the world, but there are no skyscrapers or mega structures. Everything, including the infrastructure, is made at the scale of the individual, creating a sense of horizontality against the backdrop of the vast Ganges floodplain. The temporary nature of the mela is what allows it to interrupt reality in profound ways.

This thesis speculates on the transcendental atmosphere of the Kumbh Mela by reconfiguring materials from the event to create temporary escapes from ordinary life that exist before and after the festival. The proposed floating pavilions allude to the mela in the off season by becoming literal vessels of ephemerality and allowing occupants to reconnect to the sacred river. The design implements simple assembly methods to transform portions of the pontoon bridges into spiritual retreats, which could be replicated for other temporary needs. The proposal conceptually draws from the ephemeral megacity and physically reuses elements of the festival to demonstrate the scalability and adaptability of this form of design.
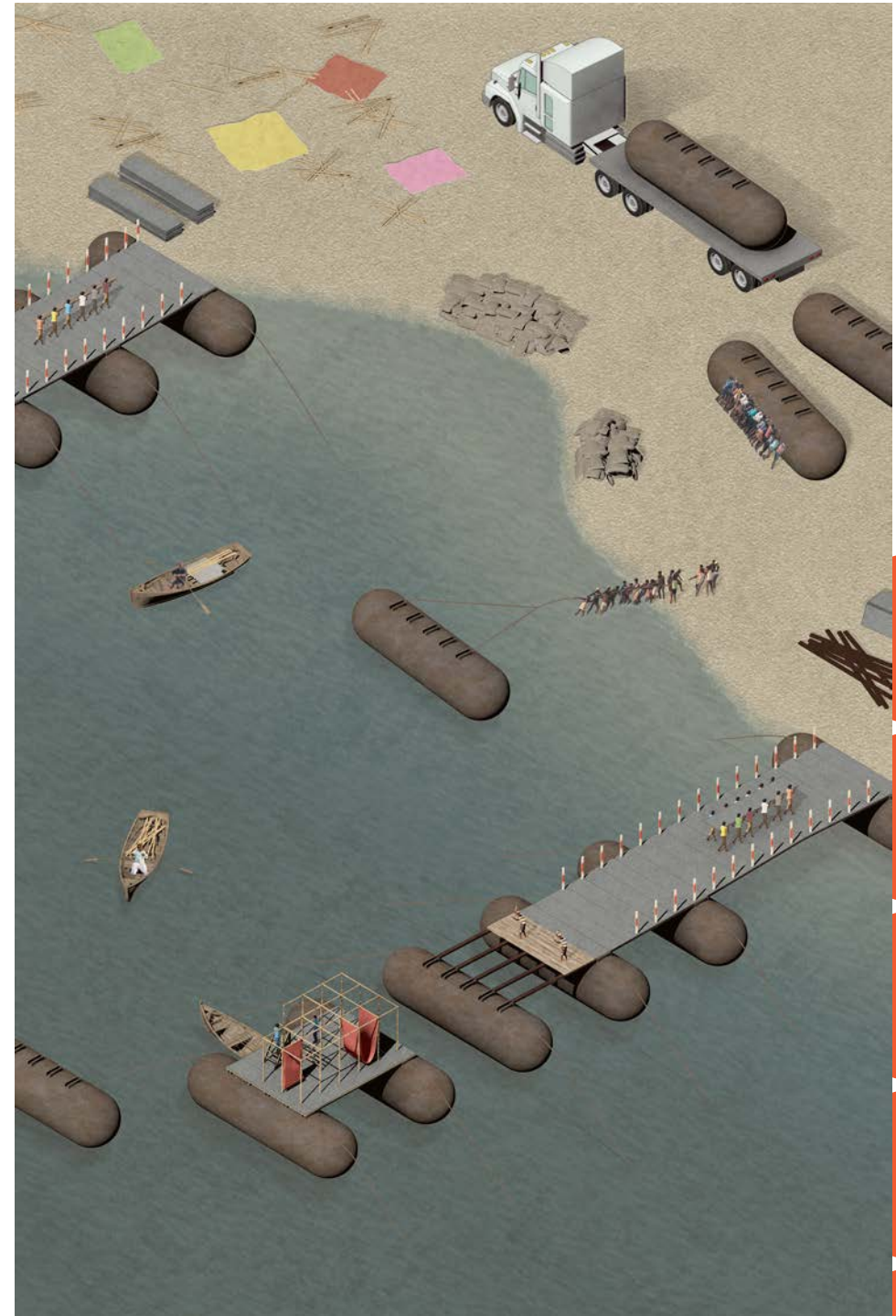
Image: Transformation of Pontoon Bridges   Advisor: Wu   Countryside in Remaking

HYPO • THESIS

David Cunningham
M.Arch I, 1995

A city should be a place where a little boy walking through
its streets can sense what he someday would like to be.
— Louis Kahn

In my pocket was the plan of a house. A plan without a site?
The plan of a house in search of a plot of ground? Yes!
— Le Corbusier

Like Kahn's city, a thesis is an undertaking where a young
architect first senses their calling. With luck, themes from
this final school project are carried far, perhaps decades, into
the future. A thesis is a set of questions which can never be
answered definitively. Thus, what appears to be an end is merely
a beginning. My search for a thesis began with two nights of
hammering hundreds of nails into a site model for a graduate
student. The nails represented trees covering a vast national
park. This experience reawakened childhood memories of
wandering across grassy hills with my grandparents seeking
Civil War spectacles that had been erased from the battlefields
by their vast scale and the stifling heat. A seminar on American
urbanism, with its underlying Enlightenment ideals of political
independence and scientific rationality, added a new ingredient
to my thesis quest. Eventually, my fascinations with cities and
memory coalesced into a proposal for a cemetery in the heart
of Canandaigua NY, part of a necklace of overlooked towns
strung across the Finger Lakes.

Since presenting my thesis project nearly three decades ago, I have never worked on a single cemetery commission, not even the restoration of a tombstone. At first glance, it appears that I failed to sense my calling. Upon further reflection, however, it occurred to me that the cemetery is not the crux of the matter, much like Moby Dick is not about the fish (never mind that a whale is not a fish). In fact, I carry several thesis fragments with me to this day. Since leaving school, I have bounced between cities and had the good fortune to work on public spaces, residential blocks, a museum, a brewery, even a fiber optic exchange. Upon arriving in New York City, I submitted a competition entry to transform a segment of depleted industrial waterfront into an upland marsh for wildlife habitat and urban kayaking. This fall, I collaborated on a fellowship to imagine an alternative future for the Prospect Expressway as a civic space linking the harbor to the ocean with multimodal transit and landscape. I continue to explore the underlying history of places and to discover connections between past events and current conditions that form the basis for suggesting how to revitalize neglected urban fabric. At a glance, these efforts appear disparate and unrelated, however, they all draw inspiration from my thesis investigation of the forces that drive urban places to flourish or fade.

Thesis does have its traumas. Initiating and inventing a project without prompts from the professor is a daunting task, akin to being adrift at sea without instruments or tools. The search for a viable site and the struggle to develop an appropriate program make for lonely nights. Youthful idealism, the desire to make a difference and change the world, is a further complication. Can architecture effect social change? Can architecture solve the ills of society? Where is the boundary between architectural means and social ends? This is much, perhaps too much, to ask of any single design. Collaboration is one possible solution to these predicaments. Instead of struggling individually, students could share thesis topics.

As a team, students could leverage their time and toil to broaden the footprint of their projects, physically and intellectually. They could construct larger and / or more detailed models; they could conduct more comprehensive and / or speculative research. This cooperative approach has the added benefit of reflecting the collective nature of design and construction in the professional world where complex projects involve dozens if not hundreds of participants. When reviewing portfolios of current students, I have noticed a trend of increased collaboration on assignments. We need more cooperation as the vital problems (theses) of our time—infrastructure, housing, resiliency—require collective action.

Imagine a squad of students crafting proposals for Canandaigua or perhaps for towns across the Finger Lakes. At the heart of the discussion, there stands a shared communal model assembled from fragments contributed by each thesis student. One place with many proposals. As a collection, these projects could function as catalysts for change. The work could pursue various trajectories. Instead of always elaborating designs, teams could assemble a book, plan an exhibition or forge pioneering materials in a lab. Taken together, these hypotheses could transform a town or region and rival the legacies of Andrea Palladio in Vicenza, Jo Plečnik in Ljubljana, Louis Sullivan in the Midwest or Alvar Aalto in Finland. The effort of a lifetime could be condensed into a single semester.
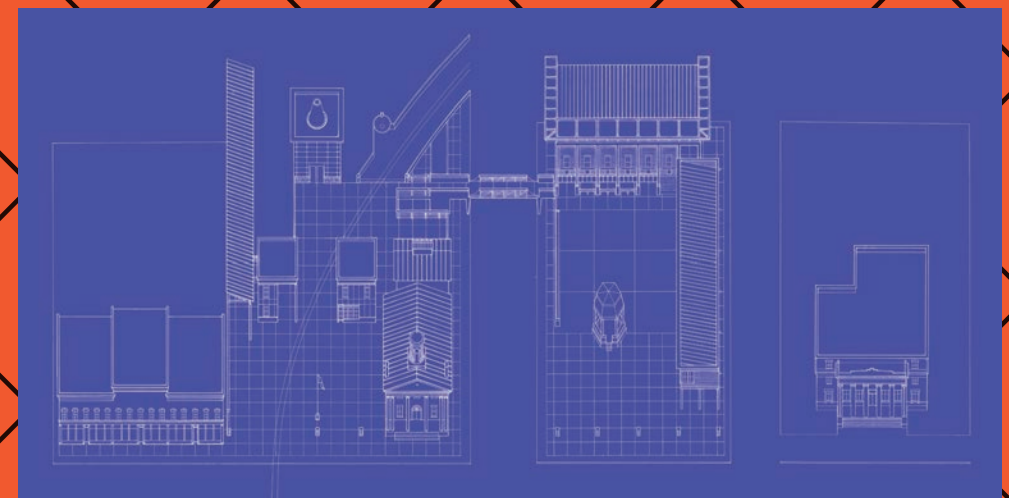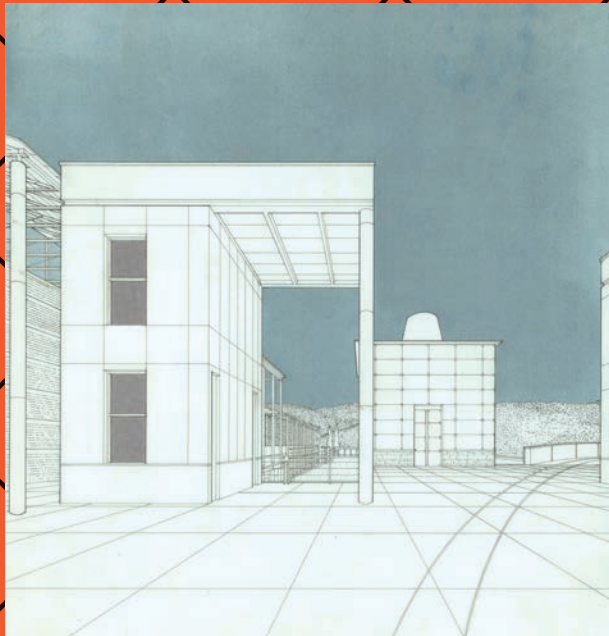

1 — Cemetery structures (monument shop, flower shop, crematorium, public hall) at town crossroads
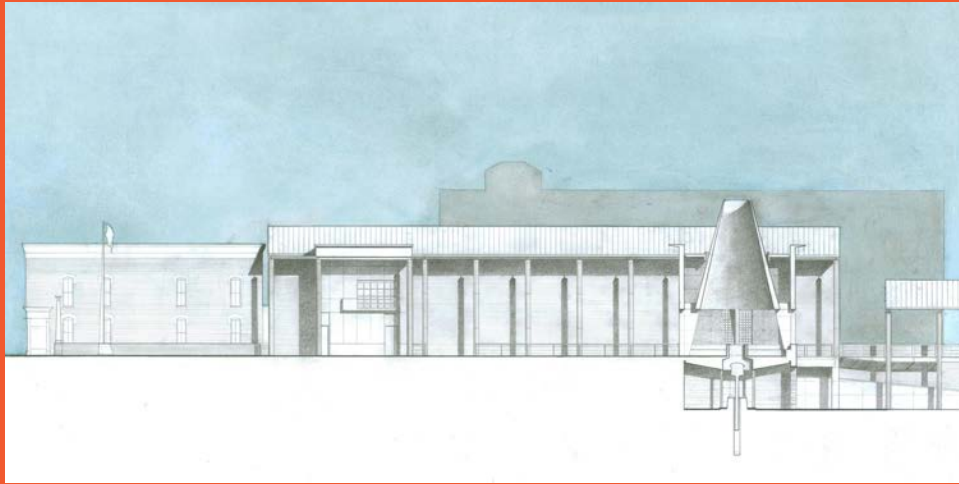
2 — **Crematorium at transition from main street (above) to memorial lawn (below)**
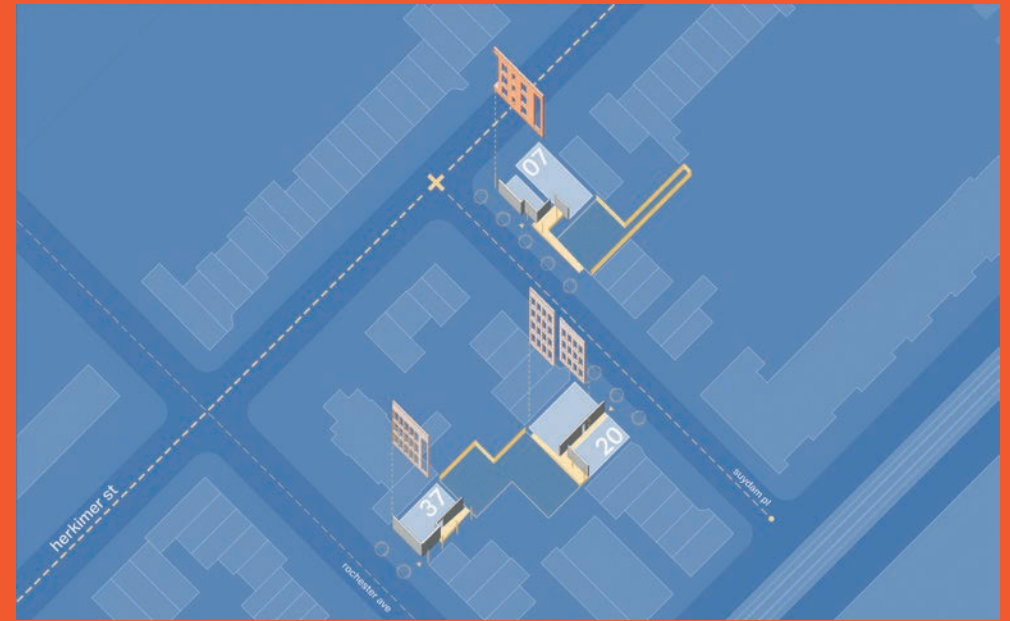
5 — **Urban connections at new social housing (3 buildings, 35 apartments)**

3 — **Cemetery entrance with monument shop (front) and crematorium (rear)**

4 — **Detail study of mortuary wall and walkway**

6 — **Waterworks infrastructure converted to outdoor classroom**

Discovery and Original Research: Reflections on Immersion

Yanel de Angel Salas
M.Arch I, 1999, James Britton Memorial Award

**"Sacred and Profane in Public Rituals:
An Exploration into Siena's Palio"**

Italy is full of great examples of choreographed centuries-old urban ceremonies, often orchestrated by a master of ceremonies, who labors throughout the year to design an impactful and transformative experience. These events are characterized by a large audience, a symbolic and often religious story, ephemeral architecture erected for the performance, allegorical paraphernalia, a procession through the city (often from public to profane realms or religious or sacred realms), and a spectacular event enacted by a set of familiar characters with a climactic outcome that unfolds in a significant urban space. These events are worth showing up for—and people do—year after year. They are part of the cultural fabric of many Italian cities. My thesis began with an interest in public ritual, events that depend on the city as stage and backdrop. I am fascinated by these ceremonies that animate urban space and are defined by it. I wanted to know more and decided to investigate the Palio horse race in Siena, near Florence, where I was living. My initial assumptions were constructed by images and legend, but I knew that keeping an open mind for discovery was important, and the opportunity to conduct original research guided my trajectory. Three immersive experiences changed everything I thought about the relevancy of research, the urban realm as a framework for events to unfold, and what it meant to construct a thesis.

The first experience was my introduction to the Archivio di Stato, the State Archive. Without knowing precisely what I was looking for, I asked for a few boxes on the history of the Palazzo Pubblico, Siena's iconic Public Palace. Surprisingly, no white gloves were required, yet I was holding 500-year-old documents inked with beautiful handwritten script that was, at times, hard to read. Combing through the material, I discovered that the Palazzo Pubblico had a "secret" passage through which city officials could sneak out to the city market. They went through a narrow hall, passed an altar (obligatory sign of the cross), up some steps, through a window cum door, and down some wooden steps that allowed full access to the market without being seen by the public. There, city officials could engage in prostitution, buy market goods, or witness public executions at the city gate, aptly named the Porta Giustizia, the "Justice Gate." The discovery generated an interpretive narrative in which the palace operated as threshold between sacred (the civic square) and profane (illicit market activities). I was getting closer to understanding the role of the Palazzo in mediating politics, economics, and religious history of site.

The second experience was a visit to a neighborhood museum where centuries-old Palio horse race trophies were displayed. I discovered the artist commissioned for the Palio trophy was required to follow strict guidelines: a prescribed canvas size made of silk textile, with an image of the Virgin Mary at the top, and a representation of neighborhoods participating in the race. The trophies on display were a reminder of how many times this neighborhood had earned Virgin Mary's protection by winning the Palio race. I learned that in the 13th century, silk was produced by the Sienese outside of the city walls and was brought through the Porta Giustizia into the city market. I imagined the artist's process: acquiring the silk in the "profane" market, painting it, and creating trophy art. I imagined a Palio artist's studio in the market connecting through the Palazzo Publico for final delivery in the main public space, the Campo, as part of the race ceremony. Would it be possible for the Palio ritual to evolve by inserting a relevant, contemporary component, a modern "plug-in" that might enrich the traditional ceremony?

The third experience was the Palio horse race. For the Sienese people, this centuries-old bi-annual horse race is a reset, a new beginning. They prepare all year, investing significant financial resources to obtain the best horse and jockey, transforming the city square into a spectacular place for a chance to have a long-lasting blessing from the Virgin

Mary and, naturally, bragging rights. I arrived in Siena ahead of time to understand how the public square was transformed and organized, and where the judges' stand was located. With great excitement, competing neighborhoods claimed their spots in the Campo. Exhibited on a chariot, the Palio trophy led the parade; jockeys, horses, and neighborhood representatives followed for a lap around the track. Arrayed at the starting line, the horses were getting anxious, the crowd was already loud and energized, when suddenly a gun shot went off and the race began. Three loops around the square, dirt clouds filled the Campo, horses tripped on one another, and the winner emerged. Euphoria engulfed the moment. The winners carried their jockey high in the air, and others climbed up the judges' stand to claim the Palio trophy, while the citizens from losing neighborhoods cried in disappointment. It was a 90-second, profound and transformative emotional experience that could happen in no other place.

Witnessing the race solidified my understanding of city as "scene" in which ritual and urban architecture are inseparably linked. The events of the Palio unfold supported by symbolic connections to city, an orchestrated procession, and a powerful narrative to emotionally engage and wow spectators. It is important to note that the Palio, like many other urban rituals, is meant to evolve, even if slowly. Changes might be as simple as modernizing people's costumes for the procession or modifying parts of the processional routes. For instance, the Palio once ran from outside the city walls, culminating at the Campo. Building upon the changing nature of the Palio ritual, I began to think that a modern "plug-in" was not such a crazy idea.
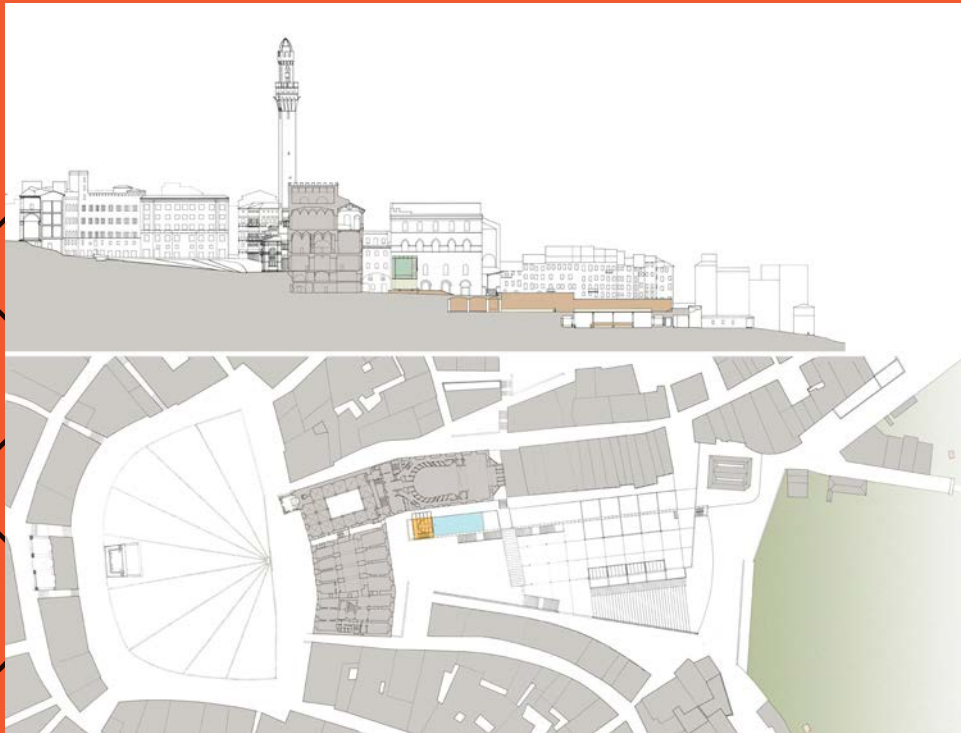
Back in America, on thesis jury day, a guest critic asked why all this mattered. To him it felt like a big, inconsequential, and fabricated event. It was hard to defend that sentiment in the context of an American cultural framework. Being there made the difference. It is not possible to fully understand ceremony and city, the culture of place, without standing amid this extraordinary bi-annual ceremony.

Many students looked forward to thesis because it offered freedom of site selection and program, and the creation of a thesis argument. For me, the rigor and level of excellence expected were not the hardest part, but rather the creation of a thesis position, argument and perspective woven so tightly that taking the site (context) or program (soul) out would render the entire exercise futile. Thesis allowed me to probe interests not explored in previous studios. One semester of thesis

preparation afforded time for original research and discovery— both foundational to creating an argument. In my case, original research was intricately tied to place.

This intense period of immersion underpinned my project and influenced work even beyond my academic years. It changed the way I go about conceptualizing architecture. The discoveries and lessons learned became a translatable toolkit to deploy in any project: 1) the choreography of experience, regardless of scale, 2) the importance of crafting narrative through design, 3) the necessity of a spatial armature for display and inhabitation, 4) the orchestration of a hierarchical sequence of movements leading to a powerful and momentous climax, and 5) the use of ephemera to activate everyday spatial experiences.

2 — Sectional drawings of the proposed artist studio, illustrating access from the market's lower level as a journey from 'profane' to 'sacred' realms, its relationship to a reflecting pool and how it hovers above the market's upper level

1— Section and plan illustrating the relationship between il Campo (sacred realm) and the reimagined market (profane realm) with the artist studio strategically located near Palazzo Pubblico to facilitate a bridge connection for the Palio trophy delivery
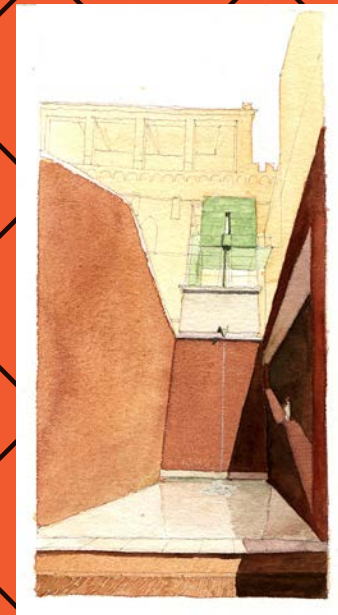
3 — Emerging from the lower level of the city market, the proposed Palio artist studio sits on a reflective water fountain tying into a city-wide underground network of fountains

The Power of Thesis

J. Eric Moss
M.Arch I, 1987, James Britton Memorial Award

My decision to pursue a degree from the Syracuse School of Architecture and the role thesis had in my professional and personal development were life-changing. Those are four years for which I will always be grateful.

Exploring possibilities as an undeclared fifth-semester undergraduate student at the University of Delaware, I found urban geography. The program examined the human race's relationship to and impact on the earth and its natural environment, including the study of why cities grew where they did, the form they took, and the role architects had in their development. Consequently, my interest in architecture grew. Upon graduation, I convinced architects to let me intern for several years, confirming my interest in the field. I knew grad school would be necessary to achieve my professional goal of becoming an architect. While shopping for schools, I met with the Syracuse Graduate Program Chair Randall Korman, who quickly became my mentor. Three additional things attracted me to the school: its reputation, the Florence Program, and the intellectual rigor of Thesis.

The School's three-and-a-half year M. Arch. I program suited graduate students like me who have undergraduate degrees in different disciplines. In my third year I elected to study in Florence for both semesters, thereby extending my degree to four years. While in Florence, thoughts about my upcoming thesis year were ever-present. Visits to forts in my travels around Europe sparked an idea. Though we no longer build fortification walls to protect cities from invaders, that battle is symbolically

interpreted on the gridiron of professional football fields. I resolved to design a stadium in the **U.S.** as a thesis project.

Upon returning to the **U.S.**, a classmate and I lived in Boston for the summer to work for architectural firms and ended up within walking distance to Fenway Park. While attending a Red Sox game I realized that Fenway's iconic Green Monster was a contextual urban response to home plate's proximity to the street that limited the extent of left field. The wall had to be taller so that home runs would be a suitable challenge. This urban site response created a distinct, place-specific home field experience. I realized that football field dimensions are regulated and always the same, whereas in baseball only the infield dimensions are prescribed; the outfield shape and size could respond to urban conditions. In the 1980s, **SoA** projects were often contextually driven. At the time, multi-purpose stadia inadequately served both football and baseball in a single stadium. I decided that my thesis would challenge the status quo by proposing a baseball-only, place-specific, and contextually significant urban ballpark.

Serendipitously, a friend shared that the **Baltimore Orioles** were looking to replace their home Memorial Stadium. I headed to Baltimore to learn more. Exiting the highway towards the Inner Harbor, I saw the **B&O Railroad Warehouse** for the first time. It is an impressive eight-story narrow brick structure over a thousand feet long that formerly served the railroad's tracks and sat on a site that was one of over 20 being considered by the city and the **Orioles** for a new stadium. This would be my site. After collecting documentation, I drove north, put my head down, and got busy for the next two semesters.

Thesis is a learning opportunity for students at all levels. Thesis students rely on predominantly younger students to help produce models and drawings at the end of every semester. It is a valuable learning opportunity for less advanced students. They helped me produce 90 square feet of ink-on-mylar drawings and physical models, including a 6'x6' urban model and a 3'x3' site model; the latter lived in my office my entire career. That model was always a conversation starter for office visitors.

"Super Jury" permitted an opportunity to present my work to practicing professionals, and resulted in two job offers. I accepted the position to work in **Baltimore** for a firm that was planning on competing for the design of the **Orioles'** new stadium. At first, the firm cautiously introduced me to a journalist who wrote a one-page article in a local business magazine about the radical notion of designing a baseball stadium that

incorporated the **B&O Warehouse**. The article caught the eye of the Baltimore Sun's architecture critic, Ed Gunts, who wrote an article in the Sunday edition (Edward Gunts, "What Was It Like in 1987," Section E, the Baltimore Sun, December 27, 1987). After a spot on the Stan the Fan sports radio show our firm leadership asked me to start mentioning the name of the office.

At the time, there were two primary stadium design firms in the country. We teamed with one; unfortunately, the other team got the job. Because my thesis received so much press, that team altered their design and incorporated the **B&O Warehouse** as my thesis project suggested. That scheme is ultimately what was built. Prior to the debate, they had designed a generic stadium structure, proposed demolishing all buildings on the site including the **Warehouse**, and surrounded the stadium with a sea of surface parking. This is the power of **Thesis**.

Peter Richmond's book Ballpark: **Camden Yards** and the Building of an American Dream and Robert C. Trumpbour's book The New Cathedrals: Politics and Media in the History of Stadium Construction attest to the impact my thesis had on the design of **Camden Yards** and baseball stadium typology. The inside flap of Ballpark states, "We meet the architecture student whose graduate thesis at Syracuse University saved the Warehouse from destruction."
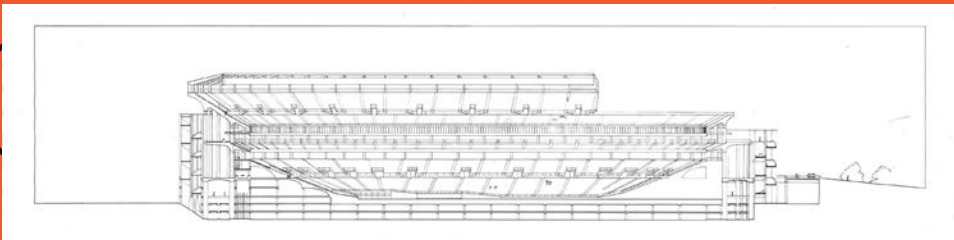
This past summer, I saw Paul McCartney perform in Camden Yards with my family. With the Warehouse as a backdrop, I was reminded how many lives have been and continue to be touched by the power of **Thesis**.
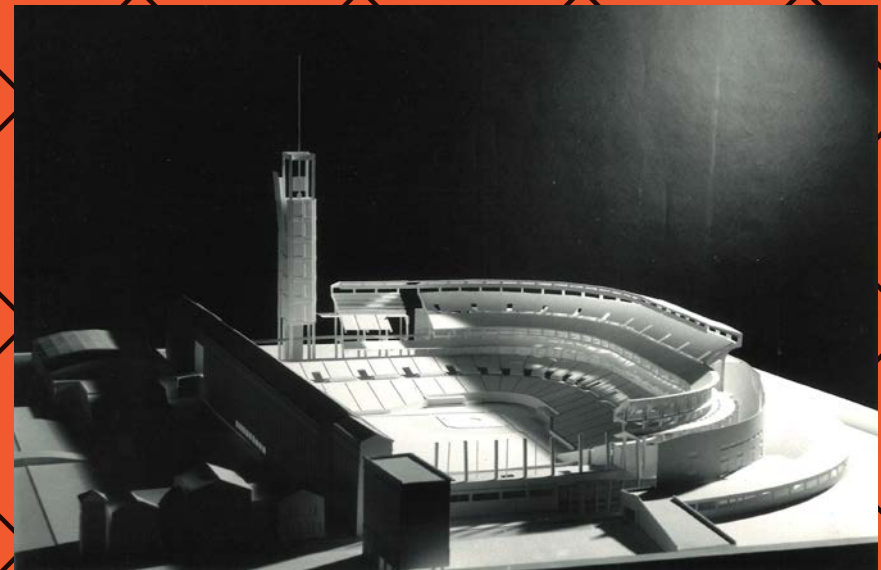
1 — Main Concourse Plan

2 — Building Section

3 — Site Plan

4 — Perspective

5 — Site Model