

Dimensions



Dimensions is the annual, student-produced journal of architecture at the A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Dimensions seeks to contribute to the critical discourse of architectural education by documenting the most compelling work produced by its students, fellows, and visiting lecturers.

Dimensions 29 Editors:

Yezi Dai · Brooke Dexter

Michal Ojrzanowski · Gideon Schwartzman

David Shellabarger · Adam Wilbanks

John Yoon

ISSN: 1074-6536

Dimensions, vol. 29

Copyright © 2016

The Regents of the University of Michigan

All Rights Reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced in any manner whatsoever without permission in writing from the University of Michigan Taubman College.

A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

2000 Bonisteel Boulevard
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2069 USA
taubmancollege.umich.edu/dimensions

Dimensions 29 was printed by ULitho Printers in Ann Arbor, Michigan on the following papers: Finch Opaque Smooth 80# Text, Anthem Matte 100# Cover with spot gloss varnish.

Typeset in **DETROIT**, GT Sectra Fine, **GT Sectra Display**, and Bembo Book.
Printed in an edition of 1,000.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to identify owners of copyright. Errors or omissions will be corrected in subsequent editions.

Dimensions

04	Letter from the Editors
06	Foreword
08	Wallenberg
10	Patria o Forastero
18	Nowhere
26	Neither Here Nor There
36	Architecture Student Research Grant
38	Architecture for Loneliness
44	The Dialogue between Drawing Machines and Human Ambience
50	Jean-Louis Cohen
56	Peter Eisenman
62	Michael Meredith · Hilary Sample
68	Thesis
70	The Chantespeak
82	Metastatic Metropolis
90	Pneumatic Futures

100	Casting Doubt
108	Aeriform Ecologies
118	A Monument in Two Dimensions
128	Fold Out Couch
134	Noun Things
142	The Yada-Yada
152	Venice Biennale Foreword
156	Four Sites in Detroit
158	Stan Allen
164	Marshall Brown
168	Pita & Bloom
172	Venice Biennale Afterword
174	Fellows
176	Placeholders
186	House Party
196	Some Views of Triumphal Arches
206	Postscript

Letter from the

Editors

Dimensions 29 positions itself within a recurrent crossroads for the discipline. The academic discourse at Taubman College introduces, samples, and plays through architectural genres and trajectories that comment on or anticipate the role of the contemporary architect as it evolves, seemingly ever faster. The relationship between architecture, the city, and its actors—architects among them—are expectedly interwoven and complex, but the ability to qualify the results of this collaboration are as open-ended as ever.

The Venice Biennale feature spotlights the U.S. Pavilion. It emerges with designs for Detroit, a post-industrial city at the heart of the launch of a new chapter in the dialogue about architecture's agency. As cities across the nation and abroad are renewed and reshaped, the role of the architect is somewhat unclear. Public desire and expectations grow alongside a vast array of new design thinking borne of architects and practices, both new and old. Imagination as an element integral to tangible progress presents a "hypotheses not otherwise formulable,"¹ placing architects and architectural academics as purveyors of new possibilities that transcend market-driven demands. Our work catalyzes change in the city and in the lives of those who call it home.

The interviews with architects working at the Biennale capture a unique moment between production and exhibition, a moment while the architect awaits the reception of the work, something imagined and designed, but not yet actualized in the world.

Dimensions 29 captures a wide spectrum of architectural thinking through careful selection of student work, the work of young practitioners, and conversations with notable figures. While the publication is by no means a complete or unbiased representation of the discipline's modern state, it is our belief that the work and writing within these 208 pages is a glimpse into many conversations unfolding today. ■

DIMENSIONS 29

Yezi Dai · Brooke Dexter · Michal Ojrzanowski
Gideon Schwartzman · David Shellabarger
Adam Wilbanks · John Yoon

1. Tafuri, Manfredo. "The Wicked Architect": G.B. Piranesi, Heterotopia, and the Voyage. In *The Sphere and the Labyrinth: Avant-Gardes and Architecture from Piranesi to the 1970s*, 29. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1967.

Foreword

Sharon Haar is professor and Chair of the Architecture program at Taubman College. Her current research investigates the role of entrepreneurship, design innovation, and global networking in the transformation of architectural practices devoted to social activism and humanitarian relief. Professor Haar's publications include: *The City as Campus: Urbanism and Higher Education in Chicago* and *Schools for Cities: Urban Strategies*. Her articles and book reviews appear in journals including the *Journal of Architectural Education*, the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, the *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, *Architect's Newspaper*, and *Architectural Design*. Her recent book chapters appear in: the Urban Ecologies Reader, *Embodied Utopias*, *Shanghai Transforming* and *On Location: Heritage Cities and Sites*. She has presented her research in conferences and lectures across the United States, Latin America, Asia, and Europe. Professor Haar has taught at Parsons School of Design in New York and at the University of Illinois at Chicago where she was professor of architecture and the Associate Dean for Research at the College of Architecture, Design, and the Arts. She received her Bachelor of Art from Wesleyan University and her Master of Architecture from Princeton University.

Sharon Haar

Dimensions 29—like many issues before it—illustrates architecture at its extremes. Cataloguing some of the best projects from Wallenberg and Thesis studios, highlighting the work of the Muschenheim, Sanders, and Oberdick Fellows, presenting the independent research of student teams, and illuminating just a sampling of the lectures and events at the school, it elucidates the loose network of diverse discourses that take place over the course of a year within our studios and classrooms. The institutional position that emerges is a deep commitment to representation and making, the techniques through which individual students and their faculty develop and defend their own architectural propositions and collaborate in advanced research. Tweaking and testing the limits of representation as

both projection and project, the work that follows engages capriccio and cartoon, text as information, design inspiration, or the embodiment of spatial relations, and drawing machines recording the experience of a space in real time. On one page we enter invisible institutions designed to fight cultural erasure in Detroit, while on another we float among atmospheric repositories hovering above Antarctica. One fellow catalogues the artifacts of triumphal history, while another creates new forms of intimacy from the traces and imprints of now abandoned domesticities... within a city a third fellow finds density with new programmatic and spatial strategies of occupation. Find yourself a comfortable resting spot within the pleather-lined aluminum branched form and enjoy! ■



The Wallenberg studio honors the legacy of one of Taubman College's most important alumni through an overall theme for the final undergraduate studio, focused on a broad humanitarian concern, explored through propositions put forward by studio section faculty. Each year we ask: what is architecture's relationship to the humanitarian; how does architecture take up a position in the world? In 2015—through the framework of "Participation"—we explore how architectural interventions may participate in larger projects of social change, political activism, or cultural reform and how these propositions of the early twenty-first century might participate in the history of architecture's disciplinary projects. Through architecture, we are able to ask questions of the immediate physical present and the long history that created it.

2015 WALLENBERG STUDIO AWARD

*Contested Ground: Unearthing
L'Enfant's Washington*, Grace Alli

*Patria o Forastero: A Vessel of
Reconciliation*, Genevieve Doman

HONORABLE MENTIONS

*A Chapel in a Lake. A Lake in a
Labryinth*, Lauren Grizbowski

Preface, Jamie Waxter

A Land of Possibilities, Stella Zhang

In this volume of *Dimensions*, three projects from the 2015 Wallenberg studio were selected as representatives of the research, analysis, insight, and design that goes into this semester's work. Genevieve Doman's *Patria o Forastero: A Vessel of Reconciliation* illustrates the consequences of the breakdown of United States–Cuba relations and endeavors to mediate these tensions created by political forces. Tyler Suomala's *Nowhere* is an original creation of spatial relationships based on Da Vinci's sketches and capolavori, taking on an analysis and synthesizing in order to step into the realm of the vaguely familiar. Yurong Wu's *Neither Here Nor There* is sited in a familiar landmark with a design manifestation that is fantastical, using a narrative to drive the design.

FEATURED PROJECTS

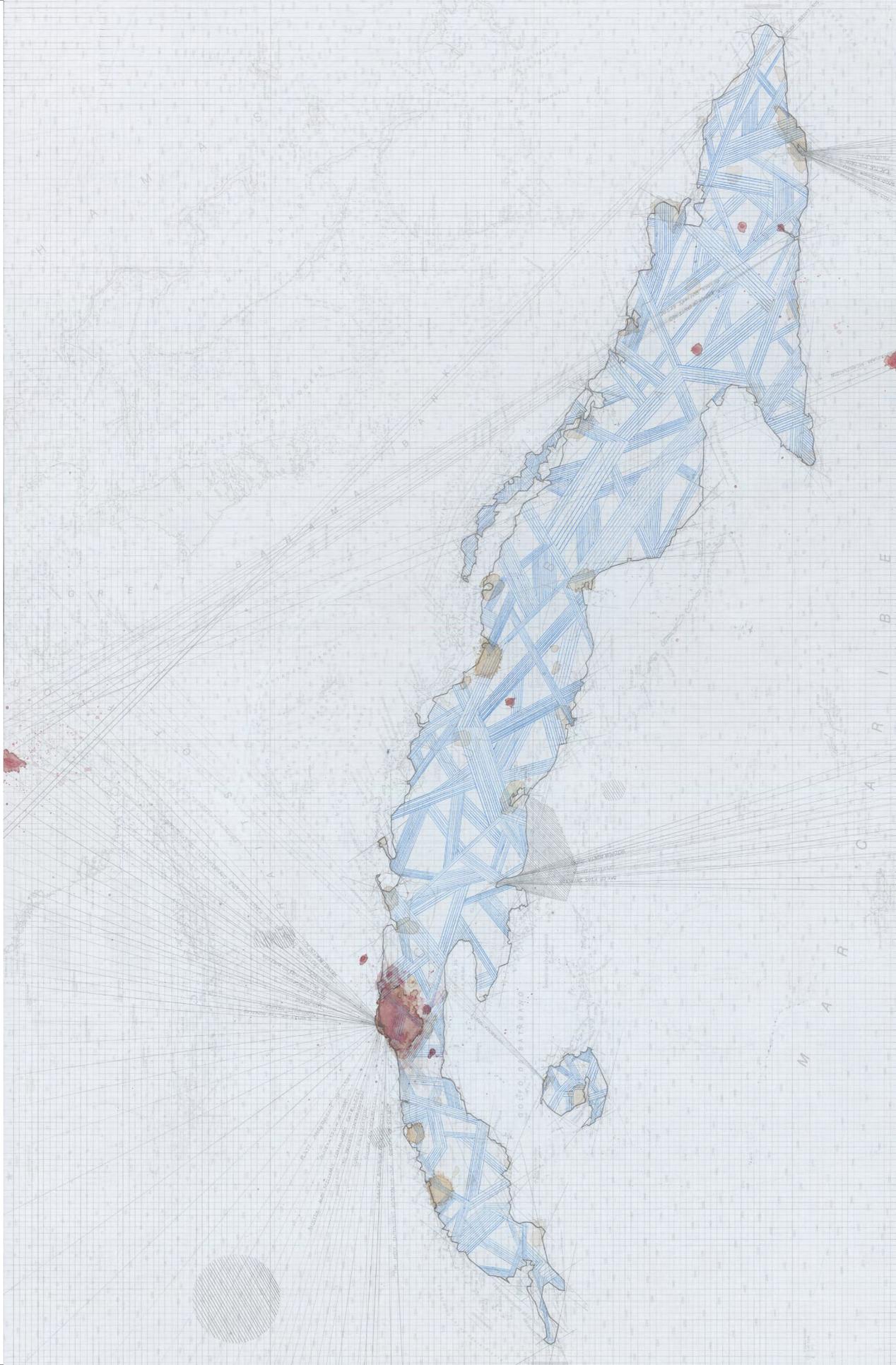
*Patria o Forastero: A Vessel of
Reconciliation*, Genevieve Doman

Nowhere, Tyler Suomala

Neither Here Nor There, Yurong Wu

Wallenbergs

A forensic investigation of U.S. relations with Cuba. By mapping the cartography of the conflict from the Cuban perspective, sites of tension emerge.



Patria o Forastero

A Vessel of Reconciliation

After 56 years of political aggression and isolation, relations between the United States and Cuba have finally come to a head. Under the new leadership of President Barack Obama and President Raúl Castro, it appears that political accord may be possible. However, the cultural alienation that has developed since the Cuban Revolution between Cubans and the diaspora of Cuban-Americans presents a far more delicate process of reconciliation.

The decades devoid of contact produced chasms within families and communities. This cultural trauma has permeated through subsequent generations as heritage and a sense of *patria* is infused with nostalgia. As Cubans and Cuban-Americans begin to experience more mobility, contact between the isolated parties will rapidly increase. *Patria o Forastero* seeks to bridge this longing by creating a ritualistic threshold to momentarily join the two sides within their opposing journeys. The revival of the sentimentally charged Miami-Havana ferry route serves to elongate the emotionally charged migration, allowing it to accurately express

the gravity of the situation at hand. The implementation of a space for reacquaintance within the neutrality of the sea produces a vessel for open dialogue.

Fidel Castro led the Cuban Revolution with strong, steadily escalating, socialist tendencies. Within a few years of overthrowing Batista, Castro declared Cuba a communist state, nationalized most private property, and centralized labor. This upheaval sparked the wave of Cuban immigration that would continue at various intensities for decades.

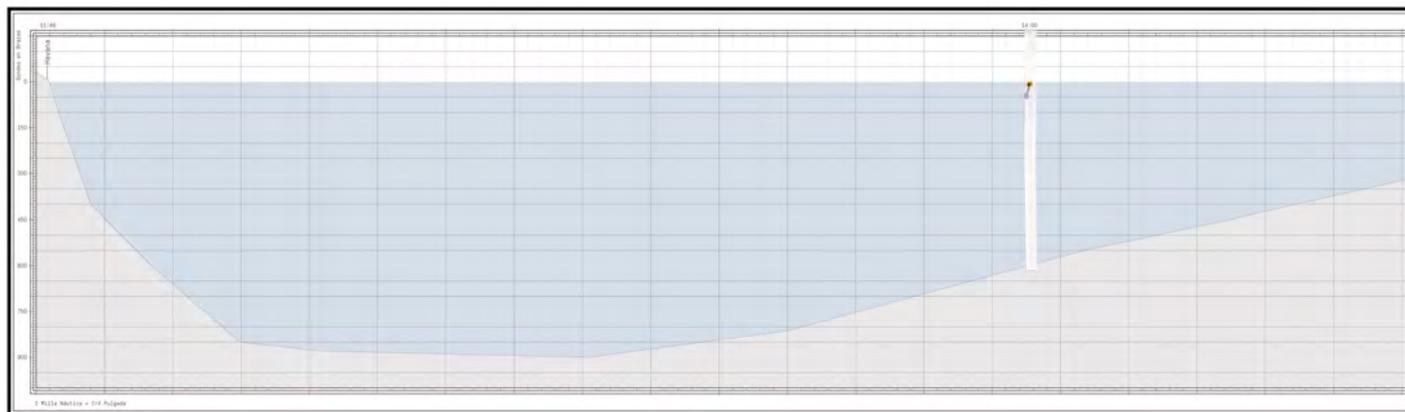
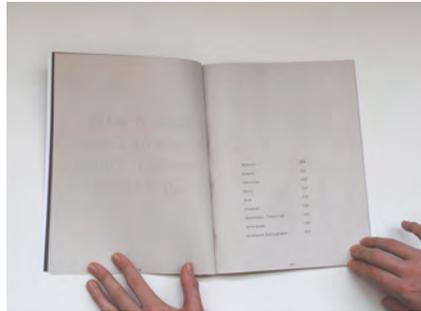
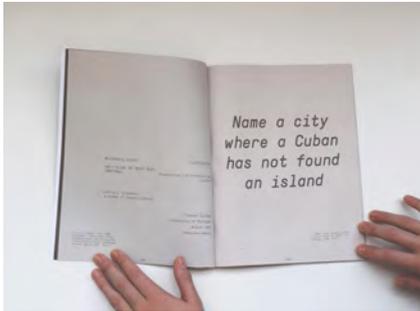
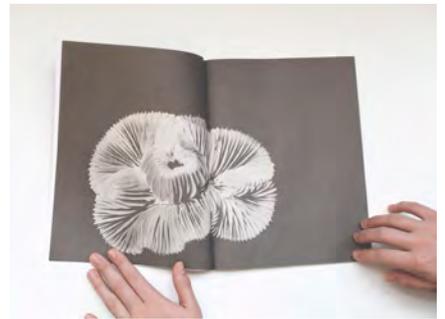
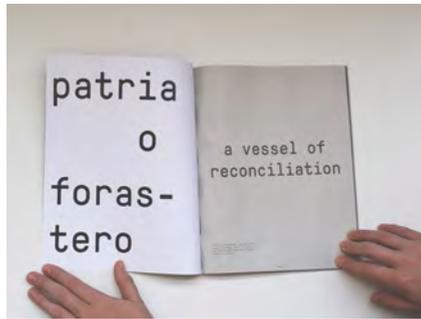
Beginning with those most negatively affected by revolutionary reforms, the Cuban middle and upper classes were the first to defect. Within the tensions of the Cold War, Cuban immigrants—or “exiles” as they were deemed—were greeted as anti-communist heroes in the United States. Despite their privileged immigration status as refugees in the United States, defectors were designated *gusanos*—“worms”—of the Cuban Revolution. The political divide and the subsequent onslaught of propaganda from both sides created chasms within families and communities. The ever-growing

Cuban diaspora in the United States developed a supportive framework based on strong anti-communist rhetoric. The diaspora, especially in areas of high density, such as Miami, created pockets of Cuban culture in isolation from the nation.

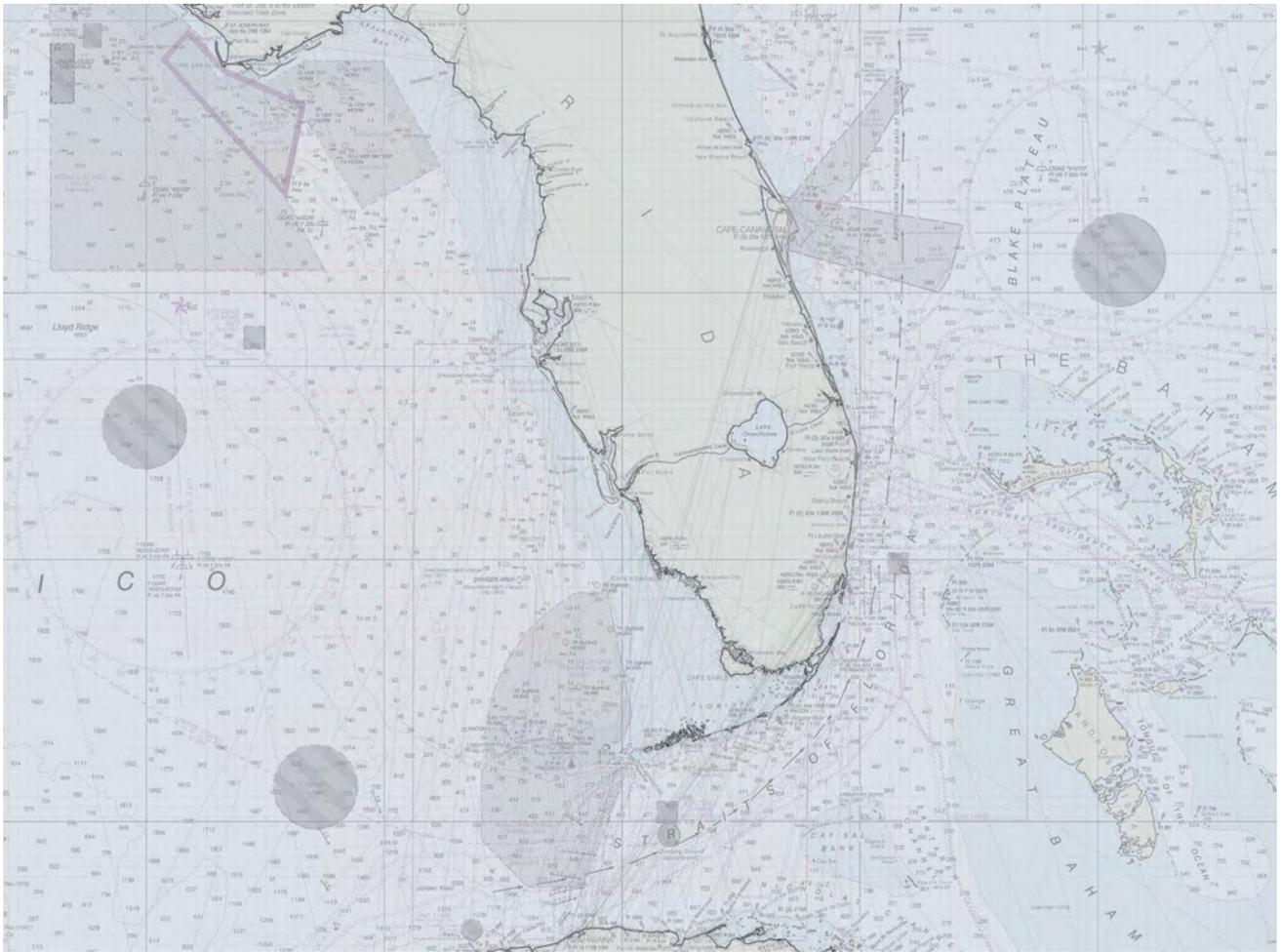
Cubans who stayed on the island faced their own brand of isolation and nostalgia. In the five decades since the revolution, the nationalistic communist fervor has died down. The pride that was once felt for Cuba’s bravery in the face of oppression, imperialist powers, and hardship has partially faded. The youth of today does not remember Batista or the Revolution. They have experienced the poverty of the Special Period and continued emigration, but they are not the fervent communists the United States feared during the Cold War. As diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba normalize, immigration of all generations will undoubtedly continue. However, the Cuban immigrants of tomorrow are far more likely to be motivated by economic opportunities rather than political ones of previous generations.

GENEVIEVE DOMAN

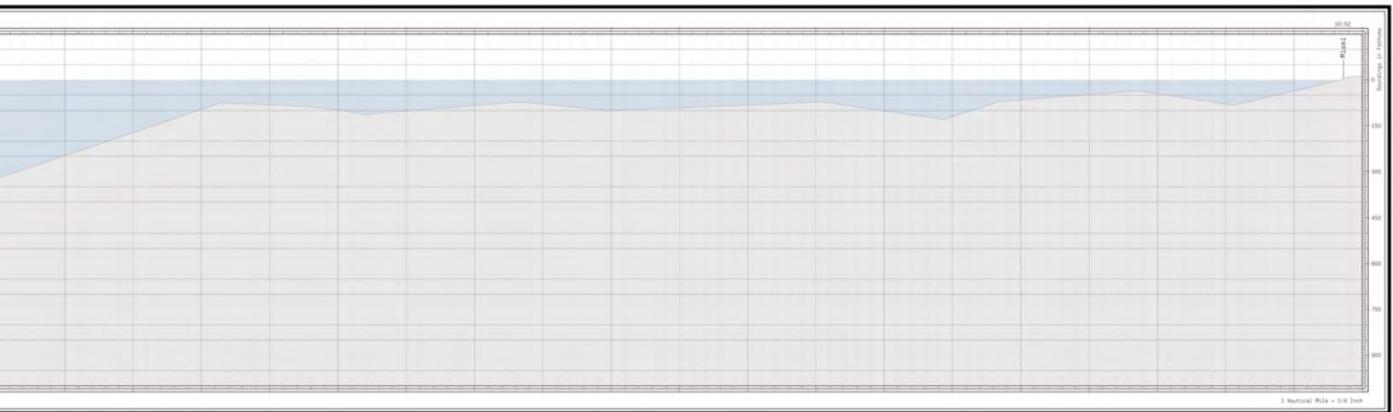
Patria o forastero, meaning “homeland or foreign land” is a play on Fidel Castro’s infamous slogan, “*patria o muerte*.”

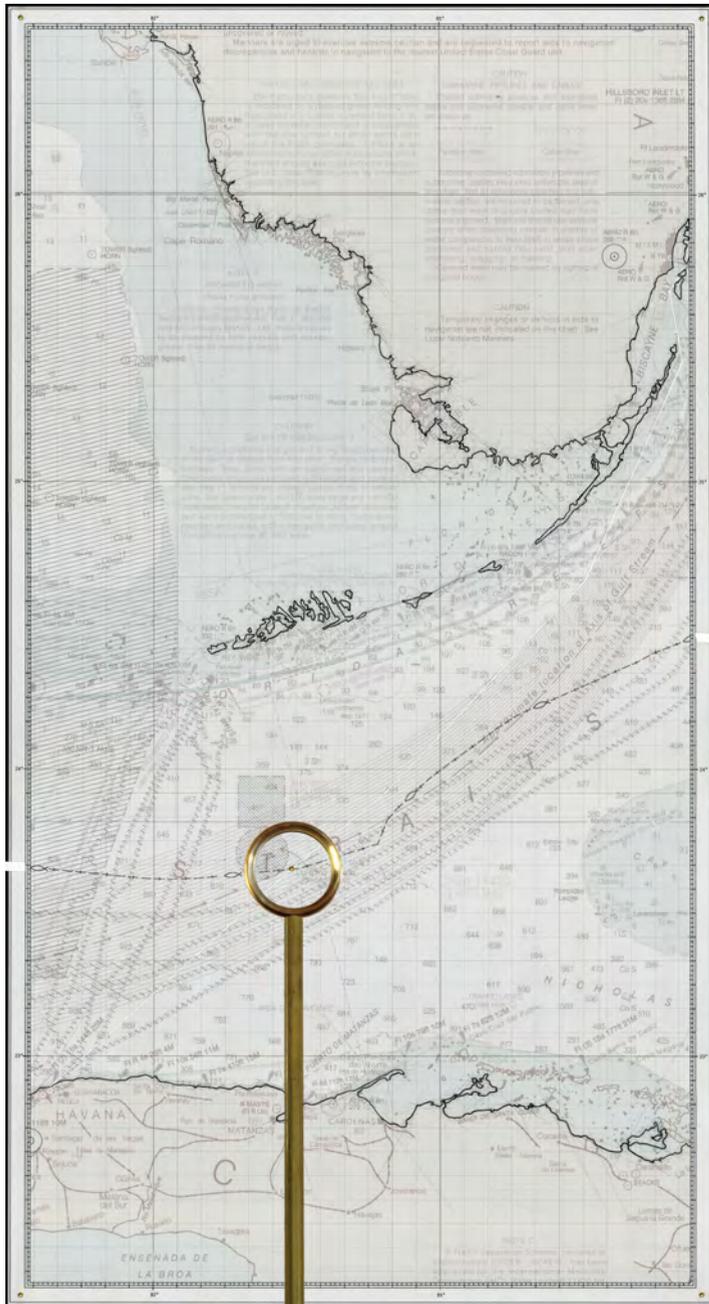


Site location along the nautical border between the United States and Cuba. The journey back to *la patria* is often a stressful confrontation of expectations.



Map of Florida showing Cuban interventions.



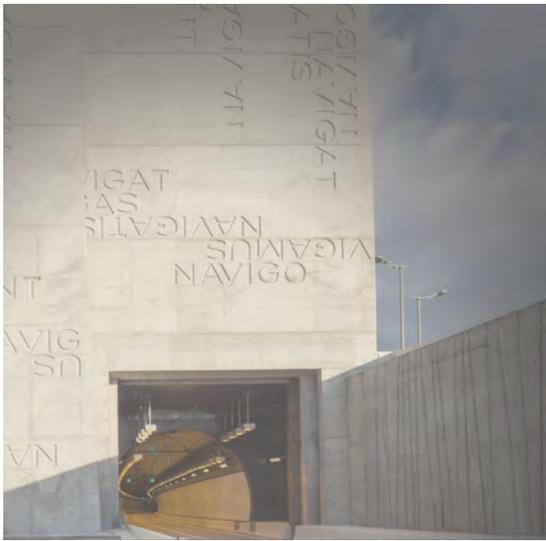


Site drawing with armature magnifying glass and brass pin.

11:46 CUBAN DEPARTURE FROM HAVANA

As Cubans embark on this monumental migration, they leave behind *la patria*, homeland, in favor of greater opportunities abroad. This constant cultural interchange is facilitated by the reimplementaion of the Miami-Havana ferry route.





10:52 CUBAN-AMERICAN DEPARTURE

Having been dubbed *gusanos*, “worms,” of the revolution, most members of the Cuban-American diaspora have a complicated relationship with Cuba.



Prior to the 1959 revolution, regular ferry services existed between Miami and Havana. Both Cubans and Americans frequented the 12-hour journey. It served as a vital economic and cultural connection between the two entangled nations. Since 1959, there has been no authorized oceanic passenger service between the United States and Cuba. This void is felt deeply within the Cuban and Cuban-American communities, as the ferry once served as a crucial connection between the two countries.

Today, as political relations finally begin to thaw, there is a renewed interest in the Miami-Havana ferry route. Cuban-Americans returning to visit *la patria* and Cubans immigrating to the United States face intense psychological experiences upon arrival. The 45-minute plane flight that is currently the only official travel option is too short to psychologically prepare the passenger for what lies on the other side. The reimplementing of the ferry, only an eight-hour journey with contemporary technology, would provide a more adequate sense of mental separation for both parties. The ferry thus turns

both of these monumental experiences into purposeful rituals that leave the passengers better prepared for what is to come.

The thaw in diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba initiates a delicate process of normalization. As restrictions are loosened and removed it will become increasingly easy for Cuban-Americans to visit *la patria*, and for Cubans to visit or immigrate to the United States. The implementation of a mid-ocean ferry terminal at the political boundary between the United States and Cuba forms a space of negotiation for these cultures. Situated in the neutrality of the sea, the terminal creates a migration ritual for a psychological and cultural transition.

The terminal serves as a thick threshold between nations, politics, and cultures. By allowing this boundary to swell, it begins to accurately represent the gravity of its definition. With distinct gestures, the Cuban and Cuban-American paths orchestrate rituals specific to the situation of each group.





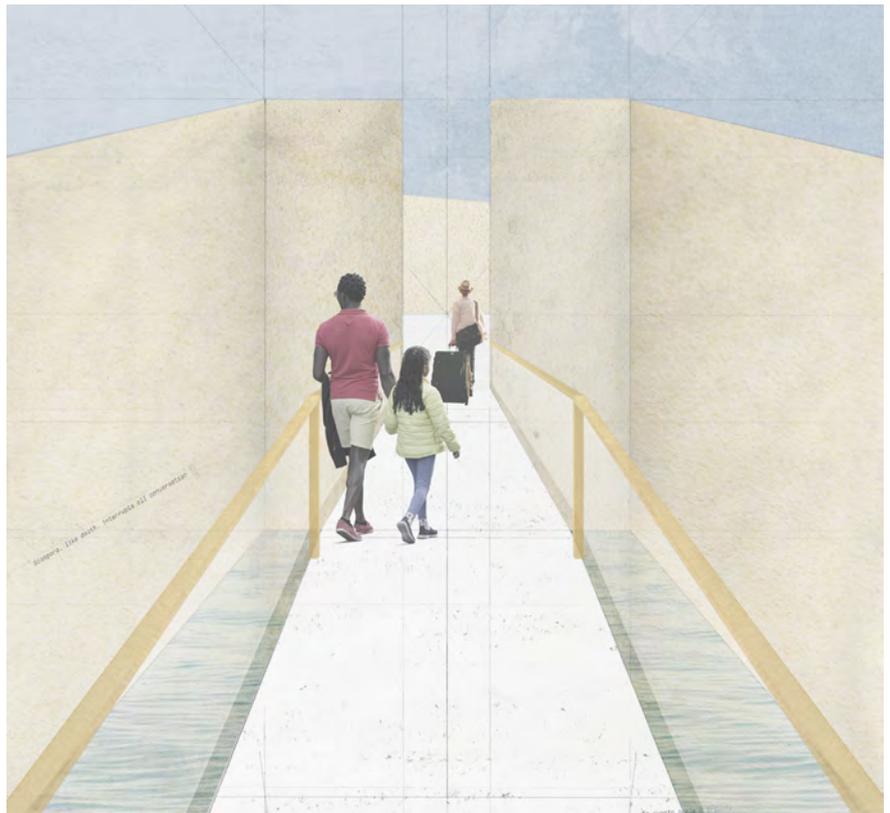
THE CENTRAL PLAZA

Moments of casual encounter in the middle ground of the plaza.

Anchored on each side by ferry docks, the processional paths break down the crowd to allow for direction and interaction. Each side encounters a distinct moment of threshold in order to recognize the political and symbolic boundary crossing. Between these thickened moments of threshold lies a mixing plaza. Here Cubans and Cuban-Americans come together in an informal setting to reconnect. The casual encounters that occur during the layover help to prepare each side for their destination. The terminal then departs from this plaza, with both sides on even ground and with a better understanding of each other's contemporary situation. ■

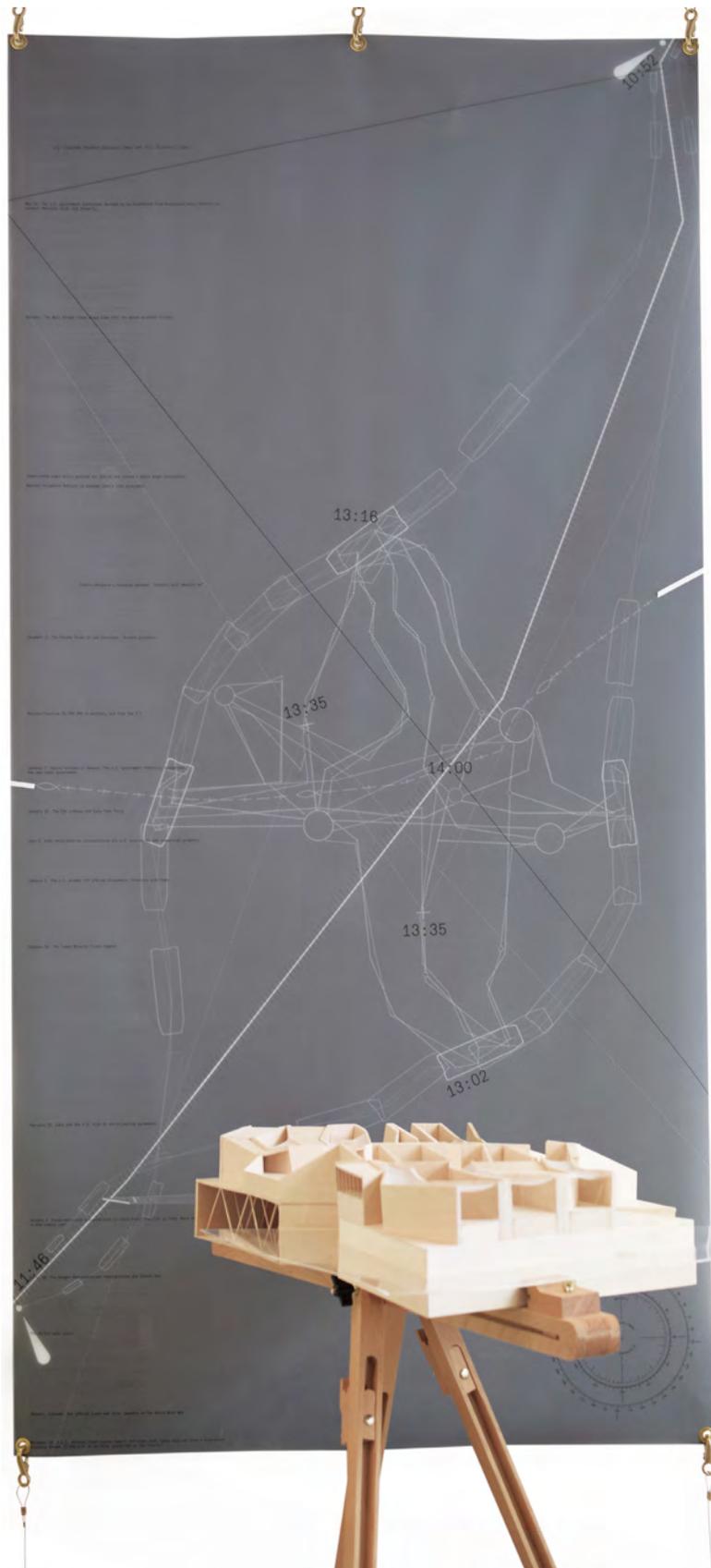
Acknowledgments:

Taylor Mortorff, Lillian Candela, Andrew Roth,
Andrea Partenio
Select Photography: Adam Smith



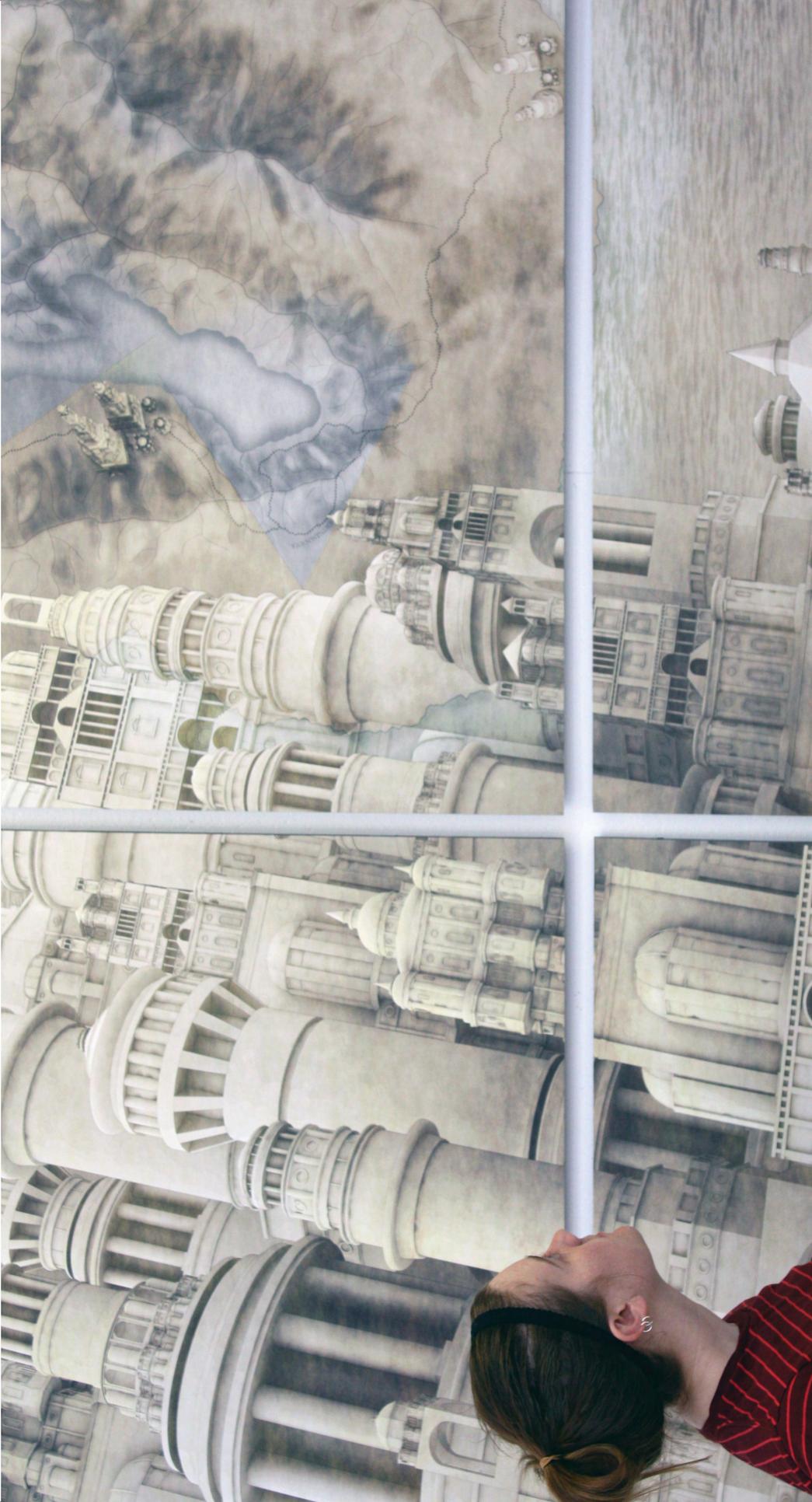
THRESHOLD

13:35 marks the moment in the ritualized journey when Cubans cross from immigration control to the open plaza. Here, the thickened threshold provides a moment of reflection.



A programmatic node is a part of the path that houses United States immigration functions.







Leonardo Da Vinci is one of the most studied figures in history, but for the most part, these studies have existed in an ongoing cycle to clarify and familiarize his work. They have been singular and codified, pursuing definitive conclusions. Conversely, this project pushes Da Vinci's work through a contemporary lens of defamiliarization in an effort to speculate on its latent potentials. In doing so, the studio environment aids in the disruption of previously stagnant studies. The result is *Nowhere*—an undefined and uncategorized collective that challenges the way in which we see our own world.

TYLER SUOMALA

Nowhere

NOWHERE

Is a new way to participate with Da Vinci—it denies the obvious and celebrates the alternative and unrealized. As a foundation of production, each scenario first attempts to see his work in an unfamiliar way.

REMOVAL OF THE PRIMARY FIGURE

By ignoring the subjects of nearly all previous analyses, one is able to connect Da Vinci's constructed landscapes.

It was clear in studying Da Vinci's paintings that he had a continued interest in the imaginary landscapes that he constructed in the backgrounds. Over a 40-year span, he authored miraculous paintings with similar backgrounds. Unfortunately, the vast majority of the literature and research focuses on the figures of the paintings, with little mention of Da Vinci's landscapes. Removing the figure from the painting and completing the hidden landscape forces one to see Da Vinci's artwork from an unfamiliar perspective. As an extension of this study, each painting was assumed to exist within the same landscape. Through careful observation of the natural elements located in the paintings, relationships were formed and a landscape was created, affording each painting its own territory, that can be traversed in the capriccio.



Madonna of the Yarnwinder, Da Vinci, 1499–1507



The Virgin and Child with St. Anne, Da Vinci, 1503





Mona Lisa, Da Vinci, 1503–1517

CONSTRUCTION OF SPACE AROUND BODIES

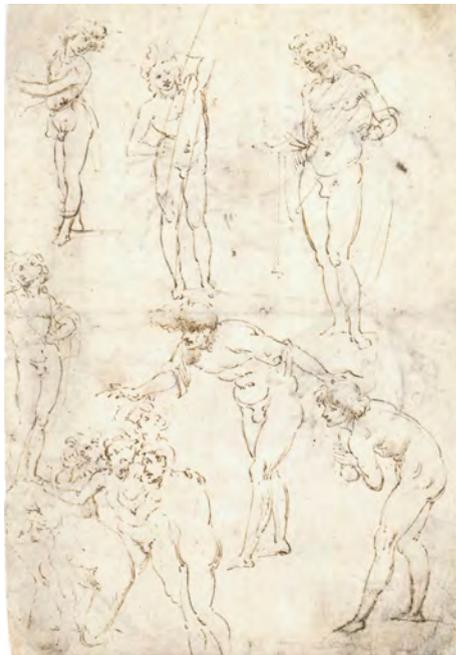
By assuming that all bodies exist in the same scene rather than as separate studies, one is able to produce unfamiliar spaces.

The literature surrounding Da Vinci's figure sketches is focused on clarifying and connecting each figure or group of figures to specific works of art. Thus, each figure study is assumed to be independent of other figure studies existing on the same page. Challenging this assumption requires a disregard for the common process of spatial construction. Instead of designing a space and filling it with figures, one must begin with the figures and then design the space. The result is a series of unfamiliar spaces that cannot truly be defined or categorized by any existing typologies.



Original figure sketches by Da Vinci and an edited version showing space surrounding the figures.







AGGLOMERATION OF ARCHITECTURE

Through specific proliferation and organization of Da Vinci's less realized concepts, new relationships and perspectives are produced.

Research into Da Vinci's notebooks revealed a deep appreciation and imagination for the study of architecture. Since Da Vinci did not author any physical architecture, his concepts existed solely within the

confines of his notebooks for the past 500 years. Initially, his studies were translated into three-dimensional digital structures, allowing his work to be experienced in an unfamiliar fashion. Later, the isolated structures were combined, manipulated, multiplied, and organized through processes inspired by Da Vinci's ongoing interests.

Da Vinci's interests with height inspire the left end, explorations with symmetry stimulate the central scene, and military and defense concepts motivate the right end of the capriccio. Furthermore, the landscape produced by the removal of the primary figures appears near the center and is populated by Da Vinci's architectures and the spaces produced



Capriccio drawing capturing all aspects of the project.

within the figure studies deform select surfaces of the capriccio.

The triumphal arch seems to sufficiently depict the situation that has surfaced by simultaneously presenting itself as an obstruction and a passageway. One could consider its coherence as a collective monument of architecture while approaching the passageway that

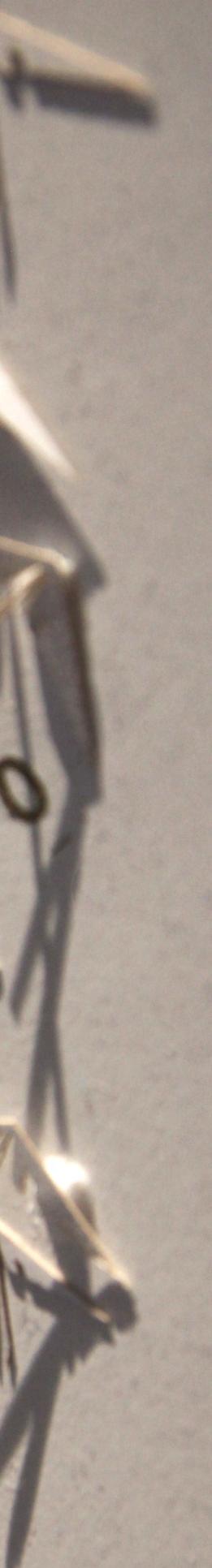
presents the opportunity to see and understand Da Vinci's work from an unfamiliar perspective. ■

Acknowledgments:

I would like to thank all of my colleagues in James Michael Tate's Wallenberg studio for producing an incredible, collaborative environment. I also would like to thank my professor, Tate, for his mentorship and guidance, and my wife for her continued support.

Neither Here





The National Mall, as a living mechanism, breathes, grows, spawns, dies, and dreams.

A landscape can manifest only through its visitors' strong belief in its power to define the past and shape the future of America. Hidden underneath the firm and unanimous belief in the heroic version of ourselves is a strong sense of common amnesty that co-exists in the seemingly true and rich history carved into every stone and every metal plate of the statues and ultimately, in our memory.

YURONG WU

Nor There



Holding tight to a cluster of balloons, I can see the city, for the first time, high above the sky, seeing the city like never before.

Suddenly, I'm falling, strings are slipping from my hand.

There's nothing else I can do but rapidly free fall to the ground.

Through the clouds, sliding down the marble surface of the Washington Monument, I land on the National Mall.

It is just about dawn, just minutes before the sun rises. Everything is still immersed in dark blue with just a splash of orange at the edge of memorial silhouettes.

Everything in the horizon seems to weave together like a still photograph, with only the blinking searchlights on top of the Washington Monument as reminders of reality.



A crisp and bright chirp breaks the silence—I turn around and see a swallow flying over. It lands on my shoulder.

“Is it your first time here?” he asks.

“No,” I say. “[I’ve been here] many times before. You?”

“I was born here, I lived over there for my whole life,” pointing at a blurry shadow not far away.

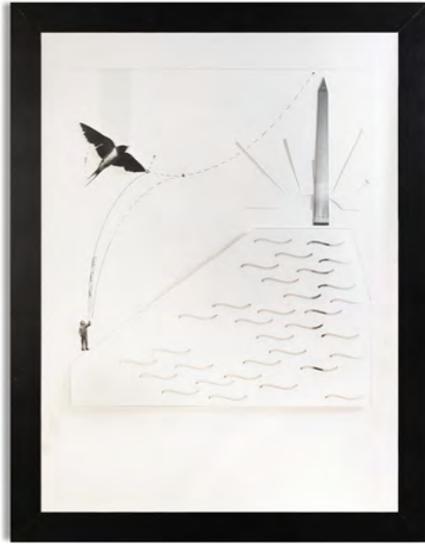
“The Lincoln Memorial?”

“Yeah, a lot of us live up there.”

“Follow me. You are about to see—look!”

As the swallow finishes his sentence, a flock of birds fly out of the roof and over the pool, heading towards the Jefferson Memorial. They glow gold in the night, warm and calming.





“Are they your friends? Where are they going? Why do they glow?”
Curious and excited, I want to know more.
“They are the storytellers of the mall.”
“Do they speak like you do?”
“Not exactly. You’ll see, my friend, you’ll see.”

Something else is lighting up. A helium balloon is rising and traveling along with the flock.

“That’s a wind turbine,” says the swallow. “It feeds the storytellers and everything else glowing on the mall. Follow it—you’ll always find the story tellers!”

As the last few come out of the roof, I am ready to run, feeling the urge to chase after them. Who wouldn’t?

“They’ll come back for you,” says the swallow, stopping me even before I take my first step. I sit down by the pool, put my foot in the cool water, watching the flock turn into little specks of light and eventually disappear on the other side of the lake.

Staring at the long gone flock, I remember a Sunday afternoon walk by the pool with mom and dad, chasing after birds in the sky. Lying on the grass next to mom, falling asleep to her stories.

What were the stories?

What are the stories?

Yeah, *What are the stories about?*

The question pulls me back to reality. I turn around to the swallow, wanting to ask, only to find an empty shoulder.

Just as I wonder where the swallow went, along with a million other questions on my mind, the mall gradually wakes up. Architects, politicians, historians, and travelers from far, far away come into the picture.

“They are coming! They are coming!”

Somewhere next to the stairs to the Lincoln Memorial, one of the students yells loudly, voice filled with excitement.

Standing next to him is a group of students, seemingly the same age as myself, traveling on a school field trip. They are laughing and yelling, as if they have found some lost treasure.





I walk over to a girl on the side. Oddly, she doesn't seem as excited as the rest. She turns and waves at me.

"Do you see the bright light back there?" she says, pointing to the sky. Only then do I realize how close the flock is.

"Look how fast they are going—look how fast! I heard they are like well-crafted contraptions, you know, the storytellers, each and every one of them. I would love to have one in my hands to just look at."

As we speak, the flock is flying down from the tip of the Washington Monument, encircling the observation deck, naturally distributed, but flying in a distinct order. They are no longer glowing, but shiny as if they were covered in gold. They move fast and seem different as they fly closer.

"They are gliders!" The realization hits me at the last moment, as I see the reflection on a metallic and rigid surface.

Choreographed and autonomous, the flock drifts through the air on its own. It is followed by the helium balloon, relaxed and unhurried, traveling along at its own speed, sometimes ahead, sometimes behind.

But how do they tell the story?



White noise blankets the area in silence, carried by the birds overhead. Each bird flies down toward us and drops something from the sky. Tiny golden dots fall into our hands like cherry blossom petals with a paper note rolled up and carefully tied with a white stone. Unable to wait any longer, I open the note.

It is a short read, hard and intense. An interesting mix of emotions grow inside of me.

Just as I finish reading, the white noise fades away. My surroundings are once again filled with talking and various sounds.

Images from memories quickly flash before my eyes.
The curled corner of an old history book, the sound
of chalk on the blackboard, the smell of a hot summer
afternoon. Jefferson, Lincoln, Washington—names I'm
so familiar with, yet so distant from.



All at once, I'm inspired, shocked, moved, and confused. Everyone is
talking, exchanging the stories they received. I look back to the girl,
hoping to hear what she has read.

“Not everything is written in the history book, huh? Do you want to
come inside with us?”
“I think I'll take another minute,” I answer and start wandering back
by myself.

The fleeting shadow penetrates the fabric of the landscape below with
exuberating energy and leaves without anyone noticing.

“We have to go now. See you later?” says the girl, leaving for the inside
of the memorial with others.



“Can you hear me?”

A faint voice comes from underneath, a sound so familiar I mistook it for my own mumbling. But lying inside my hand, the voice comes from the piece of white rock tied to the paper note.

“Yeah, what can I help you with?”

“Can you walk me to the lake?”

“Of course. Is that where you came from?”

I wonder why a little rock would have such a strange request.



“No, I’m from far, far away, brought here for the building of the memorials. We were chosen from the finest marbles around the world. Day by day, the monument gets higher and higher, watching the others like me being cut and integrated into the structure. All I ever wanted was that, to stand high above and look at this fascinating city.”

“What happened?”

“I was never picked, along with a few others. People don’t know what to do with us, so they left us at the bottom of the reflecting pool. For many years, I was asleep, looking at the reflection from the bottom of the lake, speculating the happiness and sadness happening beyond. But now, we’ve been brought out from the lake, cut, sanded, and put into the storyteller’s body. I’ve finally flown with the others, seen the happiness and sadness from up above, and delivered the stories. I’ve never been this happy before.”

Drawn to the story and the calming waves, I don’t know how long I spent staring at the lake. I am brought back to reality when the flock flies over my head. I turn around to talk to the rock, wanting to apologize, only to find it lying silently in my hand.

Maybe he’s just asleep.

With the little buddy in my pocket, I walk around Tidal Basin until I find a blossoming cherry tree, extending its branches to welcome me.





Maybe I'll lay here for a second, take a quick nap or something.

Just a quick one till the swallow comes back.

I have so much to tell him... ■

With the study of a conflicted figure named Nicky Crane, a neo-Nazi activist who later in life came out as homosexual, I started the project by exploring the relationship between statues, the people we built statues of, and the people we built statues for.

What do we expect?

What do we see?

And what do we remember?



Study of *The Happy Prince* by Oscar Wilde. Through the narrative, we search for a source of happiness and sadness.

Why do we build statues?

What role do statues play in a society?





The fleeting shadow penetrates the fabric of the existing landscape below with exuberating energy.

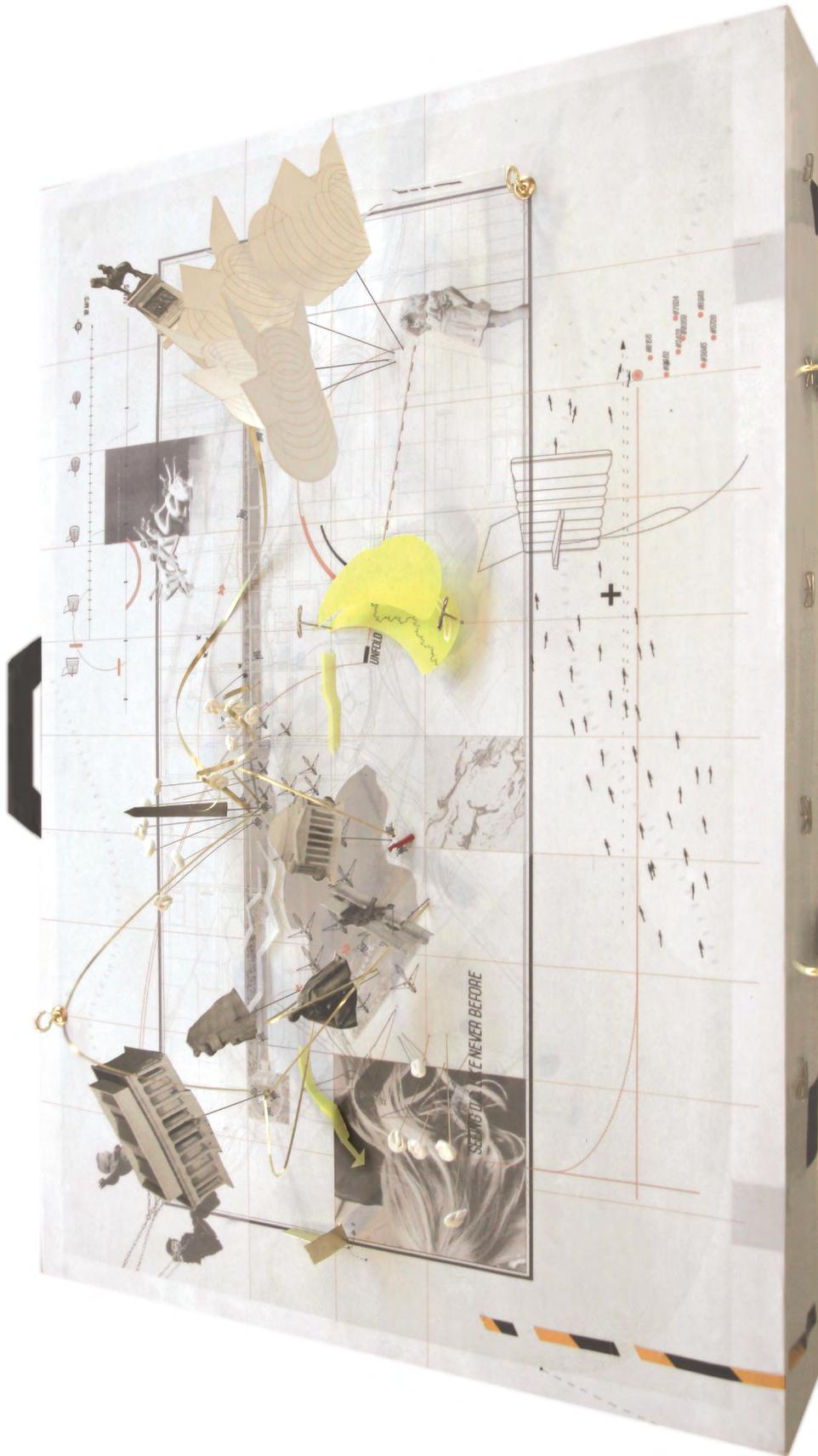
This collage is investigating the route the gliders will take at the National Mall. This includes how they approach the crowd, fly over the top, interact with the marble surface, and leave without anyone noticing.

It is illustrating an intimate, intense, and repetitive experience.



The Tripods stage a reality, allowing people to lean in, look closely, and fall into an experience that is constructed from paper and shadows.

This collage further illustrates the interaction of the gliders and the visitors. The chase, the upward gaze, the impatient unfolding, and the short, intense read.



The helium balloon, as a wind turbine, powers the National Mall and the flock of gliders. At night, the balloon also glows to provide guidance.

The balloon travels at a speed slightly faster than an average walking speed. The flock follows the balloon, sometimes behind, sometimes ahead.

The note is sometimes lighter than the wind, sometimes heavier than the granite.

Seven figural memorials were built on the National Mall. From the Ulysses S. Grant Memorial to the Thomas Jefferson Memorial, the flock circles, day and night.

The alternate stories are collected from historic research, books, and the Internet. They are verified and updated frequently. The paper notes are dropped when human activities are detected.



Initiated by the Class of 2013, the Architecture Student Research Grant (ASRG) provides funded research opportunities to both graduate and undergraduate students within Taubman College. This year, with generous support from Dean Monica Ponce de Leon and the Taubman College Alumni Board, the Class of 2015 awarded three prizes of \$1,700 each to interdisciplinary teams of graduate and undergraduate students. With the announcement of grant winners in April, all winning teams participate in a presentation to the college through a short lecture and gallery exhibition in October to showcase the work.

2015 WINNING PROJECTS

Graduate Projects

The Architecture of Loneliness,
Tafhim Rahman · Kallie Sternburgh

*The Dialogue Between
Drawing Machines and Human Ambience,*
Jaekyun Brandon Kang · Hans
Hyunseong Min · Tommy Kyung
Tae Nam · Siwei Ren · Xu Zhang

Undergraduate Project

Hyper Unreal,
Joseph Biglin · Eujain Ting · Ian Ting

Two of the projects from ASRG 2015 are featured in this volume of *Dimensions*. These projects explore the different interaction and relationship between design subjects and other externalities. The first featured project, *The Architecture of Loneliness*, is a critique of the limitations of architectural design in dealing with issues of solitude and isolation, making items that belong to this “architecture of loneliness” to provide an outlook that is tragic yet hopeful. The second featured project, *The Dialogue between Drawing Machines and Human Ambience*, explores and maps out the interaction between humans and programmed machines through sensory technology.



Architecture

TAFHIM RAHMAN · KALLIE STERNBURGH

Over the years, architects have tackled problems of poverty, disease, homelessness, segregation, and climate change, but what we have not done is address the problem closest to ourselves: loneliness. All of the built world is a struggle against loneliness. Cities, high rises, public parks, shopping malls, decorative touchstones, and a plethora of hobbies and appliances have all allowed us to ignore this pressing issue for far too long.

for

Loneliness



Instead of creating a technical solution to alleviate the problem of loneliness, we simply create more things to ignore it. With *Architecture for Loneliness*, we have built a series of products that aim to ameliorate this prevalent condition of the modern man. This intuitive collection is designed for a victim of loneliness in a moment of crisis. Using the product in the comfort of one's own home, the kit can address problems of loneliness immediately. No longer do you have to languish in isolation. The *Architecture for Loneliness* is your ultimate companion! ■

Acknowledgments:

Model Team: Jayne Choi, Annelise Heeringa, Emily Trulson, Stefan Klecheski, Salam Rida, Darryl Weimer

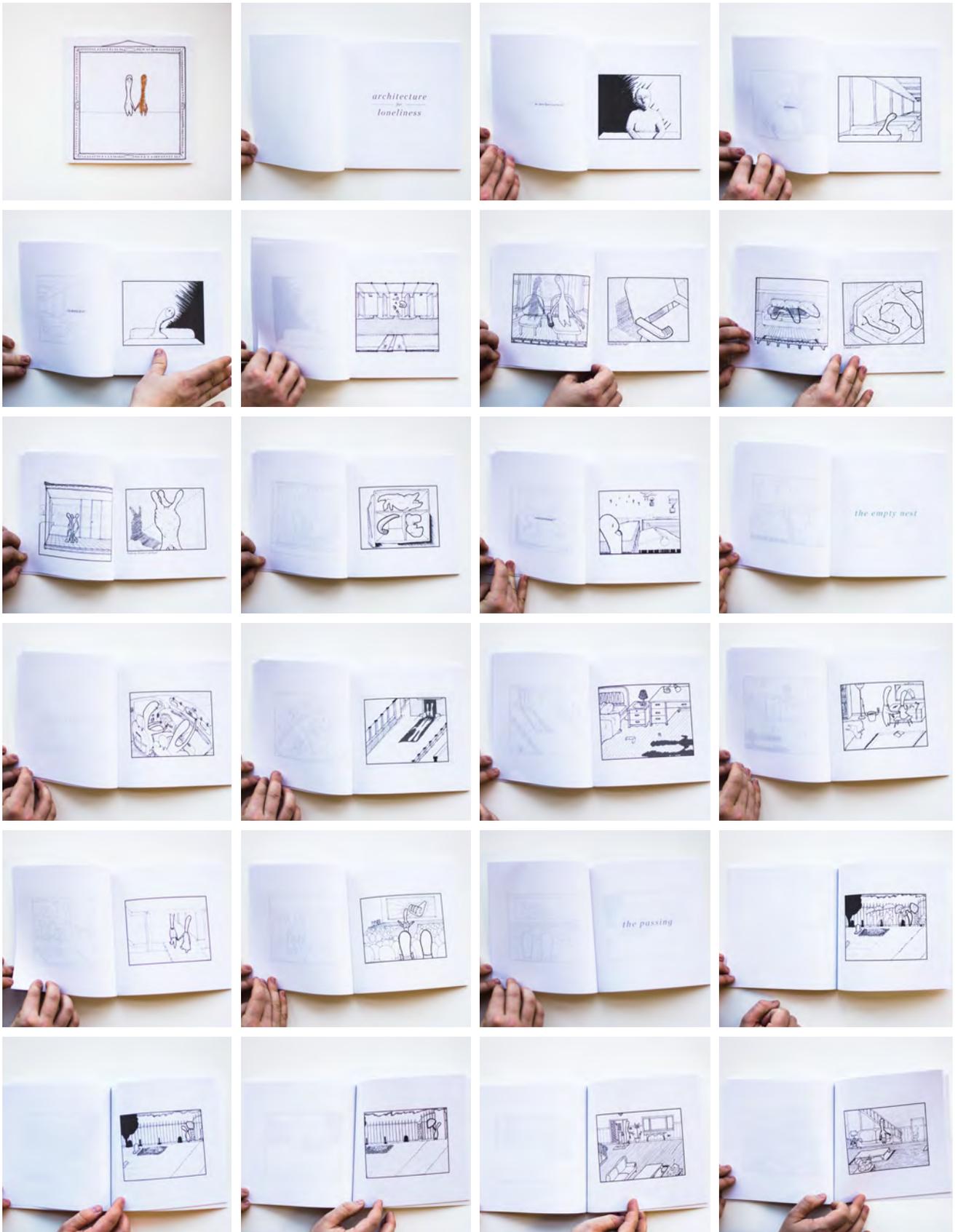
Podium Team: Connor Brindza, Ryan Goold, Chad Schram, Daniel Fougere

1:1 Team: Matt Robinson, Steven Scharrer, Chad Schram

Comic Team: Carrie Allen, Steven Scharrer

Photography: Carrie Allen









The Dialogue





BRANDON JAEKYUN KANG · HANS HYUNSEONG MIN

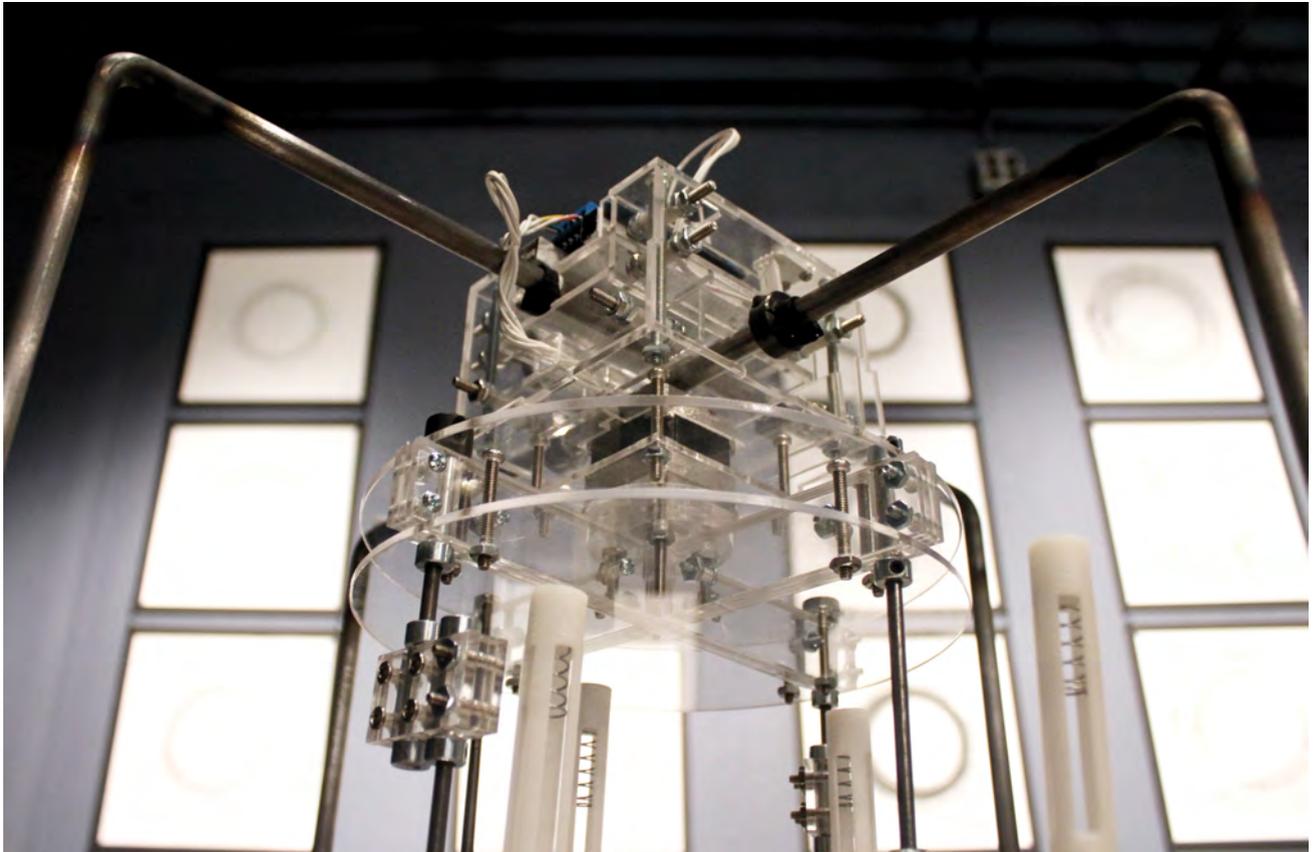
TOMMY KYUNG TAE NAM · SIWEI REN · XU ZHANG

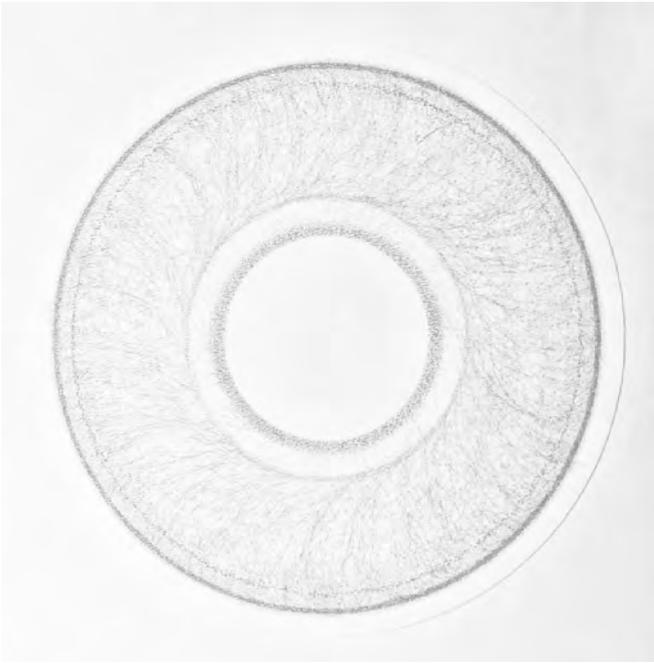
The Dialogue between Drawing Machines and Human Ambience explores the dichotomy and synthesis of the interaction between programmed movement and human interaction through automated and sensory technology. The research focuses on the development of machines that generate drawings that collect the surrounding information of place and time.

Using sensors such as light, vibration, sound, and object sensors, the machines react and alter their path and form of motion based on the contextual ambience. This collection of information about a specific place is translated into the drawing, making this drawing device an artifact that stores the memory of that place. Although the machine is scripted and programmed in such a way to have a default base path, the human interaction and context allow the drawing to accumulate with ink, dissolving a perfect drawing and celebrating the amorphousness of the drawing. In other words, the interface of programmed and human movement creates a sloppy precision.

Between Drawing Machines and Human Ambience



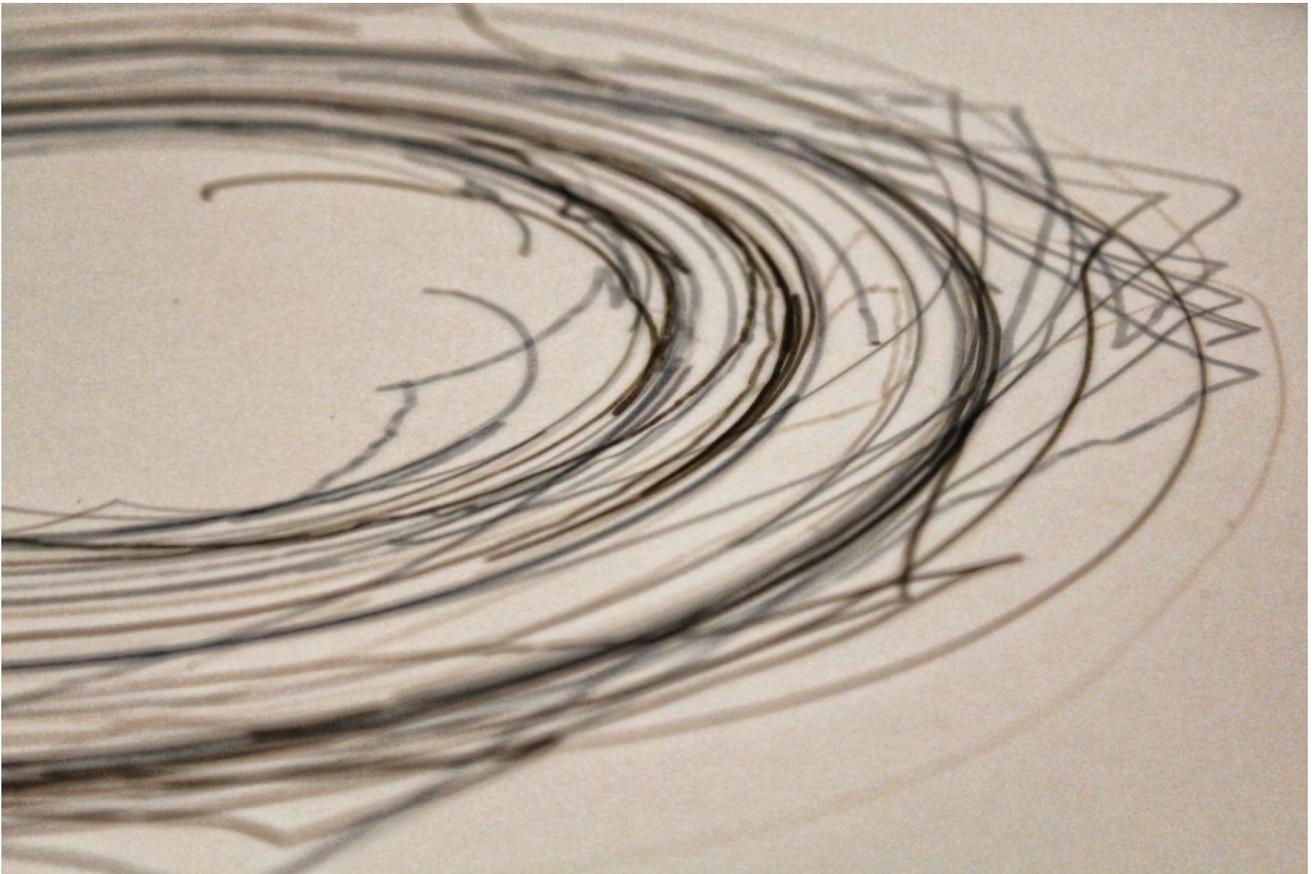




Drawing prototype from
east hallway (15 minutes)



Drawing prototype from
RGB Gallery (15 minutes)





Drawing prototype from north entrance (9 minutes)



Drawing prototype from RGB Gallery (7 minute)



The next step of the research following the exhibition is to decode the drawings by studying the motion, density, and forms produced by the machines, based on different spaces in time. As much as this project is about the exploration of the dichotomy between machine and man, it goes beyond this simple idea and flirts with the concepts of recording space, drawing that space, and decoding the drawing of the space. ■

Acknowledgments:

Taubman College Alumni Board, Class of 2015,
Brandon Kang, Tae Min Kim, Deniz McGee,
Mónica Ponce de León, James Michael Tate,
MaryAnn Wilkinson

Jean-Louis

Jean-Louis Cohen is an architect and professor of history whose research activity has focused on twentieth-century architecture and urban planning. Since 1993, he holds the Sheldon H. Solow Chair for the History of Architecture at New York University's Institute of Fine Arts and has held teaching positions at the School of Architecture at Paris-Villemin, and the Institut Français d'Urbanisme at the University of Paris.

His research and curation efforts have reached wide audiences. As appointed director, Cohen founded the Cité de l'Architecture et du Patrimoine, a museum, research, and exhibition center in the Paris Palais de Chaillot, and has curated numerous exhibitions including: "The Lost Vanguard" and "Le Corbusier, an Atlas of Modern Landscapes," at the Museum of Modern Art (2007, 2013); "Scenes of the World to Come" and "Architecture in Uniform" at the Canadian Center for Architecture (1995, 2011); and "Paris-Moscou" (1979) and the centennial show "L'aventure Le Corbusier" (1987), both at the Centre Georges Pompidou. Most recently, "Modernity: Promise or Menace?" at the French Pavilion received a Special Mention at the 2014 Venice Biennale.

A prolific writer, Cohen has authored over 40 titles, among them: *The Future of Architecture. Since 1889* (Phaidon, 2012), *Architecture in Uniform* (Hazan, 2011), and *Le Corbusier and the Mystique of the USSR, Theories and Projects for Moscow, 1928-1936* (Princeton University Press, 1992).

Claire Zimmerman, Associate Professor (LSA and Taubman College) and Director of Doctoral Studies in Architecture at Taubman College, joined us for the discussion. Her current research interests include architecture culture as it interacts with commerce and industry and the infrastructures of globalization that underpinned the spread of modern architecture throughout the twentieth century.

Cohen

with Claire Zimmerman



Dimensions sat down with Jean-Louis Cohen and Claire Zimmerman to discuss the impacts of politics and criticism on design. They joined us directly after a visit to the Bentley Historical Library.

D29 Jean-Louis, in addition to your writing, you have taken on many high-profile curatorial roles targeted at general audiences. How do you see the values that you ascribe to architecture reflecting back on the profession?”

JLC The program I developed for the Cité de l’Architecture et du Patrimoine between 1997 and 2003 was meant to create an institution that would foster a real conversation between architects and the public. Architects consider all too often that the public is made up of little kids who need to be taught, but not necessarily listened to. The population perceives architects as elitist and uninterested in their concerns. When visitors to exhibitions realize that some architects are really open, caring,

and listening, they are really shocked. So what I had tried to do was to open a venue that would perform a double therapy, bringing the architects to communicate not only through their own codes, but through the codes of others, thus making things easier for visitors to respond and express their expectations. There is a very wide gap that the culture of celebrity has widened, as architects are pictured as an elite dealing only with the exceptional, and shunning the everyday.

CZ Architecture has faced this false dilemma for much of its history—the dilemma between an internally-focused discourse and external engagement with public concerns. The two manners of discourse are different, but they are not in conflict with one another. There is absolutely no reason that you can’t have architects’ internal experimentation unfolding at the same time that their work engages with wider public concerns. The two aims are simply not in conflict,

although one is embraced and the other quietly shunned in schools. This was perhaps workable in the late twentieth century, but it is not any longer—for one, students aren’t putting up with it. This has to do with the transformations of knowledge dissemination and production that have happened in the last 20 or 30 years—and also with the state of the world today.

JLC In the contemporary world, architects perform a wide range of roles in extremely different types of contexts. What does it mean? What are these guys doing besides the core practice of design? Talking about *one* profession is misleading because we are dealing with many, many different types of practices, as architectural knowledge is disseminated among people who commission buildings, people in local administration, people active of course in preservation, or people engaged on the side of building contractors, notably in this country. The breadth of this field should

change the perspective of the schools of architecture, which are not, with a few exceptions, equipped to train people doing something other than traditional practice. Most programs remain focused on the demiurgic figure of the designer.

CZ Yes, “architecture” is much more diffused than it used to be—and jobs equally spread among a range of fields and expertise.

DZ Also in this interview series we’ve included Peter Eisenman and Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample of MOS who each take openly from history. How do you see your role of interpreting history as a historian rather than practitioner?

CZ ...well, and Peter himself has become a subject of history in recent years.

JLC I would also consider him as a true historian, as he has produced historical knowledge, in many cases visual, or graphic, but also some written interpretation. He has been looking historically at designs and buildings, from the vantage point of his theories. He is a rather unique case, and more generally, there is a dichotomy in historical production, between what I would call the ideal of accumulating knowledge according to a sort of sedimentary process and that of knowledge understood as entertainment, without the rigor of scholarly production. There are some scholars who are more on the side of the latter, in particular those who are inscribed in the Koolhaas galaxy who are clearly on the side of what I would call learned entertainment. They use visual materials, graphics, in order to illustrate the metrics and the genealogies of the projects, and there are historians who produce more traditional discourse, which might seem boring to design-oriented readers, because it is disseminated in university press books with black and white plates and long texts. There are people who are trying to navigate desperately between those two poles, like myself (*laughs*).

I want to return to the issue of the discipline, as things are not as simple as they seem to be. I always smile when I am characterized as an “architectural historian,” as I find this term rather reductive. I rather consider myself as a historian in architecture or dealing with architecture—or as an architect practicing history. Being labeled an architectural historian is almost like becoming a satellite of a profession.

CZ Right. From my perspective your question contains an answer: we are interpreting history, but without the need to find an “address” that will identify us to an audience with only a passing interest in historical matters. The historian may have many more options to explore in interpreting the past than a designer in engaging it. Good history propagates complex interpretations, just as good architecture hosts multiple ones. In short, our creative work is the writing of the past—not the design project that proceeds from its study.

JLC It is of course a widely accepted term. There is a society of “architectural historians,” which publishes a journal, and there are job postings that use this heading. The history of architecture, to put it a different way, often seems to be a province within the history of art. I am rather trying to understand it in a multidimensional space, at the intersection of art, technology, intellectual, urban, and social histories. So how can it be called architectural? Because it uses “architectural concepts”? But what are these concepts? Are there real concepts in the scientific understanding of the term? Question marks abound here, so I think it is time to reopen a real conversation on what this problematic discipline is. More than a discipline, it should perhaps be viewed as a field of enquiry, in which scholars are trying to work with different blends of methodologies. Claire, would you agree?

CZ Absolutely. The term may exist because there was a period in which the work that people like Jean-Louis and I did was considered

to be very much in support of the profession, buttressing the profession, providing justifications, providing ideas, providing a kind of defense, if you like, or a defense mechanism. There have been alternatives to such a position for some time. The role of supporting current practices has shifted to people who prefer to call themselves theorists, who are focused on buttressing the profession in some way or orienting their work to that of the profession. But I think historians now see their role to be larger, to necessitate acting as intercessors for architecture with a much wider population. This returns to the start of our conversation and the issue of *address*, or audience. In addition, it is our responsibility to reconfigure existing knowledge—to expand it and alter it through new information, analysis, and interpretation—for students of architecture of any age.

Our responsibility is now to inject interpretation about space into a general discourse.

JLC There are two audiences, and many more in fact. I am completely in agreement with you *à propos* the responsibility of historians operating on architectural questions, and history has to produce, to integrate architectural facts and architectural knowledge into the general historical conversation. If you look at historical interpretation, you will find the kind of economic data that has been injected into the disciplines by the School of Les Annales already, in the 1920s, as history ceased to be purely political or purely centered on great figures, to start working at introducing sociological, economic concepts. This has been done by historians who were also interested in representations, in ideologies. Our responsibility is now to inject interpretation about space into a general discourse.

CZ But if we come back to that dual address that you were talking about, Jean-Louis, yes, it’s our job to inject into history-writing a knowledge





about architecture that we have, but it's also our job to inject history into the profession. Tafuri did it in a very peculiar way in the sense that it's still an address to the profession by a fellow professional. There was something insular about the way he wrote, whereas I think now, really one of our biggest responsibilities in teaching is to bring to you all a larger sense of history and your own place in it.

JLC Tafuri was doing it in sometimes obscure ways, and most English translations are so bad that one is sometimes able to understand only half of what he says. But I would also say that sometimes his texts needed to be translated into Italian (*laughs*), as his discourse tends toward what I would call the *metafurico*. His metaphoric language had an unquestionable charm, which gave it its productivity. He had a certain charm in the Golden 1970s, at a moment in which architects wanted to be smart. I would return here to Mies van der Rohe's famous statement, "I don't want to be interesting. I want to be good." It was parodied by Philip Johnson, who declared, "I don't want to be interesting. I want to be famous." And Gehry wrote in a letter I have found recently in his archive, "I don't want to be good. I want to be interesting." Today's architects are more on the side of the interesting and the famous, but certainly in my generation, architects would have said, "I don't want to be good. I want to be smart and cultivated."

CZ I'll give you the title of an essay I'd love to write, for which there are innumerable examples: "Architects Never Mean What they Say."

JLC Today, what do architects want to be? They want to be famous, and interesting, and rich. Of course, this is a caricature, as I perceive that your generation also has genuine social aspirations. I was struck by that at the Harvard School of Design one month ago, talking with a big bunch of M. Arch students about how they were perceiving the school, and they clearly stated an explicitly political agenda.

D29 Both in the introduction to *The Future of Architecture. Since 1889* and in your lecture last night, you brought up the historical mutualism between the historian and architect. Why is this a link so important for you to agitate?

JLC It is of course a difficult situation because critics write under the scrutiny of the architect, so I am trying not to be judgmental. If I take the case of Frank Gehry, as I am engaged in an ambitious publication project focused on his drawings, I am trying to clarify the way in which his ideas have developed, inserting myself critically into what I would call the extant framework of reading, which has been imposed by previous scholars, and sometimes by Gehry himself, as he has interiorized the analyses of several critics. One example is the manner in which he has responded to the readings given of his Experience Music Project in Seattle, which had detected an analogy with the draperies of the Dutch sculptor Claus Sluter, active in Burgundy in the late fifteenth century. Frank seems now to be almost convinced that he took it from Sluter—architects are rarely that candid, between you and me. So sometimes the discourse of the architect reverberates critical views and appropriates them.

CZ Absolutely, historians or theorists can function as star pickers, and the relationship is generally mutual.

JLC It all started with Vasari. There is a symmetrical relationship in

which architects are looking after intellectuals who will promote them and give a certain gloss to their work. The historians are very often frustrated by not being on the creative end of social production, although being an intellectual is a creative position. They aspire to achieve recognition by writing on famous architects, in a sort of mutually narcissistic relationship.

That's also why many scholars try to get away from a writing of history centered on the big figures to try to look at things differently. But as we know, big figures do not only represent themselves. By focusing on them, other issues can be understood, just as micro-historical research allows for the understanding of larger situations and conditions.

CZ Part of the historians' concern resides in the political valence of architecture in society—and many architects are only faintly interested in politics. That is to say, they may have political leanings and ambitions, but they are often unwilling to subject those to any kind of sustained consideration, so you get a kind of soft politics—some would call it pragmatism. I think of the Smithsons as demonstrating a general desire for a certain kind of political affiliation, without doctrinaire knowledge. They thought of themselves as being for the people, but they were not strongly politically identified. I see that more and more often in studying the past of architecture, that there is what I would call a weak desire for political affiliation or political correctness, but often no sustained one.

JLC I don't know if I agree. We should extend the reflection to specific cases. This kind of discussion has to be related with rigorously constructed cases. The Catalan architects working during the Second Spanish Republic had a clear political agenda, in a very intense period. In Weimar Germany, the situation was rather complex. Mies van der Rohe pretended to be apolitical but he had sent enough signals to the left to be in trouble when he later aspired to continue working during the early Third Reich.

CZ He moved from side to side—another form of political agnosticism or lack of commitment.

JLC So he was not expressing himself explicitly. To stick to England, look at Richard Rogers, or Cedric Price. Besides the Smithsons, Price was really engaging in the Labour Party circles in the 1960s, and Rogers advised more recently Tony Blair's government on urban and architectural issues. Both Goldfinger and Lubetkin had an unambiguous agenda.

CZ OK, and of course, we could talk about Hannes Meyer here. . . . but we may be talking of the exceptions who prove the rule.

JLC Of course there are great figures of engagement such as Meyer, but all sorts of networks have been active. Very few architects have been municipal counselors, members of Parliament, ministers, or presidents. There are exceptions, most notably in South America. In Italy, Bruno Zevi comes immediately to mind when thinking of the political agency of architecture, with his efforts to have the Association for Organic Architecture participate in local elections in postwar Rome, and also someone like Giuseppe Samonà, who was a senator for the Socialist Party. Interestingly, Renzo Piano is now a senator for life in Rome. So there are great differences between the persons, and between the countries. Looking at Europe today, I still see in Spain, Italy, France, or Germany intellectuals who are active in the local and national political systems.

CZ ...and committed to those political systems.

JLC Indeed. In most cases not in a corrupt manner—trying to get close to the guys who would give them some commission, but as an engagement for ideas, and a longing to implement given programs.

CZ Jean-Louis, can you speak to the impact of what one might call the delayed unfolding of Eastern European architectural events after World War II, the delayed unfolding of that story among our institutions,

among architecture schools in Europe and America? The delay in our understanding of what was going on behind the so-called Iron Curtain is a really important alteration to the historical landscape today. Again, I think Jean-Louis was an early person to unfold that story in the Russian—Soviet work. It's now a juggernaut as far as I can tell.

JLC Contradictory phenomena can be found here. The scholarly market has been to a certain degree saturated with Western history. So one had to find new products. In addition, there has been a massive influx of scholars from the former Eastern bloc who have brought with them themes and narratives from the territories they were associated with. So in a way, a history that was essentially focused on North America, European, Japan, and some areas of Latin America, has been challenged. For instance, the myth of an "international style" born in New York and invading the rest of the world without resistance was resized. Polish planners and designers have been active in Africa, their Yugoslav colleagues were active in Indonesia, the Soviet ones in Afghanistan, Vietnam, and elsewhere. Bulgarians brought prefabrication to independent Algeria. At the limit, one could argue another type of international style came out from the Eastern Bloc, which was much less concerned with elegant form than with practicality and social service, often at the expense of aesthetic brilliance.

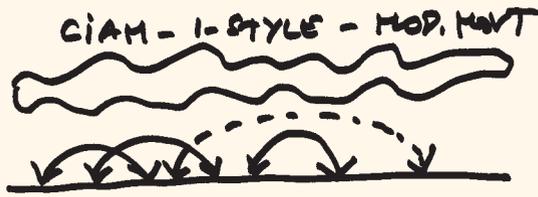
CZ Yes, architecture of modernization and not modernism, and that is a large part of why our picture is changing so much now. This stuff didn't just come at us relatively suddenly, which it did, but it came at us with the force of a realization that what we thought was the core of post-war modern architecture was just a tiny—like the

Jean-Louis diagram—just a tiny piece of a much bigger picture.

I think for me that's a critical point in your question: How do we address the present? We change your understanding of the past in ways that we think are actually more accurate, and that change your task in the present.

JLC I agree. This is another consideration I am trying to make in my research. It started in the 1980s with a publication discussing the relationships between France and Italy in the postwar years. Then, I have developed a matrix of projects dealing with the impact of France on Morocco and Algeria, with the interaction between France and Germany since 1800, with the "americanitis" that affected the Soviet Union, and with the idealization of the New World in all of Europe. In short, I have been working on a series of bilateral, or multilateral situations, creating a model that relativizes the significance of international networks such as the CIAM or of the "International style," and plays down the top-down model most frequently used, i.e. the somewhat naive local reception of international stereotypes. It is also true that in a sort of inversion this model had been read bottom up, as when Frampton saw in "critical" regionalism an architecture of resistance. . . . It was still in the same scheme, but he was taking the side of the people who were suffocating under the blanket of a universalizing system. I am more interested in other schemes that could be represented in a sketch featuring the relationships between what happens on the ground, sometimes under the umbrella of the worldwide systems. So I am much more interested in how things operate at that level, and in the way exotic territories or experiences appear as a canon through changing

Micro-history is about seeing objects in a small scale, with short-lived moments, or bringing the condensation of broader issues, tendencies, systems, or configurations into small-scale spaces.



hegemonies, in some cases under considerable, if ephemeral, political pressure. In Eastern Europe, the submission to the Soviet model after 1948 lasted for instance only for a very brief period; in Czechoslovakia or Poland, for instance, only a matter of six or seven years.

In the coming years, I envision a broader project, which would lead to a new history of cities and urban design, centered on transfers of forms and structures between cities, and between national spaces.

D29 Does the dominant metanarrative unduly perpetuate stylistic tropes or engage only a surface reading? Do you think that an understanding of unique historical episodes might play a part in the preservation of cultural value?

CZ Speaking of large umbrellas—there are many who have taken from Jean-Louis a kind of combined commitment to the study of buildings and cities, the study of the physical material, and the necessity to connect that study to larger historical flows. I find myself constantly caught between the historians who embrace the politics of the built environment without dealing much with buildings (or what we might call *architectural knowledge*), and the architects who embrace buildings but won't ever talk about politics. What Jean-Louis has done, and certainly how I understand my task is to find a passage between these extremes. Focusing on architecture, buildings, spaces, cities, physical things that we inhabit, and the way in which they intersect with historical forces, including politics. This is quite simply materialist history in the Marxian sense of the word—analysis of how

social relations are cast by material existence and vice versa.

JLC I would return here to a term I have already mentioned today, and all too frequently evoked in historical practice—the term of “micro-history.” Micro-history is about seeing in small-scale objects, short-lived moments, or small-scale spaces the condensation of broader issues, tendencies, systems, or configurations. It is not about the fetishistic centering on the “small.” However, academic disciplines in the history of art or architecture tend to produce a growing number of this kind of work, sometimes even more nano than micro. (*Pauses*) We have been through a cycle of fragmentation of discourse, of investigation, and what is wanting today are efforts to bringing all the elements into a coherent perspective, as if we had to put the toothpaste back into the tube. The overextension of this type of production has all sorts of causes. Programs flourish everywhere, with fellowships, students who need to write theses, young colleagues who have to publish. Another aspect is demographic: while the number of architects has been growing, historians, theorists, and authors producing a number of journals, blogs, platforms has also exploded. My perspective is perhaps obsolete or even conservative, but I think one needs some attempts at structuring knowledge, and at putting in perspective or at stimulating the communication between all of these levels of fragmented research.

D29 That sentiment seems really clear from your diagrams too. There's always a connection from the infinite micro-histories to the main players.

JLC I would give an example inscribed in the context of the history of Europe—Russia included. In the mid-1950s, the concept of *mikro-rayon* was introduced in the USSR to qualify a residential area complete with its social infrastructure, echoing to a certain degree the notion of Neighborhood Unit developed by the economist Clarence Perry in the framework of the 1929 Regional Plan of New York.

This type of urban component was also indebted to the contribution of the German city-planners operating in Moscow in the 1930s, under the guidance of Ernst May. They defined what they called the *kvartal*, which can be seen as an interpretation of the *siedlung* produced in the peripheries of Frankfurt, or Berlin during the Weimar republic. So, when Soviet planners worked on the general plan of Kabul in the 1960s, and built a new area, still called *mikro-rayon*, they were in fact depositing a complex layer of German, American, and Russian historical products.

CZ The same blind spots appear all over the place. I was looking yesterday at some material that Joss Kiely brought back from Honolulu. He has re-discovered how Minoru Yamasaki was building prefabricated high-rise buildings in Hawaii. Panel systems from Singapore imported from Singapore to Hawaii to build mass housing out of prefabricated elements.

JLC Fascinating indeed!

CZ Really! The fact that such connections remain unknown suggests that we also were unwilling to acknowledge overlaps with, or “technology transfer” from state Communism. Until the day when such knowledge has become truly historical, released from direct ideological sting, and open to consideration again. ■

Interviewers: Yezi Dai, Michal Ojrzanowski,
Gideon Schwartzman
Sketches: Courtesy of Jean-Louis Cohen
Photography: Brian Ranallo

Peter

Peter Eisenman is an internationally recognized architect and educator. As the principal of Eisenman Architects, he has designed large-scale housing and urban design projects, innovative facilities for educational institutions, and a series of inventive private houses.

Eisenman was awarded the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement at the 2004 Venice Architecture Biennale. *Popular Science* magazine named Eisenman one of the top five innovators of 2006 for the University of Phoenix Stadium for the Arizona Cardinals. In May 2010, Eisenman was honored with the Wolf Foundation Prize in the Arts, awarded in Jerusalem.

From 1967 to 1982, Eisenman was the director of the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies in New York City, which he founded. He is currently the Charles Gwathmey Professor in Practice at the Yale School of Architecture. Eisenman's academic career also includes teaching at Cambridge, Princeton, Harvard, and Ohio State. Previously, he was the Irwin S. Chanin Distinguished Professor of Architecture at The Cooper Union, in New York City. His many books include *Eisenman: Inside Out, Selected Writings 1963–1988*; *Written into the Void, Selected Writings 1990–2004*; *Tracing Eisenman*; and *Giuseppe Terragni: Transformations, Decompositions, Critiques*.

2004 was the year, the Yale School of Architecture was the location, Peter Eisenman was the teacher, James Michael Tate was the student. It was in the context of a required first year course titled "Introduction to Visual Studies" and it was through a series of PowerPoint presentations and analytic drawing exercises that the teacher went about discussing ways of seeing, reading, and positioning architecture...

Eisenman

with James Michael Tate



Peter Eisenman arrives in Rutgers apparel to join former student and current lecturer James Michael Tate for a *Dimensions* game day interview. Disciplinary trajectory served as an undertone for the talk following Eisenman's lecture on the "Loss of Authority" given the day prior. Rutgers lost the game, 49-16.

D29 Peter, last night's lecture addressed the lack of authority and a current state of disciplinary stagnation. How does instilling knowledge of the past aid in progressing the discipline?

PE We have to first understand what the use of history is. What is the use of precedent? I was on a jury where the students were supposedly designing an urban plan. Most of them were worried about the high rise housing blocks. I said, if you're interested in an urban plan, why don't you take an urban block? Take the Marseille. It is already there. There are a thousand variations of that. Pick one, put it in

a block because the block is going to affect the urban plan, not the unit. What are the models that we are using? What are the authorities? That is what I was trying to talk about last night.

D29 In architecture it has gotten harder to form a singularity regarding shared disciplinary values. It seems this understanding is no longer autonomously passed down within the profession, but is largely impacted by media. Is media to blame for this halt in architectural order?

PE The culture that has passed on in the media is thin and the culture that's passed on to the discipline is thick. Media has to bring things down to the level of the every day. The University of Michigan does not have to do that. Learning how to deal with media is important, there is no question about it, but that's not architecture, that's something else. Learning about architecture is very clear. Learning about media is also very clear.

Romantic images are the media. What do you think Nazi propaganda was? It was all about scoring romantic imagery of Teutonic maidens, people in leather boots, and God knows what. There is a whole culture of understanding what media does through its use of romantic images. And what happens when romantic images start to become the discipline, then you get Bjarke Ingels.

JT This is a really big issue for Peter and his school of thought. It has a lot to do with the fact that perspectives distort form, they are pictorial, and tend to be undisciplined. The drawings he's referring to are based on parallels and promote ways of seeing and reading architecture that are different from how we literally perceive objects and spaces in perspective. They aren't about what is obvious in a project, and the viewer has an intentionally detached point of view, a critical distance. In my own education Peter introduced me to the possibility that a particular kind of

knowledge and ideation can and has historically resided in certain types of representation; insider dialogues. My relationship to looking at and pursuing architecture through drawings, models and other works of representation changed drastically when I took his class.

D29 Have architecture representational techniques become diluted with the evolution of architectural software?

JT Peter's discretionary biases take a position on architectural values. When first introduced to the approach it can be difficult to grasp for a couple of reasons. Today we are more likely to associate orthographic projection drawings with technical rather than conceptual aspirations. The status of such drawings is further complicated because they are usually extracted from digital models rather than delineated through projection, constructed as he says. Also, because software like Rhino has an isometric view, and probably because we are familiar with parallel views in video games and apps, our contemporary relationship to the disciplining aims of such drawing techniques and conventions is changing.

If Bjarke Ingels is a daddy, then we are in big trouble. If you don't know that, then we are in even bigger trouble.

PE That's right, exactly. The teachers who push this are teachers that have nothing much to say, so they let you continue with the images that you know already and don't disturb you. You don't have an orthodoxy, an authority, or anything to rebel against. You've got to kill Daddy. If Daddy's already been emasculated, then you're really in trouble. What I worry about, in the academic world, is that there are no daddies. If Bjarke Ingels is a daddy, then we are in big trouble. If you don't know that, then we are in even bigger trouble.

D29 What should we, as the next generation of architectural students, do to seek out or cultivate new authorities?

PE All I know is if I were you and somebody said, "What would be the first thing to do?" I would read a book. I wouldn't go look at a building; I'd read a book because reading is not the experience of the building and the experience of the building is not going to help you once you see it and say, "Wow, this is great. I'd like to do one like this." If you don't know how to do it, seeing it isn't going to help. I've been working all my life—I showed those two slides: one of Terragni's Casa del Fascio, the other of the villa in Montagnana by Palladio. I have been working to understand what I first saw in 1961 and I just published a book on Palladio.

So to me, if you said, "What is the first book to read?" I would figure out what your interest is and there are a lot of great books. First of all, I would think, before architecture I'd want to read some great literature, like *Moby Dick* or *As I Lay Dying* by Faulkner or *Remembrance of Things Past* by Proust or *Gravity's Rainbow* by Pynchon. I can run you from the eighteenth century to the twenty-first century. I know the value of reading as opposed to not reading. Because if you can't read or haven't read, you don't know the

difference between this junk in this newspaper and another newspaper. It's all the same. It's all media. I'm training people to be experts. I want experts. I'm only interested in students who desire—because why at a great university like Michigan should we have someone who is not interested in being an expert? This is a school of experts that we are training. There is a certain authority that is necessary to train experts and that authority does not exist in the media. You guys are very privileged to have that possibility to be here and therefore it is your responsibility to yourselves to make use of the fact that you have this privilege—you are here as opposed to Nebraska, Kansas, or Arkansas.

D29 Alongside representation, a push towards fabrication at Michigan has really shed a spotlight on the school in recent years and is a camp that is increasingly championed in academia, both in this institution and internationally. Is the ascent of technological presence at odds with disciplinary authority?

PE I think one of the most difficult things in the world is designing a chair. I have tried it several times. I can't do it. Fabrication would not help me. I promise you. Then I would have to understand, "Why was I designing a chair to be able to be fabricated? I mean why do we need another chair?"



Aren't there enough chairs around that are good chairs?" For me, the best chair is a chair that I can look at; not one which is comfortable but that looks comfortable. Fabrication does not help you with that at all. We had a lecturer come in from France, another one of these parametric fabrication guys. And he said: "Do you realize I could make 50,000 iterations of this chair?"

JT "And no two would be the same."

PE I said, "Oh my God. Stop at one."

D29 The right one.

PE No, no. There is no right one; they are all awful from the get-go.

JT But you have to be able to judge.

PE You have to be able to judge. If you don't put anything in the machinery, you are not going to get anything out. And therefore, what good is fabrication if you cannot design? Most people who cannot design are interested in the experience because that's the cover. "Well, you're going to have this great experience in this fabricated parametric chair." It is dumbing down of our student body. I mean, when we are all interested in shop and auto mechanics, forget it. And we are interested in the populace seeing that we can build things with fabrication tools? It's actually a way of employing more people who do not have the intelligence to design.

D29 The University of Michigan's architecture program is in a current state of transition with the search of a new dean. If fabrication is not the answer in progressing the disciplinary knowledge of students, how do you think an architectural institution should be structured?

I would have thought that an architecture school is about two things: composition and performance.

PE So education is concerned with whether you want to be a chef. You first of all have to know what a good meal is. You have to have been around and eaten a lot of different meals and understand what that means before you can do it. It does not mean you have a fabulous kitchen or the latest equipment. The fact that you asked me that question tells me how insidious the fabrication issue is.

I would have thought that an architecture school is about two things: composition and performance. In other words, as an architect you have to learn about the discipline, i.e., composition. You have to design something. Then you have to perform. You have to be able to build it, sell it to the clients, present it in a public form, etc. I believe that students ought to be interested in both—composition and performance.

JT When I entered architecture school, composition and form were unmentionable words outside of a couple of teachers. In the past few years the word seems to have lost its taboo status, but maybe that's primarily a condition of my specific colleagues and group of friends. If one's work is going to deal with issues of form and discuss things through representation then engaging problems of composition seems unavoidable. I am of the opinion that how one studies and mobilizes historical artifacts, how one identifies, revisits, and works through specific examples and problems from the past within a contemporary mindset, is largely about commenting on previous or existing models through composing and making a project.

I think students are attracted to or put off by the level of investment that is demanded of a certain systems of projection and visual communication. Many students find it a frustrating experience to not make representational images that lack immediacy, that are generally consumable. Essentially Peter's courses make a very clear point that who you're having a conversation or discussion with matters in architecture.

In his case, an architecture school is about pedagogical exercises compared to preparing someone for the profession. While images can be powerful and seductive, his analytic methods are largely in support of studying and abstracting issues concerning form, becoming more aware of architecture, breaking it down, organizing, and repositioning its internal problems. Students who constantly ask and can't wait to make renderings (perspective images) tend to irritate Peter, and they similarly consider his formal analysis course the equivalent of taking medicine.

PE What I find about Michigan students is that they are well-versed in a lot of these techniques when they come to Yale. They do very well because they have had a good education. That education has nothing to do with fabrication. Nothing. The fact that they can perform better because they have fabrication, that's fine. But composed better? I don't know. In music schools, there is a split between composition and performance; they are two different animals. If you want to be a performance animal—and I don't think that that's a problem—then you should be interested in fabrication. But if you are interested in composition, fabrication isn't going to help you.

When I was in high school, kids who were not going to college took auto mechanics and shop. College preparatory kids did not do that. I was wondering how fabrication is different from shop and auto mechanics. So I do not know what is disciplinary about fabrication. When you say, "We have become more interested in these new toys that we have," I say that is okay. But who is teaching what goes into the toy? The toys do not produce anything. That is what I was actually talking about last night when I was talking about experience, because if you are not designing the vehicle for experience, then what are you doing? In other words, you cannot predict experience and then assume that the digital, the parametric, the fabrication is going to solve your problem. I find

If I say to you right now, “Write a sonnet,” and you never have read a sonnet, you couldn’t do it. The sonnet is like producing architecture. How do you learn to do a sonnet? You read a lot of sonnets, you go to see a Shakespeare play. Then somebody says, “Shakespeare, that’s for the masses. The real sonnets are in Wordsworth.” Right? You have to have that kind of sophistication.

that there are fewer and fewer students able to really understand what it means to design in architecture.

And we are interested in the populace seeing that we can build things with fabrication tools? It’s actually a way of employing more people who do not have the intelligence to design. So what the Peter Eisenman curriculum is about is that the more you know, the better you are going to be able to design and then use the fabrication machine.

D29 How does composition begin enact a form of architectural knowledge?

PE Look at the people in the music department. There are two kinds of people in music departments: people who are going to direct orchestras, score music, etc. and the others that are performing and they use instruments. Okay, performance has to do with fabrication let’s say. In other words, the kind of instruments, how you can use it and make instruments use instrumentality in different ways. But both composers and performers listen to music and they start by understanding what it means to make music. If I say to you right now, “Write a sonnet,” and you never have read a sonnet, you couldn’t do it. The sonnet is like producing architecture. How do you learn to do a sonnet? You read a lot of sonnets, you go to see a Shakespeare play. Then somebody says, “Shakespeare, that’s for the masses. The real sonnets are in Wordsworth.” Right? You have to have that kind of sophistication.

JT So Peter, sometimes I’ve heard people say, “Oh, that’s just composition.” So how would then

within a school do we continue to say, “Hey, if you don’t know composition...”

PE Well, if you can’t defend that, you’re in trouble. If you don’t know what a sonnet is, I mean the students from Michigan, because of the nature of the school and the quality of the people that come here, have got to be able to know what a sonnet is and its equivalent in architecture. And they have to be conversant.

D29 Authority, in large, has to do with a perceived lineage of applied architectural education and knowledge. How does mentorship play a role for both of you in the sense of your current academic roles as educators?

JT One of the most interesting statements Peter said in my own education was about Piranesi’s Campo Marzio plan. He said, “The parts no longer relate to the whole.” And then we see for the next two centuries people trying to pick up those parts and saying, “Okay, what do I do with these parts now?” And I think increasingly probably one of the things that’s starting to bubble or re-emerge since the *Deconstructivist Architecture* show at MoMA—since the digital passing through—we are starting to work through potentially a new approach to a part-part relationships that might produce unfamiliar wholes.

PE The question of producing the unfamiliar whole is very interesting. That is what was promised by the digital, but it didn’t produce that because we don’t know how to write the algorithms to produce part to part relationships. All the algorithms that are written are for part to whole.

So there you are on the forefront of thinking, but you don’t know how to do the algorithms.

D29 What about Rowe’s influence on your work?

PE Colin Rowe was a great mentor. I was very privileged to have two summers with Colin, 90 days and 90 nights two times doing nothing but listening to Colin tell me about architecture. I had a great education. I had to get out from under that though. It’s a huge weight. I think Jim Sterling and I are the only two people of his students that have gotten out from under and the rest suffocate. But I think that there is no question that Colin Rowe produced an energy for me that allowed me to go—that’s what good teachers do. He was a little over-much, but a good teacher knows how to mediate between input and stepping back. I always liken it to learning how to dance. Learning and teaching and working is always dancing back and forth; it’s never (*explosive sound*).

JT I tell my students all the time that 20 years from now, if you’re still doing the same thing that I’m doing, and you’re not commenting on what I laid in the foundation, then I have done a bad job.

D29 That’s interesting that you are concerned with not only how your students perceive the past, but also how they apply it to further their own future endeavors. We spoke to Jean-Louis about his relationship to disciplinaryity. He says it is, “More than a discipline, it should perhaps be viewed as a field of enquiry, in which scholars are trying to work with different blends of methodologies.”

PE I don’t think there is any such thing as architectural research. That is why architects in schools are poor because they can’t get government funding—there’s no such thing as research. Either you perform or you compose and research is neither performance nor composition. If you can’t do either, then you are an art historian. I go to the opera and there is always somebody sitting next to me going, “Ooh, ah.” I’m thinking,



...The impact of the course changed the way the student thought about and worked on architecture. The teacher was without question the most difficult the student encountered in his formal education, it was definitely tough love. However, twelve years later, the durability of the concerns and content delivered in that course endures and is relevant to the former student's set of architectural values. The student is now a young teacher. His approach is significantly influenced by the experience in 2004. He holds a tremendous level of respect toward and is forever grateful to his teacher.

“What’s going on,” because I’m tone deaf. I like going to the opera. I read the translations, I listen, I look at the scenery. I may take a nap. But I don’t know anything about opera. That doesn’t mean I shouldn’t go. But some people who have studied music can go—really, it’s important to them, and when you read the commentary on the opera in *The New York Times*, I think to myself, “Where was I? I didn’t hear that or see that.” You read this detailed text and you realize that there is a level of expertise in everything we do.

D29 So how do you approach topics of architectural history?

PE In my book on Palladio, I write, “I am not an historian. I am an architect looking at Palladio in architectural terms.” I can’t look through the history. I am not interested in the footnotes and archival research. That’s not what I do. I interpret Palladio for my students.

As Colin Rowe once said to me, “Facts—historical truths, facts, dates—are like sacks. If you don’t fill them up with values, they won’t stand up.” So Colin used to tell the story, in 1760 or somewhere around there, the rulers of Genoa decided that they wanted to sell the island of Corsica to the English. They no longer wanted to own Corsica, which is an island next to Sardinia, in the Mediterranean

Sea. So they went to London to sell Corsica in 1760 to the Brits. The Brits said, “No, we don’t want it—the price is too high.” So on the way back to Genoa, they stopped in Paris and the Parisians said that they would buy Corsica. Now a fact of history. Little Napoleon, who was born in Corsica in 1769, had the Genoese been able to sell Corsica to the Brits little Napoleon would never have become a general because in order to get into the British military academy Sandhurst, you had to be of noble birth. Little Napoleon became a French subject, went to the *École Militaire*, became a famous general and changed the course of history. Only because the Genoese were not able to sell Corsica to the Brits. That’s what Colin Rowe calls history. So accidents that happen because certain things don’t happen. I think that is what I’m interested in: What about the accidents that happened or didn’t happen that caused things to happen in a different way? Therefore, I am not interested in historical rhetoric. The historical record doesn’t tell you anything but certain facts. But the facts are not facts; they are only the gloss on the reality. ■

Interviewers: Yezi Dai, Michal Ojrzanowski,
Gideon Schwartzman
Photography: Salam Rida

Hilary Sample

MOS Architects is a New York-based architecture studio, founded by principals Hilary Sample and Michael Meredith in 2005. Sample and Meredith teach at Columbia University and Princeton University, respectively, and their academic research occurs in parallel to the real-world constraints and contingencies of practice, informing and elevating both. Recent projects include four studio buildings for the Krabbesholm Højskole campus, the Museum of Outdoor Arts Element House visitor center, and the Lali Gurans Orphanage and Learning Center in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Their work has proven influential in both academic and professional spheres, garnering recognition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Architecture League, and the National Endowment for the Arts. Their monograph *MOS: Selected Works* was recently released by Princeton Architectural Press.

John McMorrough is an Associate Professor of Architecture at Taubman College. His research and criticism engage contemporary architectural practices. This work is motivated by the precept that contemporary architecture as a field of knowledge must constantly resituate its productive capacities, both in its competencies *vis-à-vis* the specifics of building and in the reconsideration of its conceptual legacies. He has written and reviewed the work of MOS in *MOS: Selected Works* (2016) as well as *Log* and *Domus*.

Michael Meredith

with John McMorrough



Michael Meredith and Hilary Sample of MOS Architects were joined by John McMorrough for a *Dimensions* interview before the inaugural Practice Sessions panel. We spoke to them about their “horizontal and fuzzy” body of work that includes buildings, software, films, and objects and the ways in which these mediums further disciplinary narratives through architectural make-believe.

D29 To start, John you’ve done a bit of writing on MOS’ work and we were curious about your origin story as a way of tracking the work’s development.

JM My understanding was that I was here in a purely observational capacity and I get the first question!

MM I hope they all go your way.

JM My interest in the work of MOS started with the videos. What struck me was how in these films one could see a portrayal of architecture that is both a hope and a lament. Enigmatic

statements of...something; of what I was not exactly sure. (*Pauses*) I was not sure then, and am still not completely sure now, but ever since that exposure I have “gone down the rabbit hole” as it were and I have followed MOS quite closely for the last ten years or so.

MM Yeah, we were both at Harvard around the same time. I’m sure I tried to get his attention. Architecture is also an incredibly small world. It’s not that hard to get anybody’s momentary attention. The hardest thing is just to have the work.

HS We’ve appreciated having your insight into the videos, which for us, has been one of several types of projects in the office. They exist alongside the buildings and software—sometimes complementing them, but on occasion are unrelated. In our work, I am always thinking about how one project leads to the next or is influenced by something we’ve just seen or made. I think we both share an interest in putting things

together that might not seem to quite fit. We can work as architects always have, but now act more as “alchemists.” It is about working with things that are close to us, in the Heideggerian sense. What was close to one generation is not the same today. The videos are a way to express and situate our thoughts about the state of architecture as we’ve built up a body of work.

D29 The earlier work, like the carpet or ivy, is more overtly parametric but introduces an unexpected materiality, composition, or even functionality that shakes off its usual tropes and brings it, maybe, into the realm of the decorative arts. Not thinking about it in terms of the tools that form it, but the objects themselves, your brick studies seem to carry on this trajectory. These things involve design, but yet they’re not architecture. What’s the shift there?

MM The decorative arts comment is interesting. I haven’t put those

together. The carpets were a more straightforward obsession. We simply like rugs, textiles, and welcome mats. And thinking about Semper—we were trying to do things wrong, like cast rubber carpets with no tectonics, parametrically creating a field condition of geometry, then developing a digital “mold” to obliterate the geometry. Our work is constantly trying to put things together that don’t go together.

Recently, we have shifted away from the process driven stuff, instead focusing on the oscillation between real and representational categories. This is the space of architecture. In terms of design methodologies, all of our work deals with various problems of non-design or anti-expressionism through systems, readymades, vernacular, chance operations, sameness, errors, etc. We’ll do things that are modules that seem repeatable and systematic. This play between the real and representation, is present in all of our videos, software, and “reproductions.” There is a kind of fake narrative that’s superimposed on them. The narratives are partially true. Like the Rietveld plank bench: I spent a lot of time reading about the relationship between Rietveld and Oud, then we’d discuss things and make something that maybe has nothing to do with the amount of time we spent investigating. The whole series is also a conceit to just spend time looking into things with Google and whatever. Then we write something that probably

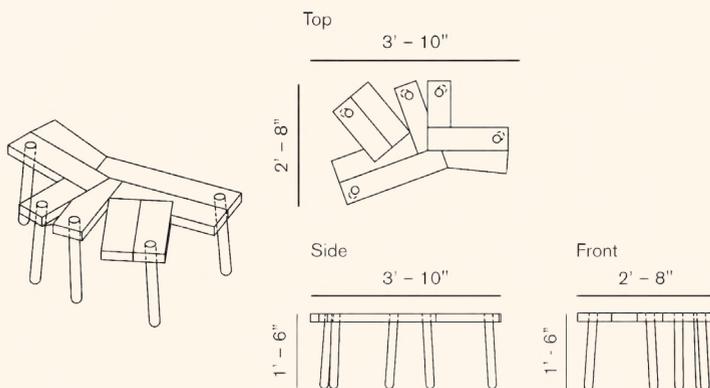
makes absolutely no sense. The “reproductions” play with history, commerce, and authorship in pretty direct ways.

HS I wanted to return to the comment on decorative arts, because like Michael I also think this is very interesting, and this reference and thinking is antithetical to how we were taught. As a practice, we’ve worked to be inclusive, so the recent work on products seemed like a way to be more immediate with making something. The making of a building takes at a minimum several years, videos are one way to shorten the time to arrive at something, and the objects we’ve been making achieve an almost immediate gratification. The products also offer a way into design that can be playful at a different scale and material than a building, which helps in thinking through other design problems. For instance, while Michael is looking at Rietveld and Oud, I’m looking at the work of and reading writings by Anni Albers. For me, her making and use of novel materials created with traditional techniques in the work of weaving has been important to think about the relationship between reality and representation and the collapse of these two things when making something new. As Michael said, the “reproductions” are about a rewriting that is more for ourselves than anyone who might buy an object.



D29 Is vagueness or the ability to mislead a way of subverting established ways of working? Anya Sirota’s studio is working on studying and designing interventions for an ordinary French longère where Corbusier and Prouvé stayed and renovated the interior. There’s no documentation of it, so there was doubt among us about whether this thing existed or not, but in doing so, it instilled a new imaginary about working in such a setting.

MM Vagueness is definitely a major interest, if you can even say something like that. We are consistently having fun with a nihilistic impulse, as part of our ongoing disciplinary interest in anti-architecture. The object narratives are usually based on a documentation that’s destroyed or you can’t find, or was hearsay. It is the act of refusal that we’re paying fun with. This is one aspect of modernism—the critical negative dialectics model. We just misuse that, and it ties into our understanding of the avant-garde. I mean you can just take up those things we were taught, but I never really believe it, like even the post-humanism of Eisenman or the neo-Avant Garde. At some basic level, they’re always deeply humanist projects, but they project a kind of post-human thing as part of their impulse or makeup even.



D29 Interestingly enough, you refer to the idea of possibility as a clearing of ground through serious-play, representation, or narrative. Are these a way of regrouping the discipline?

MM We're in an interesting moment because all narratives are unsatisfactory and incomplete in a way. And maybe they always are, but it seems like a particularly flat moment in the field. Nobody seems to believe in originality or progress. If someone came out and said I'm completely original, they'd get hit with some Google searches and links and images of something that looks similar to what they're doing. At the same time, we're in this moment of endless possibilities, endless communication, so what do you do? Is it going to be enough to just mix things up and do things? Do we need a bigger narrative even? Do we just let it dissolve? I don't know. I think someone like Jimenez [Lai] is doing a really good job with navigating the architecture world. He has figured out how to produce a kind of generational group—even though they don't go together stylistically at all—that have a kind of gravity and can start to take over the conversation. The only potential problem is that they're a group out of necessity instead of shared values. They're just sort of like, 'Listen, we need to band together because it's craziness out there.'

JM The interest in narrative today comes out of what I consider to be the utter failure of the installation-cum-fabrication project. It started off 15-20 years ago, as super-exciting: a complete formula—the nexus of full-scale realization and student labor that gave the appearance of a constructive expertise in novel forms with novel technologies (*pauses*) and there it stayed. It never really advanced or translated into another form of knowledge or production, it just settled into a genre. My own interest in the possibility of narratives is not about instrumentality per se, but in how to think about disciplinary progress in non-tautological terms, that is, where the measure of accomplishment is not just showing up, or materialization for its own

sake. This would be a possibility for disciplinary knowledge that would, in its own way, be concrete, but exist neither as a justification of technology nor of a speculative imaginary. For example, what is the use-value of work like MOS' or Jimenez's? I would say, these films and cartoons are a kind of rehearsal, but the embedded knowledge is not such that it cannot be directly translated into a piece of architecture. These are possible worlds, acting as a mediating history, or counter-factual history, in this moment where it makes a lot of sense to speak about options rather than inevitability.

D29 Is this yet another way to evade a sedimentary historical layering? Earlier in our interview series the idea of microhistory came up that for both Jean-Louis and Peter allowed a more nuanced and subjective look at architecture, albeit in different ways.

JM I don't know if I would call it a "micro-history," but I do think because the field is now so flat (but maybe always was) that an architect—and here I mean a "capital A" architect—has to be a docent of the discipline—has to construct a gravitational field around their project in order to have the sufficient density of authority to articulate meaningful propositions. This is why I keep coming back to MOS. They seem to be able to articulate a discursive field that is in its partiality still somehow complete, a little pocket universe where gable roofs and model videos are enough to constitute the appearance of a discipline. The notion of repetition today is not only the repetition of form, or maybe has nothing to do with repetitions of form, but rather the repetition of narratives that might be architecture's true construction. In cases like MOS, it's the instantiation of an architecture that legitimizes the possibility of instantiation itself, as opposed to a new ism that tries to imagine a new "cube."

MM I'd say shocking formal novelty seems like an impossibility—it is possible, but just not at this moment.

The narrative that I'm recently thinking about is how the avant-garde was replaced by the computer—this is what the parametric was doing to some degree. "Technique" was replaced with "technology." The technological project became the progressive project in the field. Technology was easy to understand as progressive because you'd say, "This is new." What it produced basically aligned perfectly with a commercial project because the role of technology is to continually produce novelty similarly to commerce. At some point I think everyone became suspect of technology as progressive, as making things better, or even interesting.

I feel very connected to other architects in my generation, with the exception of their relation to technology.

D29 What do you think is replacing it?

MM What we have now is a reaction against it. I feel very connected to other architects in my generation, with the exception of their relation to technology. Someone like Kersten Geers of OFFICE KGDVS I think is interested in similar things and references as us (especially Venturi Scott-Brown), but if you ask them about their relationship to technology they'll say, "We like beams and columns" or something. They think of technology as an material engineering problem. Generally, there is a renewed emphasis on either a sort of image production or physical material experience. Hand sketches, collages, and paintings are back. Many seem to construct a position that is almost pre-technological, probably because they didn't go through an East Coast education in the '90s.

JM At this point that is not a negation; it is just a statement of fact.

MM Yeah, I think in the American system we had a very different thing. Greg Lynn was the model for a while. We really experienced that idea of

architecture, and then it transformed. I think that's something that worries me, the current obsessions could be seen as too retro, pre-technological. It's like going back to a compositional world of painting.

Even other people who I think are very good architects within the same idiom—especially I find other Belgians like Jan de Vylder—who I think is very good—or Pascal Flammer, or Pezo von Ellrichshausen. There is a kind of amazing role of painting again. Many peoples' academic lives were spent destroying that narrative and trying to work a way out of that. The computer was a great way to deal with it, or even performance art was a way out of it. There were ways to find other modes to fight that compositional model. I feel very comfortable in a painterly world, which makes me worried about it.

JM In speaking about the various collections of objects in the lecture, you mentioned this idea of a “body of work.” This seems like a shift. In retrospect much of the work of MOS could be seen as part of a series: the films were a series, the objects were a series, now the idea of series-ness seems much more emphatic, the houses, for example, are numbered and there is a new graphic standard in the office that is unifying the representation of various projects.

What I am curious about is the moment in production of MOS where you go from what I would say is an idiosyncratic collection of objects that seemingly have no authorial sensibility and are positioned as such, to the establishment of an overt relationship between heterogeneous productions.

MM I have no problem saying that I think we should have an attitude, sensibility, or style in the office—even if that's a non-style style or something. The difference let's say between Koolhaas and Herzog and de Meuron is that Koolhaas is more consistent. There is a clear style to OMA's work, even though you wouldn't know it from the way he talks about it, while

Herzog is all over the place. It's all fantastic but I can't put it together. It's the technological project like I was talking about earlier. You see the effects of technology both as social media and the idea of material technology. Perhaps the generosity of the body of work is that you don't have to think about originality or novelty in the same way.

Working through a body of work seems like a way forward that allows us to construct our own positions as opposed to lining up one way or another.

I'm not sure how this relates, but if one morning you woke up and said, ‘I am just interested in making buildings out of rocks or found objects,’ that would be a completely stupid idea at one level, but after five years you would get somewhere interesting. Of course you'd get boxed in by that sort of attitude. I think the reasons people are afraid of a body of work is that they are thinking they'll be cornered into a certain niche market and won't be able to get out. That's the problem. Professional corporate offices would do everything to avoid a body of work, it limits your market potential. All the offices we admire have or are pursuing a body of work.

HS It is interesting to hear John's description of the work as seeming to appear idiosyncratic to a now more unified reading, presented in series. There is also the reference to the idea of working with repetition. I am interested in repetition as becoming more foundational to the work; it is how we learn and improve upon the things that we create. I don't think our end game is to be original, something Michael has already talked about, which is something I worry students try so hard to do or be. Starting at that moment seems impossible especially today with the Internet. When

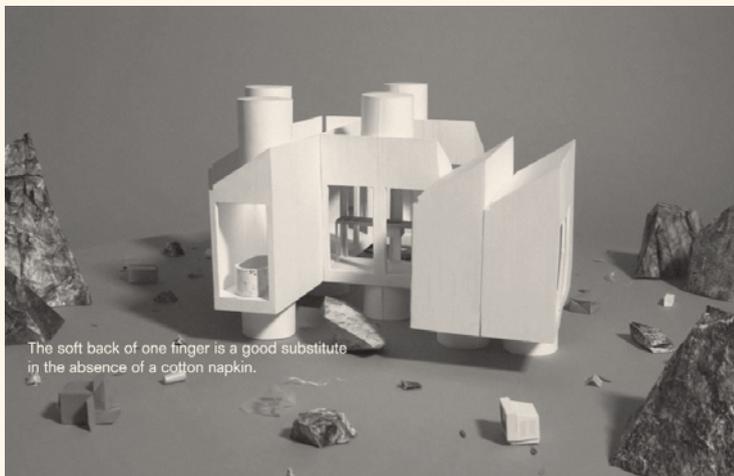
we were students there were clear dividing lines and positions to be for or against. Working through a body of work seems like a way forward that allows us to construct our own positions as opposed to lining up one way or another. For me, it has always felt so limiting to have to operate through one view or vantage.

JM This relationship between economies and technologies on one hand, and the avant-garde and the notion of progress on the other, is interesting, and perhaps changing. With the “digital turn” or however you want to characterize it, the notion of progress was characterized by formal novelty, but the expertise of MOS, while related to the ability to navigate those digital workflows, also involves what we could call non-parametric connection of content. Basically MOS has spent its time getting very good at a very particular set of relationships that don't just fall out of the machine. Take the example of building with rock, or any particular pursuit, arduously practiced, will develop your ability to do that thing well... maybe rocks are a bad example, anybody can put rocks together (*laughs*).

D29 The films show that, too. Certain recurring techniques remain, but you're able to introduce new themes and content. In the case of *The Indifferent Courier* the tone changes from romantic to day-in-the-life.

MM This problem of defining an office nowadays is a cultural problem. What Hilary and I are worried about is how do we construct or produce an office culture. So the movies help.

I'll tell you about what our sources are, if you're interested—all the movies still are trying to rework that movie *The Perfect Human* by Jørgen Leth. It's this idea of objectivity, of trying to place the human as a kind of alien intelligence. I always liked that movie, and when we start a movie, we go back and look at that again. There's a repetition in our work. Like the houses are almost one thought, but reworked multiple ways.



D29 How do you see these internal reworkings unfolding out into the world—do they aid in contracting audiences and affecting society at large?

MM Do we have a utopian project? Yes, perhaps a more immediate and micro-utopian project instead of a universalizing one. The dominant social utopian project today in schools is utopia based upon leisure—skiing, skateboarding, and rock climbing collaged into all the projects. We are after something different. I really think that as an architect, you have to believe in what you’re doing and think it’s good: that you would live in it. A lot of people have such distance to their work, and this is one thing that worries me. If you can so easily disassociate yourself from the subjects that you’re dealing with, that to me is a social problem. For us, when we did “Foreclosed,” which is a highly fictional project, I felt very comfortable about the thought of living there, honestly. Like when we were working on it, we were imagining, “What would life be like in this place?” We took that on seriously. It was an academic exercise at one level but on the other hand we thought, “This is viable actually.” Assuming what you think is good is good for others could be a potential problem because it may be laden with a whole bunch of assumptions—let’s say gender, race, class specific things—that you are imposing. But still, it’s kind of what we do and I think the

way around that is maybe the idea of the office as opposed to the individual author.

JM I was really taken by, and yet totally disagreed with, your response to the question about color in the lecture the other night, in which you stated that MOS avoids the use of color in its designs because color tends to make design appear “dated.” To paraphrase the argument, by avoiding the use of color, the architecture could better accommodate changing constituencies over time. This highlights a tension implicit within the idea of “decorum” in design, both in the sense of decorum as a kind of inoffensive politeness, but also the tangentially implied idea of decoration.

HS Regarding color, or lack of it in our work, for me this has more to do with producing a generic architecture, once color is included it becomes much harder to achieve that reading. I think also as we’ve tried to bring out the colorful environment and interface of working within the computer that is not black and white, the drawings, especially the screenshots, emerged as a form of architecture through representation. We’ve been working on these drawings for a few years, and they are put together in the new book. One thing for me that I have struggled with is the unrealistic expectation that the building should look exactly like a model or drawing—this sense of failure if the building didn’t look

identical to a model or rendering. Each form of making should be its own creative act that has its own life. I would hope that there is another layer of reality of life that emerges in the final work of art or architecture. I can see where color could certainly be a place to play with this relationship. Having it overtake the work is the thing I want to avoid. I mean, I think it is pretty evident that we are playing with certain histories of work and specific generational references, which have certain color associations like neon, but I’m not sure how generic and neon could co-exist.

MM It’s a fair criticism, maybe we will get around to it. We have such strong temporary relationships with color. We love color in images, objects, decor, furniture, etc.—but for our built work the color is primarily in the material not applied as a paint. Is that too Modernist? For instance, if you asked me ten years ago what the worst color in the world was I would have said teal, and if you asked me two years ago what the best color in the world was I would have said teal. ■

Interviewers: Michal Ojrzanowski, Gideon Schwartzman
Drawings: Courtesy of MOS Architects
Photography: Salam Rida
Practice Sessions Organizers:
 Ellie Abrons, Adam Fure, Andrew Holder,
 funded by the Third Century Initiative Grant



Thesis

Thesis, the final design studio of the Master of Architecture program at Taubman College, is a studio wherein students develop their thesis research and design interests towards a thorough and complete spatial project, utilizing a wide range of skills. These skills, deployed individually and in groups, depending on the thesis section, include researching, analyzing, theorizing, designing, drawing, and presenting a cohesive project at the end of an academic year's worth of investigation.

TOP HONORS FOR 2015

Aeriform Ecologies, Jennifer Ng

AL-10XX: ReCAST, Andrew Delle Bovi · Grant Herron · Mark Knutson · John Larmor · Shan Sutherland

Metastatic Metropolis, Alexandra Chen

Nokomis One, Caitlin Cashner · Steve Sarver · Daniel Tish

Noun Things, Brian Barber · Joseph Donelko Jr.

The Yada-Yada, Yojairo Lomeli

Dimensions 29 showcases nine projects from a diverse pool of thesis submissions, representing the varied methodologies and design philosophies that come into play in this final work of the Master of Architecture program. Thesis offers the opportunity to develop individual interests, ones that often continue to play out over the course of the student's career, giving them the ability to start working on what they see as critical to the discipline today.

FEATURED PROJECTS

The Chantespeak: A Nonsensical Ballad for Architecture, Andy Lin

Metastatic Metropolis, Alexandra Chen

Pneumatic Futures, Robyn Wolochow

Casting Doubt: A Matter of Perception, Soo Hyuk Choi · Kevin Gurtowsky · Yunzhi Ou

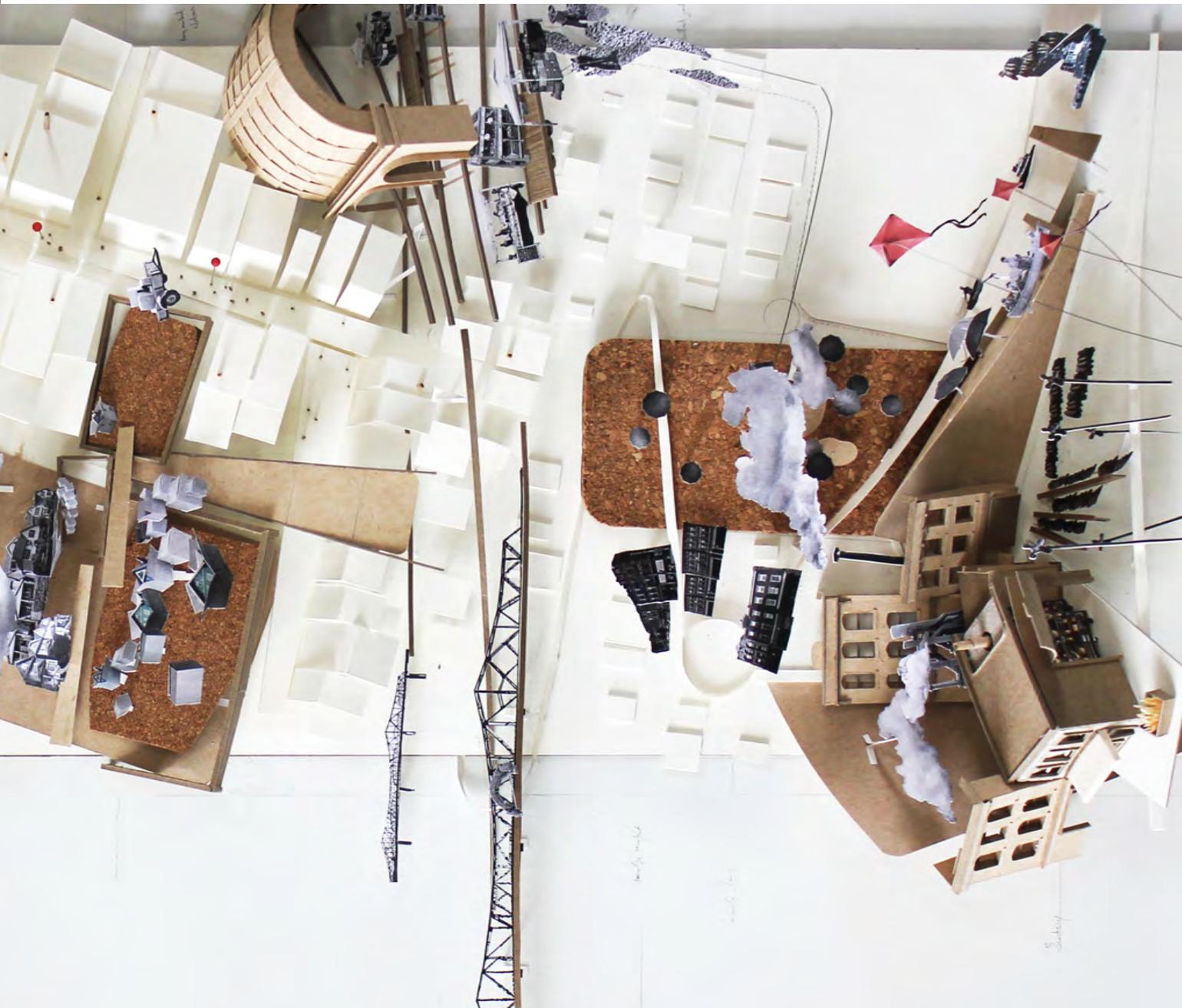
Aeriform Ecologies, Jennifer Ng

A Monument in Two Dimensions, Michelangelo Latona

Fold Out Couch: Somewhere Between a Couch and a Space Frame, Rebecca Braun · Tyler Smith

Noun Things, Brian Barber · Joseph Donelko Jr.

The Yada-Yada, Yojairo Lomeli





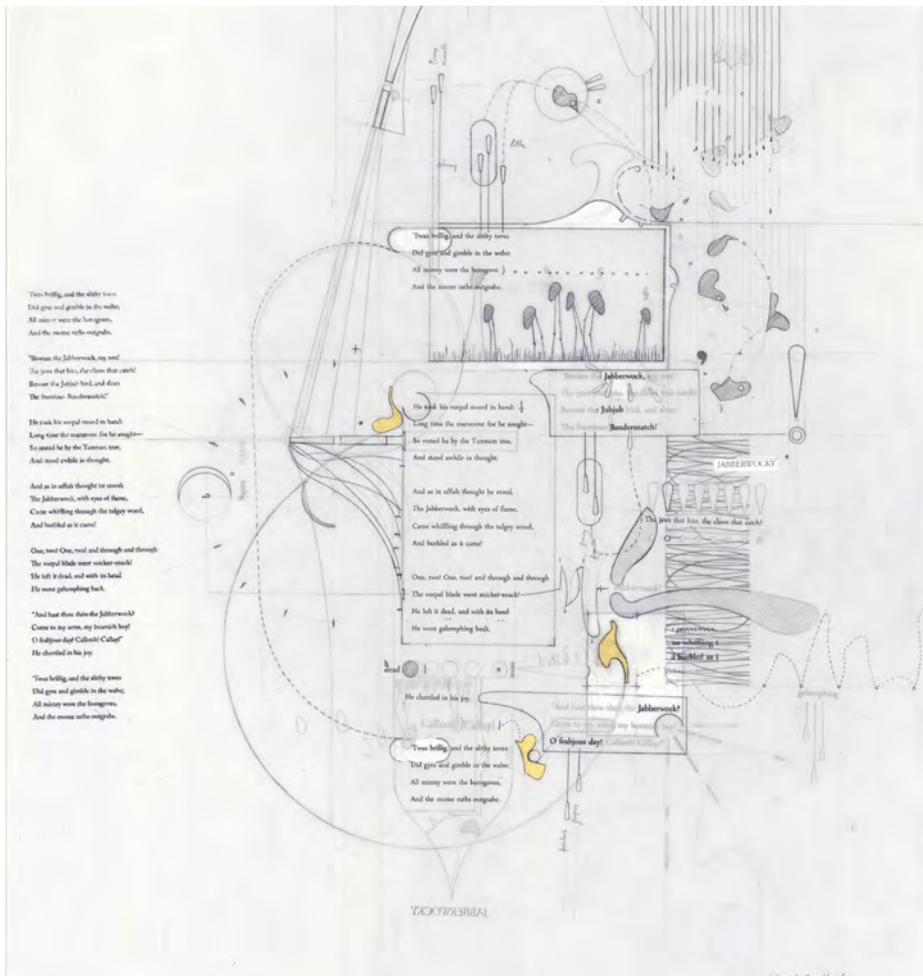
The Chantespeak

There is much joy found within the ballads of nonsense. Yet, a plausible tone of what is often associated to only a brief babble gestures towards a revised thought on architecture. From the logic, words, and subjects of literary nonsense, an architecture of nonsensical means finds a certain familiarity comprised of blanks, meaning very much to nothing and very much of everything. Observations of such “belly-up” semantics and morphologies thus reveal a framework joyously subverting and comforting existing, well-established grounds, or, in the case of literary nonsense, language. Words mean other things, behave like another, or perhaps borrow from another, yet all seem to still be in working order. Which then brings us to acknowledge “the negative prefix in ‘nonsense’ [as] the mark of a process not merely of denial.”¹ A framework seen as thoughtfully composed and highly structured, though by contradiction, is in a clear association to the genre of nonsense. However, if we attempt to consider a kind of nonsensically infused

spatial content, it finds difficulty in manifesting itself into a pithy image through only conventional means of design. Other tools are needed, tools which lend themselves more to a riddle rather than a thorough evaluation. Out of nonsense a variety of relational mechanics and word plays are stirred into motion—*homophony*, *word splitting*, *blend words*, *grammatical analogies*, *puns*, *malapropisms*, and *slippages*—becoming items of influence in driving a particular range of work. As a blurb of nonsense in a sentence puts into play an unlikely set of circumstances, the minor twists of phonetics and functions prompt proper deviations, expanding the scope of an otherwise brief exchange. A bit standoffish at first glance, these nonsensical mechanics provide an ambivalent sense towards a kind of complexity, presenting an unfamiliar familiarity. It is a flexible wiring of morphology and semantics, fit with a dash of sly pragmatism right under our noses. Worn backwards, stuttering, not where you left it,

ANDY LIN

A Nonsensical Ballad for Architecture



JABBERWOCKY ANNOTATED

"It seems very pretty but it's rather hard to understand!... Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas—only I don't know exactly what they are! However, somebody killed something: that's clear at any rate—"

—Through the Looking-Glass, and what Alice Found There, Lewis Carroll 1871

The drawing is a working adaptation of the words of the poem Jabberwocky (1871, Carroll) transcribed visually in relation to the kinds of work the words suggest as they construct the tone and sensibility of the text. It is a study of how to visually represent a word of no meaning while doing something of even less meaning. Therefore, as words of nonsense literature appear to evoke linguistic agreements, with an oddly understandable syntax, the drawing examines how words bereft of specified definition are translated into parallel visual agreements. Sifting through the word by methods of notation and superimposed sequencing, marks begin to identify one from another or its base tendencies and workings. Read in tandem with the poem like medieval illuminated manuscripts, the illustrations bloom according to the "pungency" of coined words (slyth toves, snicker-snack, galumphing) in producing a number of portmanteau-ish actions and processes.

work is strictly speaking of a design methodology and an architecture purely analogical to those references. Therefore what begins in literary nonsense is inscribed into translations of operable specifics, relational implications, or a reinstated shared framework. They are to be more of a continued utterance to contemporary design methodologies—as opposed a reaction against the austere—plowing a path through peculiar considerations. An architecture of nonsensical qualities, whatever it may become, yields an accessible complexity, one of tonality and spunk, the way Lewis Carroll's *frabjous day* renders a joyful bewilderment. It explores the institution of word plays and the lingering effect through a spatial application of sorts of identified nonsensical devices and tropes. When reading an excerpt of nonsense, a body of rather delightfully refreshing qualities surfaces including mistakable likenesses, a polyphony of parts, improvisations, odd yet sustainable deviations of words, and expressive tones of meaningless neologisms, just to name a few.

With these notes in mind, *how does nonsense help inform a new approach towards existing spatialities and introduce a kind of flexibility within architectural thought?* This is a steady interest emerging as the work unfolds. The work often justifies the commonplace element, though in its somewhat inferred banality it will always be the context for anything which supersedes it. In a broader sense, I seek to develop not only an architecture akin to the texts and whimsy of nonsense, but simply reintroduce what is already present. When reintroduced, it comes inflected with a hint of tonal expressions, as Ella Fitzgerald would do as she scats along with *How High the Moon*. With the plays and licks of nonsense literature propping themselves up against the well-known, there is a certain legibility within such complexity. Understood, yet not entirely certain, it allows for a level accessibility into the tune, recognizing tonal and relational cues by a certain subject.

but no different than anything else around. We often double-take upon hearing such nonsense, yet it is this ambiguity and tension as medium which is welcomed in literature, and equally present in architecture as noted by Venturi's *Complexity and Contradiction*. There is absolutely room for an interpretation gone amuck to be celebrated, bearing and presenting spatial promise that is often overlooked, and yet a word play, or another characteristic of nonsense, is fairly uncommon in being considered a logical progression of a conversation. It endures through the absurdities, both vivid and eccentric, yet it forms a compliant whole. It touches on being a parody of sorts—referential to others, while simultaneously making room to become a genre itself.

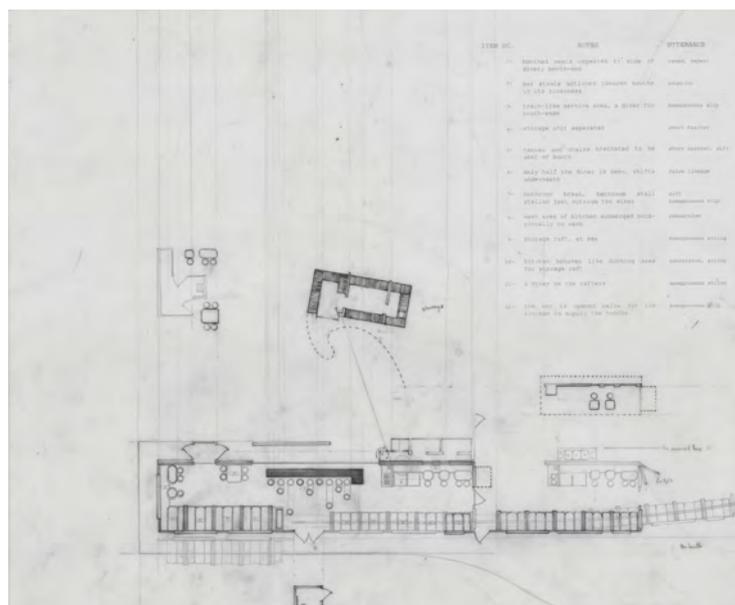
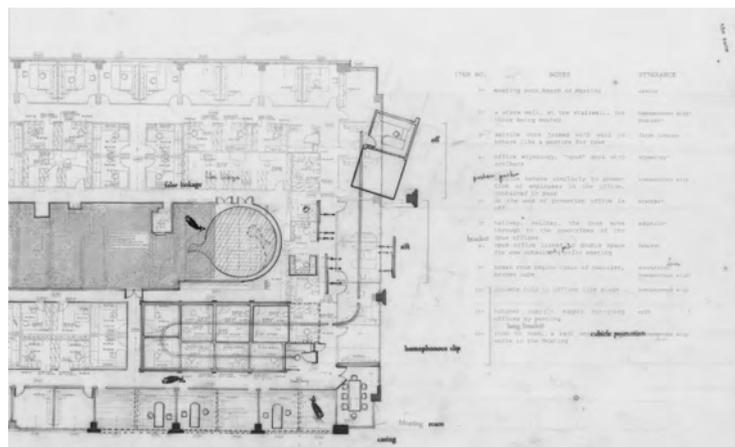
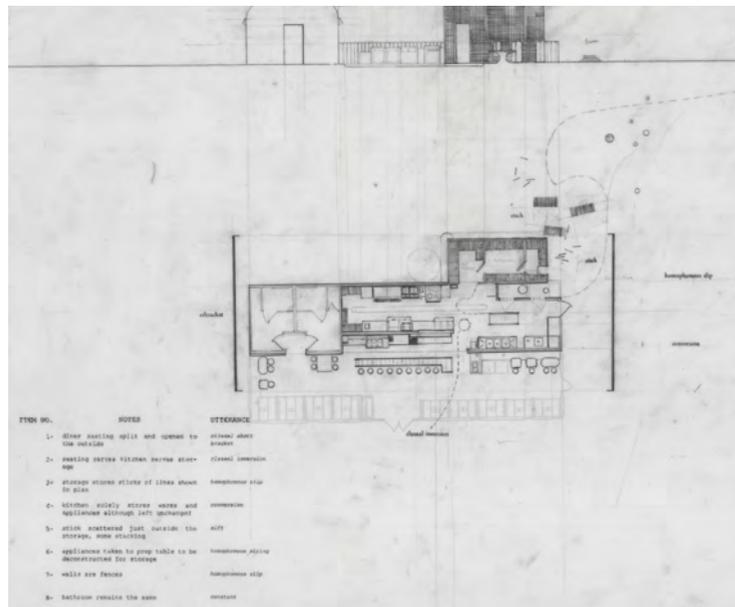
Though referring heavily to topics of linguistics and literature, the

Perhaps we underestimate our ability to make sense of nonsense, but in fact we do it quite well—we are susceptible in finding odd relationships between things as an appropriate means of expression. Which brings in joy—the joy in which nonsense brings, the joy of taking part in nonsense, the joy of moving from such nonsense. Although much of the initial work focuses on the mechanics of word plays, and in many instances tonal properties follow mechanics, they do not discount the value of the joy it prompts. Though not quantifiable, the sense of joy within the architectural process expands its conceptual breadth and what we choose to include in the work, simply by not discrediting that which we enjoy or find humorously apt. With a joyous hurrah at its forefront, a framework set to allow slippages and unconventional relationships broadens the aspects and mediums of architecture into an auxiliary spatial vocabulary. This break from the “double-take upon hearing such nonsense” now allows us to revisit a lively tune in all its arrangements. Adopted by a cosmos which slightly went awry, that is nonsense, this brief collection of drawings, constructs, and other findings perhaps will provide a plausible babble to such a framework, yet more importantly, like many works of nonsense, hopes to welcome a sense of pure joy into the process of architectural thought. ■

1. Lecercle, Jean-Jacques. *Philosophy of Nonsense*. Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 1994.

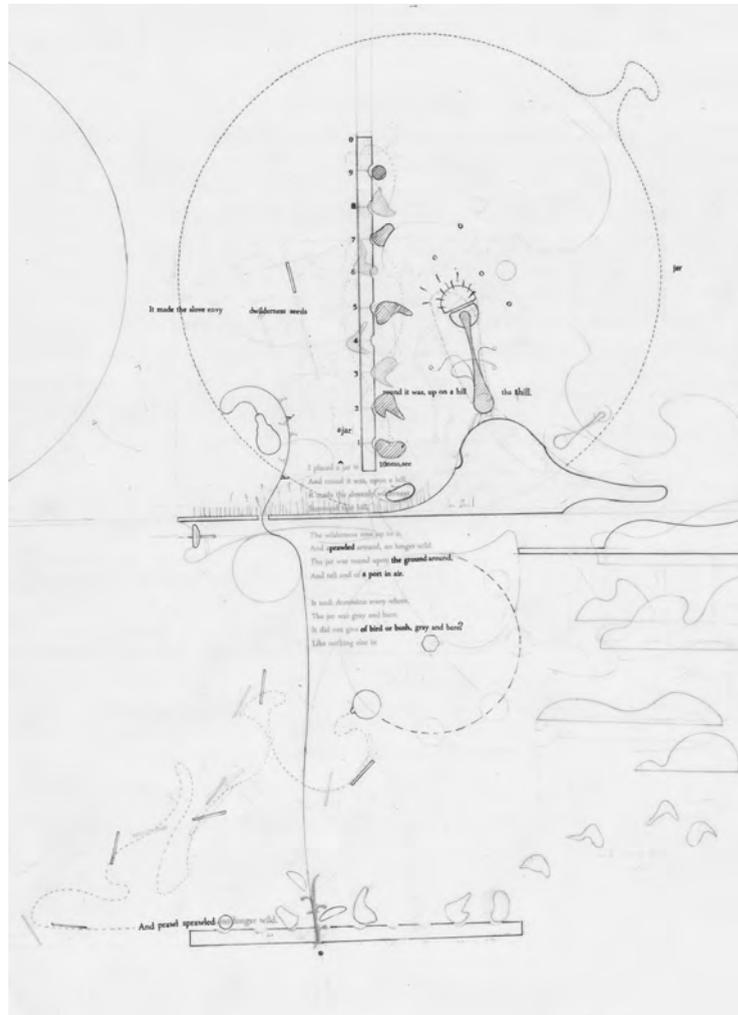
PLAN-ISH DEVIATIONS

Putting into play nonsensical devices as spatial operations, this series of plan-ish drawings restates the original structure yet hints towards a sort of parody. They do not mock however, instead they are characterized more by the refracted state of the parody to the original. Parts are recognizably doing their proper tasks though finding themselves in another context. With reasonable, complete exploitation of language and space the drawing classifies and tags territories of each mechanic at work to reconstructing an order of things and ground for a framework for nonsense. Backwards in logic and non-linear to say the least, the suggested deviations teeter between a lack and excess structure which, funny enough, ostensibly “checks out.”



EXERCISE NO.1 AND NO.2

This pair of exercises aim to work through the fragility and plasticity of words, or 'word-making', through a set of operations under the influence of word plays. Two poems were used, *Anecdote of the Jar* by Wallace Stevens and *A Late Walk* by Robert Frost, as initial studies in solidifying the nonsensical devices at play. Slippages of the text, morphologically and phonetically, reconsiders a word's structural integrity, shifting the weight in which words produce the tone of the poem. Each drawing produces odd translations where words take on other roles, perhaps emphasizing the improvisational tendencies of language, however still retains its familiarity to the original poem. Word plays allow for a continual succession of possibilities to emerge and provide for a finer sense on the work of words.



Anecdote of the Jar

I placed a jar in Tennessee,
And round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.
The jar was round upon the ground
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion every where.
The jar was gray and bare.
It did not give of bird or bush,
Like nothing else in Tennessee.

Wallace Stevens

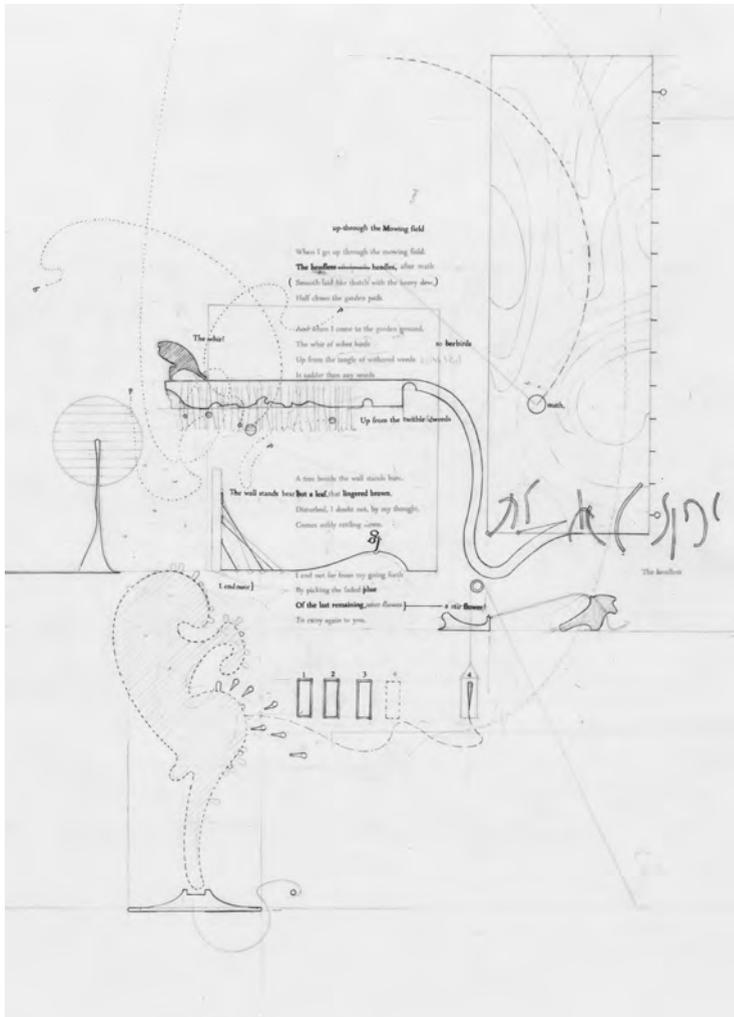
Anecdote of the Jar'

Placed ajar in 10-ness, seeds
Prawled around and round it was.
And up on a hill, the thill
Made the slove envy the dwilderness seeds

The wilderness roser round that hill
up to wit and tall.
The jar was round, upon a pond
On the groundaround.

Of a port in air it took dominion on
Every where, gray and bare.
But the jar did not give of birded bush.
And like nothing else prawl sprawled,
no longer wile.

a deviation



A Late Walk

When I go up through the mowing field,
 The headless aftermath,
 Smooth-laid like thatch with the heavy dew,
 Half closes the garden path.

And when I come to the garden ground,
 The whirl of sober birds
 Up from the tangle of withered weeds
 Is sadder than any words

A tree beside the wall stands bare,
 But a leaf that lingered brown,
 Disturbed, I doubt not, by my thought,
 Comes softly rattling down.

I end not far from my going forth
 By picking the faded blue
 Of the last remaining aster flower
 To carry again to you.

Robert Frost

A Late Walk'

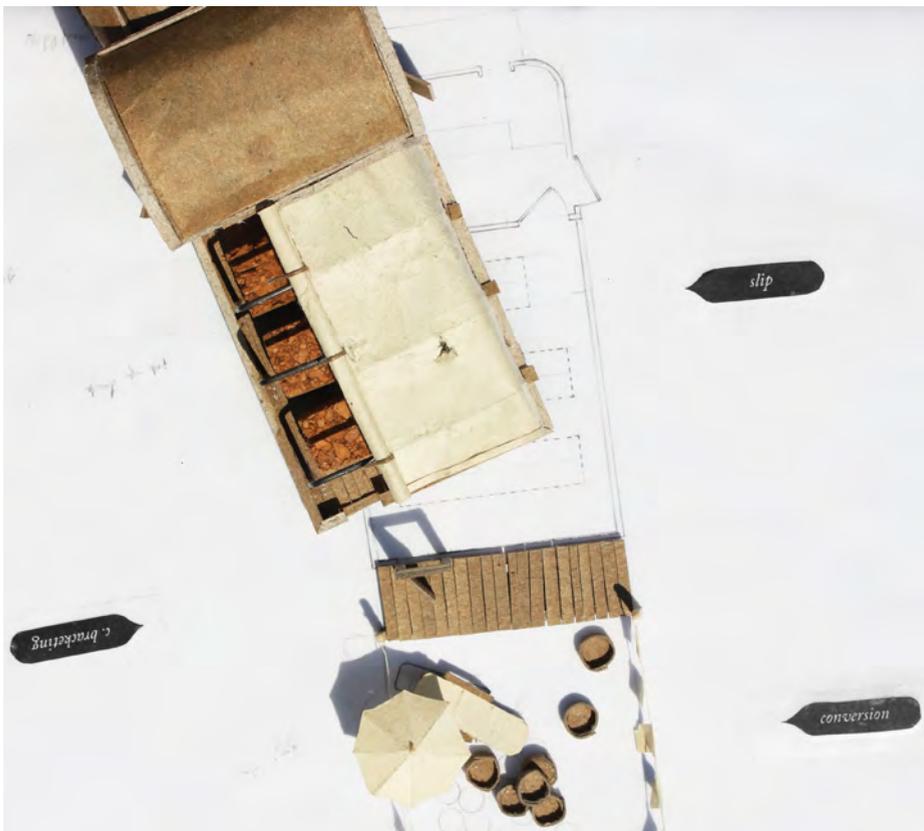
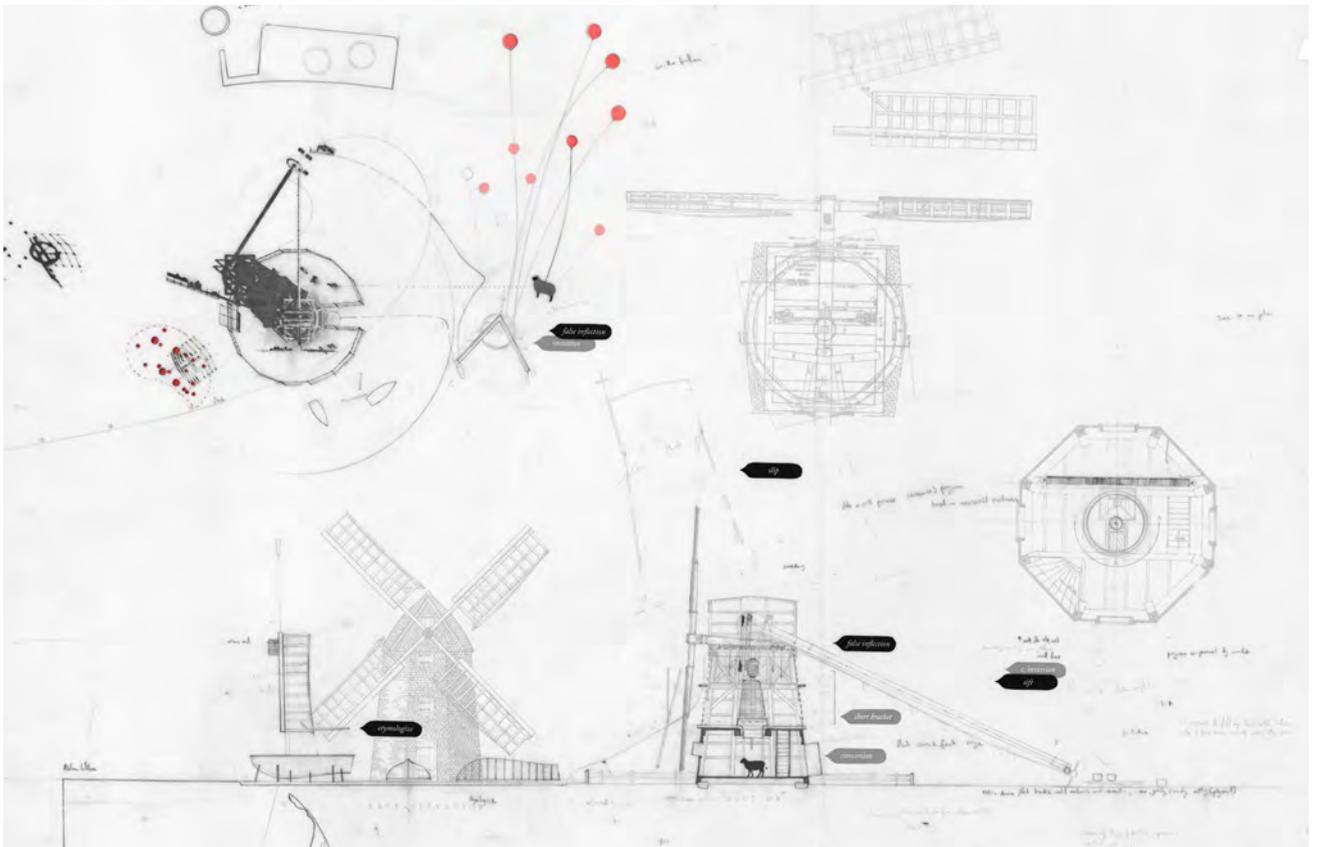
When I go, up-through the Mowing Field
 The headless (smooth-laid like thatch with heavy dew)
 Headless after math then
 Half-closes the garden path.

When I come to the garden ground,
 The Whir!
 So birbs up from the twithled weeds
 Is sadder than any words.

With a tree beside, the wall-stands bear
 But a leaf, that lingered brown.
 Thotted by my knot, I doubt disturbed,
 When comes the softly rattling down.

I endnote
 (far from my geoving fourth)
 By picking the faded blue
 Of the last remaining, a stir flower!
 Two carriages again to you.

a deviation



A pair of quick nonsense, operating on isolated and limited operations. Each structure works on other qualities of affecting and creating space, considering the unreliable, procession of residual events, and occupying characters and their tasks. Perhaps not part of the building, all of those mentioned are worthy in constructing the semantic language of the space.

GENERAL STORE

A store for selling the mill's smocks, although lined as a fence around the empty bushels. With a reclaimed house used as a general store, the goods are loaded onto its bed from the docks and moved to selling sites. Meanwhile, the homeowner/vendor rests at the site awaiting the house's return. With smocks as a consistent product, the store brings about outside goods.



SHEARERS SHED

The shed constructs work on the mechanics of slippages in language and space with a specific geographical and cultural influences, in this case the town of Nantucket. Selected nonsensical devices operate on an existing mill, deriving an alternative, yet relative, use or spatial configuration. Using homophonous slips primarily through analogous means, the resultant shed has a certain likeness to a conventional mill yet serves a distantly related purpose, milling wool for smocks. With a reframed spatial presence and influence, through a semantic inversion, mechanics appear not so straight forward but entirely legible. Like nonsense neologisms, the shearing shed works as study in examining the ambivalence of meaning and action in nonsensical words.

Workings of the mill begin at ground floor, extracting wool from sheep by the shearing shed. The wool the gathers in on a spool to be woven together in sheets for sewing smocks (top level).

BOAT BUILDER'S HOUSE

The shed's boathouse, undergoing similar nonsensical operations. With a tented structure and rolled interior floorboards the boathouse is capable of adjusting to fluctuating sea levels. To keep the boat builder nearby his corked dwelling peeks into the boathouse, never submerged. Bobbing nearby is the slurred boat dock, floating and fleeing.



A LIMERICK REVIVAL

"The Limerick" is a working document which sought to develop each architectural character as well as the relationships between them within the larger scaled urban scheme. The spatial characters, defined by nonsensical devices explored in Nantucket constructs, speculate on the generative nature of a collection nonsense architecture and its expression as a sort of traveling, revitalizing event.

Structures, perhaps finding its closest relative to a repurposed defunct building, involve a polyphony of uses and processes in a perpetual-like motion. Both specific and peripheral components of the plan are called out designed in tandem, ranging from a single window detail to an implemented housing type. This hybridized collage uses the character's orientation and placement on the drawing to suggest spatial qualities and functions, elaborated in the Annotated drawing. The document is thus linked to interests in exploring alternative methods of design and drawing through assemblage and collage, producing a prudent and precise, yet swift, process of working.





1. BALLAST GARDEN

- a tranquil commuter path from avenue to avenue
- meditative work days
- garden tenders in the morning and deep thinkers in the afternoon

2. TRAINKET

- a traveling market, permanently local
- revitalizing walkable zones and events for public gathering
- recycled steel from railroad track removal bays

3. GUTTER MAIL

- alternative mail deliveries
- rainwater canals over and under roadside features

4. THE BRICKERY

- freshly baked neighborhood goods and smells
- manufactures breaded and aromatic masonry materials—outdoor radiant clothes dryer

5. KITED CANOPY

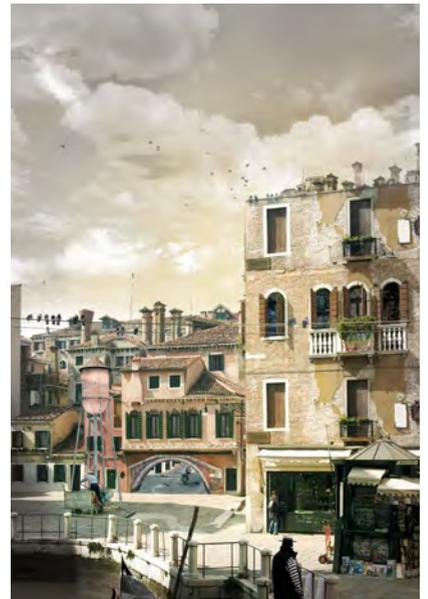
- a public structure everyone can participate in a skyfeature
- an unreliable shading device

6. UMBRELLA PARK

- a park enjoyed in the rain
- shaded colored canopies for frequent park goers
- puddle makers

7. BOXIN FILLS

- portable neighborhoods
- paired housing and workplace
- sodded hedges to climb for scenic views



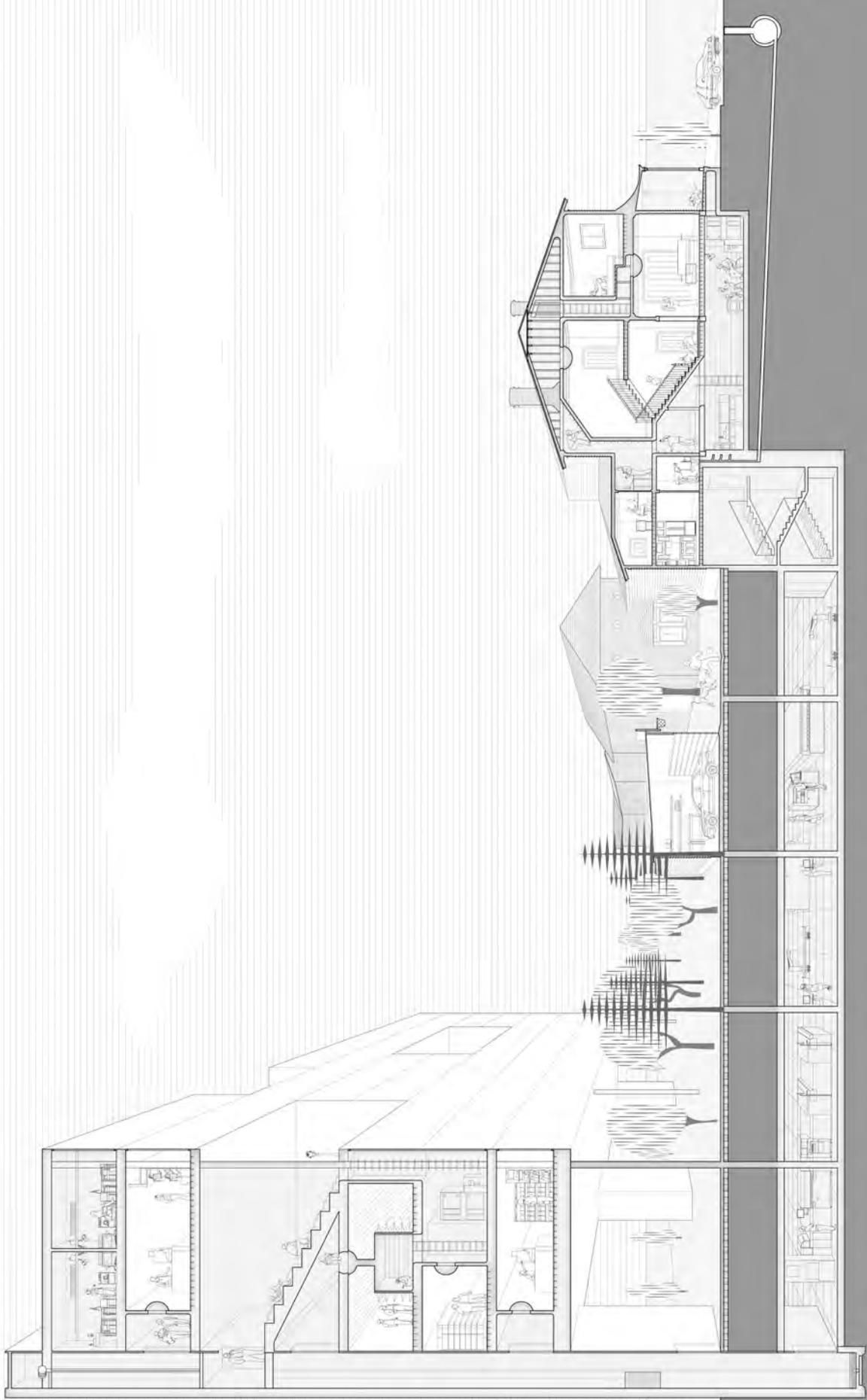


A LIMERICK REVIVAL

Using the taxonomy of nonsensical devices, notated by the red balloons, to design each character, the scrolled drawing places them within the urban context and its provided public amenities. With varying densities, the presence of the limerick changes in scale although still ingrained within existing structures.

A lingering effect of the limerick, once passed. Populating a scene, propositions of nonsense operate on all things small and large to develop augmented programs and architecture. Visualized, without abstraction, these portraits offers a plain perspective on nonsense as very much an ordinary palette, though one would find it (im)properly painted. From janitorial gondoliers to sandwich order façades, the devices of literary nonsense speculate on other means of expanding known spatialities with not just our conventional tools.

Metastatic



Metastatic Metropolis seeks to critically re-stage the interfaces between the hospital and the city to create new situations and synergies between the participating systems.

The Cleveland Clinic is a major stakeholder with significant political and spatial influence in the city's development. Attracting patients from all over the world, the hospital brings in an excess of \$10 billion in economic activity in Ohio and is the city's largest private employer. It has been hailed as a future savior, yet Cleveland Clinic's current pattern of habitation is a closed system that does not engage in improvement of the city. Rather, it opportunistically perpetuates blight and decline. Cleveland Clinic's visual catalogue of buildings, charged voids, and articulated links spread outward, capitalizing on the economies of the mid-rise landscape. The spatial agency of the clinic and its implicit systems of order are as authoritative as the

institution's supposed primary mission to care for the body.

The totalizing presence of the institution is easily read as a realization of radical futurism projects. The

167-acre main campus can both absorb and project narratives as wide-ranging as that of modernist hygiene, mat urbanism, company towns, the Panopticon, and New Babylon. The proposed project metastasizes the trajectory of the Cleveland Clinic.

As a disease might spread from one territory to another, the expansion of the hospital insinuates itself into novel and bizarre situations. Surgical interventions take advantage of on-the-ground phenomena and amplify them toward projective futures, yielding a fabric that delineates environments of risk, surveillance, and technology—making visible and grounding the metabolisms that underwrite its pervasive growth. Re-reading radicalisms back into the

project serves to gain new insights, both into the visionary projects themselves and the future of the medical industry.

Three interventions take advantage of on-the-ground phenomena and amplify them toward a projective future. "Live" investigates how historically preserved neighborhoods might become a laboratory testing bed and landscape of surveillance.

"Play" takes on the reinvigoration of deteriorating networks and infrastructures shared by the clinic and the city. "Reap" asks how a shrinking city could re-envision its aging

population and what the clinic may have to contribute. These speculative growth strategies start to mitigate the clinic's rampant parasitism without compromising its unabashed self-interest. In other words, this project aims to re-situate the pathogenic intrusion of the institution within a more symbiotic relationship.

Metropolis

ALEXANDRA CHEN

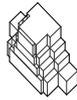
ANALYSIS

BLDG

Buildings house the main programs of the clinic, capitalizing on mid-rise economies.



B1



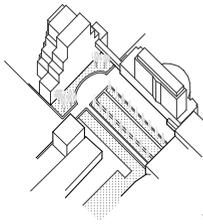
B2



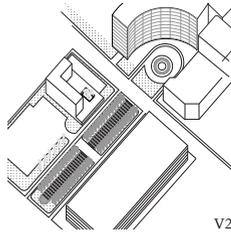
B3

VOID

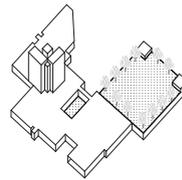
VOIDS maintain daylight and ventilation in the name of hygiene, providing spatial rhythms that generate the ground of the urban fabric.



V1



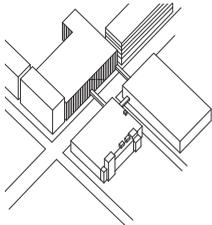
V2



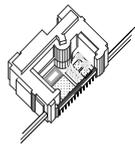
V3

LINK

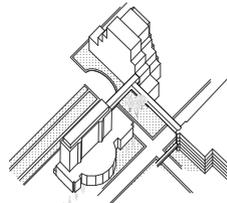
Links isolate populations, protect them from external forces and maintain efficiency, figurally networking buildings through their explicit articulation.



L1



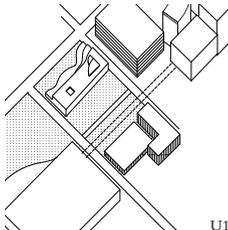
L2



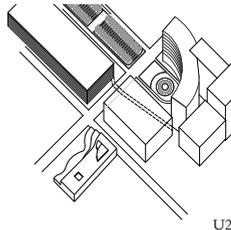
L3

UNDR

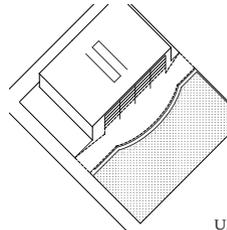
Underground spaces underwrite the activity on the surface, the unseen world logistically manages all metabolisms of the system.



U1



U2

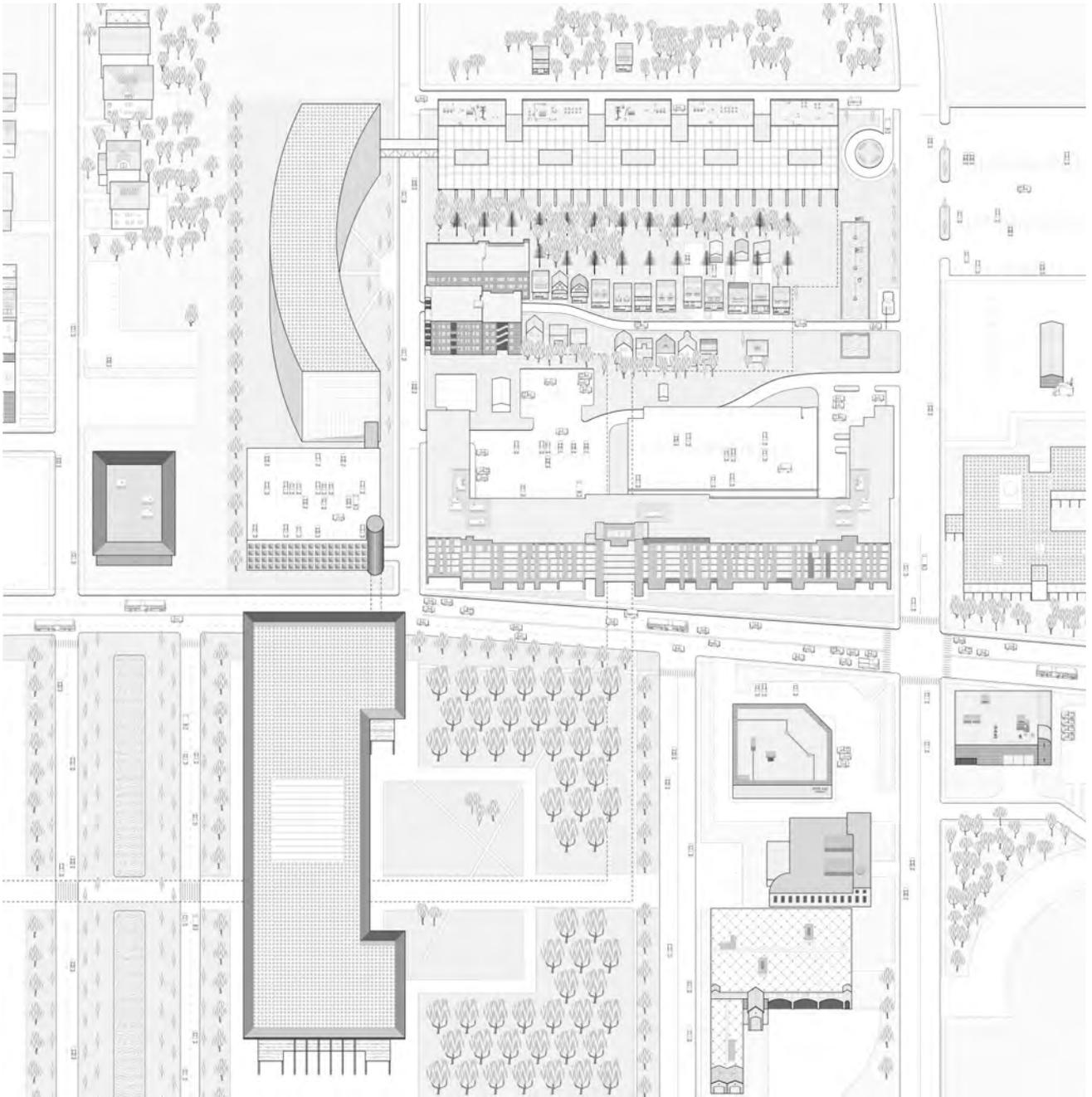


U3

LIVE

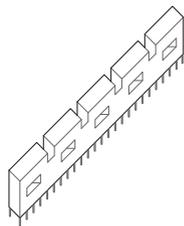
Part historic neighborhood, part laboratory for long-term medical research, the historic neighborhood of Upper Chester acts as a testing ground for cohort observation, surveillance studies, data collection, and experimental interventions in situ. Hough is a statistically-planned area adjacent to the Cleveland Clinic with a median income 20% less than the rest of the city and a life expectancy 20 years shorter than nearby neighborhoods. It features many historic landmarks, and thus significant parcels are immune to the clinic's usual raze and rebuild strategy.

Seeking to opportunistically capitalize on unique situations brought about by its spread, the hospital's research facilities insinuate themselves into the domestic realm. Through direct and indirect observation, this expansion negotiates the boundaries between private residence, scientific knowledge, and the public good. The interlaced dwelling and research programs each have distinct physical attributes; while research spaces require covert and unrestricted access, the residential space much also maintain a pretense of normalcy so as not to taint the robust data collection. The push and pull of the two parties, each perversely aware of each other, might serve as a pilot program on the part of the clinic that ultimately views the urban realm as a laboratory for data collection and experimentation.



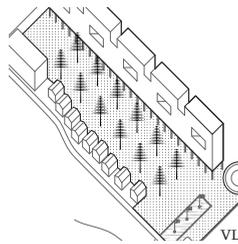
PROGNOSIS

Campus expansion conforms to the Building-Void-Link-Underground language already in use by the institution.



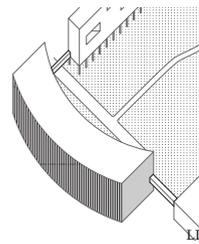
Surveillance Center
9700 Woodward Avenue

BL



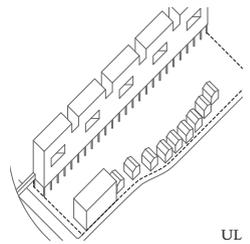
Backyards Woodward
to Newton

VL



Parking
E. 97th Street and Newton

KL



Basement
Newton Avenue

UL



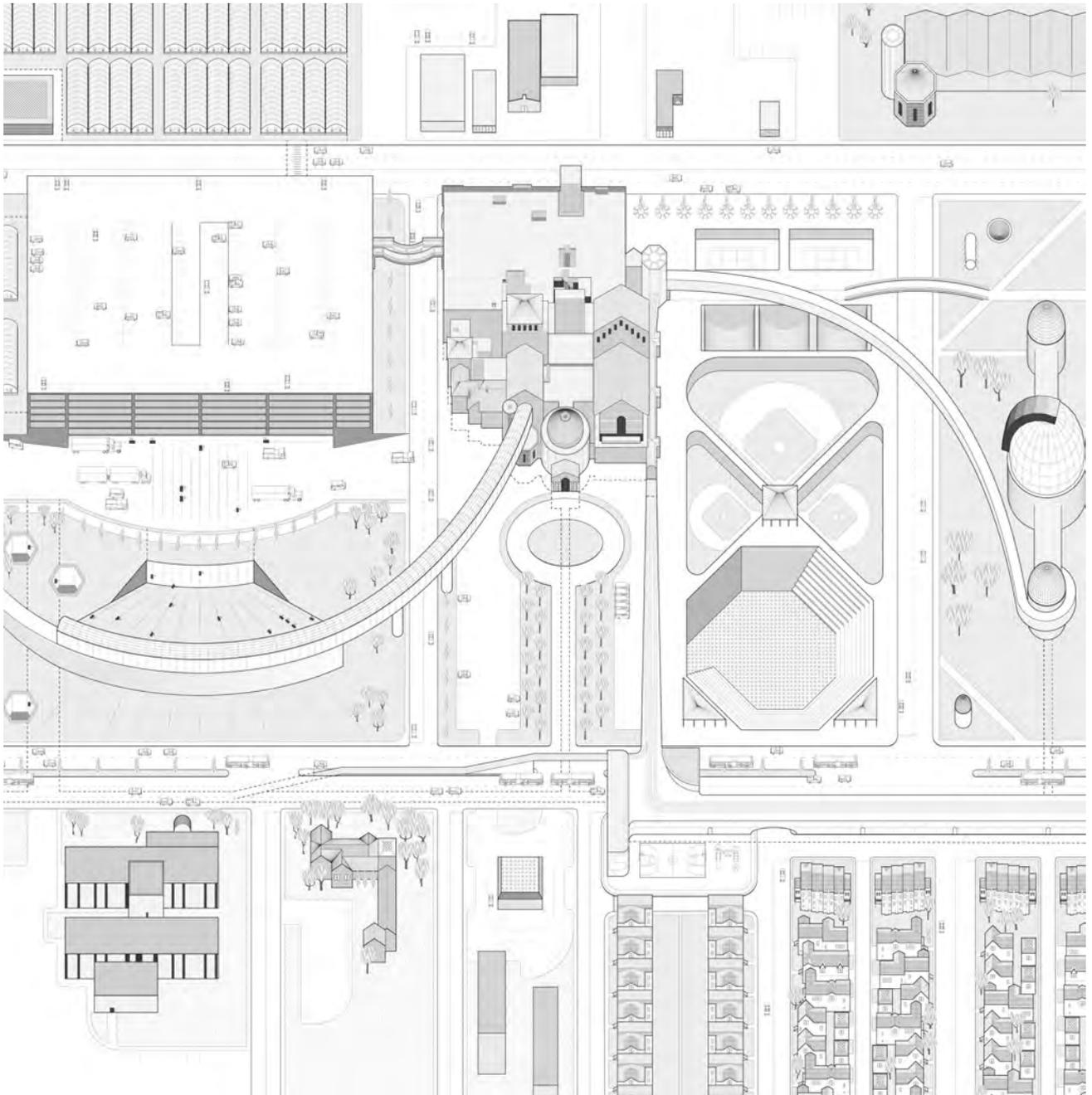
PLAY

Having recently acquired the New Cleveland Playhouse, the clinic's rehabilitation of the neighborhood creates a theater of transit—elucidating the role of its automated vehicles, weaving into civic transit systems, and tapping into the recreation and health of clinic employees and civilians alike.

Euclid Avenue is the major thoroughfare that connects downtown Cleveland to University Circle and the Cleveland Clinic, priming the institution for a novel interface that renders visible its metabolisms.

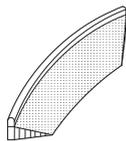
In addition, the nearby Woodhaven Townhomes gated community,

existing urban transit lines, and the hospital's logistics center are all located in the vicinity. Through a precise comprehension and integration of systems intrinsic and extrinsic to the hospital, the arts and recreation district generates a synthetic landscape of differentiated orders. By reorganizing these flows, topographies are selectively manipulated to promote physical salubrity, negotiate logistical circuits, and reimagine the role of extant autonomous robots. Traffic networks of private vehicles and public transit are also engaged.



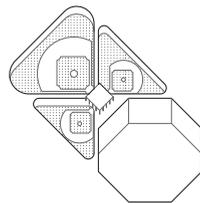
SYMBIOSIS

Euclid Avenue's civic transit hub boasts public amenities including a pool, playground, and restaurants. A prescribed 1.0 mile tracks promote the salubrity of residents and visitors alike. An additional 10,000 feet of infrared track guide unmanned robotic vehicles.



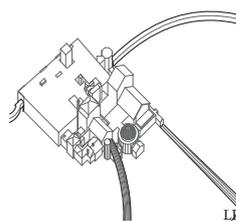
Logistics Arena
Euclid at E. 88th Street

BP



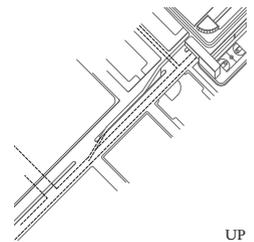
Parks and Recreation
E. 83rd and Euclid

VP



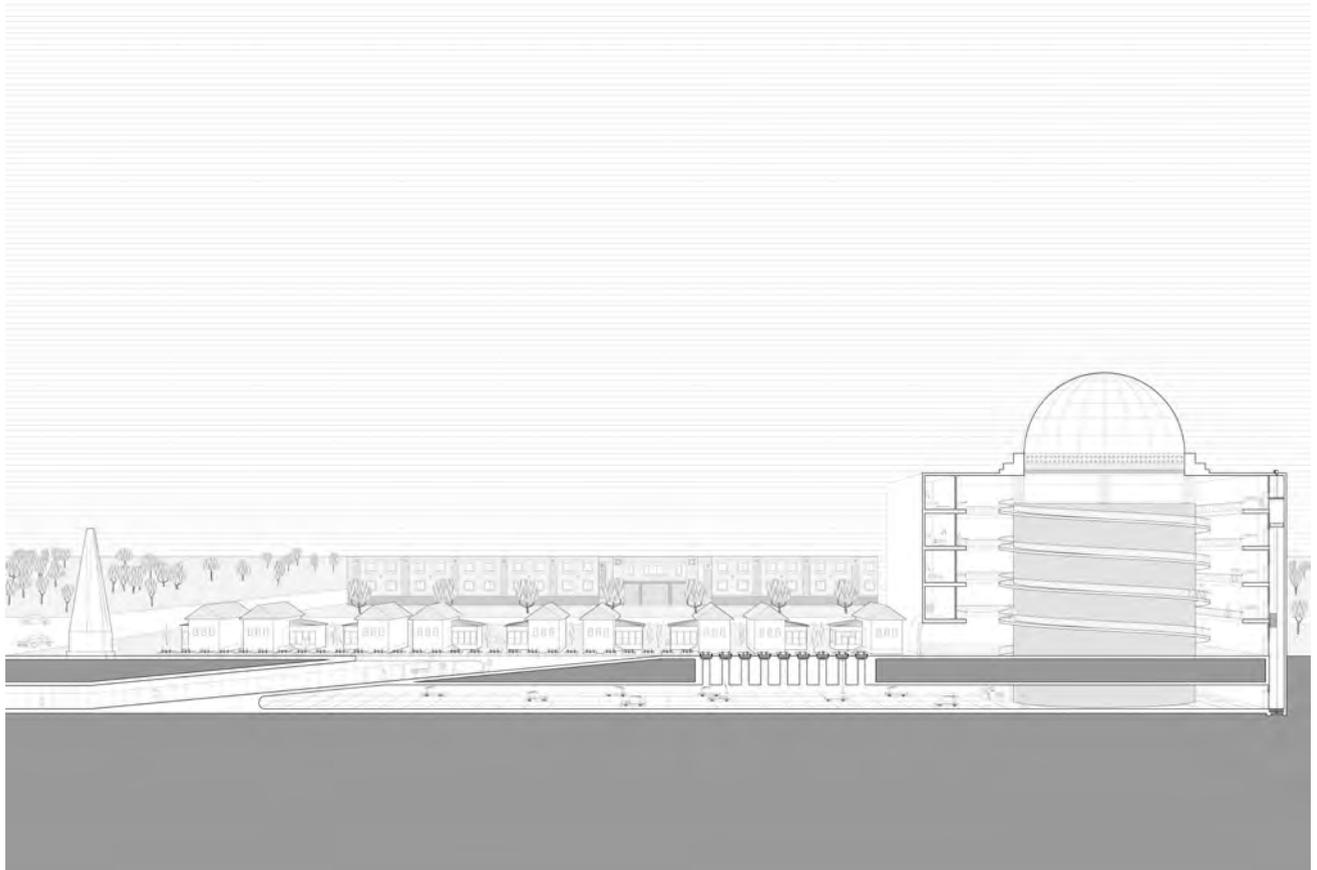
Observatory Arm
Over E. 83rd Street

LP



Circuita
Euclid Avenue

UP



REAP

The uncompromising productivity of the Cleveland Clinic behooves its consideration of a major externality of the healthcare industry—death.

Over 5,000 people die under the clinic's care each year and thousands more go unclaimed in public hospitals around the city. Promoting ecological compost funerals and taking on the civic responsibility of social housing for the elderly, the clinic mobilizes its technological resources toward maximizing the utility of these unintended outputs. A single body can be used as an educational resource, a source of transplant organs, and it has the ability to fertilize thirty square feet of crops over the course of a year.

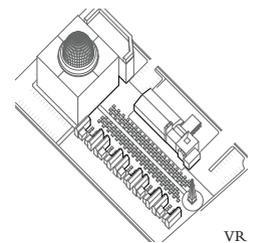
The resultant productive acreage is distributed along promenades and in memorial spaces near the clinic. Closing the systemic loop and providing food inputs back into the hospital thereby carries the capacity to reorganize the city grid based on a new system of death, production, and memory. By re-conceptualizing ritual and vertically integrating programmatic externalities, it offers a new strategy for expansion as the clinic shifts from specialty referrals to long-term care. ■

Acknowledgments:
María Arquero de Alarcón, McLain Clutter



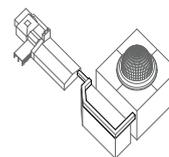
BR

Senior Social Housing
8290 Carnegie Avenue



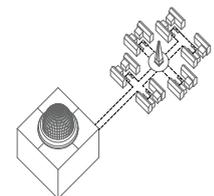
VR

Memorial Promenade
Cedar Avenue at E. 89th and 90th



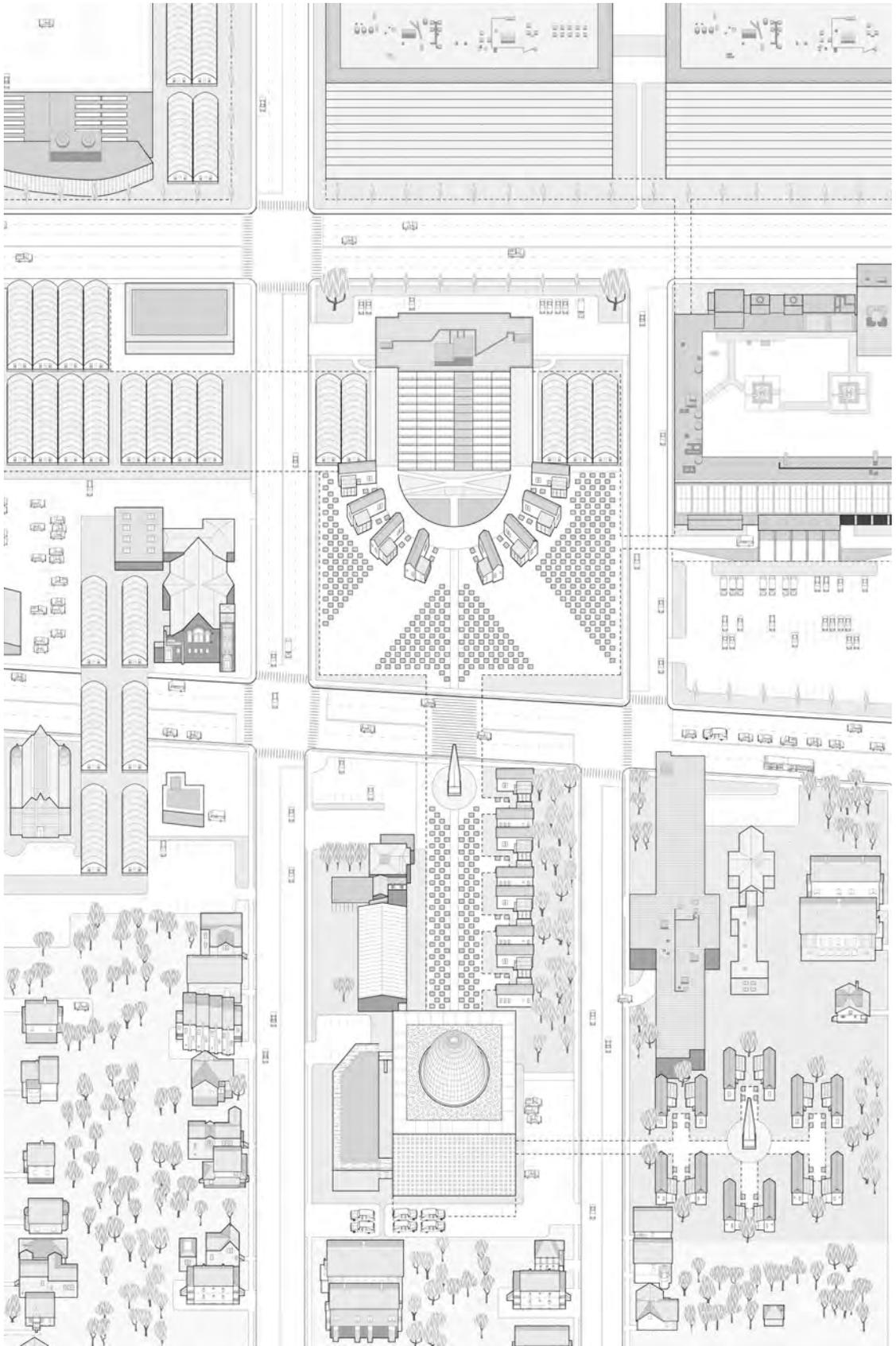
LR

Coroner's Triangle
2165 E. 89th Street



UR

Outcropping
E. 90th and E. 93rd Street



APOPTOSIS

In biological processes, programmed death offers distinct advantages when highly controlled. In the growth of the Clinic, programming death into the carefully regulated landscape is more integrative than damaging to the system at large.

Pneumatic



CLE | Cleveland Megabus

Most Common Destinations
 Atlanta, GA, Buffalo, NY, Charleston, TN, Chicago, IL, Cincinnati, OH, Columbus, OH, Erie, PA, Knoxville, TN, Lexington, KY, New York, NY, St. Louis, College, PA, Toledo, OH



BKL | Burke Lakefront Airport

Current Air Cargo Service
 AirNet Express - to Columbus
 Bakair - to Minneapolis/St. Paul
 Central Air Southwest - to Dayton
 Agairton, Kalamazoo, Topeka



CLEVELAND AMTRAK

Most Common Destinations
 Toronto, Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia - New York, Washington, DC



CLEVELAND GREYHOUND

Most Common Destinations
 Indianapolis, IN, Nashville, TN, Atlanta, GA, Buffalo, NY, Chattanooga, TN, Chicago, IL, Cincinnati, OH, Columbus, OH, Milwaukee, WI, New York, NY, Toledo, OH, Pittsburgh, PA, Philadelphia, PA, Boston, MA

TOWER CITY STATION

Red Line
 Blue Line
 Green Line



PORT | Port of Cleveland

Current Tenants
 Esso/Chevron
 Kenmore Construction Company
 Carmeuse Lime & Stone
 Federal Marine Terminals



DOWNTOWN

RED LINE
 Rapid Transit, Rail

HEALTH LINE
 Rapid Bus Transit

GREEN LINE
 Rapid Transit, Rail

BLUE LINE
 Rapid Transit, Rail

I-271
 Oberbelt East Freeway

I-90
 Ohio Turnpike I-80

LAKE COUN
 CUYAHOGA

ROUTE 422
 Ohio, Pennsylvania



Futures

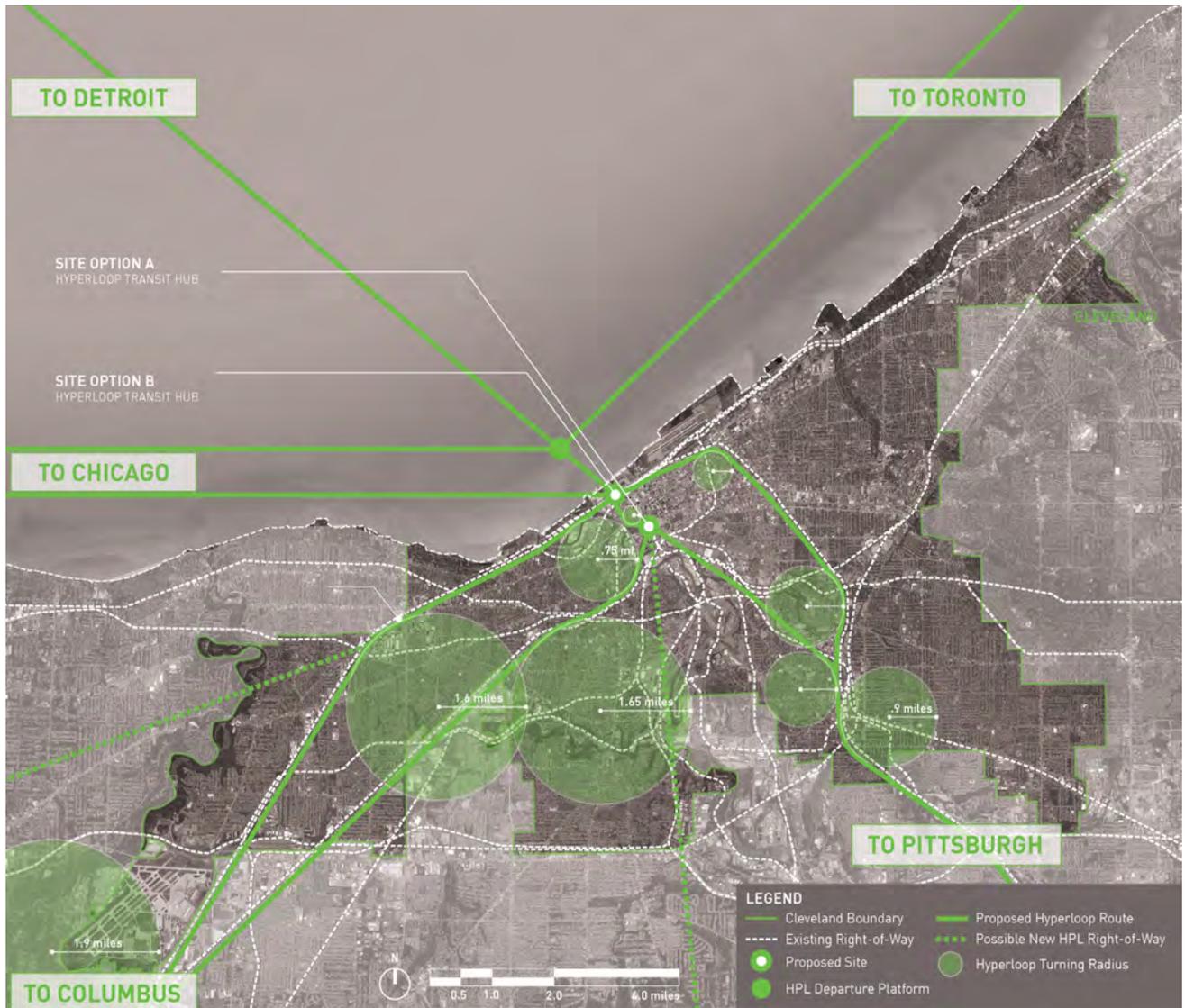
The hyperloop is coming to Cleveland. Throughout its history, infrastructural innovation has driven Cleveland's urban transformation and reinvention. For decades, massive transportation and utility networks have served as a backbone for the agglomeration of industrial economies and strategically provided momentum to the city's growth. However, Cleveland, like other Rust Belt cities, has suffered from depopulation and low urban investment since the decline of industry in the mid-twentieth century. Today, instigated by the pressures of global and regional competition, Cleveland once again presents itself as a locus for infrastructural revolution.

national geography with a network of pneumatic tubes that connect major urban centers within minutes, redefining the extents of the metropolitan area. At the local scale, the proposal examines the potential of a new transit hub to affect Cleveland's urbanisms and development patterns, designating a new gateway into the city and repositioning the central district within the larger urban metabolism.

The technical demands of the hyperloop infrastructure impose a linear formal language for the architectural intervention, creating a central spine along the Cuyahoga River that feeds into the urban fabric at multiple entry points. The resulting multi-nodal transportation hub ties the newly proposed hyperloop system to the city's existing infrastructural networks and generates a new public connection between the downtown and waterfront.

Building on this legacy, Pneumatic Futures establishes downtown Cleveland as a hub within a new national hyperloop network, injecting urban activity into the city through the high-speed exchange of people, products, and services. The project operates at multiple temporal and spatial scales and delineates new regional and urban orders. At the territorial scale, it transforms the

ROBYN WOLOCHOW



HYPERLOOP TURNING RADII

Current research and engineering studies of the hyperloop system suggest that at its predicted velocities, the hyperloop will require a turning radius ranging from 2.28 miles at 300 mph to 14.6 miles at its maximum velocity of 760 mph. This turning radius is significantly larger than that for existing infrastructure such as highway systems and railroad tracks, making it difficult for the hyperloop to follow existing right-of-way along the entire route between cities.

SCALE 1 FLOWS OF CLEVELAND

This section explores the existing infrastructural and flow networks of Cleveland and seeks to locate, based on these flows, potential nodes within the system. Three of the identified nodes were considered as possible site locations for the hyperloop transportation hub and were analyzed for their potential to connect the hyperloop infrastructure within the existing urban network.

In the selection of a site it was critical to locate the hyperloop transit hub within the central city to maximize walkability and allow the increased urban activity, due to the hyperloop

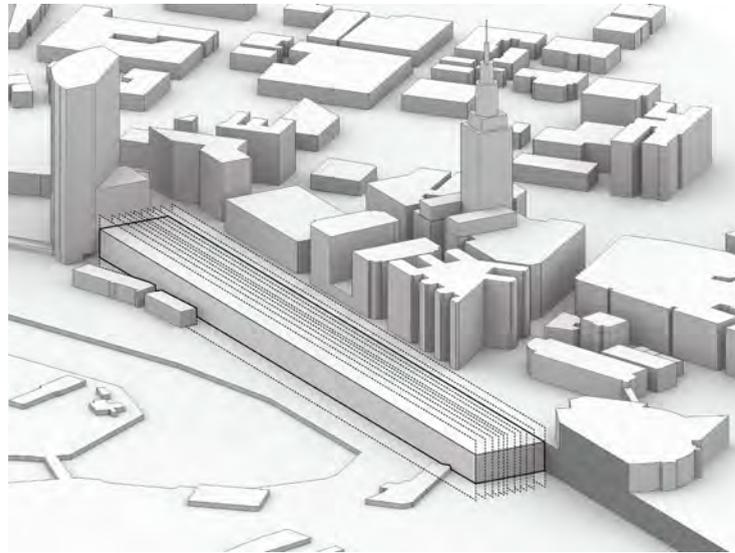
traffic, to benefit the city and positively affect the existing urban fabric.

The selected site, along the Cuyahoga River at Tower City Center, offers a prime location for the hyperloop to plug in to Cleveland’s existing urban network, providing direct access to downtown and serving to revitalize the waterfront district—an area of the city that has been largely abandoned since the decline of industry in the mid-twentieth century. Tower City Center, Cleveland’s closest thing to a transit hub within its current transportation infrastructure, is both historically significant as a transportation epicenter and

serves as an existing retail, dining, recreation, and events center that directly connects to sporting facilities, hotels, casinos, and restaurants. The programmatic variation, historical significance, and ideal location within the downtown district (in terms of walkability and proximity to major destinations) made this site the best option for the proposed hyperloop station, which seeks to capitalize on the existing urban amenities while injecting new life into Cleveland's downtown area.

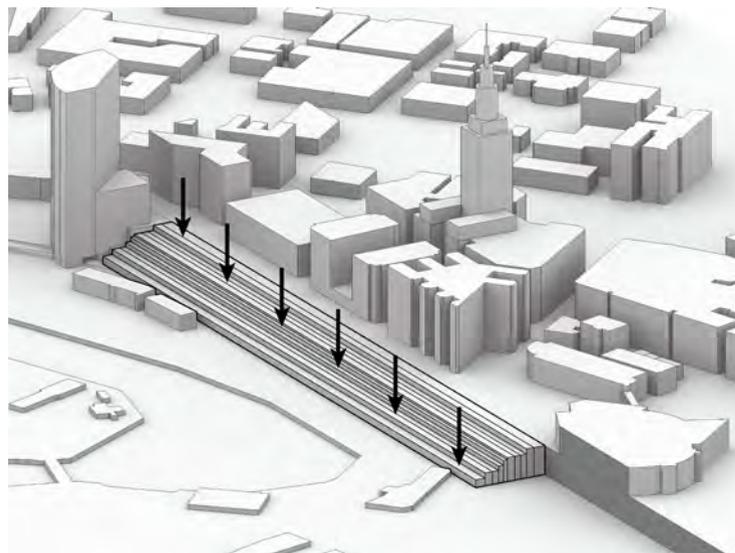
Since the existing rights-of-way along the highway and rail routes are not suitable for the high velocities of the hyperloop system, new paths must be created to direct the hyperloop flows in and out of Cleveland. This series of maps shows the proposed pathways in and out of the city. Routes are combined along a singular, straight pathway through the selected site along the Cuyahoga River at Tower City Center and then branch out to various destinations outside of the city limits. To the northwest of the city, the central line splits toward Toronto, Detroit, Chicago, and Columbus, with a re-routing station located off the short of Lake Erie where rights of way are easier to negotiate. To the southeast, a re-routing station just outside the city limits directs hyperloop capsules toward New York City and Pittsburgh. This system allows the Cleveland Hyperloop Station at Tower City Center to serve all direct routes out of Cleveland without requiring all six lines to pass directly through the downtown. This reduces the amount of construction and interference that occurs within the central city, while still allowing the hyperloop station to be located within the more walkable, high-activity zone of downtown Cleveland.

The technical requirements of the hyperloop infrastructure as it passes through Cleveland are the primary influence toward the final architectural design. The architecture of the proposed Hyperloop Transit Hub emphasizes the linearity of the system.



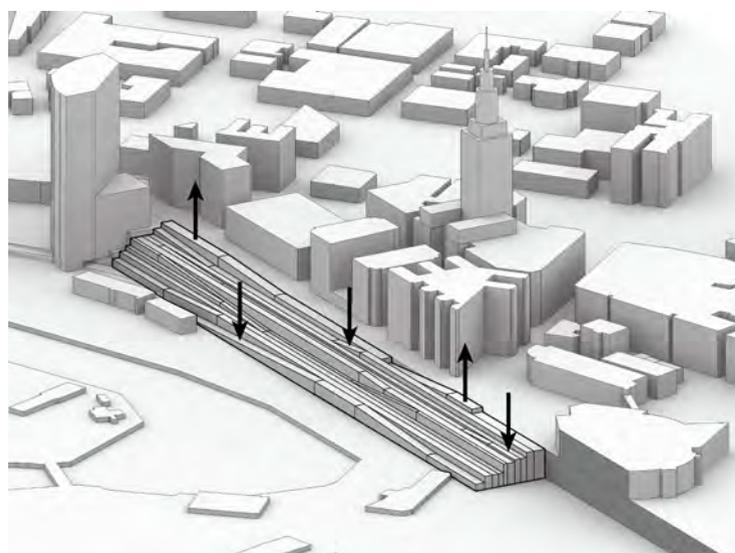
CUTTING PLANES

Following the linear nature of the hyperloop infrastructure passing through the project volume, cutting planes are used to split the project volume into narrow strips to formally break up the volume.



BRIDGING THE ELEVATIONAL CHANGE

By lowering the height of the strips of program, the topographic change between street level and waterfront is gradually bridged, extending the pedestrian platform and street level and creating a connection to the waterfront below.



RAMPING

The strips of program were varied further to create a series of exterior and interior ramps that allow pedestrians to travel from Huron Road to the waterfront, along either interior or exterior routes of public space.



EXTERIOR PUBLIC REALM

The ramping exterior form of the hyperloop hub creates an extended pedestrian platform from street level down to the waterfront. The material palette and its application along the pedestrian walkways further emphasize the linearity of the building and create distinct pathways for each type of movement. These flows direct pedestrians to various entry points within the existing urban fabric of Cleveland, creating a new public realm within downtown and further tying the new hyperloop station into its urban context.

**SCALE 2
A NEW TRANSIT HUB**

At the heart of this proposal is the architectural scale. The project seeks to design a new architectural typology that creates an entry point for the hyperloop into the existing urban fabric of Cleveland and creates a successful transfer point between the hyperloop and the city’s existing transportation infrastructure. Unlike existing transportation architectural typologies, this station creates city in a new way, providing multiple, controlled points of entry into the city and strategic initial views of Cleveland.

Architecturally, the transit hub seeks to create a gateway into the city, but instead of achieving this through a monumentally scaled architectural intervention, the structure offers a low-profile addition to the waterfront along the Cuyahoga River, integrating itself at multiple elevations with the surrounding buildings and landscape. Through a series of exterior and interior circulation elements, the building creates a public connection downtown at the street level to the waterfront, offering recreational programs and proposing



a new relationship between the city and its central river. The structural elements, design of the façade, and circulation emphasize the linearity imposed by the technical demands of the hyperloop infrastructure.

DEVELOPING A FORMAL VISION

The ramping of the strips used to generate the overall massing allows light to enter the interior of the space in a unique way, providing intentional views of moments of the city and the exterior urban plazas on the exterior of the building. The form of the building creates an extension at street level in the form of a pedestrian platform, creating a low-profile icon for the city. The hub directly connects to its surrounding context, with interior pathways leading to the adjacent Federal Courthouse Building, Cavaliers Stadium, and Tower City Center.

DESIGN INTENT

Whereas typical transit centers feature large, central atriums that provide views of all modes of transportation, loading, and crowding, this design for the hyperloop center instead creates narrow strips without any central chamber. This architectural strategy creates a unique urban condition, directing people into a larger number of urban flows at multiple sites of intervention.

The exterior of the massing explores the potential for a ramping system

to bridge the topographic difference between street level at Huron Road and the waterfront below. This ramping creates multiple entry points into the station at various levels, spanning a 110-foot elevational difference. The ramping also creates a unique urban condition for the station. Most major transportation hubs and city landmarks contain more of a street presence to indicate an entrance and a more obvious point of entry into the surrounding urban fabric. This station instead creates an extended urban platform at street level from which passengers descend down to the level of the hyperloop and the Cleveland RTA rail lines.

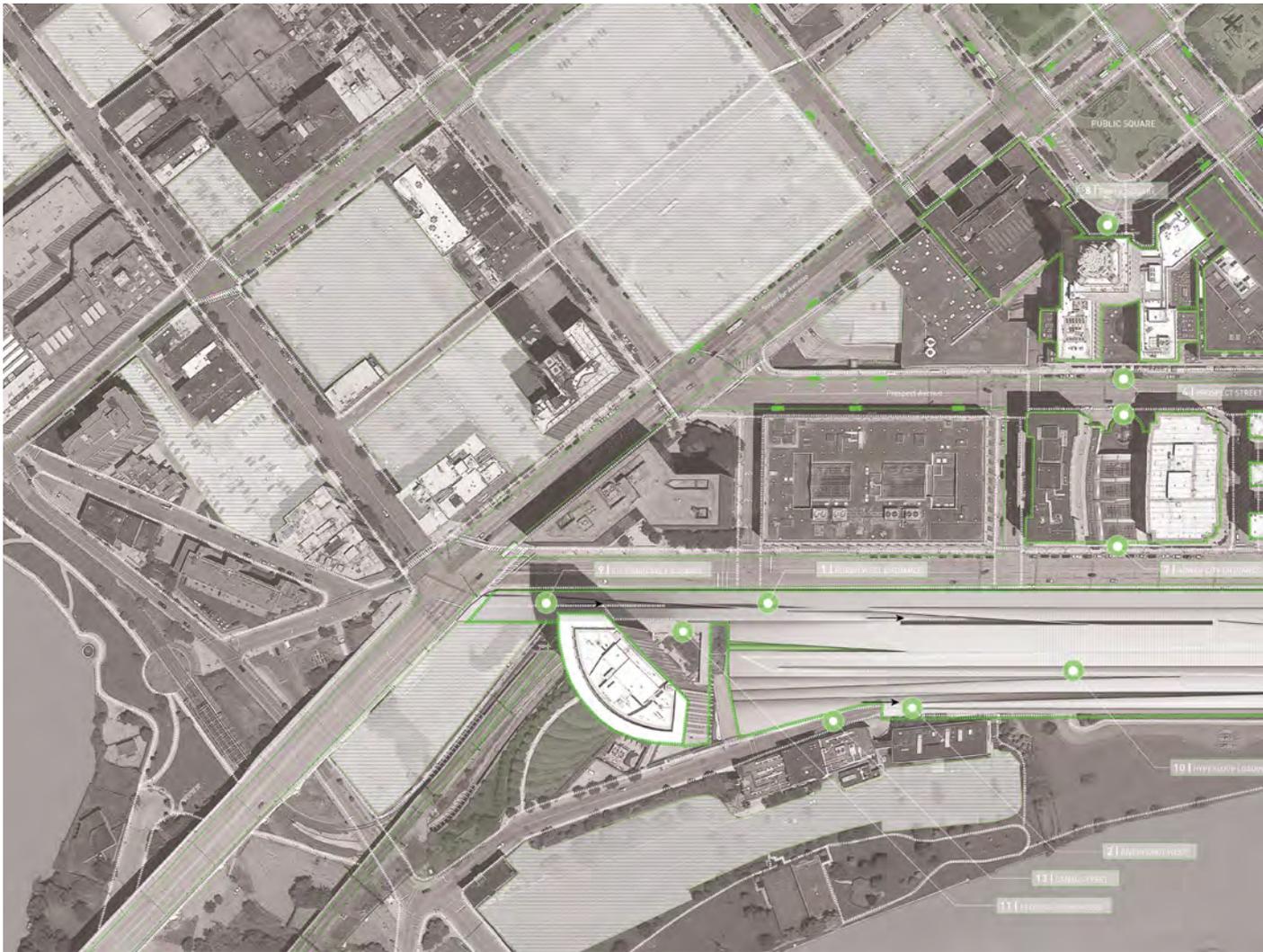
The ramping of the floor plates and a lightweight structural system create a system in which the entire southern facade of the structure can be composed of glass, leaving it open to views of the city and providing ample sunlight to the interior of the station.

Program strips create a linear circulation system within the space, emphasizing the linearity of the hyperloop infrastructure, imposed by its high velocities and turning radii. The division of program follows a spatial organization that divides the building into zone—capsule loading is separated into areas for passenger, vehicular, and cargo loading, while accommodating service, maintenance, and operational systems.

The structural system also emphasizes the linear nature of the hyperloop.

HYPERLOOP LOADING

This section perspective shows the design of the hyperloop infrastructure within the interior of the transportation hub. A vertical chasm is created along the spine of the hyperloop track, increasing its visibility within the space and further emphasizing the linearity of the building design. The reference plan shows how the hyperloop loading level is divided into zones, separating the hyperloop capsule loading processes for people, vehicles, and freight cargo. A portion of the track is also dedicated to maintenance and facilities management. Airlocks at either end of the track control the pressure within the hyperloop track for incoming and outgoing traffic.



Structural elements follow an east-west grid system, with perpendicular members occurring at moments of cross-circulation. The pneumatic tubes of the hyperloop infrastructure are clearly called out within the building, creating an iconic emblem to a downtown Cleveland of progress, innovation, and national connectivity.

The interior of the hyperloop transportation hub features a series of pedestrian ramps that connect passengers from Tower City Center to the hyperloop loading level, the RTA light rail lines, interior public and commercial programs, the Cuyahoga River waterfront, and the street level above.

Hyperloop loading occurs on a single level, connecting directly to

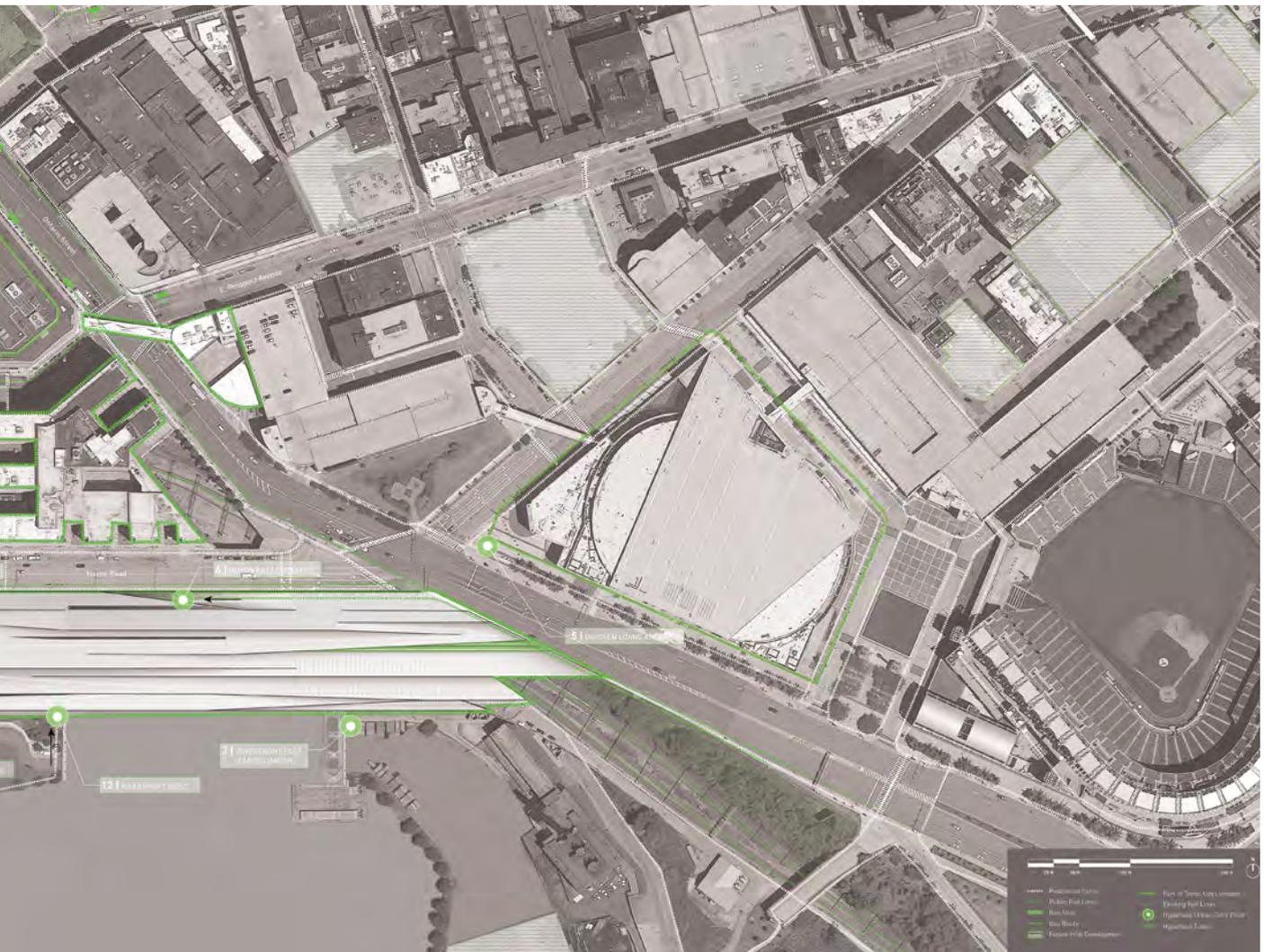
the Tower City Center main level at approximately 40 feet below grade. Hyperloop loading is divided to allow cargo loading, pedestrian loading, and vehicular loading to occur in distinct zones in order to maximize efficiency. These various loading functions create a degree of spectacle within the space, allowing the transparency of hyperloop operations to educate and excite passengers and visitors.

The strips of program designed to emphasize the linear nature of the hyperloop infrastructure also maximize visibility of retail and passenger services to passersby, creating a new interior destination within the city of Cleveland.

Passengers can enter directly from street level to either the hyperloop

loading level, the RTA light rail platform level, or the mezzanine retail level, which also houses a downtown facility for the Cleveland Clinic, one of the city's economic anchors. The interior of the station allows these various circulation pathways to intersect and overlap, creating visible connections between programmatic zones.

The existing RTA light rail lines currently service more than 150,000 passengers per day, however, with the additional infrastructure of the hyperloop, this station, which has a gross square footage of almost 2 million square feet, would see anywhere between 100,000 and 500,000 visitors per day. Serving as a hyperloop hub within the Midwest



region, Cleveland needs to support the highest volume of hyperloop traffic.

This high-traffic entry point into the city provides a strategic injection of people into the downtown core, activating the waterfront along the Cuyahoga River and establishing a connective fabric based on the new hyperloop infrastructure.

PUBLIC CONNECTION TO THE WATER

The existing waterfront of the Cuyahoga River in downtown Cleveland is underdeveloped, underutilized, and underappreciated. Historically, Cleveland's river has been the source of environmental and political debate, given its high toxicity and pollution levels, due to its

industrial land use patterns since the early twentieth century.

By creating a new public realm that connects downtown with the waterfront, the city can reimagine the possibilities at the downtown core.

An exterior circulatory pathway allows visitors to meander downwards from downtown to the Cuyahoga River with opportunities at each level to enter the transportation hub. With 24-hour, 7-day hyperloop and train schedules, this public exterior space will experience constant activity.

Serving as both a public destination for Cleveland's residents and a unique urban feature for hyperloop visitors, the exterior ramp of the hyperloop station creates an urban escape within the city.

At the waterfront level, the hyperloop hub offers public access to water activities through boat and kayak rentals and fishing, while handling the high volume of both incoming and outgoing cargo traffic.

The existing Port of Cleveland, located north of the site along the shore of Lake Erie, ships cargo year-round to locations in the Midwest, the greater sphere of North America, and overseas to Europe and Asia. This cargo is transported via train to and from the port, whose location is inconveniently placed within the city's flow network. The proposed multimodal transportation hub is more strategically placed near rail, highway, hyperloop, and river transportation systems and offers an ideal cargo

loading and unloading zone at the waterfront level.

Pedestrians enjoying the exterior walkway can observe these infrastructural activities and gain access to the services and amenities made available at the riverfront. The abundant south facing glazing of the hyperloop hub allows for complete visibility into the station from the public space outside.

SCALE 3: A NATIONAL NETWORK

The North American rail network was developed throughout the 19th-century as a series of individual lines connecting cities and industrial districts, beginning with the construction of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad in the 1820s. Today, this rail network continues to provide transportation service across the country.

In 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower proposed a national highway network to connect the country more efficiently for trade, travel, and connectivity. Construction began in 1956. A 35-year project was initiated—one that continues today with constant road repairs, extensions, and re-routing of previous roadways.

Since the construction of the highway system, there have been little to no advancements in the national infrastructural network. This project proposes a new national infrastructure network based on the technological advancements made in the last few years, specifically referencing Elon Musk's proposal for the hyperloop. This hyperloop system would connect the major U.S. cities via never-before-seen high-speed passenger and freight transit.

The project proposes three central hubs in the national hyperloop network: one in Los Angeles, one in Dallas, and one in Cleveland. With these three hubs, 40 of the largest cities in the U.S. and Canada are connected with the new infrastructure, accessible within 1.5 hours.¹

Geographically, Cleveland is an ideal hub location, able to connect to a large number of Midwest and Eastern urban centers within this amount of time. Similarly, Los Angeles and Dallas are strategically located to incorporate major cities into the network. The hyperloop routes would create a more linear, connected network that is capable of including the cities outside of the 1.5-hour travel radius.

The project also proposes a national network of hyperloop infrastructure that includes the major urban centers in North America. Similar to the existing railroad lines, routes are created between cities large enough to support the new infrastructure. A certain critical mass is necessary before it becomes economically and socially feasible to introduce a hyperloop system. The selected cities, with commuters and visitors, would create a demand high enough for the new system to be sustainable.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ADVANTAGE

In 2010, when Ohio was awarded \$400 million to build a new high-speed rail network to connect Cleveland, Columbus, and Cincinnati, an economic study was conducted to examine the growth potential in Ohio generated by the new infrastructure. It was estimated that becoming an interregional hub could generate \$3 billion in economic development for Ohio.²

Another study by the Midwest High Speed Rail Association (MHSRA), titled "Economic Impacts of the Midwest Regional Rail System," concluded that the overall economic benefit of the system would be \$23.1 billion, with a benefit-to-cost ratio of 1.8 and providing more than 57,450 new permanent jobs. It was also estimated that during construction of the system, an average of 15,200 annual jobs would be created.² These figures—one dollar and eighty cents returned for every dollar spent on the system—represent one of the highest returns for any regional rail system in the U.S.

This report analyzed the capital investment by corridor between major Midwest cities. The route between Cleveland and Chicago, for example, was estimated to cost \$1.2 billion in infrastructure and \$152 million in train equipment, for a total of \$1.4 billion to complete the corridor. This route, which on current train service takes 6 hours and 24 minutes, would be reduced by over 2 hours to 4 hours and 22 minutes.

The Midwest Regional Rail System (MWRRS), as proposed, will consist of 3,000 miles of track, using existing rail rights-of-way shared with freight and commuter rail. It plans to provide access to approximately 80% of the region's 65 million residents.

Like the other high-speed rail proposals discussed in the previous pages, this regional rail network designates Chicago as a central hub, with direct routes to Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Carbondale, St. Louis, Kansas City, Omaha, and Milwaukee.

Compared to the Midwest Regional Rail System, as currently planned, the Midwest Hyperloop Network proposed in this proposal offers significantly reduced travel times, increased economic benefits to Cleveland and the Midwest region, and improved environmental efficiency. The proposed network (as mapped on the previous page) connects the same cities as the MWRRS proposal (which contain the majority of the Midwest population). However, with Cleveland as a central hub location, instead of Chicago, the Canadian cities of Toronto, Montreal, and Ottawa could also be incorporated into the system. This border crossing, though potentially politically controversial, would greatly facilitate access between the two countries.

ANTICIPATING URBAN GROWTH

A major result of a national hyperloop system is future development and growth of cities. Growth is likely to occur at higher rates near hyperloop



stations as people, services, and industry seek to locate themselves within close range of the new high-speed transportation network.

The cost of living in cities will start to matter even more as commutes between cities become shorter, allowing workers to live in one city and work in another. For example, imagine being able to work in one of the larger, more expensive metropolitan areas such as New York or Toronto, while paying the costs of living of a much cheaper city without increasing the length of your commute.

The development of a national hyperloop network is also likely to initiate development in a new way compared with other regional transportation infrastructure. Unlike rail, it is difficult to plug in to the hyperloop network, except at specific

locations with hyperloop stations. This can result in denser, more populous, and more developed cities without any increased development along connective routes.

A new hyperloop infrastructure brings into question many economic and social issues that may arise in regards to urban development. Do some cities become simply commuter cities? Does the cost of living in cities with hyperloop access stations become too high, excluding many from utilizing the new infrastructure? Does the hyperloop encourage infill and increased density or encourage sprawl?

Now is the time—before the dreams of the hyperloop have come to fruition—to consider the consequences it will have on urban growth and development. How will cities expand—how will development patterns be permanently altered? What

are the positive and negative effects of these changes in development patterns? Will there be a mass exodus to or from cities with hyperloop stations? Will new cities arise in the vicinity to allow easy access to hyperloop stations? ■

METRO AREA BY HYPERLOOP

The new metropolitan area of Cleveland, as redefined by the newly achievable transit speeds. Areas accessible to the site within one hour by hyperloop.

1. "Cleveland, OH." *Forbes Magazine*, July 2015. Accessed January 25, 2015. <http://www.forbes.com/places/oh/cleveland/>.
2. *Ibid.*



Casting Doubt

This work is an exploration of ambiguity between figure and ground, solid and void, novelty and history, curiosity and recognition.

Using Gestalt principles of perception as a primer, the project investigates potential readings and misreadings of volume, mass, and figure.

SOO HYUK CHOI

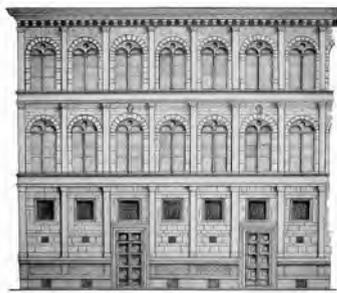
KEVIN GURTOWSKY

YUNZHI OU

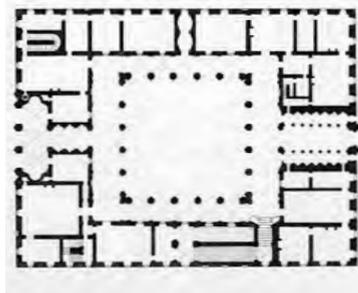
A Matter of Perception



Palazzo Medici

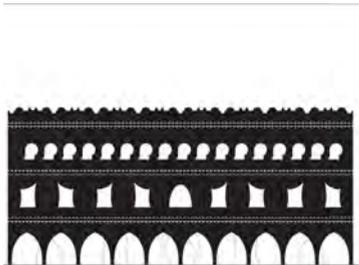
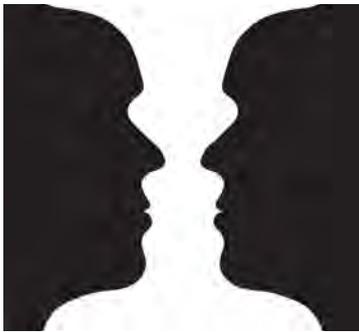


Palazzo Rucellai

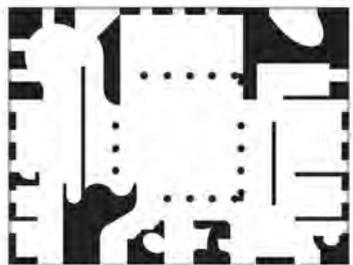


Palazzo Farnese

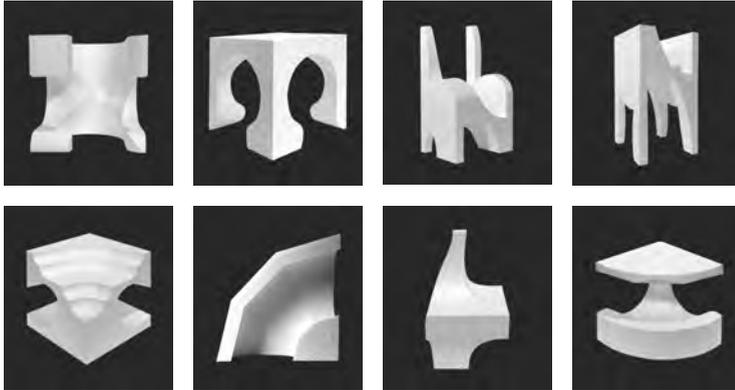
Inspired by Palladian principles from his *Quattro Libri dell' Architettura* (The Four Books of Architecture), *Casting Doubt* blends the anachronistic spatial organization of the 16th-century Italian Renaissance with formal design techniques of the 21st-century through the use of digital modeling and fabrication. Through exploring and expanding the boundaries of spatial awareness and visual perception, *Casting Doubt* creates new urban and architectural conditions while remaining grounded in historical precedent and disciplinary rigor.



Proto-Palazzo Elevation

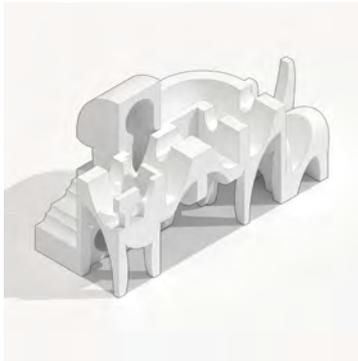


Proto-Palazzo Plan

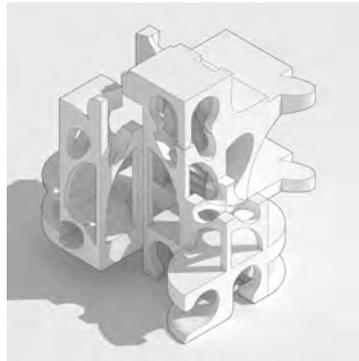


With human proportions and activities in mind, a set of revolved geometries and two-way extrusions are created as building blocks for inhabitation. These are our letters.

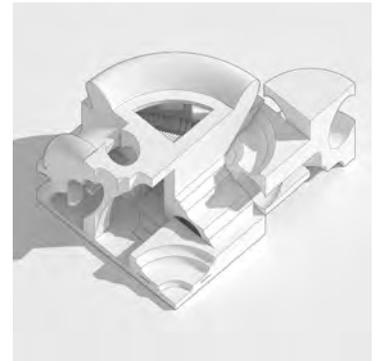
Pieces are combined to create characteristic moments, resembling elements in the historical palazzo. These are our words.



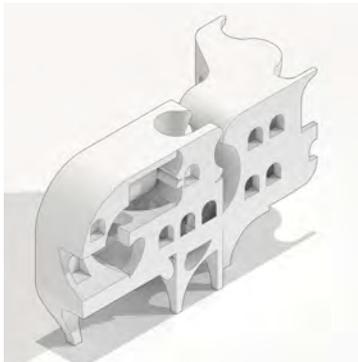
Portico



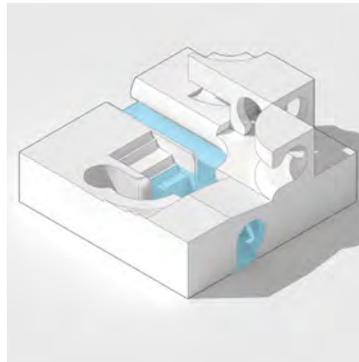
Loggia



Occupiable Interior



Façade



Ground



Courtyard

Moments are then linked to construct sequences of varying experiences ranging from small, enclosed niches for reflection to large, open zones for gathering. Strung together, these are our sentences.

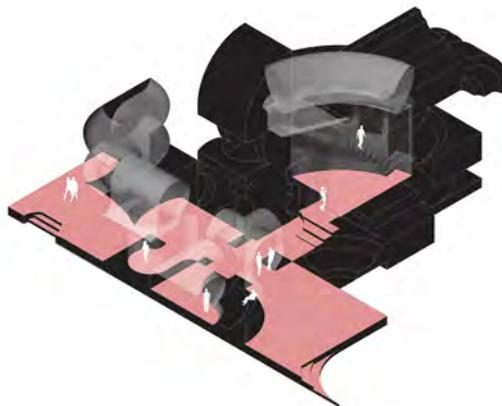
Steering away from conventional registrations of occupation, spaces seamlessly blend between the habitable and interstitial. Alternating between subtractive and additive readings, this massing strategy unifies disparate pieces into something greater than the sum of its parts.



Light/Dark



Public/Private



Interior/Exterior

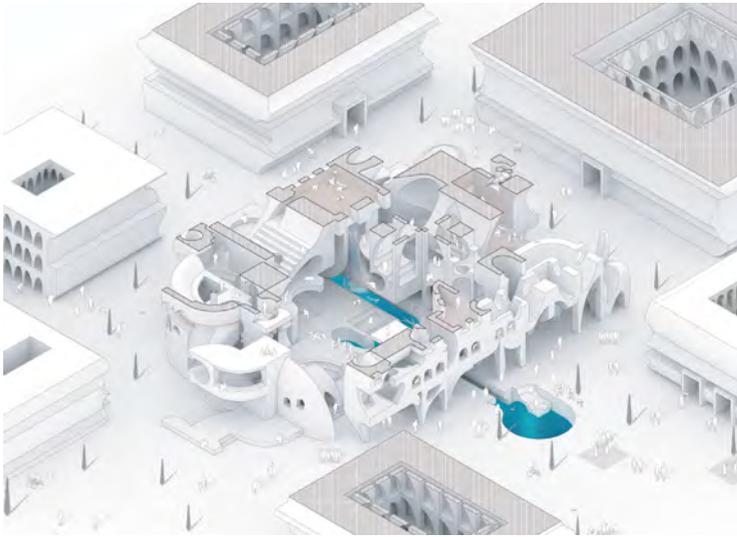
Referencing the historical Italian palazzo, the building has three main stories, an interior courtyard, and a portico lining a facade. Silhouettes visually connect to resemble everything from a campanile to a whale from one perspective, but disassemble as the viewer moves, since the pieces may be physically separate.

Conventional palazzo features such as symmetry, cornices, vertical facade, and loggia appear and disappear as the modified figural blocks form a porous yet coherent whole, providing a broad spectrum of zones ranging from nested spaces to waterfalls.

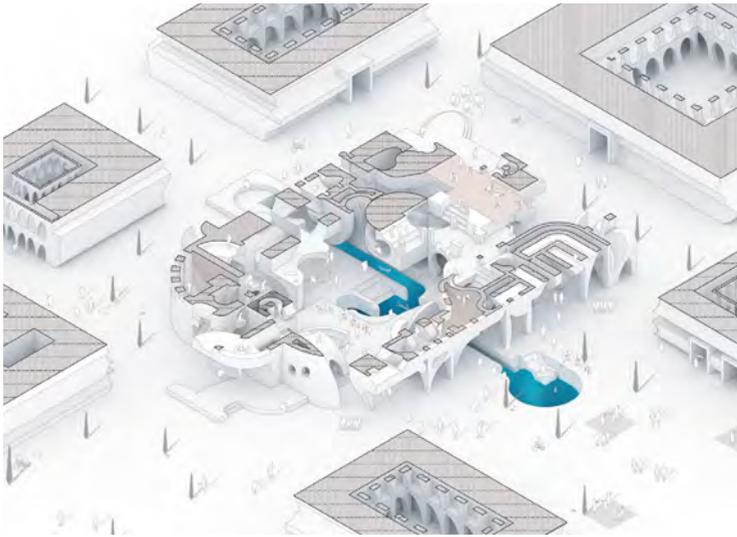
The courtyard, hugging light and air, lends an approach to the loggia as well as the canal.

Meanwhile, denser parts of the building give shape to light shafts and mimic atriums. Intricate positive and negative articulations boggle the mind and inspire one to seek understanding, which is unique to each individual, or even to each experience.

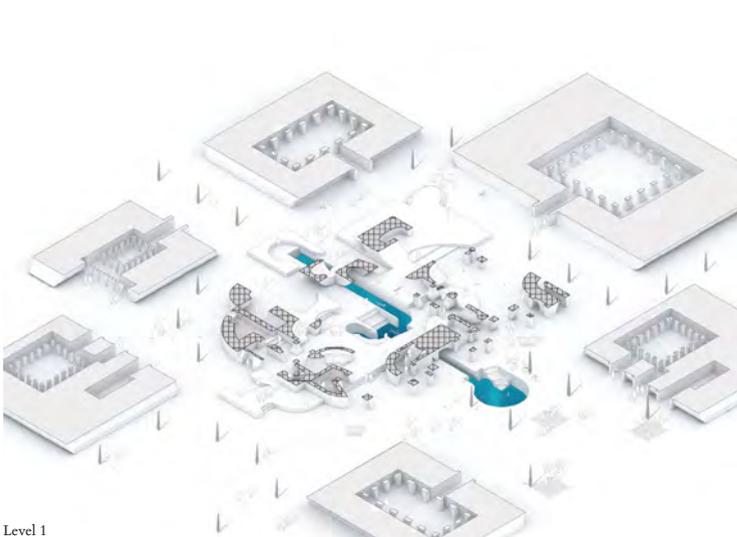
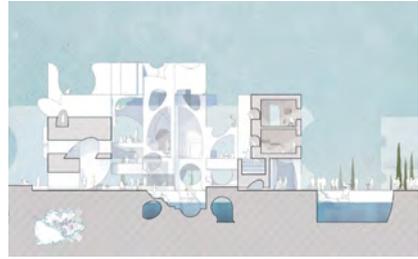
Overall, the building appears as both an eroded mass and an agglomeration of smaller, abstract figures. Similar to the palazzo, it is situated within the dense urban fabric, which also contains countless external interiors and internal exteriors.



Level 3



Level 2



Level 1





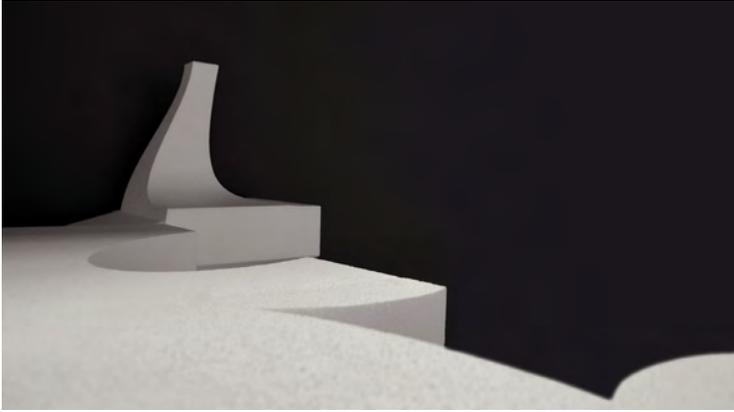
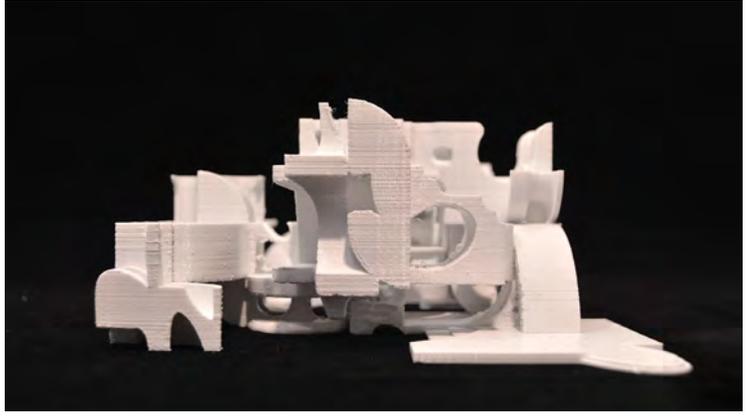
Each facade produces a distinct approach to the building, allowing for different levels of enclosure, openness, and recognition. The indeterminacy of form and depth allows for oscillating readings of the foreground, middleground, and background

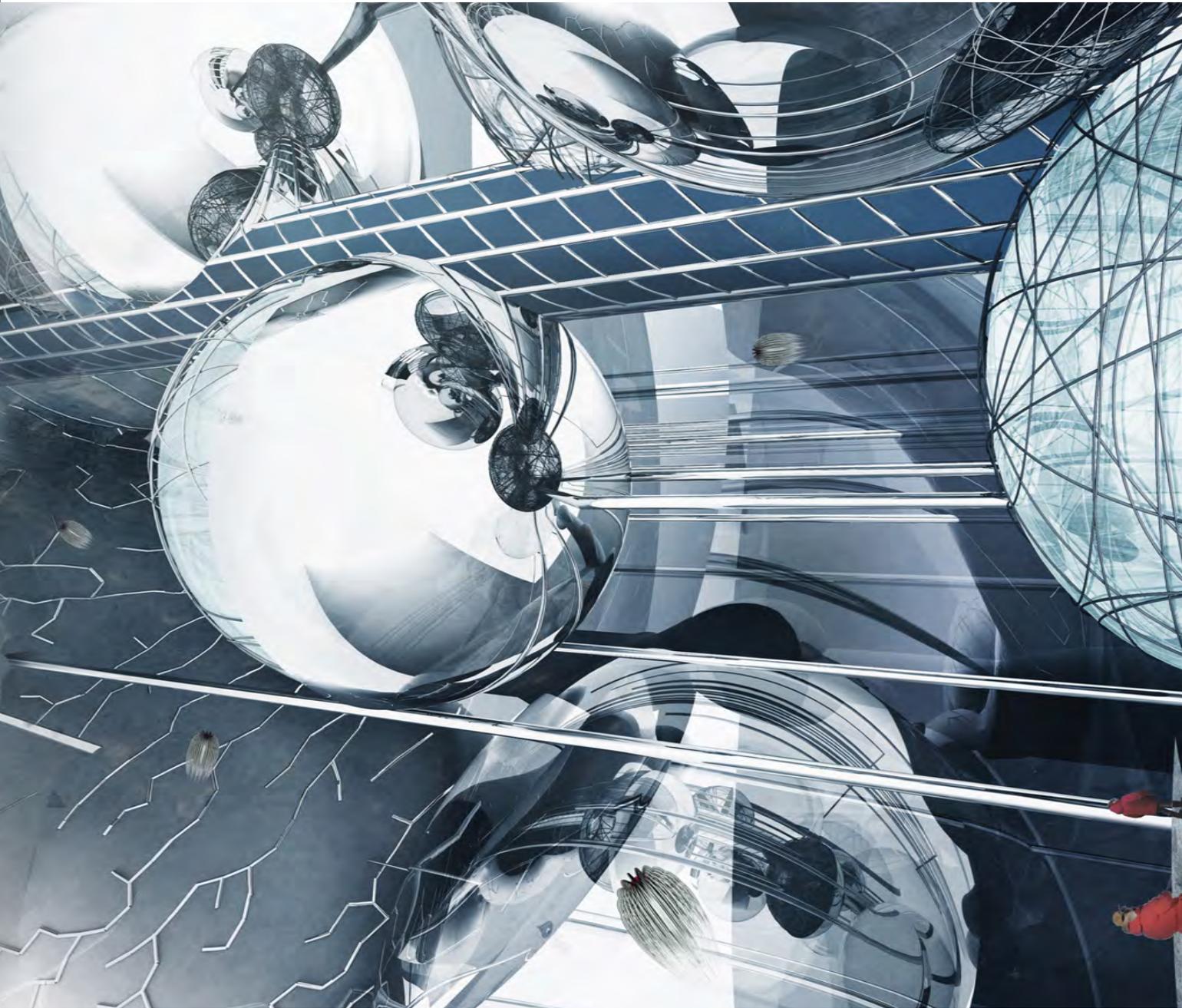
The plasticity of form encourages meandering as one traverses the terrain of the palazzo of objects. Engendering a bewildering atmosphere of solid and void, this project casts the subject as simultaneously inside and out. ■



Acknowledgments:
Asa Peller for his guidance on the robotic fabrication of our final model.









Aeriform Ecologies

An Atmospheric Archive for Industrial Effluvium

Aeriform Ecologies observes the global effluent flows of industrial activities related to petroleum and fossil energy extraction and refineries by viewing these gaseous byproducts as spatial runoffs and extensions of its infrastructures. The work investigates these flows as exclusionary devices that are able to disregard and dematerialize conventionally observed geo-spatial boundaries. Further, it underlines the ability of these imperceptible emissions to redefine and expand the constraints of contemporary governance and reposition it within the context of the post-human. Such emissions associated with chemical processes of combustion and distillation for the refinement of crude oil and production of natural

gas include carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and hydrofluorocarbons, particulate matter, and carbon monoxide.

According to the EPA, oil and natural gas plants in the United States emit a combined total of 407 million metric tons of carbon dioxide per year. This number represents over 85–90% of gas emissions in the country. International sites where high levels of oil extraction activities occur include the Ghawar Field Oil Sands in Saudi Arabia, Athabasca Tar Sands in Canada and the Sakhalin-1 field in Russia. These sites can be used as tools to investigate ways of making these imperceptible byproducts palpable in order to reframe our relationship to emissions

JENNIFER NG

as a form of capturable and occupiable material for spatial production. At the same time, it allows for acknowledging these anthropogenic exchanges within the globe as a whole system.

This can be exemplified in the appearance of polar stratospheric clouds that occur over the Arctic and Antarctica, formed with the combination of extremely low temperatures and the transportation of gaseous nitric acid by air currents in the stratosphere toward the poles in both hemispheres. This iridescent phenomenon, as a byproduct, highlights the biochemical properties of atmospheric compositions while also producing a human comprehensibility, based on a disengaged aesthetic experience to an incomprehensible (intangible) object, such as emissions.

EMISSIONS AS A HYPEROBJECT

It is impossible to fully fathom the totality of these gaseous materials. Timothy Morton describes this as a “hyperobject”—an object so massively distributed in time and space relative to humans that it is impossible to align within our social, political, and even perceptual dimension. While it is constantly receding from our understanding, it is at the same time, completely embedded into our physical world; only knowable in glimpses.

Using Morton’s philosophical framework of the hyperobject, one can dissect the intangibility of aeriform gaseous byproducts through the temporal discrepancies of the emission accumulation in the atmosphere through the deployment forces and form through time.

By observing the atmosphere and air as a type of “material witness” and a form of matter, it can be indexed through adjacent forms of matter and objects. Using what Eyal Weizman describes as “the forensic investigation of material spaces” allows for a way to observe an alternative complex logic for space making that is intricately tied to the anthropogenic condition of emissions.

GROWTH & NUCLEATION

Early forms of research involved the observation the growth of bacterial cultures from dust from air filters in an agar dish which was incubated at 88°F and results begin to appear after half a day. The growth of the bacteria found in the dust, began to colonate within the petri dish of polysaccharide mixture. This experiment studied the indexing of an unseen waste product against organic matter.

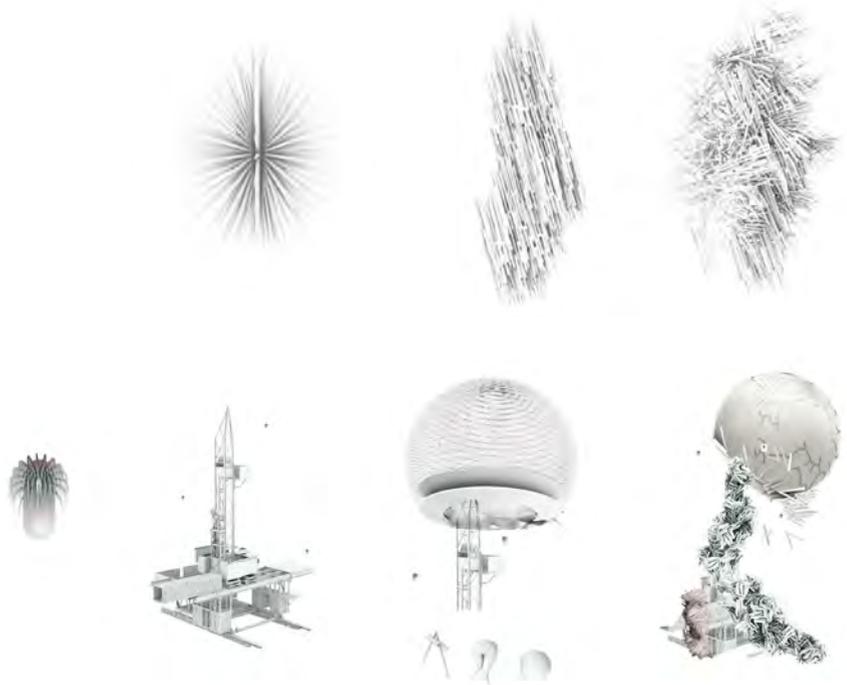
NESTING & ACCUMULATING

Investigations into the production of potassium aluminum sulfate when combined with heated distilled water. As the supersaturated solution cooled, the once powder formed grains of chemical began to solidify due to its chemical properties. This was repeated for sodium acetate and sodium sulfide; both of which succumbed to a form of nucleation and crystallization.



SITES OF EXCLUSION THROUGH EMISSIONS

Carbon dioxide & carbon monoxide emissions in the atmosphere detected by NASA's Orbiting Carbon Observatory (NASA/JPL-Caltech).



THE SCOUTS & SCRAP OF ABANDONED INFRASTRUCTURE

Scouts optically and monitor the air conditions through visual, chemical detection of carbon dioxide and other emissions.

DIGESTION OF INFRASTRUCTURAL MATERIAL

Decomposes abandoned refinery, extraction and energy supply infrastructure in modular forms to be contained within the Material Digester.

NONHUMAN SYSTEMS

Biochemical investigations show insight into the formation of the Lechuguilla Caves in New Mexico, formed with the presence of gypsum, sulfur and rare, rock-eating bacteria (that feed on sulfur, iron, and manganese minerals) combined to produce the geological formations over millions of years. These geomicroorganisms act as agents of a geological exchange on a more expansive timescale.

Through growth, subtraction, alteration, and phase changes with palpable human materials, the terms ‘growth’ and ‘aggregation’ present formal opportunities for linking emissions with the language of architecture. Formal studies of growth and aggregation produce a set of nonhuman systems to explore a reconception of the hyperobject qualities of gaseous emissions.

UNIVERSAL EMISSION DETECTION

The Scouts are drone-like vehicles that grow and elongate in reaction to global emissions; they are able to analyze and sample levels of CO₂, methane, and other atmospheric gasses in the troposphere and stratosphere.

In response to the data retrieved by the Scouts, the Harvesters are also able to travel to lower levels of the atmosphere to digest abandoned infrastructure from both land and sea.

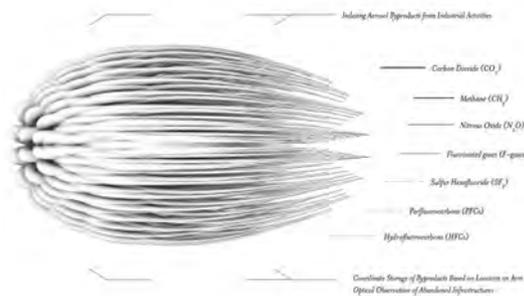


THE SCOUT: UNIVERSAL EMISSION DETECTION

The International Atmosphere Commission is now formed due to the increasingly high levels of particulates in the air to reinforce regulation of specific composition within the stratosphere above the surface. The stratosphere, which is directly above the habitable troposphere is approximately 10-13 km above the surface of the earth. Regulation of emissions from this international level produces the need to monitor emissions from both industrial sources and mobile sources of contamination at global scale. Autonomous technologies called ‘The Scouts’ are designed to roam the troposphere and stratosphere, monitoring and registering the airborne

by-products from activities from petroleum extraction, refinement and use. Through the use of a synthesized biochemical product, these devices begin as simple cylindrical products such as carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide while storing the coordinates of these. It is also able to visually capture images and locations of abandoned petroleum equipment. The Scout’s signals are relayed to the Queen Maud Station where the Harvesters arrive to further ingest emissions and digest the unused infrastructure.

These receptacles traverse the globe, ingesting gaseous discharge from the emission-ridden troposphere. They take advantage of a jet stream at 35,000 ft and use a passive propulsion system as a means of transport. These include defunct and unused oil rigs, extraction facilities, and instruments that are then decomposed into a special iron alloy with the use of carbonization within the vessel.



MATERIAL DIGESTERS (CATALYZING)

The structures for these digesters is rigid to accommodate for the solid matter that needs to be transported in the atmosphere.



AIR DIGESTERS & MATERIAL DIGESTERS

Air Harvesters collect carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides and other particulate matter and emissions. Their structure is more light and flexible.



DIGESTERS DIRECTED TO STATION IN ANTARCTICA

These Harvesters collect material and gas samples of industrial activity in order to archive and store ambient data of current moment in Antarctica.



ACCUMULATION OF HARVESTERS FOR RESEARCH

The research and archive within the Queen Maud Mountain Range is a slow accumulation of these vessels.

HARVESTING AERIFORM MATTER

The Harvesters use an altered version of carbon sequestration for the solidification of gaseous byproducts and dematerialization for abandoned infrastructure. The majority of the aeriform products that are ingested are directly converted into solid modules within the inner shell of the dirigible, while some residual gasses are stored within the outer shell. The Harvesters ultimately leverage gaseous air pollution for the production of solid matter.

After being gathered, air emissions are propelled to Antarctica for the production of a remote archive and station, such as unclaimed areas of Marie Byrd Lands and south of the Queen Maud Mountains range.

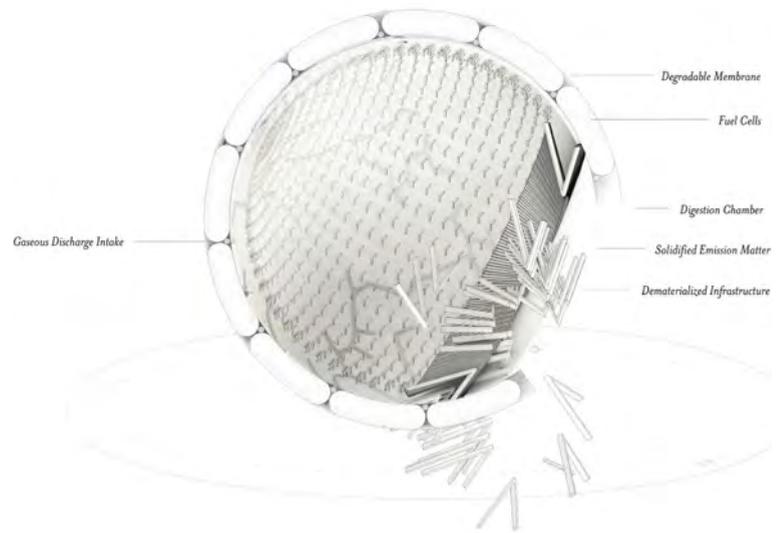
These dirigibles collect to form an atmospheric repository that coincides with the contemporary practice of ice coring, which is the drilling of ice to reconstruct a climatic record and a history of atmospheric compositions. This effect is produced through the trapping of air bubbles in the melting and refreezing of glacial sheets throughout millennia.

Researchers position capturers in order to denote locations in which the Harvesters can land. Through a combination of aerial aggregation and accumulation on the ground, these Harvesters become terrestrial growths of aeriform curations.



SOLIDIFIED EMISSION PARTICLES & DEMATERIALIZED INFRASTRUCTURE STUDIES (PROTEIN LOGIC)

Produced by Harvesters, the enzymes are solidified, digested aeriform and solid matter from emissions and abandoned scraps of infrastructure. The formation of the aggregation follows a protein logic that accumulates organically based on the figure of the different modules.



THE HARVESTERS

The Harvester are unmanned dirigibles that roam the emission-ridden troposphere collecting gaseous discharge and converted. These receptacles leverage gaseous air pollution for the production of solid matter. In response to the data retrieved by the Scouts, the Harvesters are also able to travel to lower levels of the atmosphere to digest abandoned infrastructure from both land and sea. These include defunct and unused oil rigs, extraction facilities and instruments that are then decomposed into a special iron alloy with the use of carbonization within the vessel. Upon reaching its maximum capacity, the Harvester travels to its central base located in the Queen Maud Mountains of Antarctica, where they accumulate and aggregate according to their location to produce an archive of emission conditions.



GEOGRAPHICALLY ORIENTED ARCHIVES

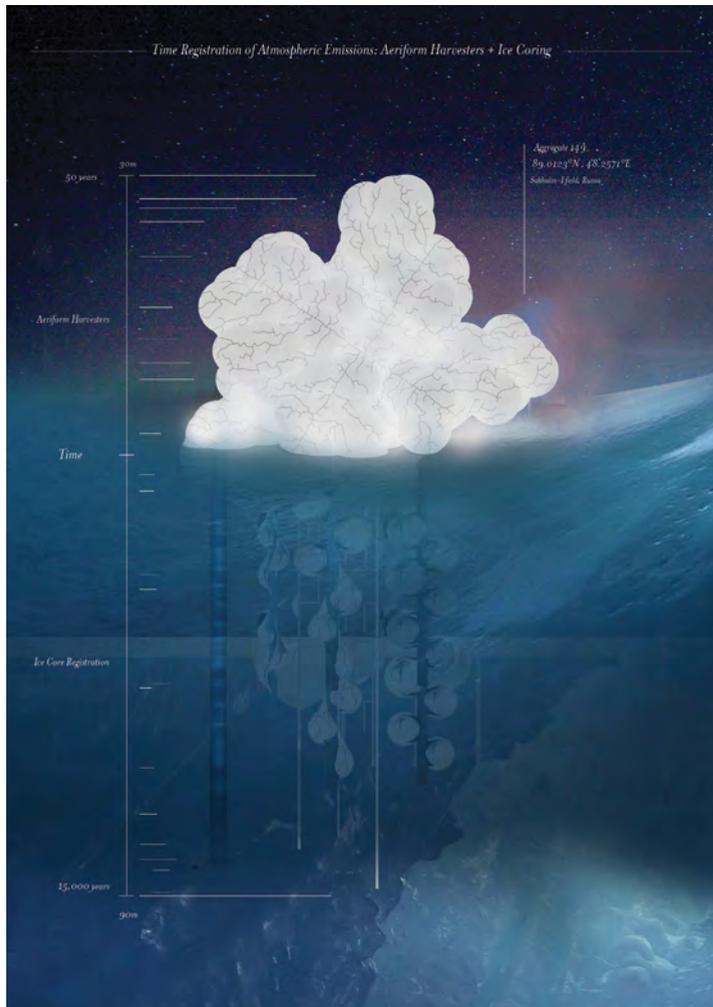
Different iterations of repository formations or archives are created, depending on the origins of the Harvesters. From below and within the crevices, small research stations are situated for the testing and experimentation with air. The accumulation of Harvesters mark an accelerated form of time registration above the ice, while the ice sheet below provides a register of the past. Queen Maud Research Station resides as a monitor and archive for atmospheric conditions. Over an extended period of time, the outer membrane of the Harvesters decomposes, leaving an architectural scaffold of gas pipes not intended for human use.

ATMOSPHERIC REPOSITORIES

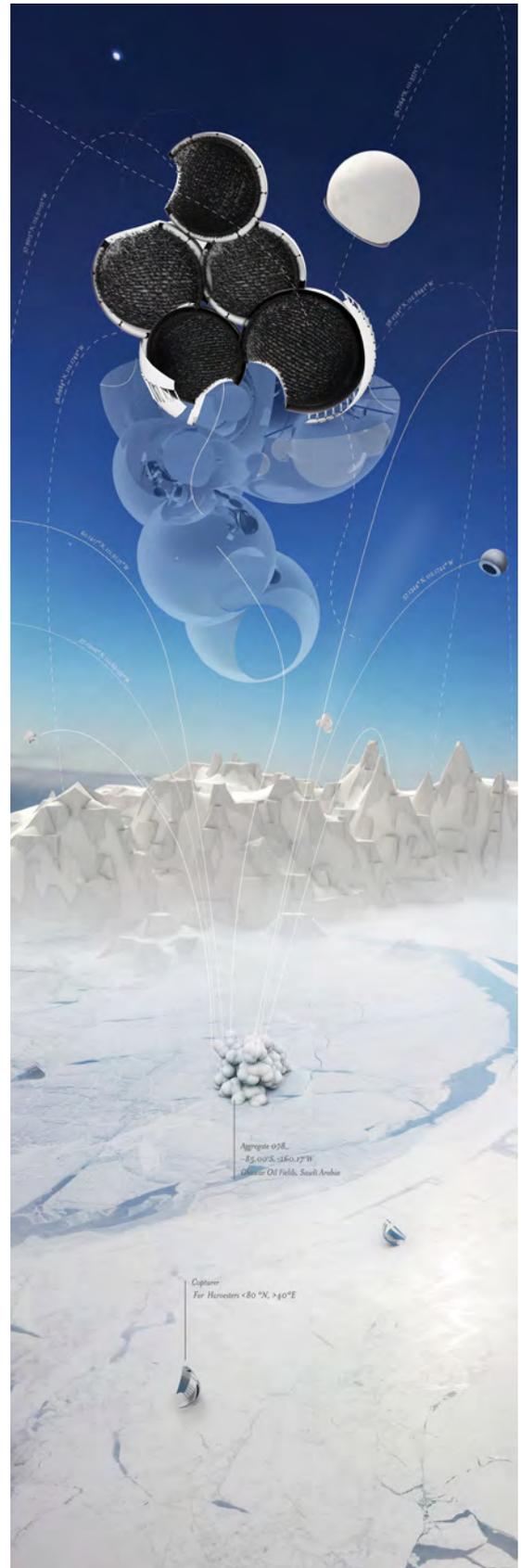
This juxtaposition between the man-made architecturally programmed pods with the emission harvesters acts as a way to reimagine our relationship with anthropogenic byproducts. The internal solidified modules of the Harvester (comprised of both emission byproducts and defunct petroleum infrastructures) are then leveraged as structural material for flooring, mechanical equipment, and scientific study within the Queen Maud Research Stations. Meanwhile, the outer layers, which are made up of pipelines for storage, are continuously extracted of the gaseous byproducts by laboratory equipment for inspection and data collection.

ICE CORING PARALLELS

The accumulation of Harvesters mark an accelerated form of time registration above the ice, while the ice sheet below provided a register of the past. Queen Maud Research Station resides as a monitor and archive for atmospheric conditions. Through tracking the rate of these growths, scientists can track the composition of the atmosphere at different moments in history.



These dirigibles collect to form an atmospheric repository that coincide with the contemporary practice of ice coring, the drilling of ice to reconstruct a climatic record as well as history of atmospheric compositions. This effect is produced through the trapping of air bubbles in the melting & refreezing of glacial sheets throughout millenia. Capturers are positioned by researchers to denote locations in which the Harvesters can land. Through a combination of aerial aggregation and accumulating on the ground, these Harvesters telluric growths of aeriform curations. Capturers depending on origins of solidified emissions within the vessel.



AUTOCATALYTIC RESEARCH STATION

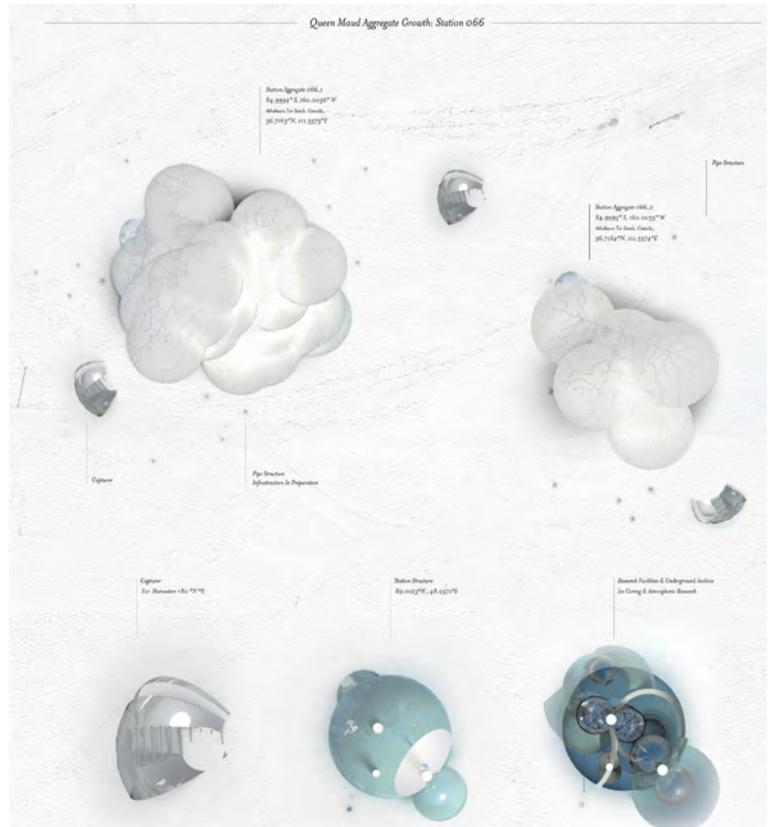
While each of these stations houses programs that include sampling and extraction, testing and experimentation (Testing Pod), and domestic activities (Living Pod), each posits to challenge our perception of emissions. We then observe the occupiable and also unoccupiable space as a way to express inhabiting an incomprehensible hyperobject.

TELLURIC INDUSTRIAL LANDFORMS

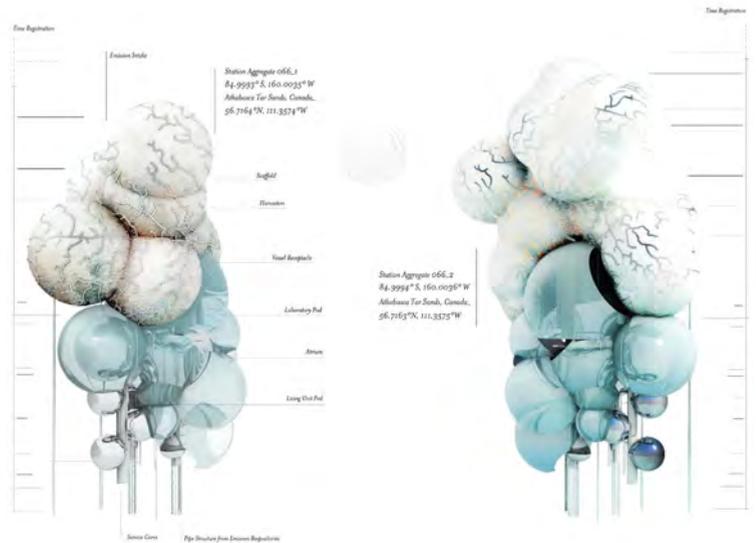
The inception of this autocatalytic ecology attempts to reconceive modes of inhabitation for the post-human condition using the emergent traits of growth and accretion from biochemical processes. Each one of these technologies can be constituted as a reactionary response to the emission ridden Anthropocene.

The Scout is a passive proxy to monitoring and sampling of an earth-wide condition. The Harvester is an active liaison that collects gaseous samples. The research station leverages the unanticipated occupiable opportunities of atmospheric products. All of these components work together to dissect the incomprehensible and intangible through the use of scientific observation and knowledge.

Aeriform Ecologies hopes to reimagine architectural motives for design through an alternative complex logic that is intricately tied to the anthropogenic conditions of industrialization and technology. This anticipates a move to reconceive contemporary perceptions of air emissions tangentially to the unanticipated spatial qualities of atmosphere, while speculating on the viability and curious undertones of inhabiting a pseudo-geological landform comprised of industrial aeriform matter. ■



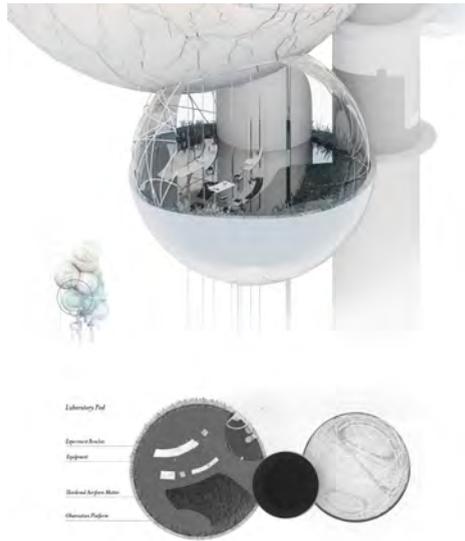
QUEEN MAUD AGGREGATE GROWTH STATION



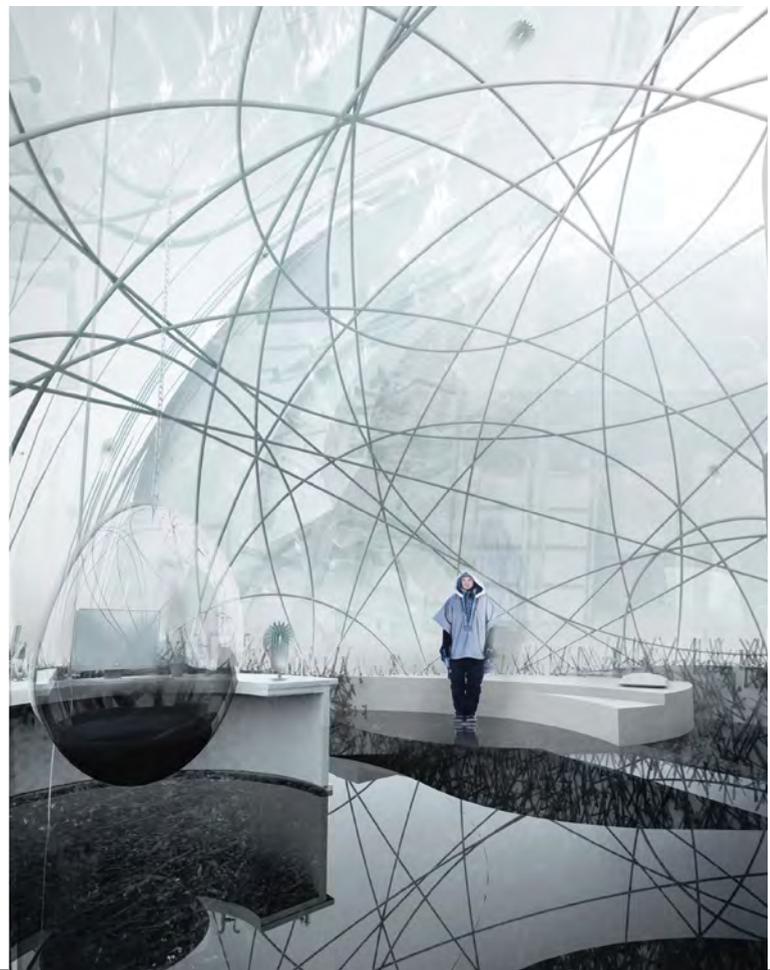
MARIE BYRD GROWTH: STATION 017

Known as the Marie Byrd Research Station, the accumulation of these vessels originate from the Athabasca Tar Sands in Alberta, Canada.

QUEEN MAUD STATION 066'S LABORATORY AND TESTING POD



QUEEN MAUD STATION'S LIVING AND RESEARCH POD

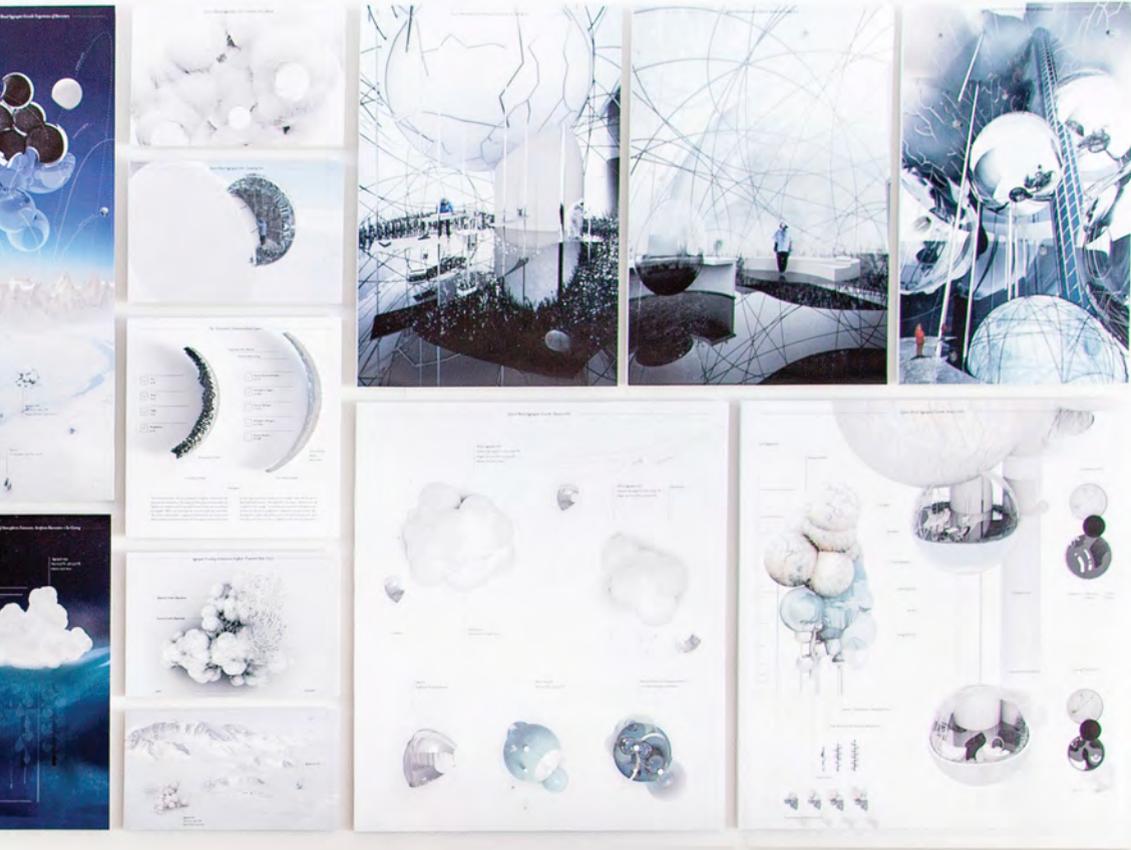


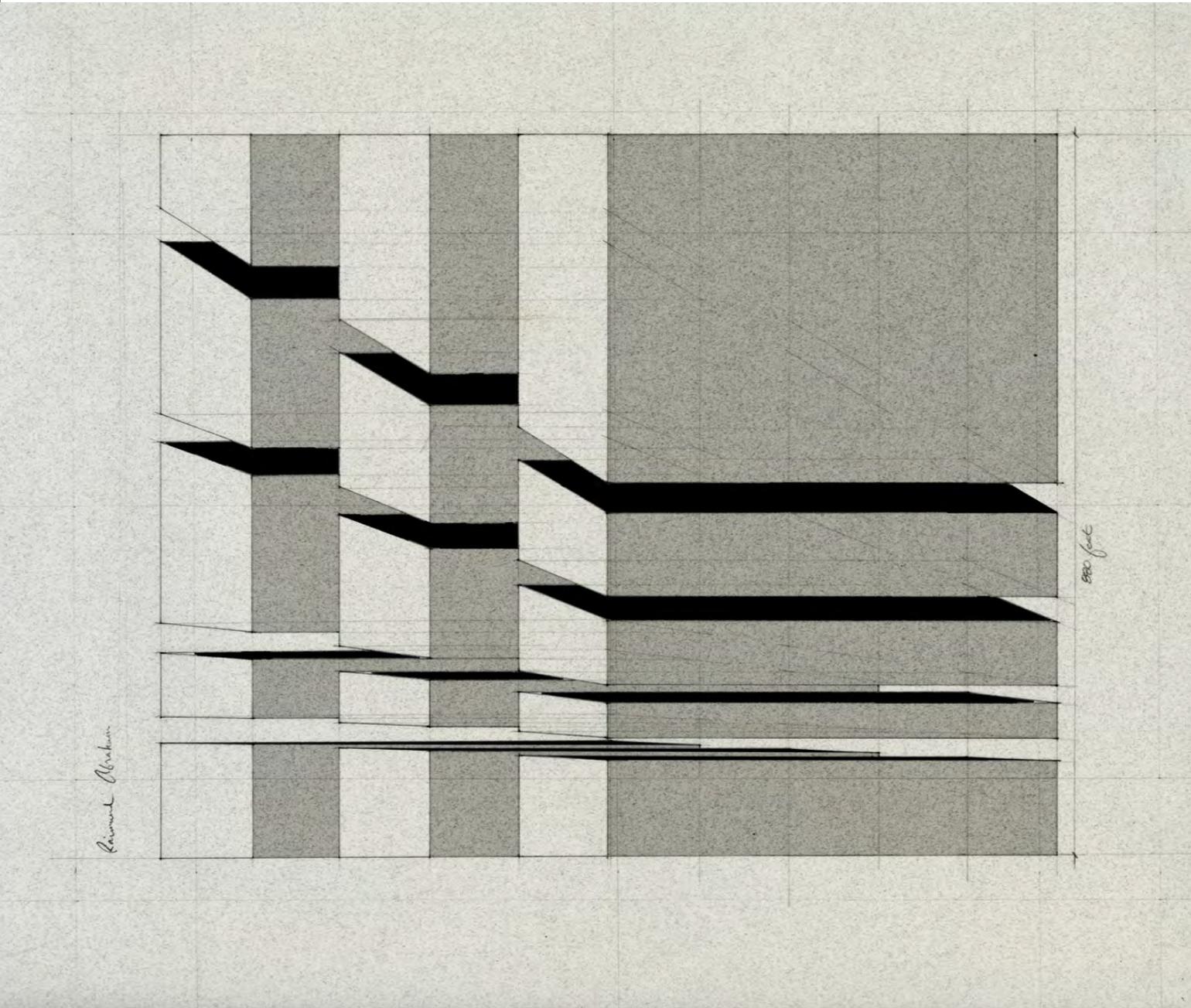
CONCURRENT INHABITATION WITH EMISSIONS

Living amongst the Anthropogenic by-products of the globe; the solidified aeriform matter can be seen as garden of carbon modules.



Aeriform Ecologies Exhibition
University of Michigan
Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning





Raimund Abraham's
Ground Zero (redrawn)

A Monument in Two Dimensions

A Monument in Two Dimensions attempts to work at the levels of both content and form. In other words, the artifacts/drawings developed throughout the year are as much the proposal as the content they represent.

Precedent as concept is taken on explicitly as a driver in content as a result of beginning to author a thesis. Monuments or architectural mnemonic devices, come into play because they are designed objects, images, and structures that base themselves entirely on something that came before them.

The work consists of a curation of intentionally unbuilt projects proposed for New York City. “Intentionally unbuilt” is important because these projects have remained abstract and in so doing speak to their concepts or statements more readily.

Following this, the content of the monument is not intended to be built, but rather to spark memories in the viewer associated with the curation, or other more personal experiences.

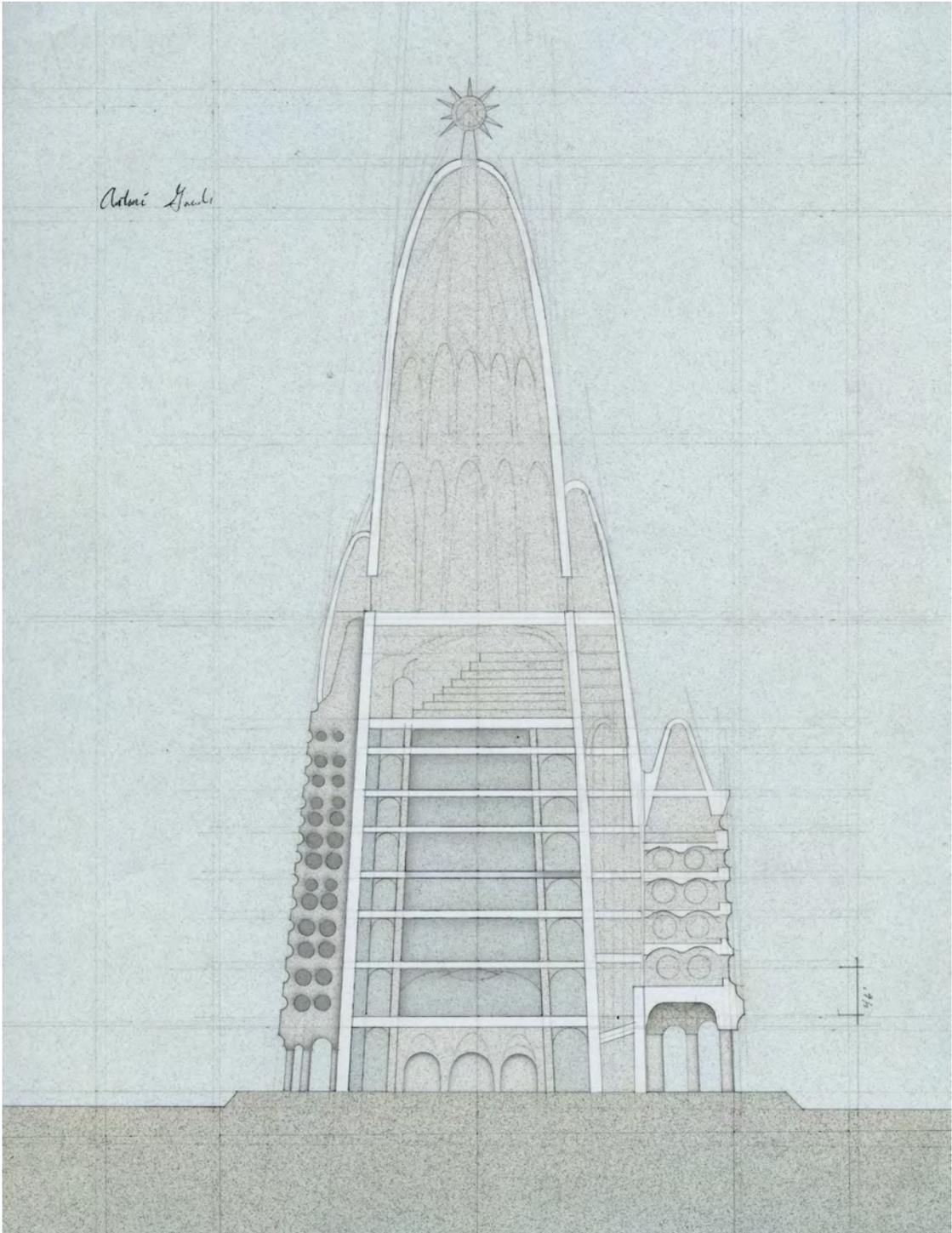
The projects are redrawn, pulling them out of a solely iconic existence into one that re-contextualizes the aims of each designer. This curation of new drawings provides fodder from which to design a monument.

The next stage of the work is the production of the monument. Monumentality relies on an autographic, unique, and unrepeatable existence, and as such, the design work is predominantly manual. The drawing itself becomes an artifact, something that is one of a kind, instead of just a print, and therefore becomes the monument itself.

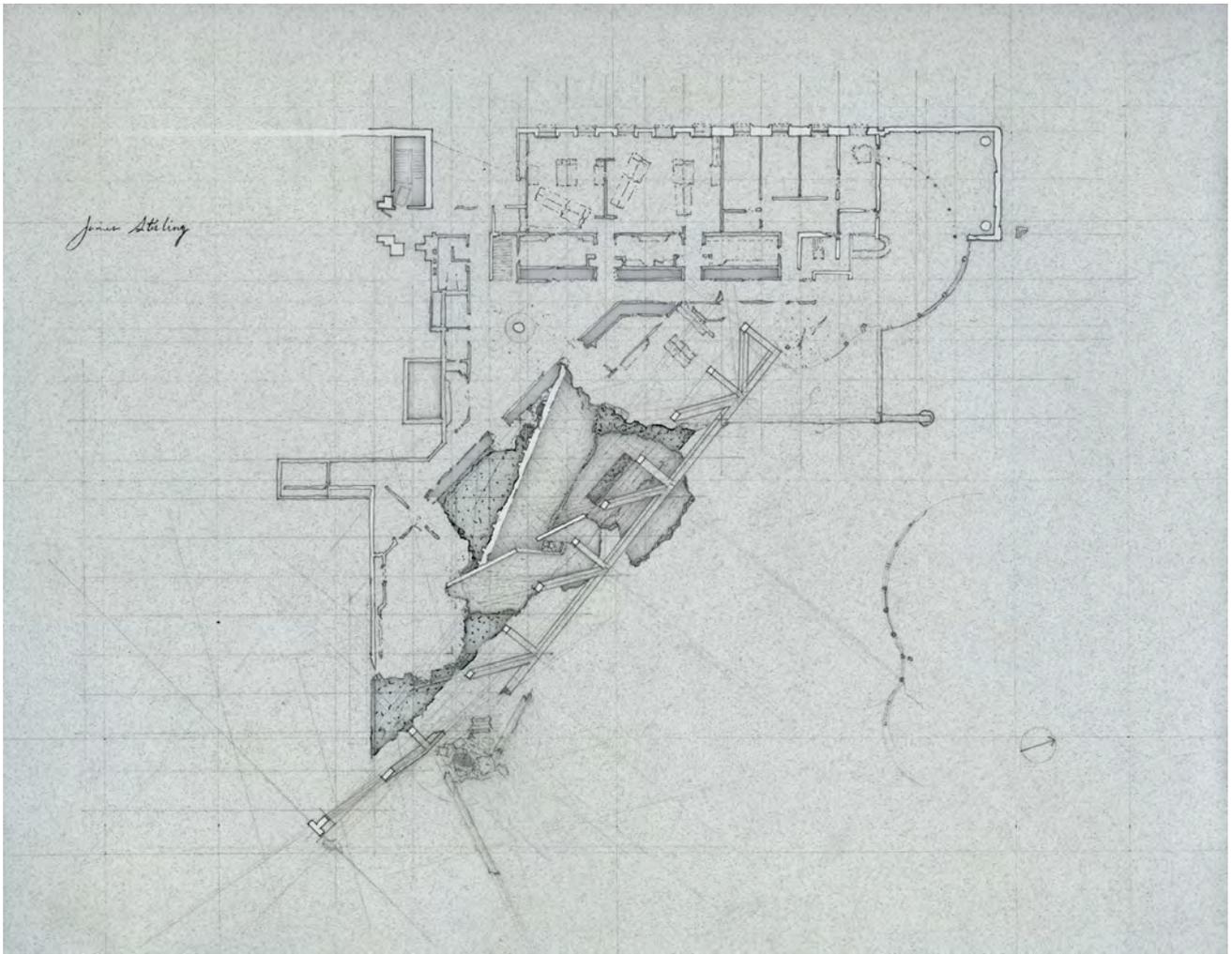
If the drawings are the monument, then paper must be the site. Methods of working, like creating hatches out of recognizable, scaled objects, help the viewer flicker between the scale of the content represented and the scale of the actual artifact. The use of multiple orthographic projection types per page also intends to keep the viewer from seeing only the content of the monument. If the y cannot inhabit the content in their minds, they are forced to consider the form of the monument: fourteen 18 in x 12 in rectangles on a wall.

In the end, what is produced is a set of content-driven reactions to a curation of canonical, unbuilt architectural proposals. These come together to create a monument in the form of a drawing.

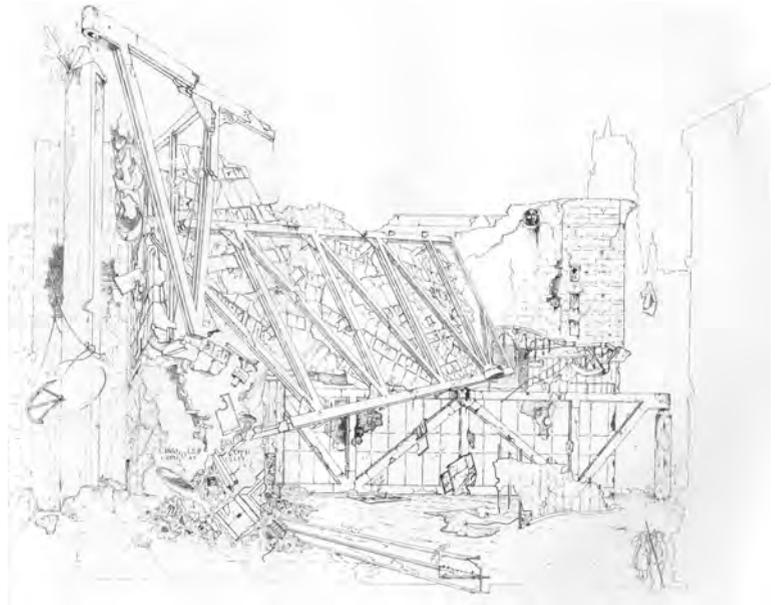
MICHELANGELO LATONA



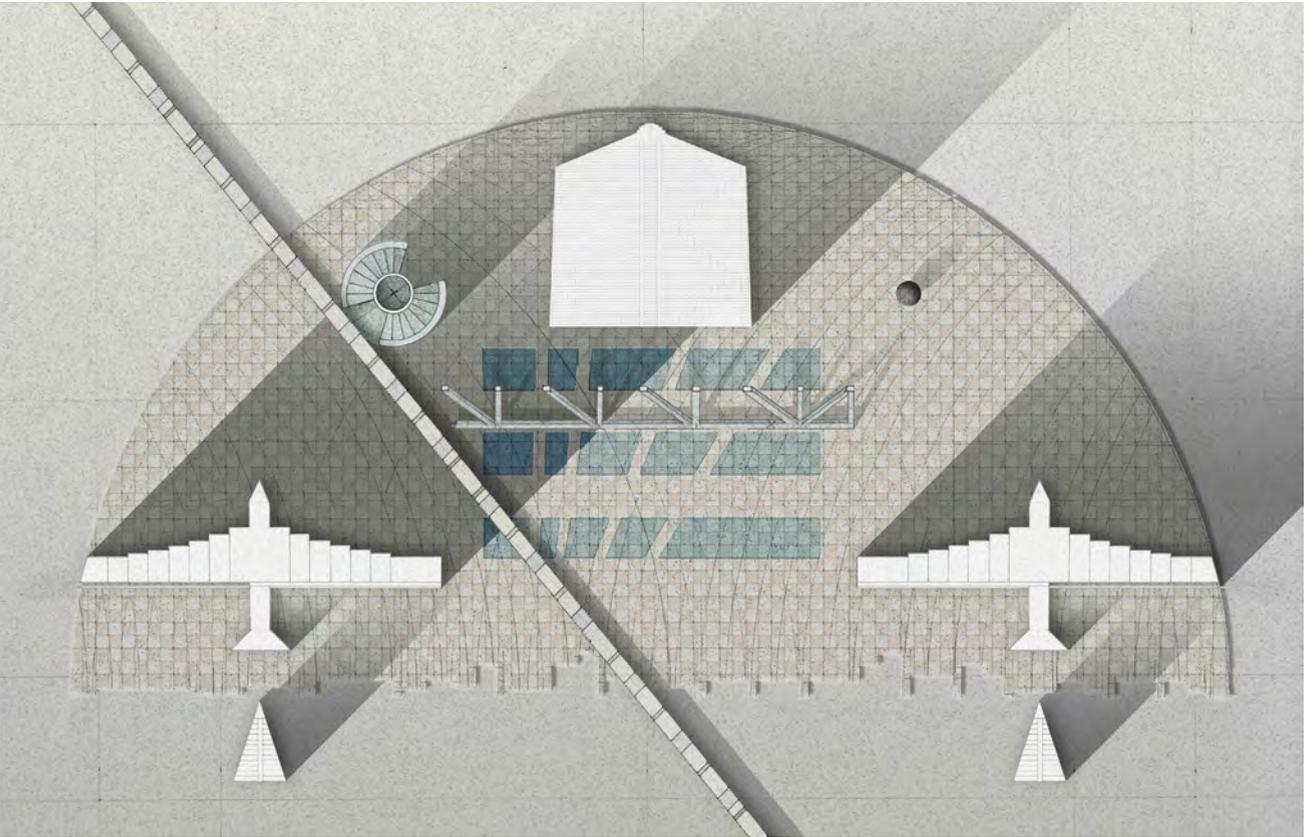
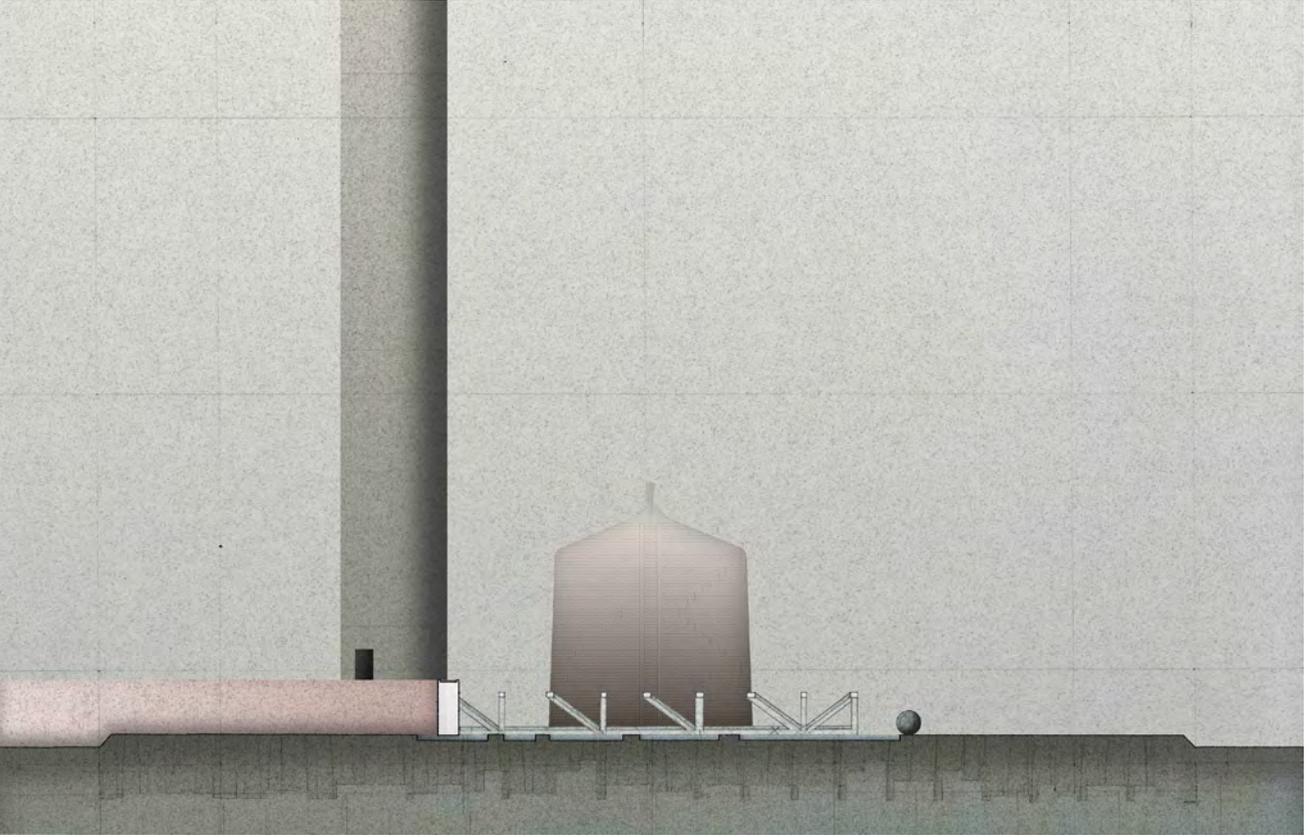
Antoni Gaudí's Grand Hotel (redrawn)

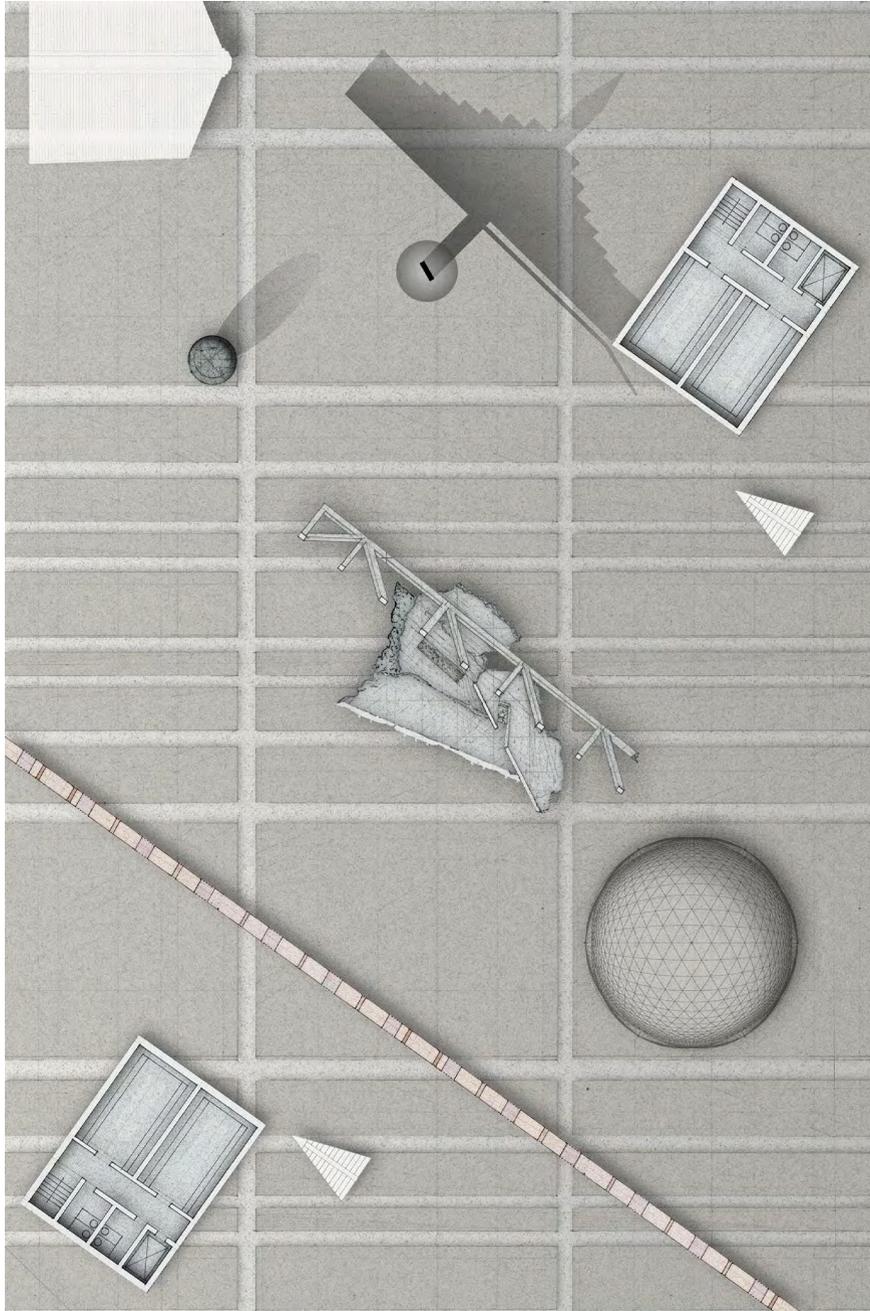


James Stirling's ruined
Columbia Chemistry Addition (redrawn)

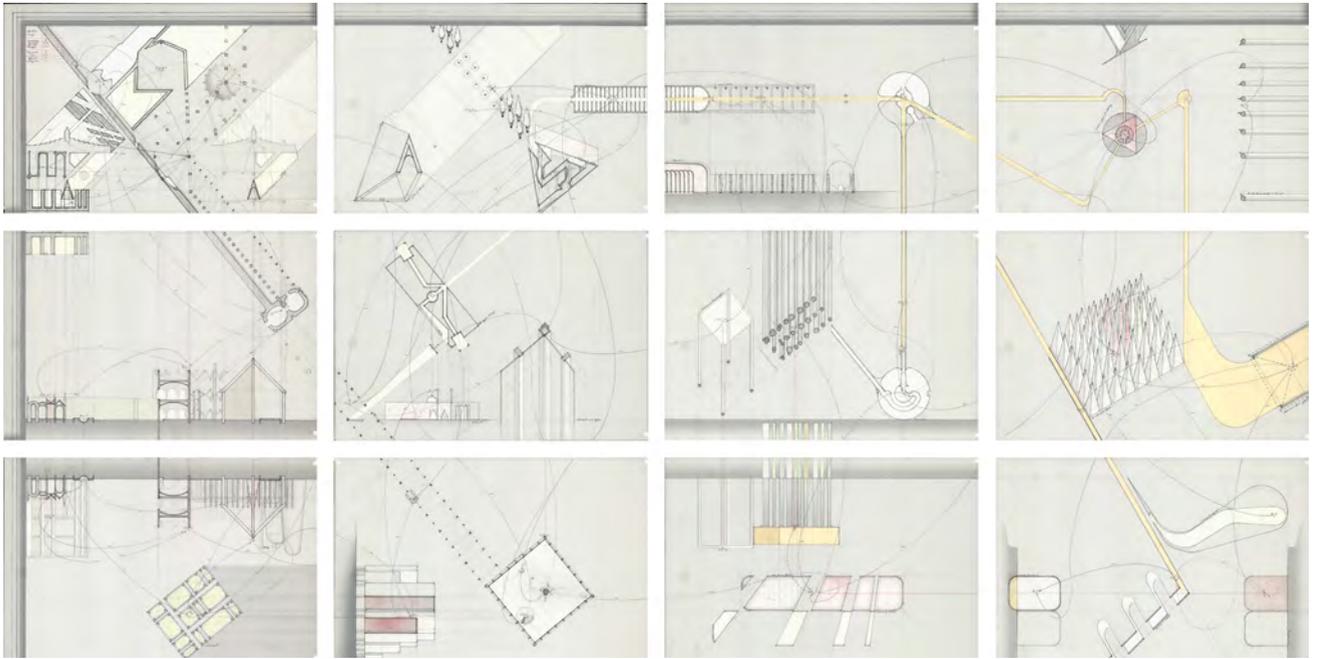


James Stirling's ruined
Columbia Chemistry Addition



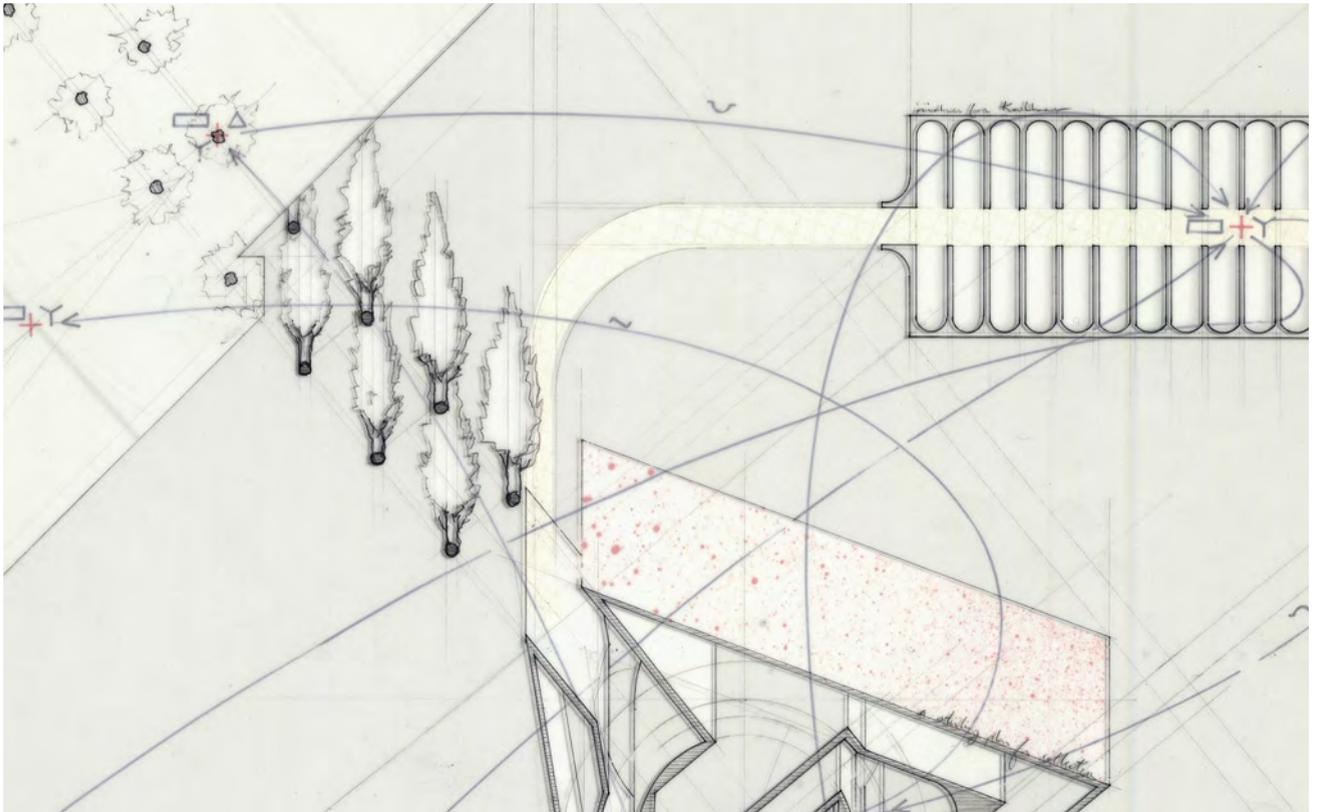


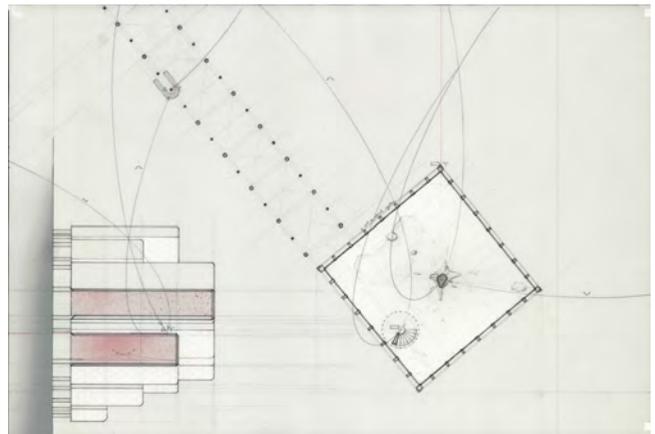
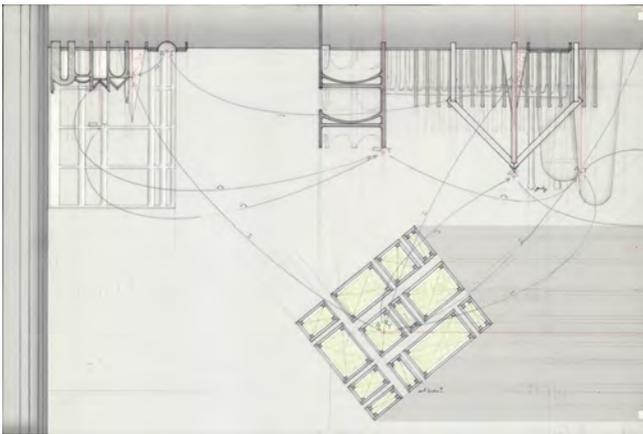
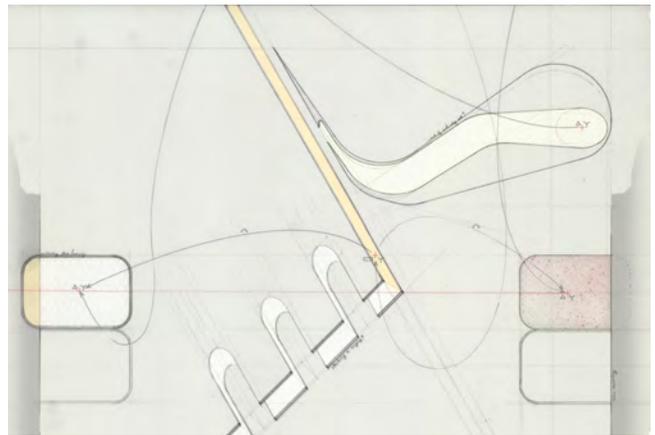
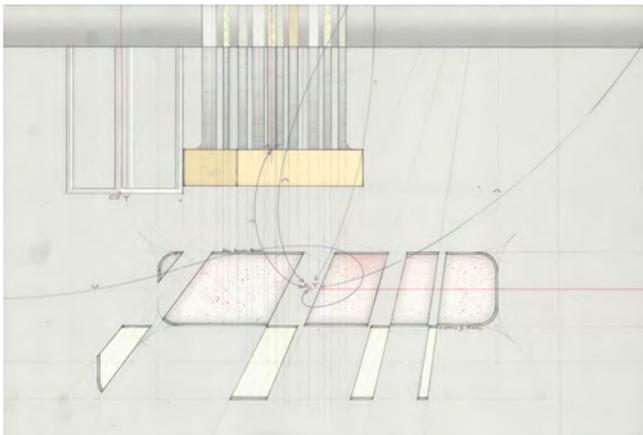
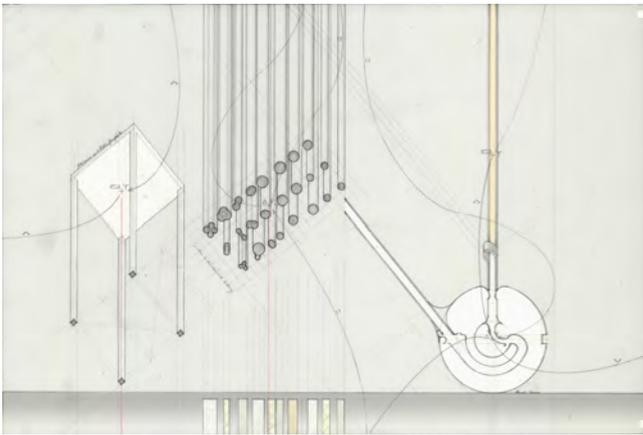
Initial design trials



12 Paper Monuments

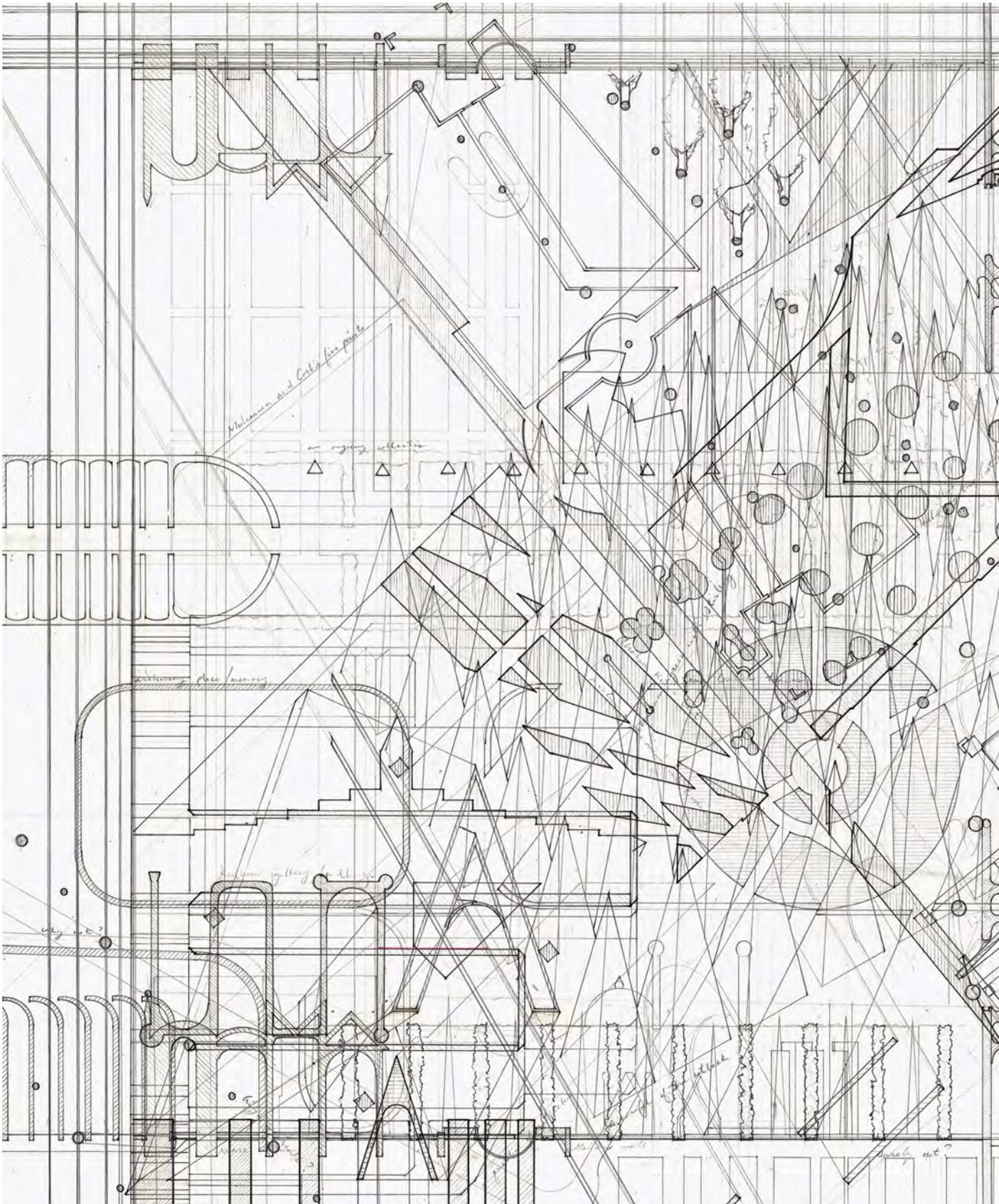
That Thing Rem Koolhaas Likes to Do (detail)

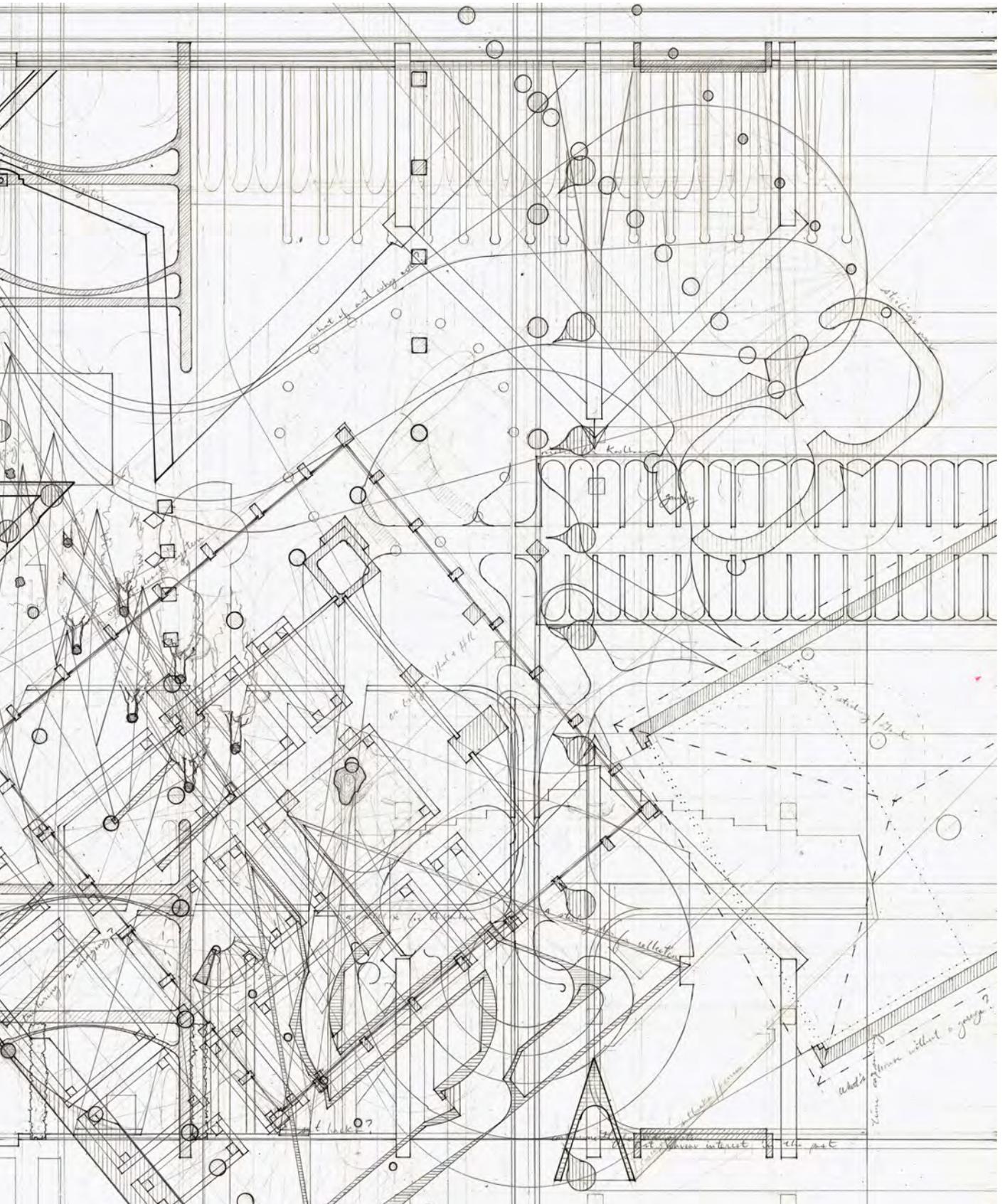




James Stirling on Egypt
Over / Under Raymond Hood
Hugh Ferriss muses on Art Nouveau

A Flamboyant Dodge by Antoni Gaudi
Medicine Time for Raimund Abraham
A Bridge to Bucky Fuller







Fold Out

It has always been the work of the designer to make sense of technological change and to control the perceptual effects of new industry on a culture. The radical explorations of 1960s Italian architecture and furniture design were a direct commentary on the age of mass production and industrialization occurring in Europe and America. By sampling form, color, material, and manufacturing techniques, architects and designers like Ettore Sottsass and Alessandro Mendini worked to challenge popular perceptions of familiar objects and spaces through design. Their work positioned the designer as the interpreter of technological change, and sought means by which a culture could radically engage new technology. We seek to reframe this line of exploration within the digital age, leveraging contemporary fabrication techniques and forms of computation

to construct ambiguous and sometimes contradictory relationships between an object, the space it forms, and its apparent function (or lack thereof). The design fosters incongruous relationships between materiality, technique, scale, and form in order to deny a decisive reading of the overall construct. An interest in the forms of curved folds and the technique of domestic upholstery is paired with the inherently opposed materiality of repurposed aluminum sheets and clearance aisle pleather. The outcome is indeterminate, yet surely it falls somewhere between a couch and a space frame.

Couch

Somewhere Between a Couch and a Space Frame

REBECCA BRAUN · TYLER SMITH

TECHNIQUE

The technique of curved folding was a constant line of formal inquiry within the project, conceived from the outset as scalable both dimensionally and materially. Formal research was carried out across a wide range of materials, utilizing a variety of advanced fabrication techniques. A series of curves, generated digitally, were first etched into sheets of Bristol using laser cutters and then quickly folded by hand and glued. This allowed for rapid iteration and initial analysis of formal qualities. Next, the curves were scored into large sheets of PETG on a Zünd knife cutter, folded, and roughly upholstered with a variety of plush materials. This stage of research allowed for the introduction of new contradictions between materials (hard or soft, glossy or matte, sharp or pillowy), while also providing an initial understanding of the necessary detailing needed for a full-scale fabrication. Forms and material combinations deemed interesting, appalling, or otherwise compelling became candidates for full scale testing. The final stage of research centered on realizing a single incarnation of the genealogy of forms and material combinations found within the work. Far from a conclusion, the resulting installation is rather a means of inserting the work into the world as an inhabitable construct to be engaged, analyzed, ignored, and ultimately destroyed. Through observing these interactions, we sought to challenge the common perceptions of materials, the means of their production, and the spaces they create.

PAPER, PLASTIC, AND ALUMINUM MODELS

Three iterations of models, including laser cut Bristol, Zünd cut PETG plastic with upholstered neon stretch fabric, and water jet cut and scored aluminum.

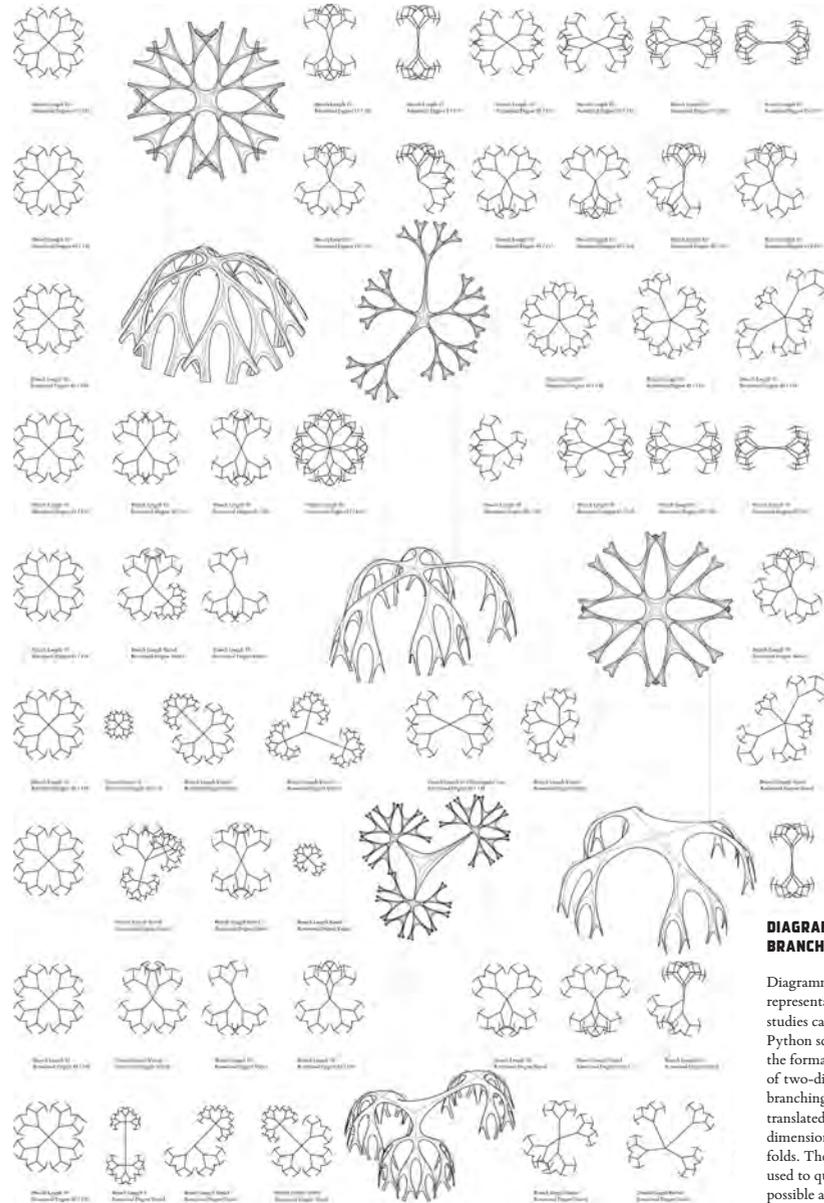
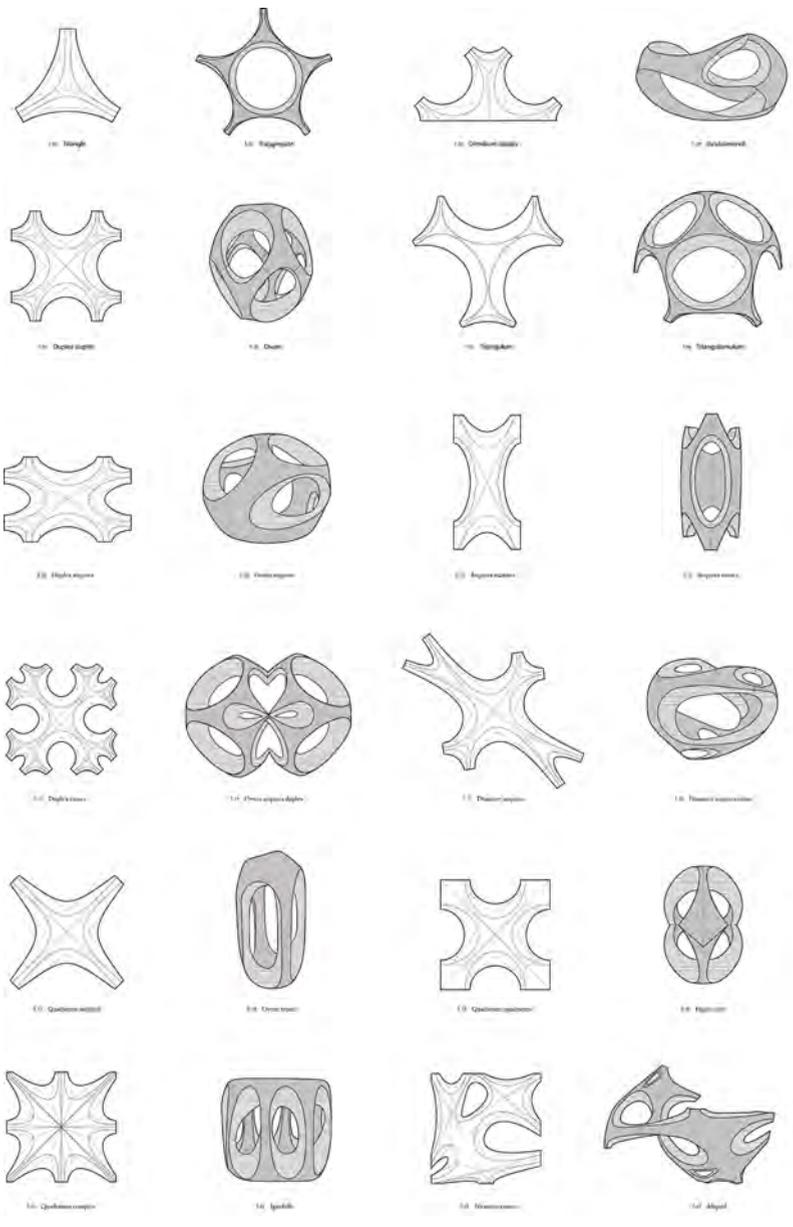


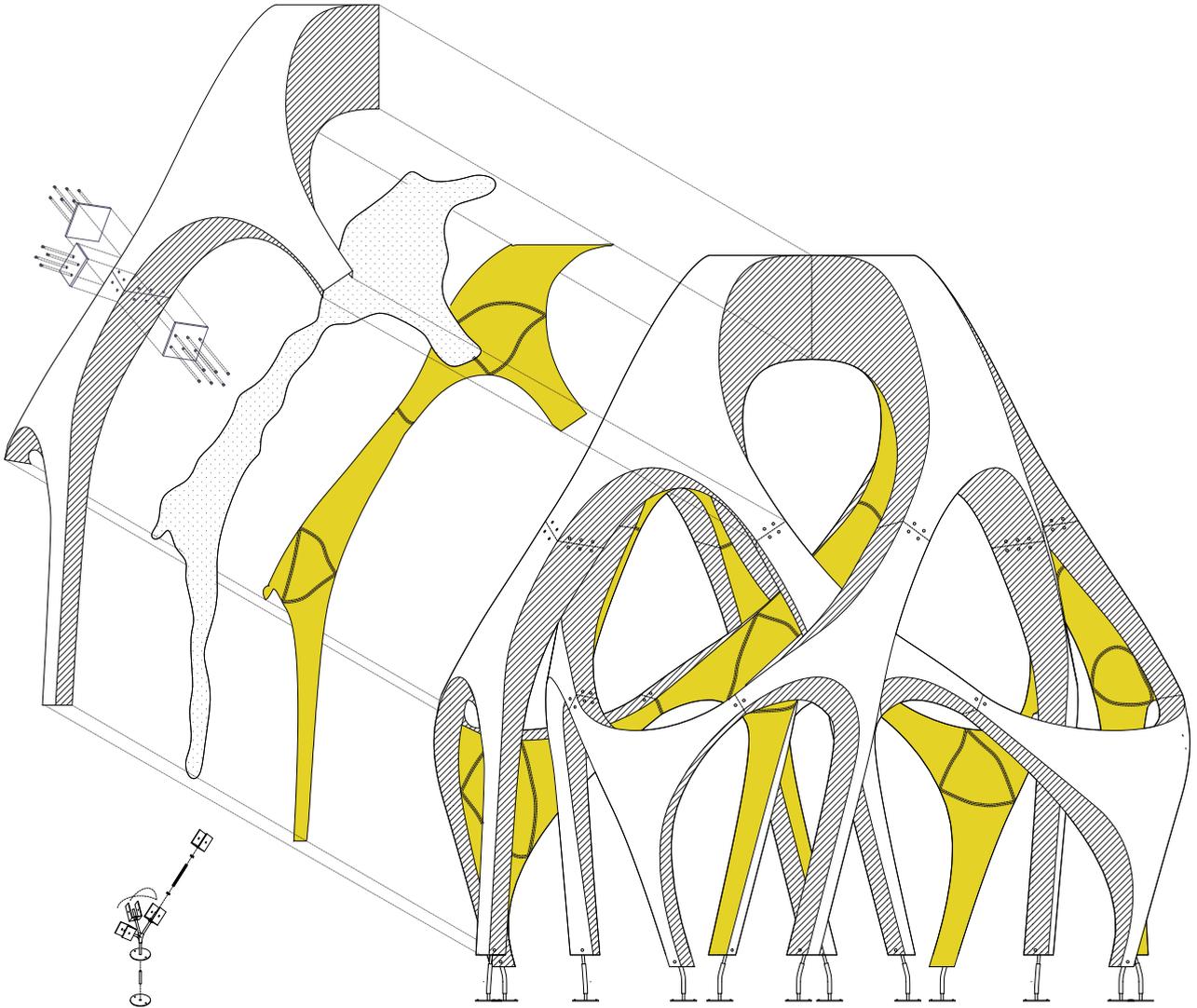
DIAGRAM OF BRANCHING PATTERNS

Diagrammatic representation of several studies carried out using Python scripting to assess the formal possibilities of two-dimensional branching patterns translated to three dimensions through curved folds. These studies were used to quickly evaluate possible aggregations of parts.



DRAWINGS OF PAPER MODELS AND CUT SHEETS

Drawings showcasing the translation from two-dimensional scores and cuts to three-dimensional folded objects. These studies made it possible to evaluate the characteristics of various folds and the qualities of the space they enclose.

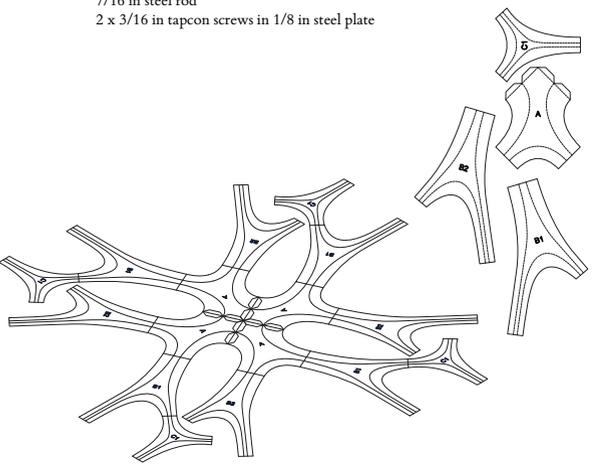


FOOTER DETAIL

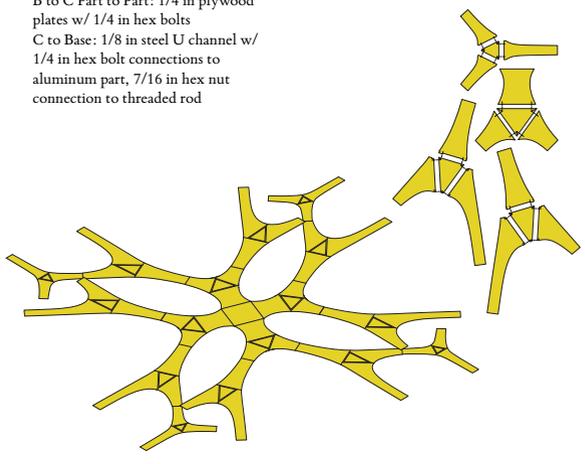
- 1/8 in steel U channel
- 7/16 in threaded rod
- 3/8 in rubber gas line
- 7/16 in steel rod
- 2 x 3/16 in tapcon screws in 1/8 in steel plate

ELEVATION

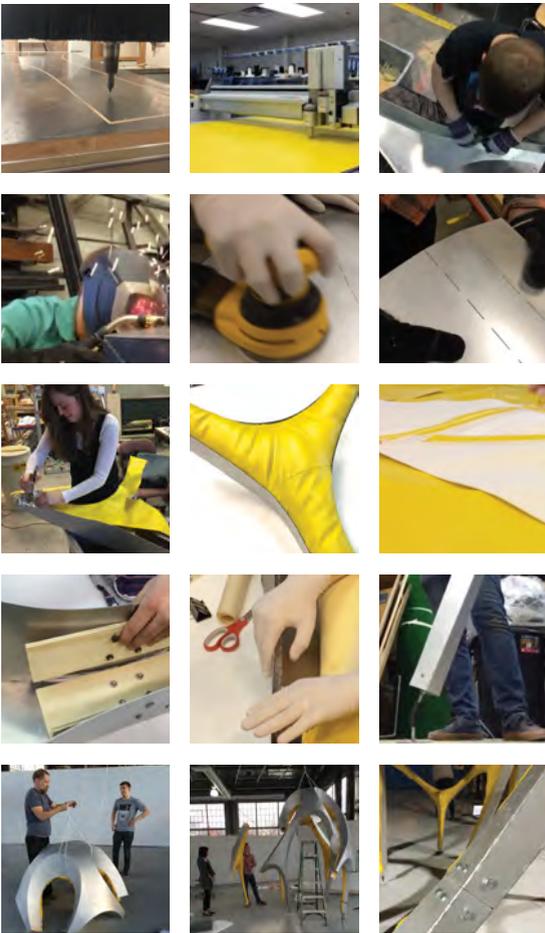
- A to B Part to Part Connection:
1/4 in plywood plates w/ 1/4 in hex bolts
- B to C Part to Part: 1/4 in plywood plates w/ 1/4 in hex bolts
- C to Base: 1/8 in steel U channel w/ 1/4 in hex bolt connections to aluminum part, 7/16 in hex nut connection to threaded rod



UNFOLDED ALUMINUM



UNFOLDED FABRIC



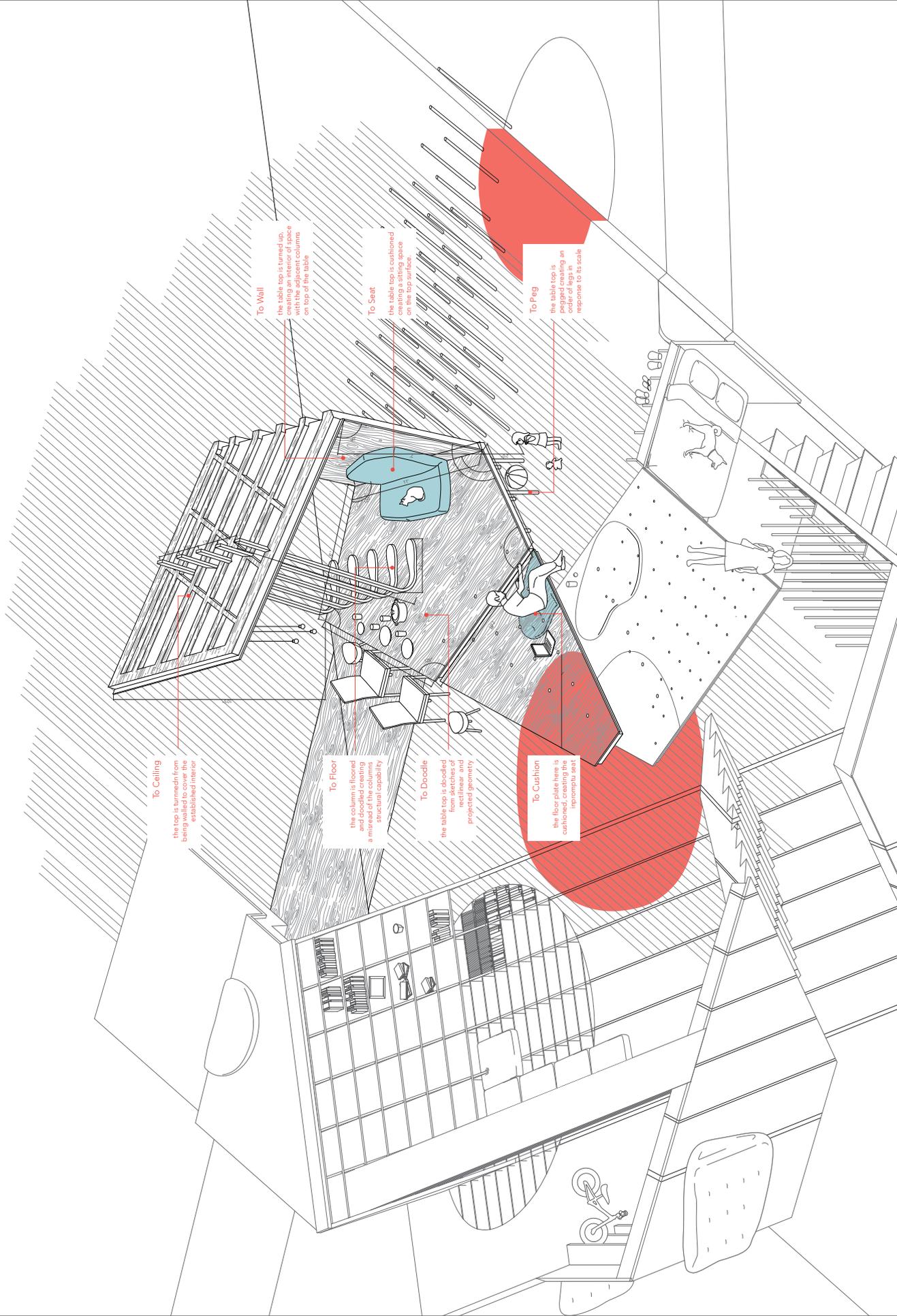
FABRICATION

Following extensive material and formal research, preparations began for a full scale, inhabitable prototype which users could interact with and evaluate. Repurposed aluminum sheets were sourced from a local warehouse and rolls of yellow pleather were selected in equal part for their gaudy shade and distinctly tactile texture. Sheets of aluminum were scored and cut on a CNC router before being thoroughly sanded and clear coated to deburr the score lines and give a soft matte finish. Finished parts were carefully folded by hand and lined with flexible metal tack strip, traditionally used in upholstery. Pleather strips were cut on a Zünd knife cutter and sewed to fit within the folded metal parts. Once upholstered, parts were fastened together using hex bolts and thin plywood plates, which secured the parts while providing sufficient flexibility for installation. Custom steel footers were designed with a thin rubber tube connection which allowed steel mounting plates

to be secured flush to the ground, while parts could comfortably rotate to attach to subsequent parts. As a reaction to strict time constraints and limited material, the final construction became a negotiation between fixed and flexible parts, which could be fabricated quickly with minimal waste and be installed on site in one run. *Fold Out Couch* seeks to reverse the traditional process of design by foregrounding material qualities and methods of fabrication as a means of projecting possible spaces. Rather than standing as a fully defined proposal, the project works as something of an inhabitable sketch highlighting qualities and contradictions within its materials and techniques, and offering means by which to evaluate and further the body of work. ■

FABRICATION PROCESS

The fabrication process consisted of CNC scoring and cutting aluminum sheets, deburring and finishing the flat parts with an orbital sander and clear coat for a matte finish, then hand folding the part. Finished parts were subsequently lined with a flexible metal tack strip and upholstered with Zünd cut and custom sewed pleather. Once upholstered, the cap piece was hoisted by pulleys and parts were attached top-down, then fixed to the floor through custom footer plates.



To Ceiling
the top is turned from being voided to cover the established interior

To Floor
the column is floored instead of the columns structural capability

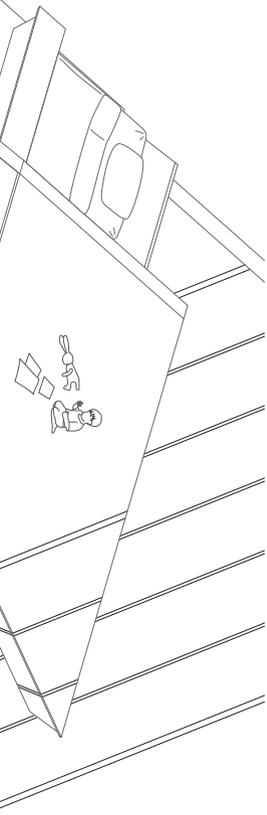
To Doodle
the table top is doodled from sketches of the mean and projected geometry

To Cushion
the floor plate here is cushioned, creating an impromptu seat

To Wall
the table top is turned up, creating an interior of space with the adjacent columns on top of the table

To Seat
the table top is cushioned creating a sitting space on the top surface

To Peg
the table top is pegged creating an order of light as required to its scale

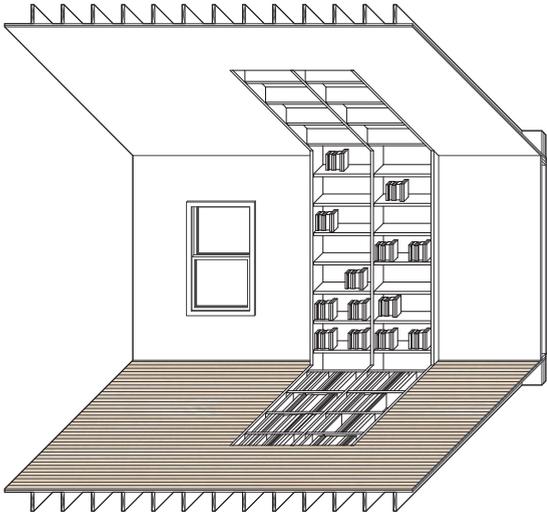


Noun Things

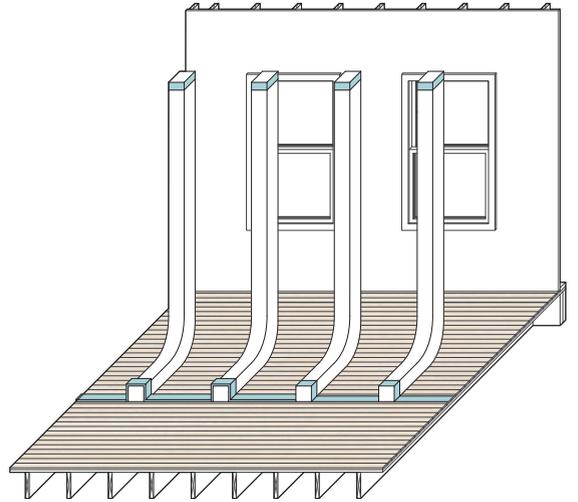
BRIAN BARBER · JOSEPH DONELKO JR

Noun Things establishes a new notion of the interior through deviations and distortions of typical architectural elements. The project mobilizes a set of nouns commonly used to describe interiors, such as “floor,” “wall,” and “cushion,” by transforming them into verb actions which disrupt the standard configuration and spatial capacities of familiar objects. Columns are floored, tables are walled, and floors are cushioned, for example, producing new forms of inhabitation and spatial character. 45-degree parallel projection is used both as a space-making and representational

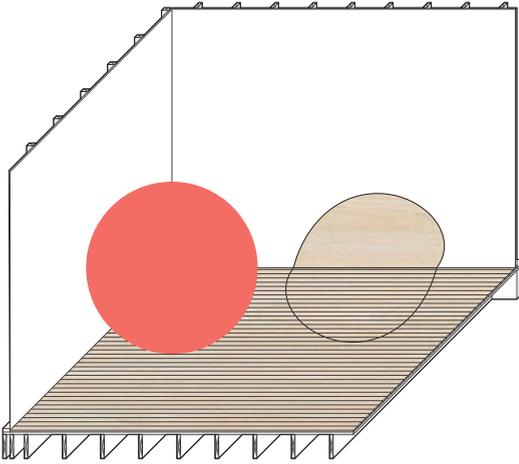
strategy. For example, tilted columns destabilize the typical orientation of a space along the x, y, and z-axes, and column bases shaped by the projection of a circle produce elongated ovals perfect for sitting and lounging. This use of multiple projection angles allows new elements to take on various roles within themselves and new orientations in space. The use of 45-degree isometric drawings further emphasizes the strange nature of this new interior, while maintaining the measured control of standard architectural drawings.



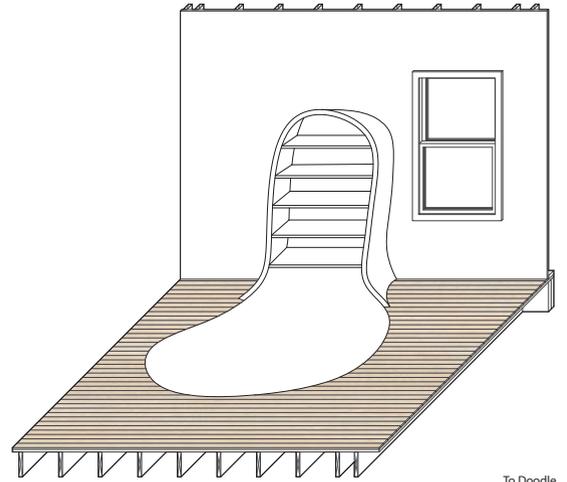
To Floor | Ceiling



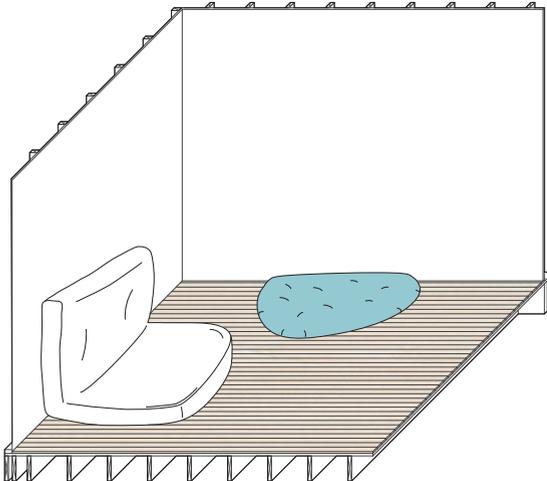
To Floor



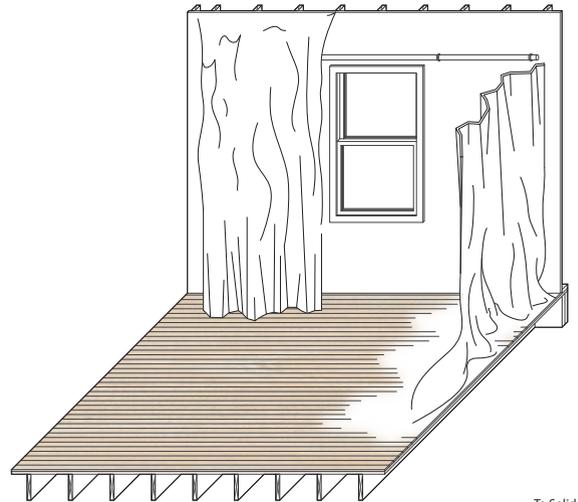
To Circle



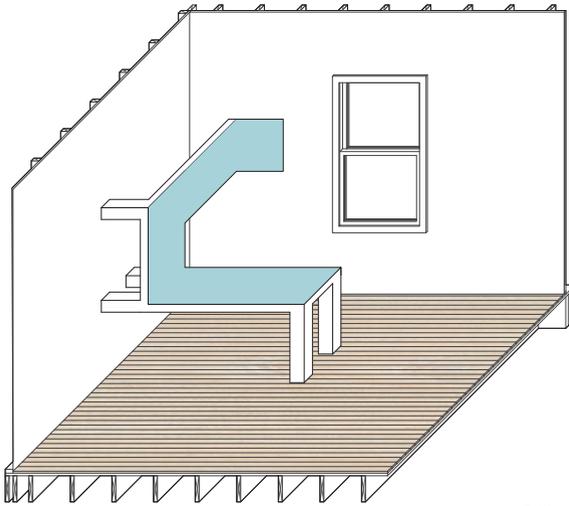
To Doodle



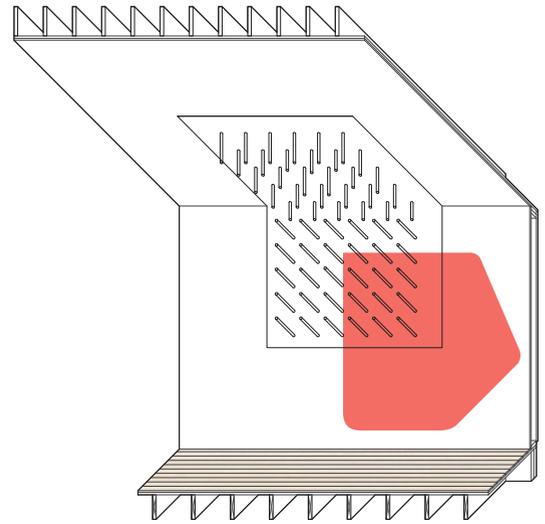
To Cushion



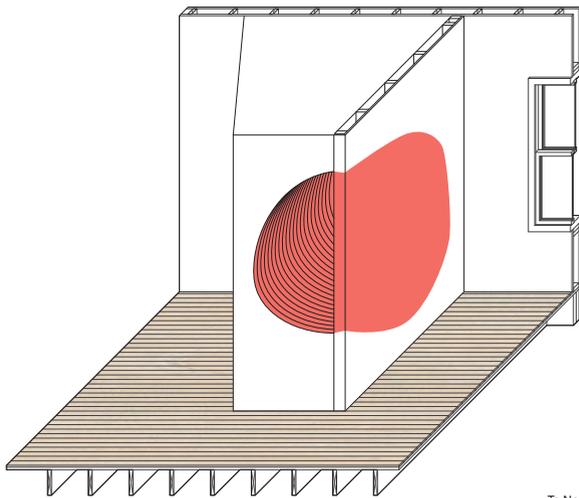
To Solid



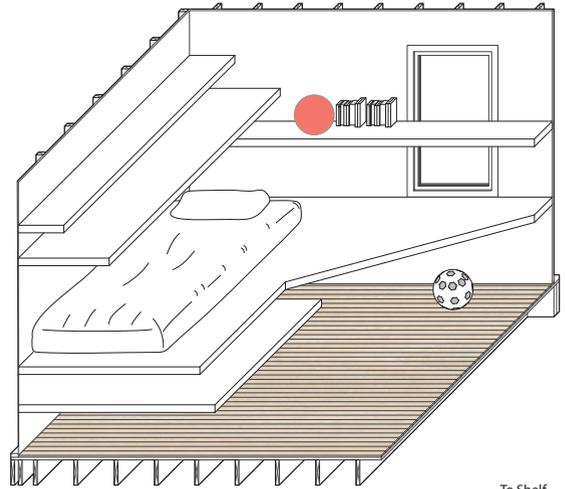
To Wall



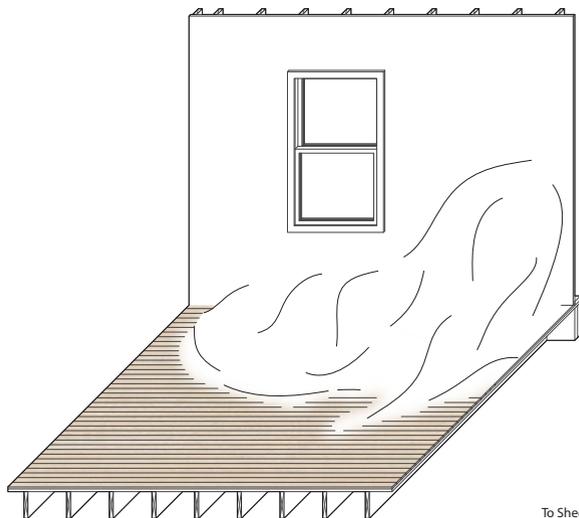
To Ceiling



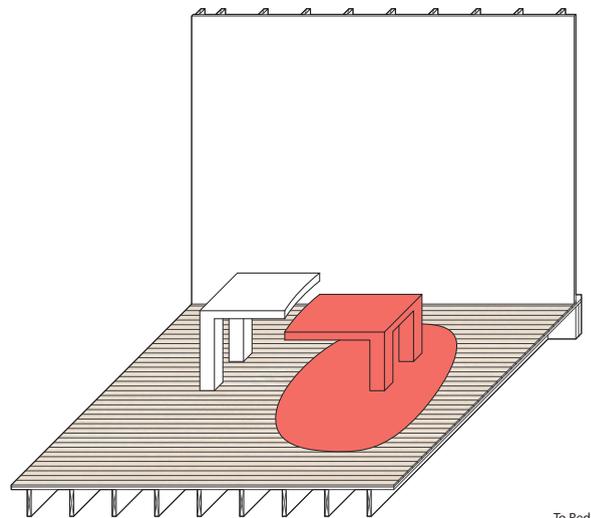
To Nook



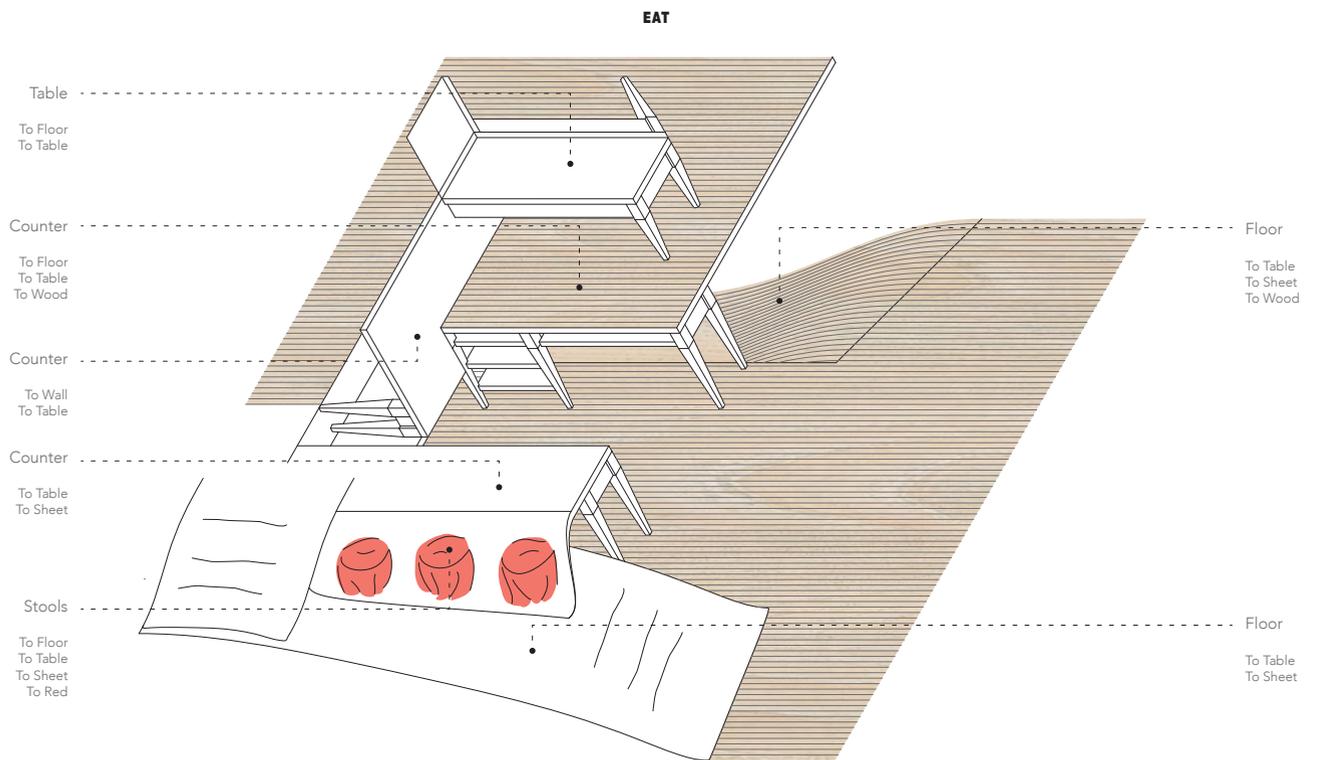
To Shelf



To Sheet

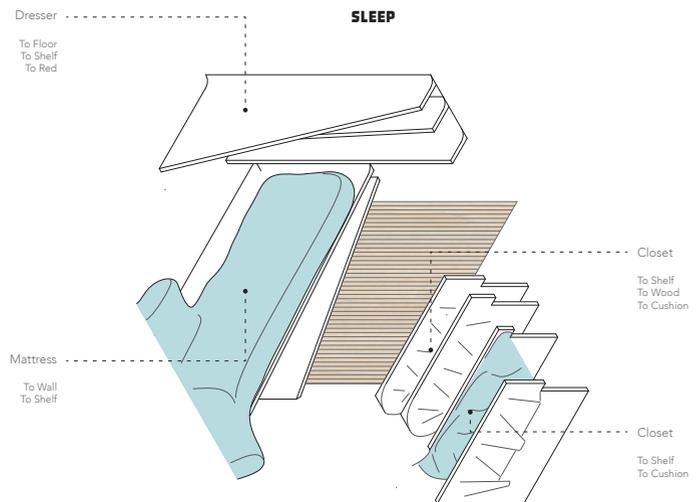
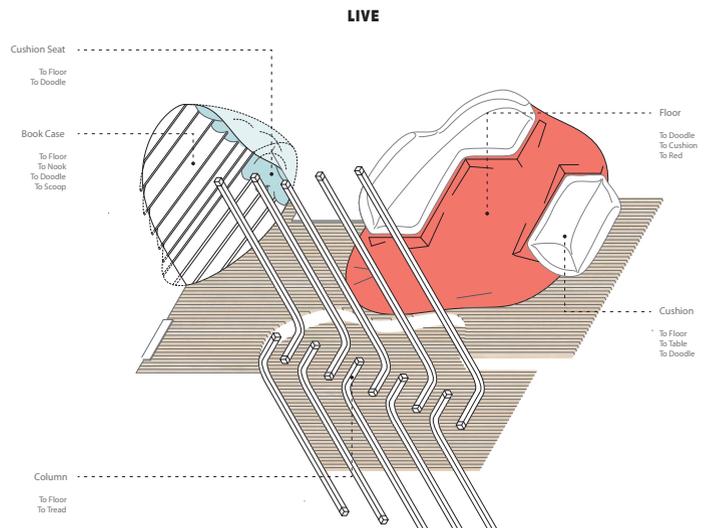
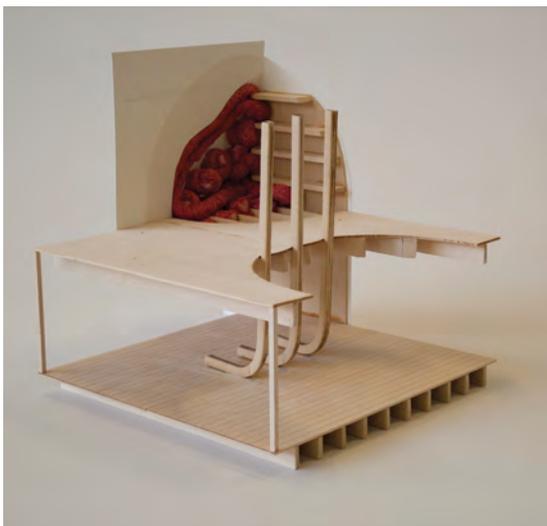
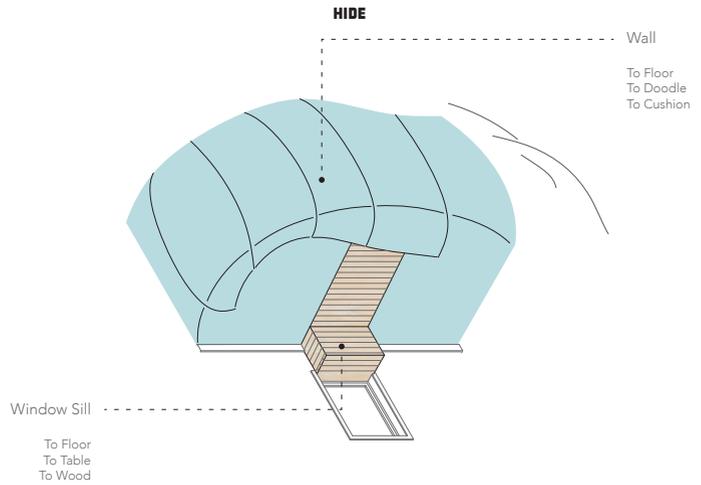
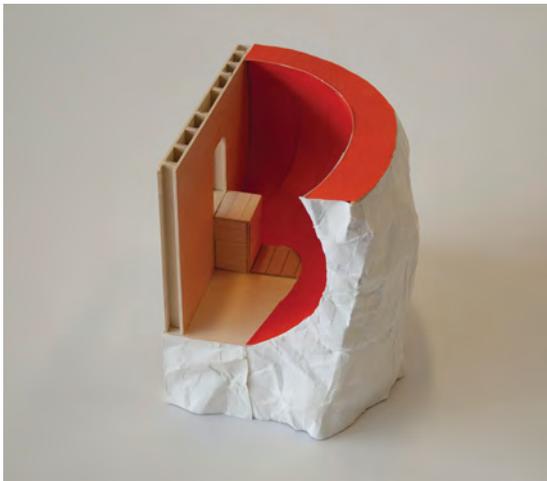


To Red



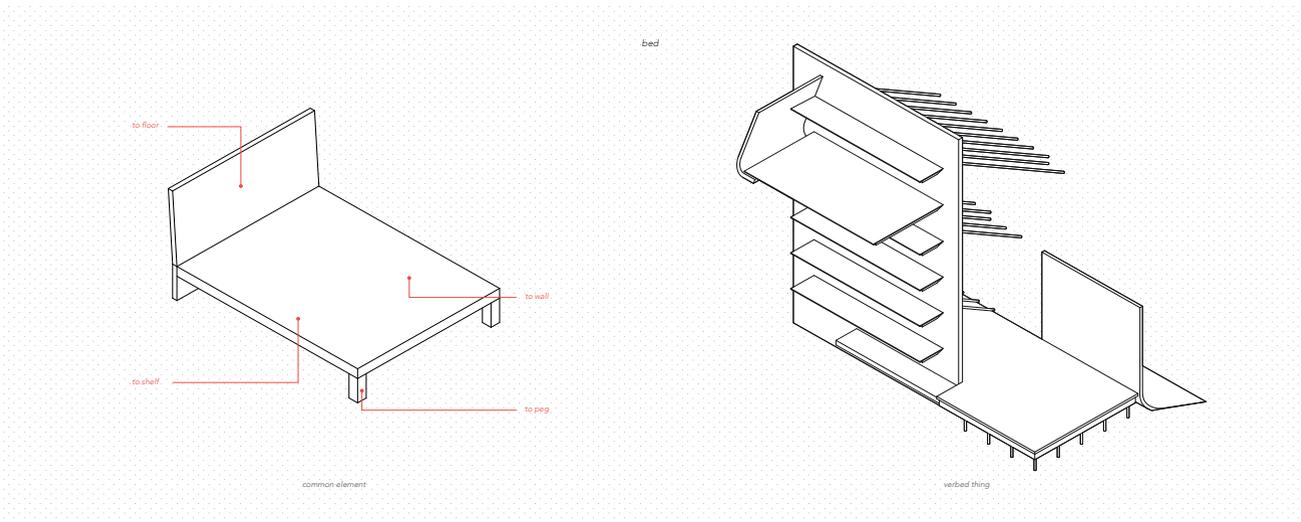
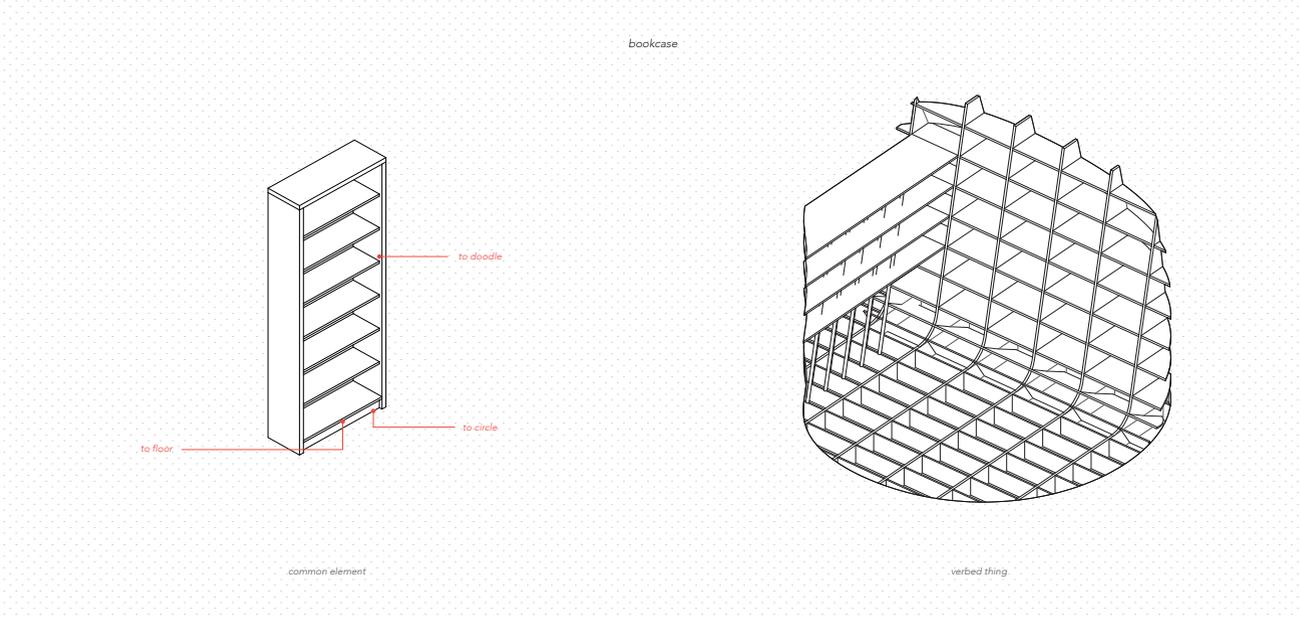
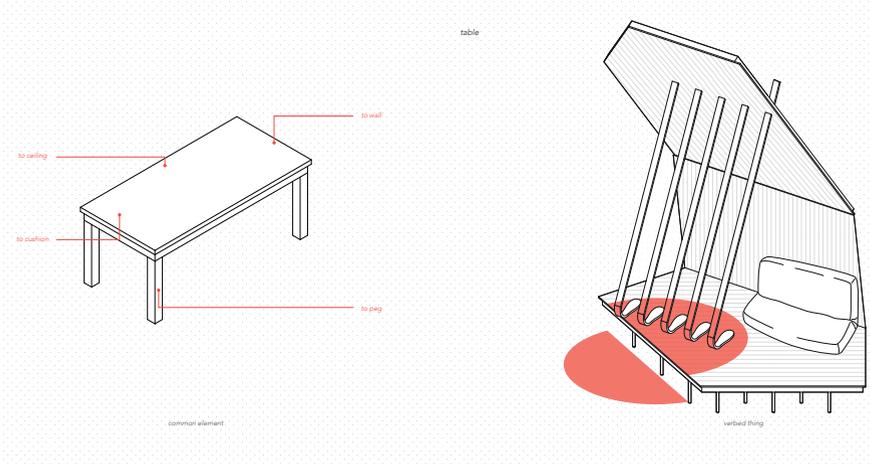
ROOMS AND THEIR INTERIORS

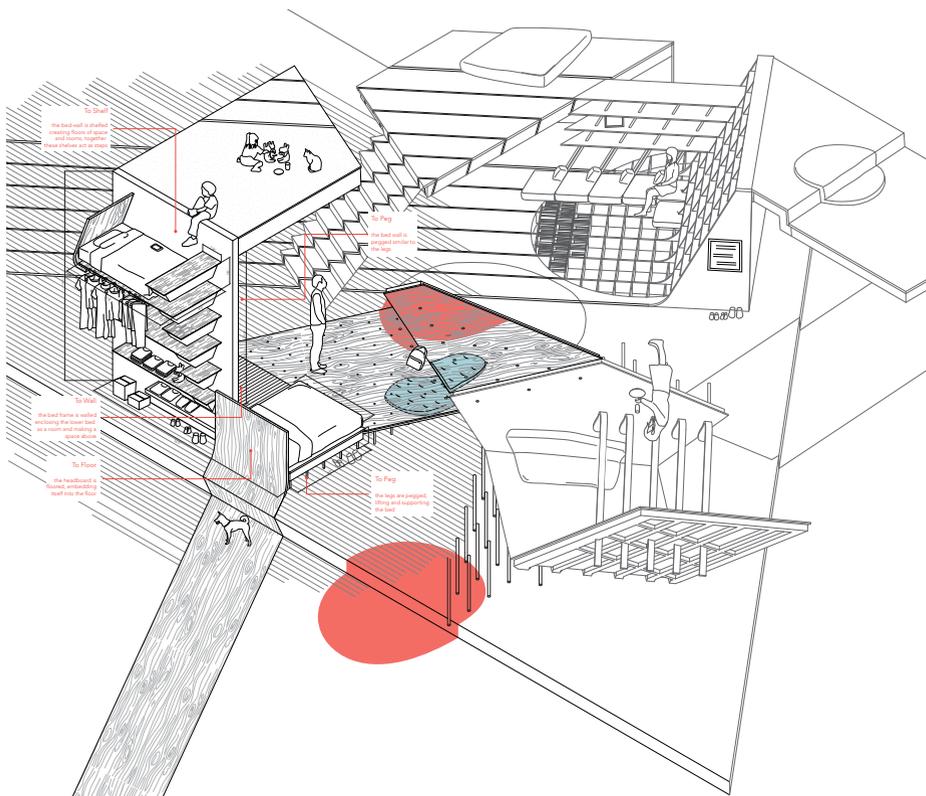
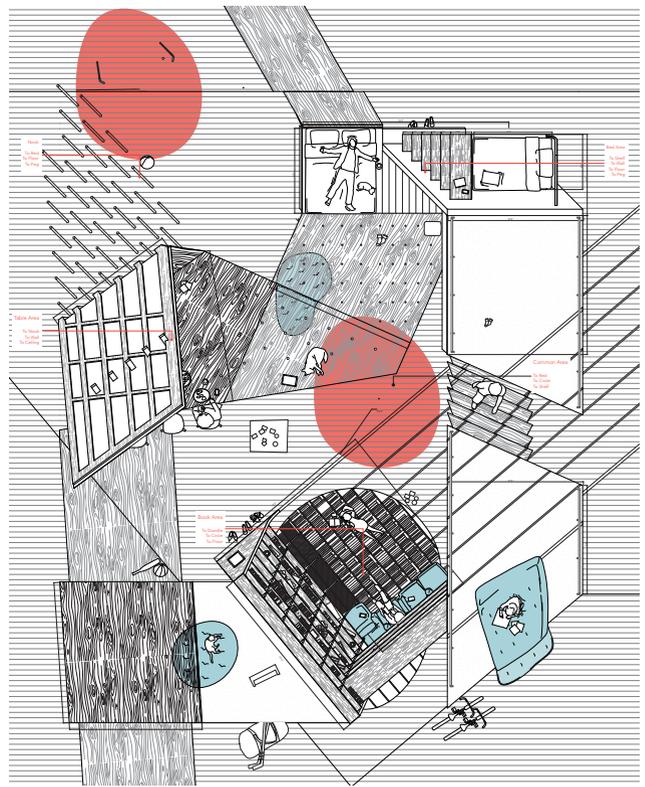
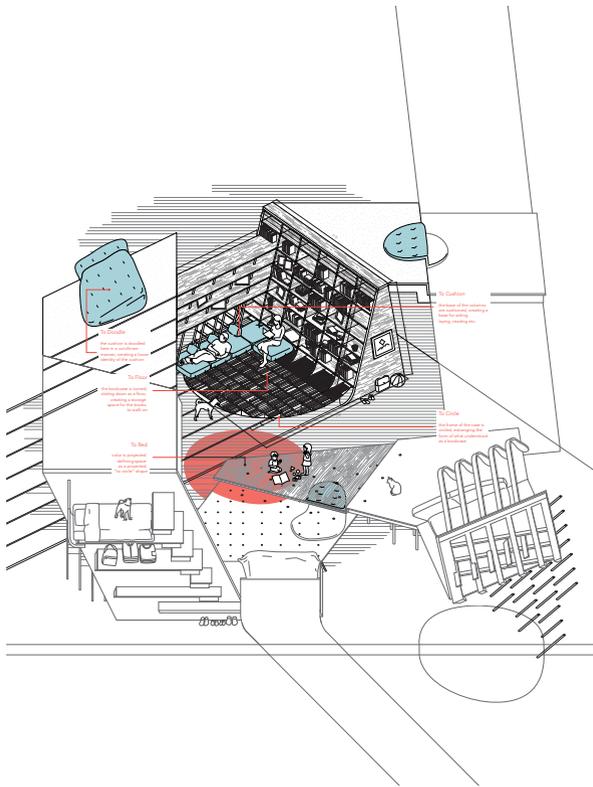
How can we take the perception of a familiar object and shift it by using ideas and actions that share similar attributes? Is there a point where the identity has been shifted into something that is faintly recognizable, created from something that was previously known?



THE THINGS

What if we look at the object itself as a space, or even a room? The bookcase, table, and bed are all recognizable objects but if the perception is shifted through applying verbs, scaling, and through our drawing method, the object becomes recognizable only through the way it is used rather than the familiar way it has appeared.





THE THINGS ASSEMBLED

What if we go further and examine how the things come together as a usable space? The way these things are drawn and projected onto one another further distinguishes the bed, table, and bookcase from what they are to a series of things that come together to create a space.

They no longer sit alone by themselves. Now they establish a series of spaces, unrecognizable from what they have commonly been known as, just weird enough for one to wander up to and use. ■





Yada- Yada

The

The large-scale demolition of “blight” in Detroit signals the obliteration of the past in order to create a blank slate for the inception of a future Detroit, but Detroit is no *tabula rasa*; there are people and vibrant cultures here. The “blight removal” effort is a guise for a strategic attack on the cultures and people who call Detroit home, who are unwanted in the future state of Detroit. Hip-hop, ethnic foods, and other arts and cultural practices with long, unique histories in Detroit are on the verge of extinction in this rapidly changing city.

Historically, when the presence of certain cultures has become synonymous with blight, slums, and decay, the only option is eradication. As in many cities in the 1800’s, blight is likened to a cancer, one that “sucks the soul out of anyone who gets near it”²² in today’s Detroit. This comparison elicits swift, emotional action—demolition—because, like cancer, blight is threatening but diffuse, and the only cure is its removal. The nebulous term—blight—is applied to those things no longer welcome in Detroit’s city limits in dangerous rhetoric by those with power, such as Dan Gilbert,

who referred to blight as “a symbol of all that is wrong and all that has gone wrong for too many decades in the once thriving world-class city of Detroit.”²³ This copy-and-paste application of the undefined term serves as a call to arms for those in power to erase the many subcultures in Detroit.

The Yada Yada Conservatory ensures space in the rapidly changing landscape of Detroit for practicing, learning and doing those things usually overlooked. The institution is a network that seeks invisibility rather than stability, because if it is discovered, it too will fall victim to the systematic erasure. It is dispersed, rather than centralized, and makes the informal, vibrant cultural practices of hip-hop formal. Similar to the astronaut suit, the institute conceals the occupant and allows it to survive in an alien environment by remixing existing tissues to camouflage itself in plain sight.

Detroit needs new programs to match the evolving city. What once forged Detroit is on the verge of extinction and a space for its production is needed in order for it to not be

“One day Detroit will come back and it’ll be as generic, commercialized, and boring as every other place. Until then, everyone should come experience all the inspiration to be found here.”²⁴

Yada Yada: (noun)

1. talk or language that is boring or that offers little information
2. boring or empty talk, often used interjectionally especially in recounting words regarded as too dull or predictable to be worth repeating

YOJAIRO LOMELI

demolished and scrapped with the rest of the debris. Specifically, it needs a new place for cultural production, one that is hidden in plain sight so that it survives through the overhaul that some people are calling for.

Remix: (verb)

1. a new or different version of a recorded song that is made by changing or adding to the original recording of the song.
2. a variant of an original recording made by rearranging or adding to the original.

ORDER NO. 15

This order removed all wrecking requirements that before the city would have had to clear in order to execute a demolition of an edifice deemed blighted.



Detroit Annexation Diagrams

THE WAR ON BLIGHT

Things are changing in Detroit. Recently an approval for bankruptcy has been secured and a push to demolish all blighted buildings has been started. Along with this comes an influx of young people, many not from the area. Little do they know they may be causing more harm than good. The things that originally made Detroit attractive to these new inhabitants are on the verge of extinction because of the very relocation into the city. The very culture of the area will soon be priced out due to the changing times. The demolition signals a complete obliteration of the past and a tabula rasa start. Detroit simply needs to remix the existing conditions in order to preserve the cultural richness.

SCHOOL CLOSING NOTICES

This document stated that Detroit was changing and was returning to an educational leader by closing schools. This schism signals a missing piece in a very complicated puzzle.

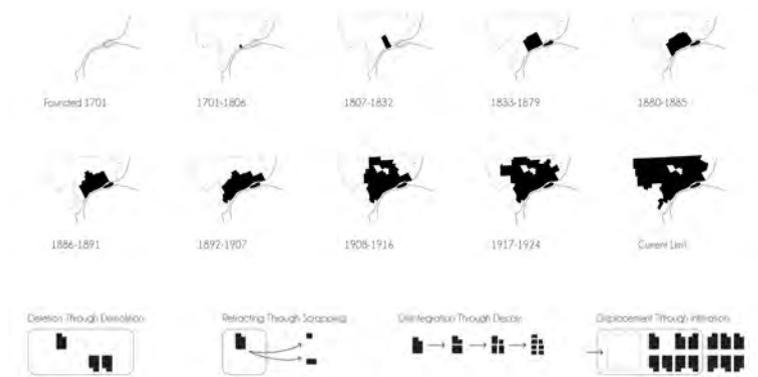


THE FRONT

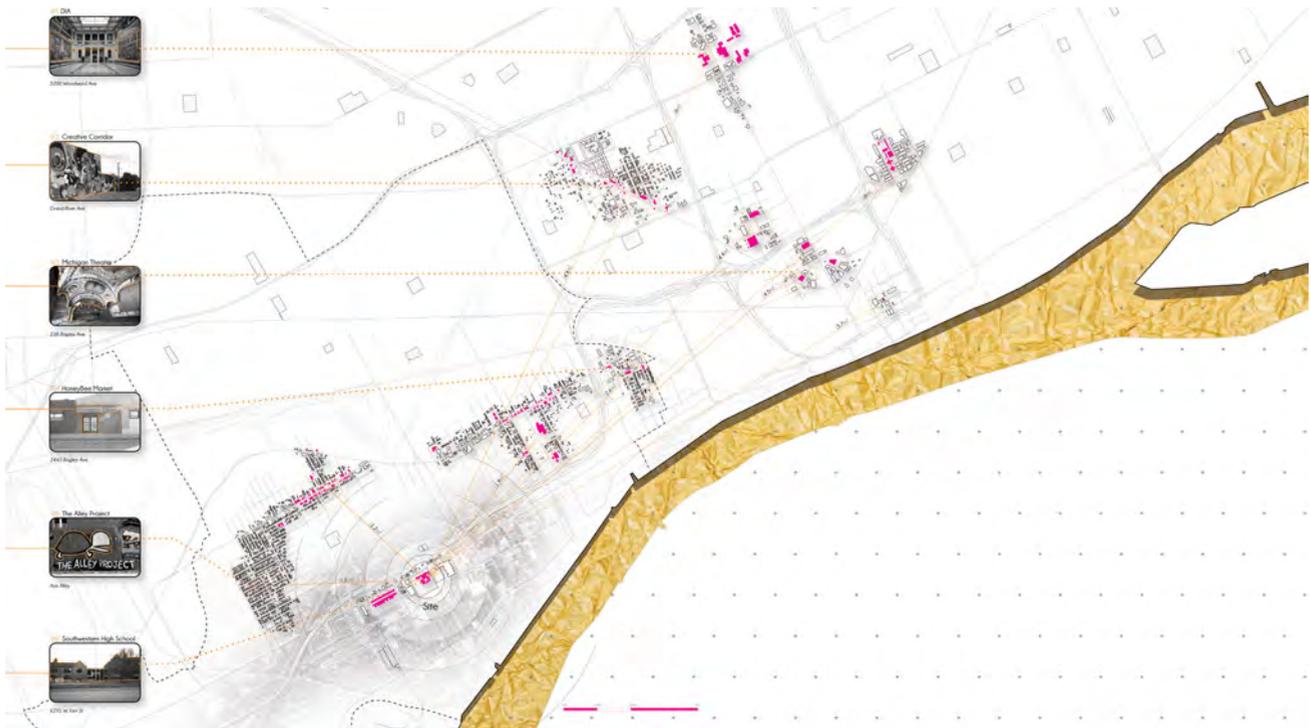
After a long period of annexation and growth, Detroit is going through a period of erasure. The things and people being erased in an effort to downsize are being targeted because they are seen as unwanted in the future state of Detroit, whatever that may be. These documents allow the erasure to go unchecked. The documents are signals of something more going on in Detroit than the simple clean up of blighted buildings. Rather these show a strategic, duplicitous game that those in charge are playing: saying one thing through these documents to front one reality and doing something completely different. They use these documents as free passes to circumvent democratic processes and set up a tabula rasa condition for the "Future Detroit."

BLIGHT TASK FORCE STATEMENT

Blight is compared to cancer, to render it a symbol "of all that is wrong and has gone wrong in Detroit" and something that has no cure besides its instantaneous removal.



Detroit Erasure Diagrams



Conservatory and Site Drawing

THE CONSERVATORY AND THE ASTRONAUT

“The white surface ‘erects a screen’ between the body and the onlooker, interrupting the eye’s attempt to grasp the body. It brackets the body out. But at the same time, it forces the body into the imaginary by advertising an inaccessible domain.”⁵

The Yada Yada Conservatory seeks to steal behavioral traits from the suit of the astronaut in order to survive in the alien environment that is Detroit. After a long period of growth, Detroit is being strategically erased in a number of ways. In order for the cultural practices not to follow, an architecture for those things needs to emerge, making the informal practices formal. However, the architecture needs to be like the suit of the astronaut, so that it allows those cultural threads to remain within a city that is actively trying to erase them.

- The conservatory needs to conceal the occupant and its true intentions.
- Reflector and amplifier of the environment through the visor, as to not draw attention to itself but rather to its surroundings.
- It allows the body to survive in alien environments.

The Yada Yada Conservatory is an institution that seeks invisibility rather than stability, is dispersed rather than centralized, a networked system that fronts one reality, but actively camouflages its true intentions in plain sight, and finally, is a remix of existing conditions to develop spaces that induce and harbor cultural production otherwise on the verge of extinction.

The site of Southwestern High School is central to southwest Detroit and served as a physical manifestation of the duplicitous project the city was playing. The use of this site was to operate on this building representationally, to develop characteristics and traits to use in the deployment and dispersal of architectural analogues into the network of the Yada Yada Conservatory which lie in pockets of density that still hold some sort of cultural value.

THE OPERATIONS

Working on the operations listed below provided techniques and characteristics for the development of architectural analogues. This is where the Yada Yada gains visibility. The

operations worked on came from the Grandmaster Flash Crossover in order to give a project about invisibility a visibility. The Grandmaster Flash Crossover is an innovation in DJing technique made by disc jockey Grandmaster Flash, which elevated DJing into what we know today. The operations are then paired and remixed with an existing, normative condition in Detroit to conceal the presence of new programs and intentions. Those operations that form the Crossover are:

- Melodic Scratch
- Backspin Technique
- Cutting
- Punch Phasing

1. Barlow, Toby, and Sarah F. Cox. “Sleepless in Shanghai.” *Hour Detroit* (2013)

2-3. Gilbert, Dan, Glenda D. Price, and Linda Smith. “A Message from the Chairs.” Letter. 27 May 2014. Blight Task Force Report.

4. Gilbert, Dan, Glenda D. Price, and Linda Smith. “A Message from the Chairs.” Letter. 27 May 2014. Blight Task Force Report.

5. Wigley, Mark. *White Walls, Designer Dresses: The Fashioning of Modern Architecture*. MIT Press, 2001.

001 THE SOUND BANK CONEY ISLAND

A Sound Bank is designed through the Melodic Scratch and tasked with being invested in collecting and preserving sounds and images for artists to sample in their work. The Melodic Scratch is the smooth mix from one record over to the second record that the DJ is using by scratching and blending them together. Culture is as fragile as seeds and therefore a sound bank was needed to preserve the sounds of these cultural tissues on the fringe of extinction.

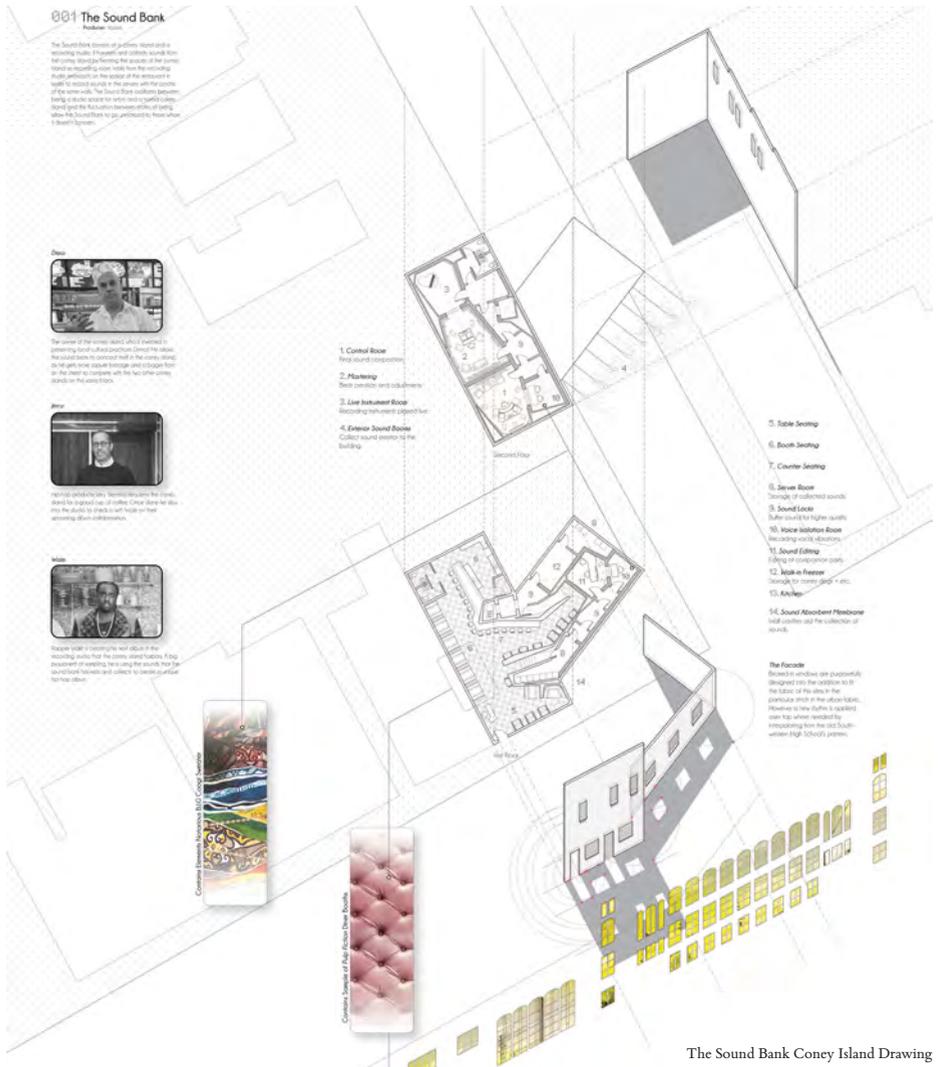
The operation of the Melodic Scratch yields techniques and ways of working on such an architecture that is for the auditory part of Hip-Hop, and can smoothly switch between states of “reals” like the Melodic Scratch of the DJ to go undiscovered. The Sound Bank was paired and remixed with the normative condition of a coney island. This pairing conceals the new program and intentions of the Sound Bank in order to ensure its survival.

The Sound Bank consists of a Coney Island restaurant and a recording studio. It harvests and collects sounds from the Coney Island by treating the spaces of the Coney Island as recording rooms. Walls from the recording studio encroach on the space of the restaurant in order to record sounds in the servers with the poche of the same walls. The Sound Bank oscillates between being a studio space for artists and a normal Coney Island, and this fluctuation between states of being allow the Sound Bank to go unnoticed to those whom it doesn't concern.

When something is sampled, there are new outcomes with remnants of the old, but in the mix, the author controls the oscillation between the ‘reals,’ that being sampled and that which the sampled becomes.

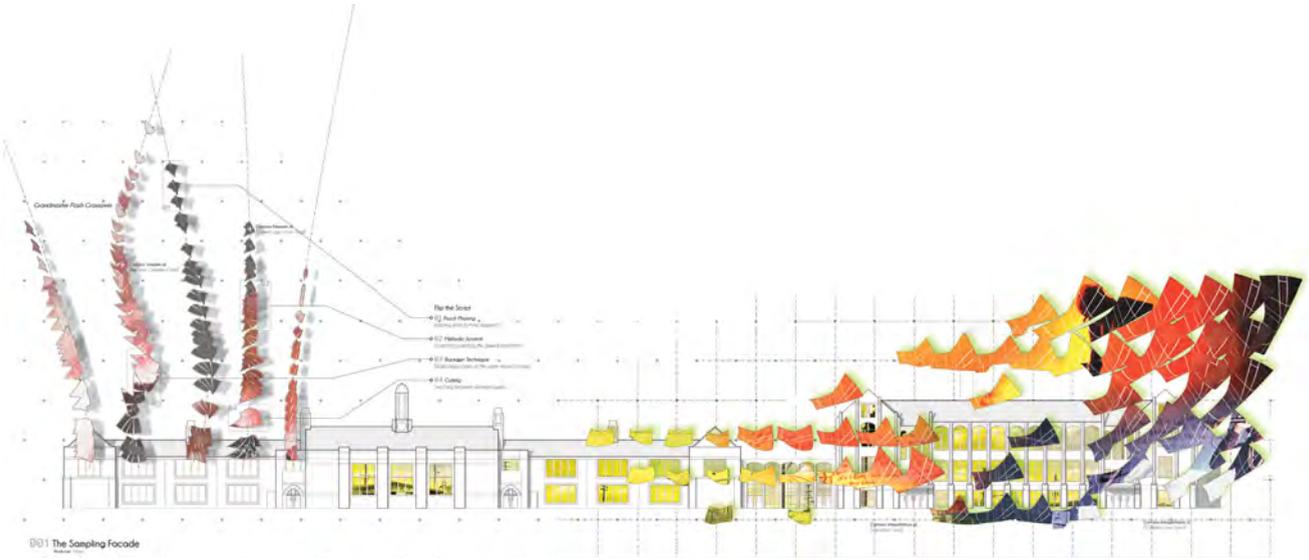


“Flow . . . the turntable’s needle in DJ culture acts as a mediator between self and the fictions of the external world. With the needle the DJ weaves the sounds together, do you get my drift?”⁶



6. Miller, Paul D. *Rhythm Science*. MIT Press, 2004.

The Sound Bank Coney Island Drawing



001 THE SAMPLING FACADE

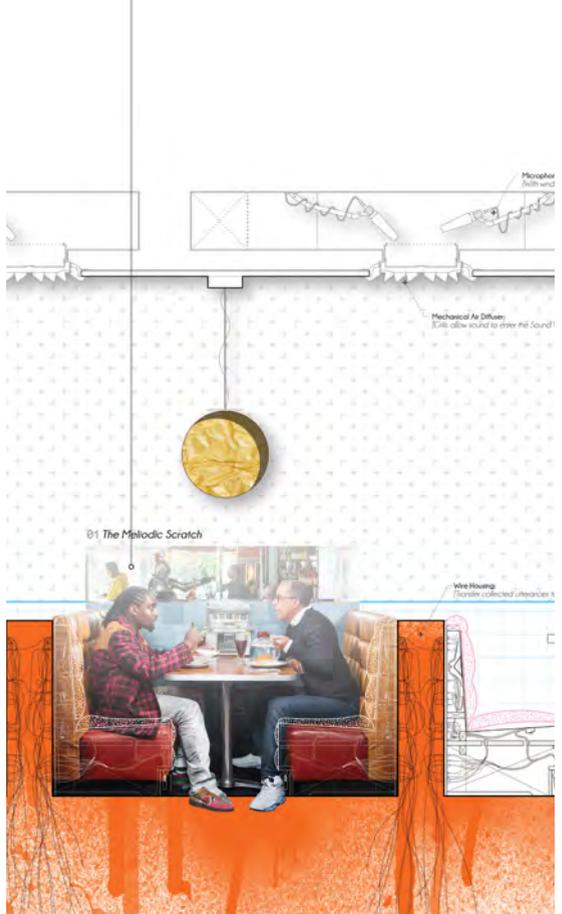
This drawing uses the abandoned façade of the Southwestern High School building to propose an architecture that is about sampling pieces of the urban fabric to embed itself within the sites that the Yada Yada conservatory operates.

001 THE PUFFY SHIRT

The model construct began to show in highly detailed sectional cuts the impregnating walls of the recording studio into the coney island. It shows the mechanisms through which visitors' sounds are harvested for future sampling. The hyper-realistic nature of the model aims to show a normal condition that some may simply take for granted; The Yada Yada.



Narrative Detail Section of The Sound Bank Coney Island



002 THE LAUNDROMAT BUNKER

A Laundromat Bunker is designed through the looping operation and tasked with being invested in providing a space for breakers to perform the art of break dancing. The backspin technique more commonly known as looping, is done when the DJ has two of the same records and lets a segment play on one while finding the same segment on the other and switching between the two creating and infinite loop. The name 'bunker' seeks to embed itself within the lexicon of terms to denote places for such performances already within the city such as 'the shelter.'

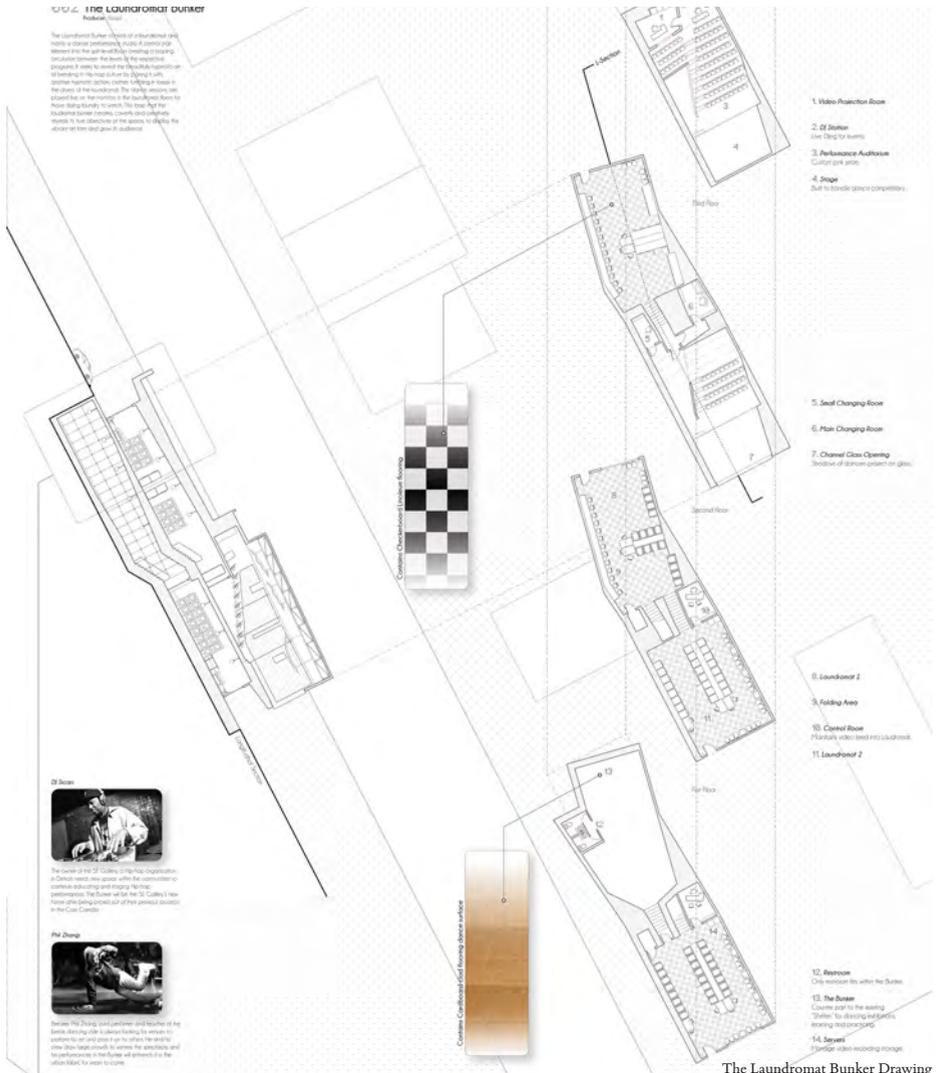
The Laundromat Bunker consists of a laundromat and mainly a dance performance studio. A central stair element links the split-level floors creating a looping circulation between the levels of the respective programs. It seeks to reveal the beautifully hypnotic art of breaking in hip-hop culture by pairing it with another hypnotic action; clothes tumbling in loops in the dryers of the laundromat. The dance sessions are played live on the monitors in the laundromat floors for those doing laundry to watch. This loop that the laundromat bunker creates, covertly and creatively reveals the true objectives of the space, to display this vibrant art form and grow its audience.

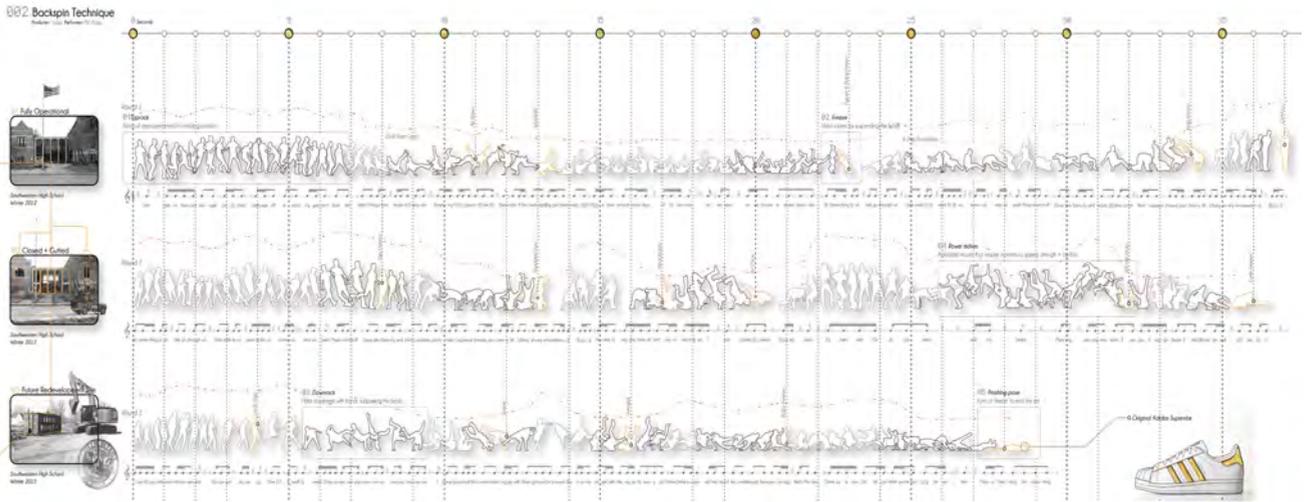
Like the DJ's abundance of duplicate records, Detroit's building stock is treated as such by the demolition efforts. The DJ does not get rid of their excess, but rather they create new forms of music—remixes. Unlike the Sound Bank, the bunker only tries to conceal the dance studio minimally to the exterior and not at all within the interior.

7. Miller, Paul D. *Rhythm Science*. MIT Press, 2004.



“Give me two turn tables and I’ll make you a universe.”⁷





002 BACKSPIN TECHNIQUE

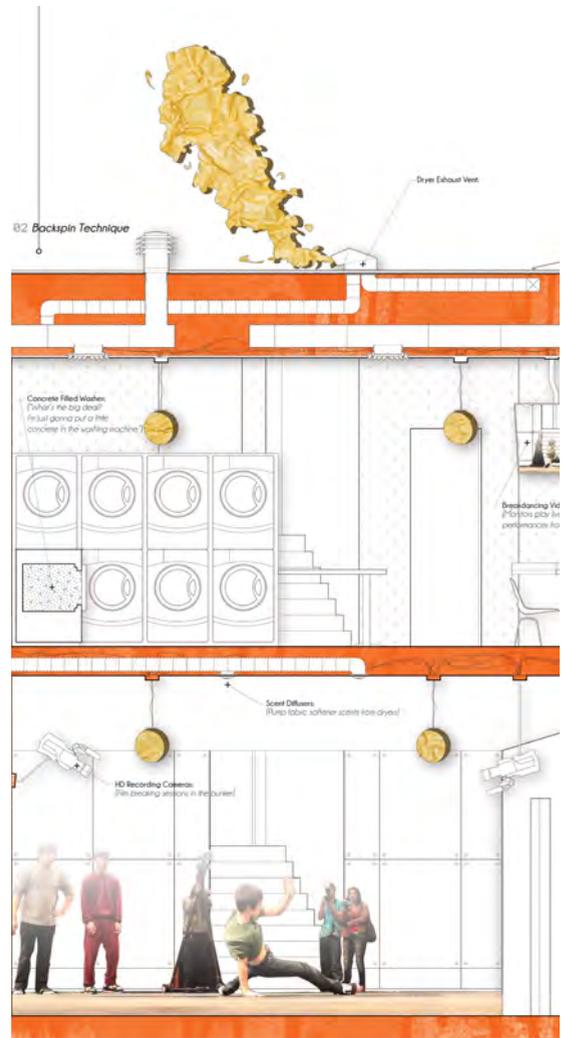
This drawing investigates the looping nature of break dancing as a way to show the ebbs and flows and liken them to looping building life cycles as a way to remix existing conditions.

002 THE REVENGE

This model construct shows the juxtaposition of the break dancing studio and the laundromat. The looping of dancers is recorded and played back through TV monitors to play side by side to the looping clothes in the washing machines. Rather than hiding the act, the bunker serves as a place to practice and put on display if only internally.



Narrative Detail Section of The Laundromat Bunker



003 THE BILLBOARD BARBERSHOP

The act of cutting hair is very similar to the switching of states that the DJ carries out through cutting. Cutting is when the DJ shifts between records very quickly and abruptly. You enter the barbershop in one state and exit in another. The quick shift, cutting, happens within, literally and figuratively. People rarely see the in between, and only experience the two 'reals' that you move in and out of.

The Billboard Barbershop is seeking to strategically use its surface area to project graffiti at a time in Detroit where it is being criminalized. On the site of the old Cass Technical High School, its faces lie perpendicular to major axial avenues that lead into the downtown area. Cutting is the quick switch from one record to another, a very sharp transition. The barbershop changes the appearances of people from one to another as sharply as the DJ cuts in and out of records. The shutters of the billboard operate in this way such that the façade can cut in and out quickly between displaying graffiti and obscuring it.

The shutters aim to disrupt the graffiti's visibility during the barbershop's operational hours, and to put the graffiti on full display when the shop would be closed, hence the shutters close as well to make the image whole. The flicker, or cutting in the DJ arena, allows the graffiti to survive and switch quickly between its two states, there and not there.

To many, the billboard may just seem like another billboard, only those in the circle of the barbershop know how to enter and its operation hours. It is unlike the other two instances of deployment, as it projects the visual manifestation of hip-hop, while hiding its operation as a barbershop. ■

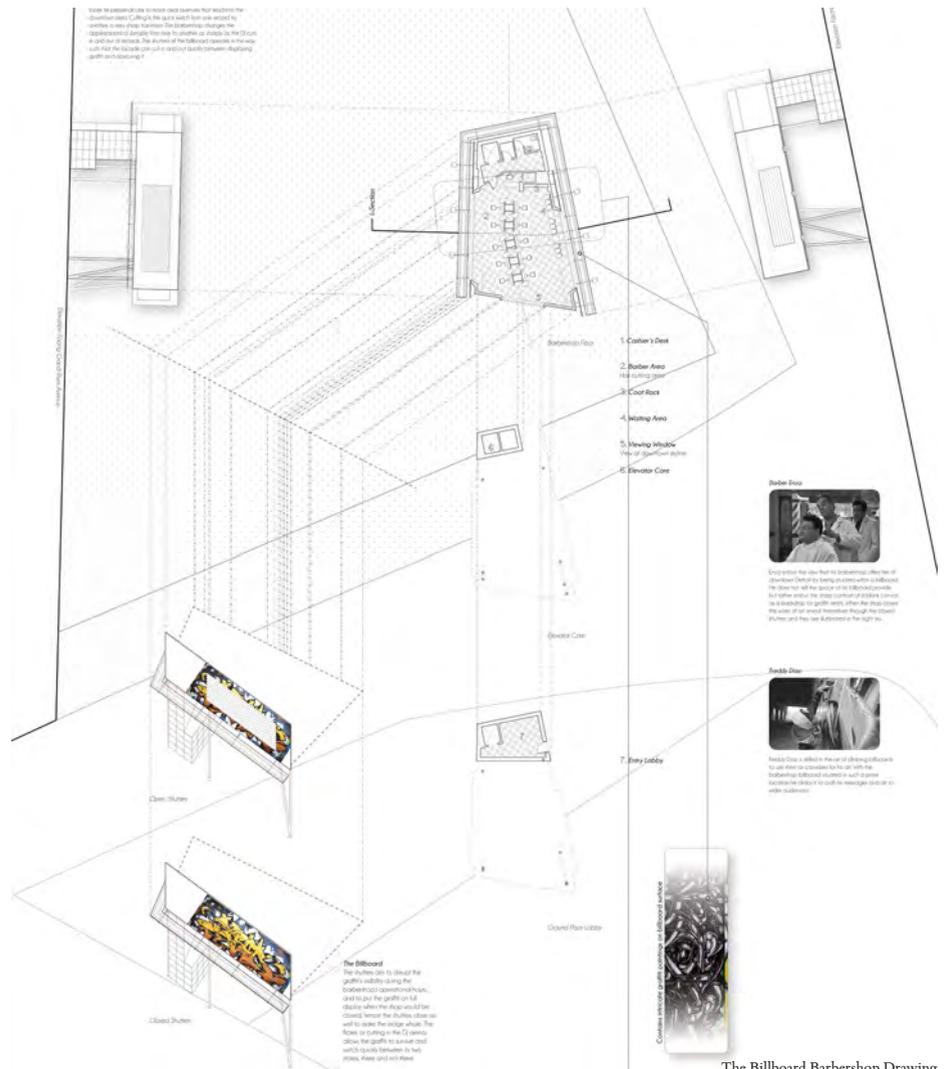
8. Miller, Paul D. *Rhythm Science*. MIT Press, 2004.

Acknowledgments:

Carlos Pompo, Karl Heckman, Andrew Davis, Jay Tyan, Trevor Herman-Hilker, Yoonwon Kang, Gina Kim Lastly, to Christian Unverzagt.



“The task of the art now is to somehow speak of this plurality of ‘reals’ in a world moving into a polyphrenic cultural space.”⁸





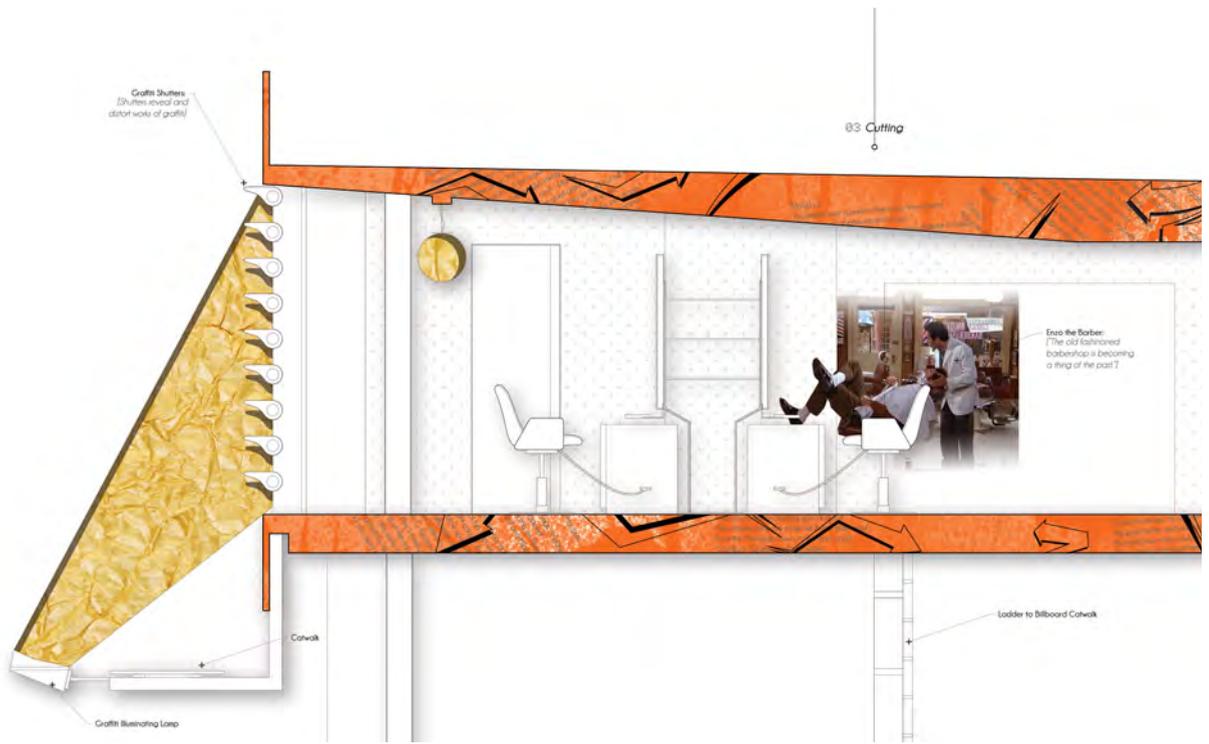
003 THE WINK

This section model construct shows the ability of the billboard to switch between states of real quickly. In a full attack on graffiti and other things unwanted, Mayor Duggan launched a campaign to ticket any building with graffiti on it. This is yet another way that the city is eliminating cultures they deem not worthy enough of sharing a role in the "new Detroit." This construct shows the ability to put graffiti on full display, while allowing it to flicker between being there and not there, at the same time.

003 CROSS-FADER CUTTING

This drawing investigates the iconic Cass Technical high school building was demolished in the fashion of how the DJ cuts. Creating the illusion of it being cut from the landscape in a matter of days by saving the iconic façade for last to not draw attention.

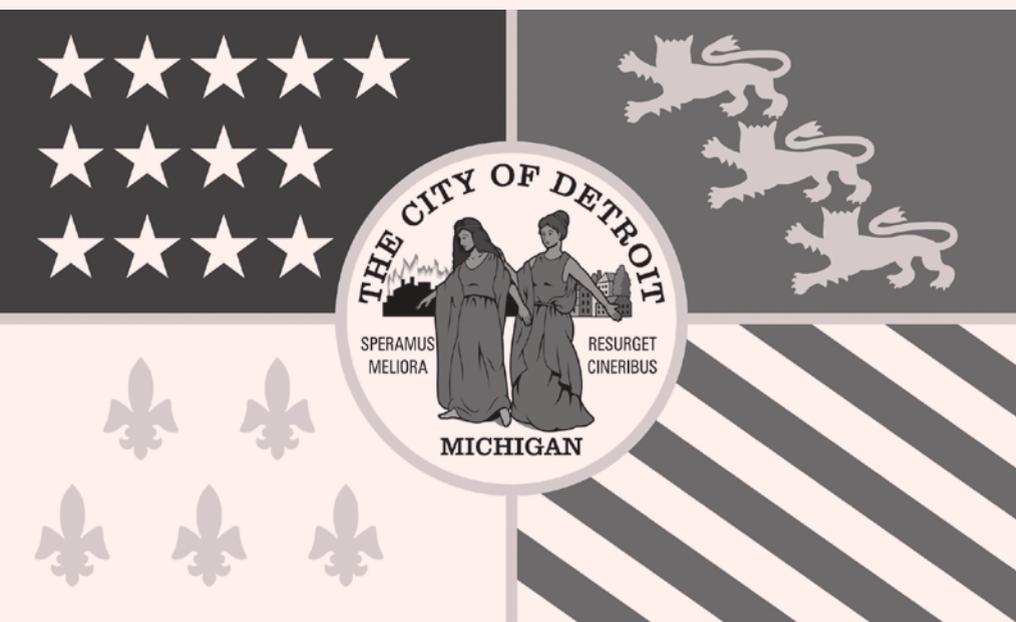
Narrative Detail Section of The Billboard Barbershop



Mónica

Mónica Ponce de León, AIA, is the newly appointed Dean at Princeton University School of Architecture as of January 2016. Prior to her appointment at Princeton, Ponce de León was the Dean and Eliel Saarinen Collegiate Professor of Architecture and Urban Planning of University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning from 2008–2015. In 1991, she co-founded Office dA and in 2011 launched her own design practice; Mónica Ponce de León Studio. Dean Ponce de León received a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1989 from the University of Miami and a Master of Architecture and Urban Design from the Harvard Graduate School of Design in 1991. She joined the Harvard Graduate School of Design faculty in 1996, where she was a Professor of Architecture and the Director of the Digital Lab. She has also held teaching appointments at Northeastern University, the Southern California Institute of Architecture, Rhode Island School of Design and Georgia Institute of Technology, among others. She has received honors from the Architectural League of New York (Young Architects Award, 1997 and Emerging Voices, 2003) the American Academy of Arts and Letters (Award in Architecture, 2002), the Smithsonian Institution's Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum (National Design Award in Architecture, 2007), and the United States Artists (Target Fellows in Architecture and Design, 2007).

Ponce de León



D29 What was the ambition with selecting Detroit as the site for the U.S. Pavilion? Is Detroit a unique condition or symptomatic of a larger identity for American cities?

MPDL Cynthia Davidson and I chose Detroit because it is a city that has a rich history of invention, from the automobile and the concrete paved road, to musical innovation like Motown and techno, to modern design and architecture. Detroit was once the center of American imagination, captivating and inspiring people worldwide. As you well know, for decades Detroit has been dealing with extraordinary challenges that are

present in most postindustrial cities. But in Detroit, these challenges are highlighted and magnified, producing dramatic images, which have been consumed by the international media and have generated a narrow perception of Detroit. What is left out of the current stereotypical view of Detroit (as a city in ruins) is the ingenuity and entrepreneurship of individuals and communities in Detroit who are creating new possibilities for the future. The project for the Venice Biennale, for me personally, then comes out of a reaction against the stereotypes and a desire to reframe the Detroit

conversation in terms of Detroit's capacity to engender alternative spatial and cultural models for the twenty-first century city.

To that end, Cynthia and I decided to commission new speculative projects that are rooted in the realities of Detroit, but are not constrained by its present. It is important that the projects be speculative because Detroit has been the subject of many studies, but these studies have never been free of economic or political forces. For example, one of the sites we chose, 6370 Vernor Highway in Mexicantown, has undergone several

planning “charrettes” but always from the point of view of development interests, and thus these proposals have failed to address the aspirations of the community and tap into the potential of Mexicantown to generate new models of urban life.

D29 Where does “the architectural imagination” sit in the larger conversation of architecture as a discipline? What agency do we have as architects, especially in cities such as Detroit?

MPDL Cynthia and I believe that architecture has the power to construct culture and catalyze cities. With these twelve projects for the Venice Biennale, we aspire to frame a conversation about possibilities and to create the context for a discussion about the future of Detroit outside of the usual interest groups. For me, the ability of architects to imagine different versions of what can be real is precisely what gives architecture its agency. Robert Fishman, in his lecture on Detroit at Taubman College last fall, was asked the same question and he put it beautifully. I paraphrase him in saying, “Architecture seemingly has little power to actually change the difficult and complex conditions that affect Detroit, however, by providing alternatives to the status quo, architecture like no other discipline can empower communities to think beyond current limitations.” I could not agree with him more. This is why we decided to have three different teams providing options for each of the four sites, so that no project could be understood as the only option, or worse, a totalizing vision.

To select the four sites, Cynthia and I collaborated with an eleven-member Detroit Advisory Board that included heads of non-profits, government officials, and community activists. They helped us develop the criteria for selecting the sites and narrowed them down. We wanted sites that could benefit from new ideas, but also sites facing issues affecting other postindustrial cities. Despite the fact that these are speculative projects, the twelve architectural teams worked

in Detroit with community groups, property and business owners, and members of the advisory board in order to understand the history and present of the sites and the aspiration of its neighborhoods.

Architecture has the power to construct culture and catalyze cities.

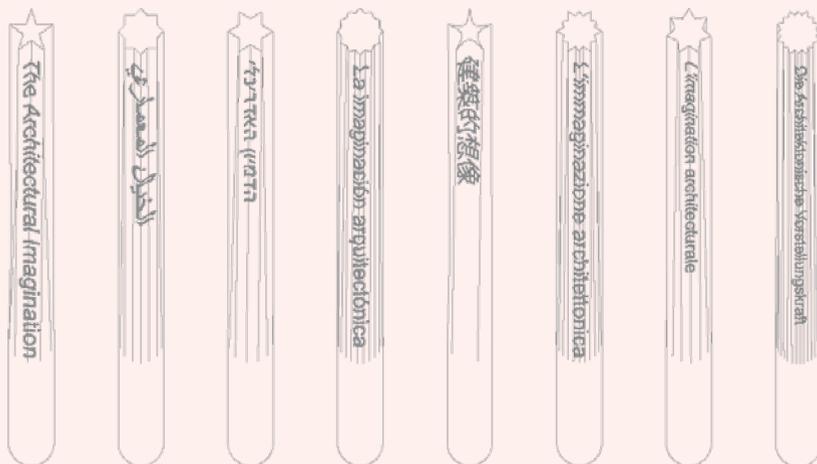
D29 Can you tell us more about the specifics of the installation you designed?

MPDL There is a long tradition of temporary installations at the courtyard of the American Pavilion. Chiara Barbieri, Director of Special Projects at the Guggenheim Museum in Venice (the Guggenheim manages the American Pavilion in the Giardini) explained to us that historical data shows that without an installation in the forecourt, attendance to the exhibition would suffer. As a result, from the outset we understood the problem of the courtyard as one of signage. This seemingly simple statement is, of course, very complex because it conjures up issues of representation in architecture—issues that have been well rehearsed and

yet never resolved—and thus remain simultaneously at the center and at the margins of the discipline.

The simplest sign is a vertical post that holds a name, like an address marker. But a single post would not suffice to represent the wide range of architectural thinking in the Architectural Imagination, which for us reflects the diversity of Detroit and the nation as a whole. Instead, using the columns of the U.S. Pavilion portico as a point of departure, our installation transforms the forecourt into an open-air hypostyle hall—a displaced grid of columns that serve as totems holding “The Architectural Imagination” in the main languages spoken in Detroit.

The new columns allude to the fluting of their 1930s counterparts, but the fluting dissolves into drums before they touch the ground. Several of the columns were truncated and turned into seating. The grid of columns also makes reference to one of the American symbols for excellence: the grid of stars in the United States flag. Detroit’s own flag holds a similar reference, but instead of fifty stars the Detroit flag has thirteen. Thirteen is a number that interest me because it is a prime number and thus, not architectural. With thirteen columns, you cannot easily make a grid; it has





to be displaced. Conveniently, the star also offers a geometric logic for how to generate the fluting. Thus, the top of each column begins in the shape of a star, and unlike the Detroit flag, but more like the city itself, each star has its own figure—figures that have their own histories—and together make a new whole.

029 How does your work and the work of the twelve contributors affect the discourse surrounding Detroit and the state of American architecture?

A single post would not suffice to represent the wide range of architectural thinking in the Architectural Imagination, which for us reflects the diversity of Detroit and the nation as a whole.

MPdL The architectural discourse surrounding Detroit has tended to be in one of two camps: there are those who paternalistically argue that architecture can and should “fix” Detroit. And then there are those that argue architecture is completely ineffective and should not be in Detroit at all. These two opposing

views are symptomatic of the state of American architecture today and highlight two prevalent modes of thinking in the field; neither of which is productive. For me, the problem with the first position is that it leaves out of the equation the many complex forces that have shaped the reality of Detroit today; from racism, to ill-conceived government policies, to local and global economic forces. The second position is perhaps worse, because it denies Detroit access to architecture at a moment when new spatial and cultural models are emerging in the city. I hope that the work from the twelve teams will help focus the architectural discourse on what architecture does well; to propose options and alternatives that demonstrate that the status quo does not need to be so. Detroit is full of invention and imagination and all of us can learn from it. ■

Interviewers: Brooke Dexter, Adam Wilbanks

Project Credits:

MPdL Studio: Monica Ponce de Leon, Lauren Beby, Austin Kaa, Clay Montgomery, Christine Metzler, with Axel Kilian and Kaicong Wu

The Architectural

DEQUINDRE CUT EASTERN MARKET 1923 DIVISION STREET

Situated across the Dequindre (pronounced de-kwin-der) Cut from Detroit's Eastern Market, this area has an industrial past, vacant present, and an uncertain future.

The site is located on the periphery of Eastern Market's artisanal food production area, within a short walk of the central market. Here specialty food products, such as locally packed sausages and distilled vodka, complement the market's fresh food with a "Made in Detroit" culinary culture.

Detroit's Eastern Market is one of the area's most successful farmers' markets and a historic and popular food destination. Its 4.5 acres are dedicated to fresh and specialty food stalls and halls serving wholesale and retail customers. Each Saturday market attracts up to 45,000 visitors, and the more intimate Tuesday market is ongoing during peak growing seasons. However, on non-operational days, the large site is primarily vacant – in part due to limited residential space in the mostly commercial and industrial area.

The Dequindre Cut, which once housed a bustling industrial rail line, has now been converted into a below-street-level, public greenway with running and bicycle paths amongst gardens and commissioned urban art installations and graffiti. Opened in May 2009, the cut is a pedestrian link to the Detroit riverfront in an otherwise freeway heavy urban core. Phase II will extend the cut and

connect to Mack Avenue. The next leg to open runs through the area of focus for The Architectural Imagination.

The site is a transitional zone between Eastern Market and a largely vacant and deconstructed residential zone across St. Aubin Street to the northeast and the automobile oriented Gratiot Avenue commercial strip to the southeast.

The site and surrounding sites are zoned M3—General Industrial District, defined as an "area where the modes of operation of the industry may affect any nearby residential uses" (City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance).

MEXICANTOWN 6370 VERNOR HIGHWAY

Centrally located on the north edge of Mexican Town, 6370 Vernor Highway sits at the intersection of an industrial rail interchange to the northwest and the burgeoning Latino immigrant communities to the southeast. The site has the potential to become a future nexus for Mexican Town's teaming neighborhoods and cultural centers.

While the residential neighborhoods to the south have high crime and foreclosure rates, they are also known for their exciting mixture of eclectic architecture, culinary offerings, and musical appeal. Located on Vernor Highway, Mexican Town's cultural "spine" features touristy areas amidst the smells of freshly made tortillas and baked goods and the rhythms of merengue and salsa. Aesthetically, Mexican Town is known for its vibrantly colored buildings and beautifully painted murals.

Mexican Town is a cultural hub that attracts many visitors from outside of the community as well as cross-town tourists. Authentic Mexican restaurants and markets resist the pressures of corporate commodification of Mexican identity. The broad area known colloquially as Mexican Town is interspersed with distinct Latino immigrant communities and is bounded by Fort Street to the south, the Central Railway to the northwest, West Grand Boulevard to the east, and Michigan Avenue to the north.

The site's northern neighbor, the Central Railway container yard, is an active infrastructural element connecting the City of Detroit and the United States to trade with Canada. The site holds potential for mediating borderline architectures to emerge.

The site is zoned M4—Intensive Industrial District, defined as "a district that will permit uses which are usually objectionable, and therefore, the district is rarely, if ever, located adjacent to residential districts" (City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance).

US POST OFFICE 1401 WEST FORT STREET

Situated in Detroit's west side industrial niche, the U.S. Post Office at 1401 West Fort Street is seen by many as an outdated, underutilized, and monolithic structure that currently blocks the development trajectory of the up and coming neighborhood Corktown to the north that is attempting to expand toward the riverfront. Also to the north are light industrial and commercial uses,

Imagination

and to the south, an underutilized (because largely inaccessible) public waterfront parkland.

Due in part to its isolation from Trumbull Avenue and Corktown, the adjacent West Riverfront Park (opposite the Post Office from Trumbull) is currently a sparsely populated open grass field with the Detroit Riverwalk dead-ending into an adjacent industrial storage yard.

Completed in 1959, the Post Office was the last major railroad-oriented building built in downtown Detroit. It is a ten-story building above ground with two below—which previously tied into the Michigan Central Rail Line with tunnels to Canada.

The postal center remains a mail-sorting hub for metro Detroit, and in the past employed hundreds of Detroit residents. However, need for its continued operation has been questioned because processing quantities are down, and there are government talks to shut down the mail-processing operations at this facility and to move them to a suburb such as Metroplex or Allen Park.

Corktown is an emerging Detroit cultural district north of the Post Office. It includes the former Detroit Tiger Stadium, now a public baseball diamond; the new home of Quicken Loans state-of-the-art 66,000 square foot technology center at 1415 Rosa Parks Boulevard; and some of the oldest existing residential neighborhoods in Detroit, originally built as detached homes and row houses by Irish settlers and now listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Corktown is currently a hot spot for developers looking to retrofit existing structures. The neighborhood is largely residential south of Michigan Avenue, with commercial properties developing along Michigan Avenue and Trumbull Avenue.

The site is zoned M4—Intensive Industrial District, defined as “a district that will permit uses which are usually objectionable, and therefore, the district is rarely, if ever, located adjacent to residential districts” (City of Detroit Zoning Ordinance).

PACKARD PLANT EAST GRAND BOULEVARD AND CONCORD AVENUE

The Packard Plant is a former automobile manufacturing facility located in Detroit’s north-south industrial beltline. Originally commissioned and owned by the Packard Motor Car Company, which at its peak employed 40,000 workers, the plant was innovative for its use of reinforced concrete and an open warehouse floor plan.

Designed by architect Albert Kahn in 1905, this was the first industrial building in the world to emphasize a large, productive floor plan without the interference of columns. The reinforced structure also enabled the use of large, tall windows to bring natural light deep into the workspace.

In addition to automobiles, Packard produced military craft and engines, and thrived during the two world wars. Many buildings were constructed to accommodate this seemingly endless growth. Postwar, however, the luxury automobile

industry declined, and in 1958 the company went out of business.

Parts of the plant remained operational, used by other businesses until 2010, when the entire plant went silent and became unoccupied. Over decades of visits, urban explorers and vandals have left the structure unsound, having stolen or destroyed most finishes and basic infrastructure.

Frequent fires break out in the structure—costing the City of Detroit nearly \$1 million annually—and a plethora of non-commissioned graffiti covers many surfaces. Some of this graffiti, including the famous “Banksy Mural,” has fetched thousands of dollars after being removed from the plant and sold.

The site was purchased in December 2013 by Peruvian developer Fernando Palazuelo, who is known for leading development of central Lima from a similar state of disinvestment and abandonment. He intends a mixed-use future for the Packard Plant on a 10–15 year timeline and a \$350 million dollar estimated budget.

The surrounding neighborhoods are primarily industrial, with decimated residential communities to the east.

The site is zoned M4—Intensive Industrial District, defined as “a district that will permit uses which are usually objectionable, and therefore, the district is rarely, if ever, located adjacent to residential districts” (Detroit Zoning Ordinance).

Interview with

SAA/Stan Allen Architect is a small, agile practice capable of working at a wide range of scales. Responding to the complexity of the modern city in creative ways, SAA has developed an extensive catalogue of innovative design strategies, in particular looking at art, field theory, ecology and landscape architecture as models to revitalize the practice of architecture. The office has realized buildings and urban projects in the United States, South America and Asia. Stan Allen holds degrees from Brown University, The Cooper Union and Princeton. After working for Richard Meier in New York and Rafael Moneo in Madrid, he established his independent practice in 1990. From 1999–2003, he worked in collaboration with James Corner/Field Operations, during which time they won competitions for the French Embassy Garden in New York and the reuse of the Fresh Kills Landfill in Staten Island. From 2002 to 2012 Allen served as Dean of the School of Architecture at Princeton University where he is currently the George Dutton '27 Professor of Architecture.

Stan Allen



D29 How did you first approach this project? With a site as loaded as this, how did you balance the objective realities and assumed stereotypes of the site?

SA Well, it's a good question, and it's really key, I think, to the whole project. You've called it a "loaded site," and I think that's very accurate. The site is loaded in two different ways. On the one hand—and this was what interested us and appealed to us—it's loaded architecturally. I think of all of the sites, we have the one with the strongest existing architectural presence. I mean, the architecture of the Kahn Factory is just so strong, so elemental, that it gave us something very solid, literally, to push back against. Frankly, that helped drive the project forward, because it helped to create a specifically architectural dialogue. So that's one side of it. But the other side of it is a whole series of complex, historical, economic, social, political questions around Detroit today. That's

a very different kind of reality. That's a reality that, as architects, we don't have a lot of control over and that gave us a lot of trouble at the beginning of the project. How could we respond to all of the very real and complex problems that exist in Detroit? How do we respond to the immediate context of the Packard Plant?

I remember when I was in school at Cooper Union, Bob Slutsky used to say, "We're more real than the real world." Now, Cooper Union had the reputation of being an inward-looking place—not 'real world' at all. The idea that Cooper Union was more real than the real world was completely counterintuitive. But I think what Slutsky meant, is that when you're developing a project in a very rigorous way and you're in a sense faithful to the constraints that you set up, constraints that belong to your project and belong to architecture as a discipline, that's one kind of reality. There's another kind of reality: a reality of politics and

money, clients, and regulations. Those are what I would call contingent realities—in some way, not very real at all because they are always subject to change. Part of what we did at the very beginning of this project was say that we were going to emphasize those internal realities; the realities that had to do with the consistency of our own project and the consistency of the discipline, and be more flexible with those contingent realities. We just couldn't get too caught up in Detroit's economic future and questions of race and poverty in Detroit. Our agency as architects is very, very limited in that regard. That suspension of disbelief was very important in the beginning of the project.

I would say, it's also very important to understand that those contingent realities are not unimportant, because we do want to find a way to fold those back into the project, and I think we did. In order to get the project moving, it was necessary to provisionally suspend those.

That suspension of disbelief was very important in the beginning of the project.

D29 Looking at your own work, how are you engaging history—both in the Biennale and outside of it? How do you find a balance between contemporary conditions and history?

SA Well, I don't know that it's a problem to get caught up in history, in a way. The famous quote—I believe it was Philip Johnson—who said, "You cannot not know history." The idea that our work is always unfolding in a dialogue with the past is very important to us. Again, I think that happened in a couple of different ways in the project as we moved forward. I am sure there could be more. We wanted to work with a strategy to create a kind of infrastructural platform using the existing architecture of the Packard site and then populate those surfaces with what ended up being something like a kind of field conditions strategy. That is to say, work with an array of very small parts that could develop local differences while at the same time, through a repetition and seriality, establish a sense of overall order. Although I would make it almost a policy never to arbitrarily use something like a kind of field conditions strategy, it turned out, ironically, that in this particular site, it was a good strategy to use.

The Packard Plant has a very literal presence in that history. It belongs deeply to twentieth-century history and technology of reinforced concrete and of serial production in the automobile industry. So somehow, the Packard Plant is so embedded in some of what I think are the most important developments of twentieth-century history. On one hand, you have that as a dialogue to work against, but on the other hand, we're now living in a historical period when questions of serial production and reinforced concrete technology aren't necessarily the dominant technologies.

The second issue is that as we worked on the project and as we developed a strategy, we were continually looking for some kind of programmatic anchor that could drive the project forward. And again, we didn't want to fall into what frankly, I thought were some clichés that had been floating around in Detroit, such as urban farming, community activism, self-organizing systems, and so on. I have a longstanding interest in the relationship between architecture cities and nature, so there was an interest to engage the larger question of the role of nature in the city of the 21st century. We hit upon what I believe is an interesting strategy. We thought that in order to drive this project forward, and in order not to fall into a kind of conventional developer's logic, we needed some sort of strong institutional presence on the site. It could be a university, a non-profit, anything that would be able to give a strong, architectural, and institutional identity to the site.

The program we hit upon, which engages the question of nature in the city, is a botanical garden, but a botanical garden reconceived as a twenty-first century institution. So again, to come back to your question, there's a long history of botanical gardens in cities, which goes back to the Renaissance, and early scientific studies of botany, medicinal plants, and then later with the botanist Linnaeus, the development of the plant classifications and the Latin naming for plants. Botanical gardens are very interesting to us because on the one hand, it's a public facility based on education, leisure, and recreation, but at the same time, it has a scientific and research dimension. It's an old institution that we think was ripe for rethinking and rediscovery.

To answer more directly, history is always present in our work and we find it to be very helpful to use history as a kind of springboard and dialogue as we move forward; it's never an impediment.

D29 When you're one of several teams working on the same site, how important is it to you to work as a collective with other architects, or is it just your own take on the site? Are you in conversation at all with the other teams?

SA The short answer is no. Again, I think that has more to do with the curators and the way they set it up. There may have been sites where the different groups were more in conversation, but I think Cynthia and Monica chose the three architects to work on this site very consciously. I think they're going to get three very, very different projects. In general terms, I would say that architecture is by definition a collaborative endeavor, and certainly the spirit within the office is very collaborative and in other projects, we have collaborated with landscape architects, engineers, and so on, but this one was developed more internally.

D29 How do you engage site-specific methods of working or process? Do you tend to work at a distance? Does working at a distance or working on site change your approach?

SA I think this is a very important question. You can't not engage the realities and the specifics of any site. In our thinking, the more information we have, it's always better. It's always better to have more information than less information so the site visit was incredibly important. It provided the ability to walk through the site and be physically in contact with that remarkable architecture. But on the other hand, if you're too close to the object, you get frozen. I think one of the real powers of architecture, as a discipline, is precisely the abstraction of architecture's tools: the drawings, the computer models, the calculations, the analytical tools available to us as architects. All of those tools impose a necessary distance from physical reality and that's actually the source of the freedom and creativity in architecture. I always like to quote Robin Evans when he talks about this question. In his essay "Translations from Drawings to Buildings," he

says something like: “If we could work directly with the material of architecture—in other words, like a sculptor; no preliminary drawings, no distance, directly working with the material itself—we might have a better architecture, but we’d have a smaller architecture.” That is to say, we would have an architecture that’s more immediate, more authentic, and closer to the thought of the architect and touch of the hand. But you could never build anything larger than what you could build with your own hands, and so all of architecture’s social power and ability to engage the larger questions of abstraction and cultural project would disappear. That enabling distance, which belongs deeply to architecture’s working methods is always key in any project going forward.

I think one of the real powers of architecture, as a discipline, is precisely the abstraction of architecture’s tools: the drawings, the computer models, the calculations, the analytical tools available to us as architects.

D29 Where would you say this project sits in your body of work? Is it a continuation of things you’ve looked at before, or is it a new chapter, something separate?

SA Well, I would say both, in a way. I already mentioned the fact that, without intending to, we ended up producing a project that owes a lot to the notion of field conditions, which has been around in my work for a long time. So certainly, at that level, it’s consistent. And in many ways, the project is a kind of synthesis of ongoing work. I think the other important question for us in terms of the program—and we have said this a number of times—is that the Packard Plant has a particular kind of potential as a site. It’s too big to think of it as a single building; it’s too big to think of it as just one program. So it has to be programmed like a landscape or like a fragment of the city. So certainly, in the last 10–15 years, all of my thinking

about landscape and urbanism was key in thinking about the program of this site as the project developed. It became a kind of platform where we could insert many programs, even apparently conflicting programs. But it works the same as in any city—I always like the Georg Simmel quote: “The metropolis makes a place for conflict.” Cities are valuable places socially and politically, precisely because they allow conflict to take place. Yet at the same time, good cities also hang together as some sort of larger whole. For us it was very important that the scale of the Packard Plant would make possible both conflict *and* coherence. In that sense, the project synthesizes some of the landscape, some urbanistic thinking, as well as some field conditions strategies.

On the other hand, I’d have to say in a large part, certainly we have never done a kind of adaptive reuse project at this scale. I think the presence of the Packard Plant as something to push back against made the project really new for us.

D29 How is what we often call archipelago urbanism in Detroit advantageous, and how is it a challenge?

SA Well, I think it’s one of the few realistic strategies going forward. I think we’re probably not alone in thinking as Detroit empties out and becomes much less dense overall, the archipelago strategy is the best one. If you believe that the value of urbanism is based on density, where are you going to find that density in Detroit today? The notion that Detroit is going to turn back the clock after everything that has happened and somehow magically coalesce into a dense urban center is pretty naïve. On the other hand, the idea that there could be pockets of density, (islands of density, going back to the archipelago idea), islands of density in a matrix of green space linked together with new forms of transportation—that seems to be a realistic strategy going forward. We were pretty skeptical if you look at the immediate context of the Packard Plant. For most of the year in Detroit, nobody’s going to ride their bicycle

to the Packard Plant, for an event or to go shopping or to visit some sort of local market. So the alternative proposal that we look at the city as a large interconnected region populated with pockets of dense, active urbanism seems to be a rich and promising strategy going forward.

D29 How has your work leveraged Detroit? Assuming that you consider Detroit a specific condition, how has your work leveraged partnerships with other professions, or has it in Detroit?

SA There is an arbitrary political boundary in Detroit, which is the boundary between Detroit and its northern suburbs. And of course, it’s a very, very powerful boundary. We have seen the maps that chart poverty and unemployment and there is a hard line there. And it’s a frightening line, a very real line; it has real consequences to real people. But it’s also an arbitrary line in architectural and urbanistic terms. It’s a political boundary, a straight line drawn on a map rather than a real architectural or geographic boundary. So I think we were trying to look at the larger region and the way in which the Packard Plant could become a kind of pivot between the wealth of the suburbs and the tough economic situation of Detroit as a city, and hopefully draw from both. So we could bring the cultural resources of the city to the Packard Plant while bringing some of the wealth of the suburbs to the Packard Plant. That was our regional strategy, in terms of the realities of Detroit today.

D29 Often we refer to Detroit as a testing ground. In your work with Detroit would you agree or disagree with that? In what ways is it more resolute and something that is unchanging?

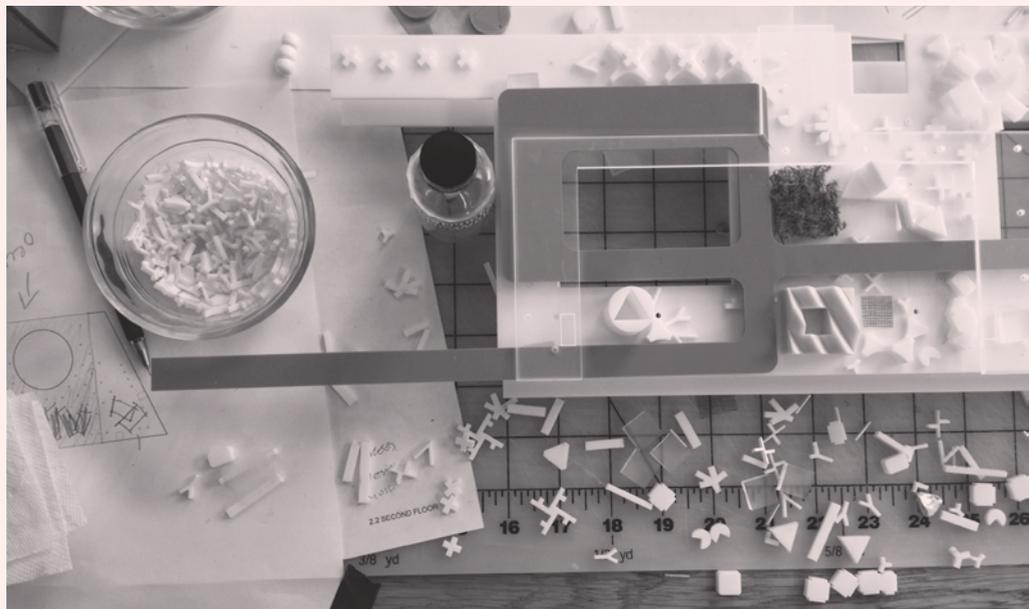
SA The thing that’s absolutely specific to Detroit is Albert Kahn, the Packard Plant, the history of the factory, and reinforced concrete construction. That was a strong point of reference for us. But I will also say, in all honesty, that we were very skeptical about some of the recent Detroit history coming in. I mean my view from the outside (not knowing Detroit very well), is

that Detroit had become a kind of test ground for questions of shrinking cities, re-wilding the city, urban farming and activist architecture. In other words, there were a lot of strategies reacting to the depopulation of Detroit that I just didn't find so productive. So we were aware of that history and we wanted to keep our distance from that history. But to the degree that the depopulation of Detroit also raises the larger question of the role of nature in the city, we were interested in those possibilities. We ended up filtering that history through our own project lens: that is to say, through the vehicle of the botanical garden, we are working with an architecturally specific program that engages questions of nature and ecology in the city.

D29 Was there anything in particular that surprised you about Detroit over the course of working on the project? What lessons from Detroit came out of the work?

SA Well, again, I had visited Detroit a couple of times, but I had never visited Detroit with an eye to working there. I perhaps brought this preconception of hundreds of student projects that used Detroit as a kind of testing ground for urban farming and shrinking cities, and the fascination with the crumbling industrial infrastructure—what some have called 'ruin porn.' These were things that I just wanted to keep my distance from. I think the thing that really struck me when I did visit is actually the quality of the existing architectural stock at all different levels in Detroit. Detroit has a really strong architectural legacy and it was important to emphasize the architectural legacy, as opposed to what I would perceive as these negative qualities of shrinking cities, empty lots, and so on. That was really what came forward to me when I visited and we thought about as the project progressed.

D29 What is the anticipated reception of this work in Detroit? How do you see Detroiters engaging the work once it comes back to Detroit after the Biennale?



SA I would say that's a question for the people in Detroit to answer and not me. *(Pauses)* We do our best—I mean we make the best project we can and we try and understand the project in terms of its own logic. But I think if you start trying to speak to or prejudice the reception as an architect, you're dead. You have to do our own work and you can't worry about what other people are going to think about it in the future.

I think if you start trying to speak to or prejudice the reception as an architect, you're dead.

D29 How do you see the project performing internationally versus back here in the U.S.?

SA I think inevitably, this is one of the interesting things about the project and speaks to the intelligence of the curators. I think there is a kind of fascination with the problem of the American city and Detroit as an extreme representation of the American city, in both its positive and its negative connotations. The American city as something very expansive, and open, democratic, porous to landscape—the American

grid as it extends across the landscape. The city, which is—certainly in the case of Detroit—a city based on the automobile. These are all very specifically American, and they all have their positive and negative sides. I think for the Biennale and for an international exhibition, for the American Pavilion to foreground the American city as a problem, is an important and intelligent concept. For me, that's the power of the project in terms of a larger international discussion.

D29 There's always compression in translation when you have these kind of global-local projects, like you have with the Biennale. What do you see the benefit being in the end? How will Detroit benefit from this project?

SA I think that it would be naïve to think that somebody in the city—some city official or some developer—is going to look at a project and say, "Oh, great. That's it. I'm going to build that project." The task of an international exhibition is to bring energy and a focus on the potential role of architecture, and bringing that into the public discussion in Detroit. As architects, if we have a specific project or a commission we have one kind of task; that implies a certain way of working and a certain kind of product. But I think with

an exhibition like this our job as architects is different: our task is to expand the horizon of imagination and open up the realm of possibility for Detroit in the future.

D29 The question surrounding your preliminary roundtable discussions was, “What is the architectural imagination?” How would you define that differently now? If someone were to ask you that same question, what would you say today and what is that architectural imagination producing in Detroit?

SA As architects we’re visual people, first of all (or should be). So for me, the architectural imagination comes down to thinking in images. It also has to do with a kind of extended conversation with the history of the discipline. It cycles back to your very first question. Architecture, unlike other art forms, has to unfold in relationship to the existing realities on the ground, and it has to do with the way in which you use constraints in a positive way. I am always convinced that you do more interesting work when you have more constraints. There’s nothing more frightening, as an architect, than total artistic freedom and an open field. We need constraints to push back against and this has been an exercise and a test case in a very interesting and complex set of constraints that hopefully sparked some creativity and invention on our part.

going to produce. I would say that now, having worked on the project, that our sense of the image that we’d like to promote going forward would have to do with Detroit’s condition as a specifically American city. A city that’s open, expansive, and engaged. It was extraordinary to stand on the roof of the Packard Plant and look out at the extended line of the horizon in the distance with the vastness of the Packard Plant in the foreground. These were two things in conversation with one another—the archetypal 20th century factory and the archetypal American city in the landscape. Somehow, I think that idea of expansiveness as a specifically American quality is very important. But at the same time, if we can counter that expansiveness with local density, complexity, and internal conflict, we might be able to produce the kind of dynamic which belongs to all good cities. That would be something we’d like to see. ■

Interviewers: Brooke Dexter, Adam Wilbanks
Photography: Courtesy of Stan Allen Architects

There’s nothing more frightening, as an architect, than total artistic freedom and an open field.

D29 In the roundtable discussion that you were in with Thom Moran, he said, “we owe the world a new image for Detroit.” What image do you want to see in Detroit, and do you feel the same way that you did at the beginning of the project about what that image might be?

SA I would certainly say that we entered the project with no preconceptions. We didn’t know in advance what sort of image we were

Interview with

Marshall Brown is a licensed architect and principal of Marshall Brown Projects. He is also an Associate Professor at the IIT College of Architecture. His achievements include selection to the U.S. Pavilion for the 2016 Venice Architecture Biennale and participating as a finalist in the 2012 Navy Pier Centennial Vision competition. He will have new projects on view in Chicago during spring and summer 2016 at both the Arts Club of Chicago and Western Exhibitions gallery.

Marshall Brown's work has been exhibited at the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit and Western Exhibitions in Chicago. He has served on the editorial board of the *Journal of Architectural Education* and has lectured at the Chicago Humanities Festival, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, the Graham Foundation, and the Arts Club of Chicago.

His projects and essays have appeared in several books and journals, including *Metropolis*, *Crain's*, *Architectural Record*, *The New York Daily News*, *Art Papers*, *The Believer*, and *New Directions in Sustainable Design*.

Marshall Brown



View of the sports block with the great "deck-solarium".

D29 How are you balancing objective realities and assumed stereotypes in Detroit?

MB So let's unpack that. So how did I start?

That's a good question. I started by looking at the material conditions of the site, though what struck me was the monumentality of some of the architecture around the site; ice houses, factories, slaughterhouses, and things like that. That made an impression on me immediately, as well as the intense activity around the site and different kinds of activity. This included the business of the market, as well as some of the art projects that were going on around the neighborhood. The thing that struck me, most importantly, was the existence of a school. While I was visiting the site, children were being let out of the Detroit Edison

Public School Academy. That was the thing that I found most surprising and shocking, that in the middle of all of this, you had these small schoolchildren running around in their uniforms. The existence of that institution was the thing that I latched onto as anomalous, but most promising. One of the things I am always interested in with my work is power in its many forms, in particular institutional power. It seemed to me that the existence of that school was promising for the future of the place, and we were being asked to think speculatively, and I assume optimistically, about the future of the place, so that was where I began. That's where I began, at least in terms of thinking.

D29 In your work, what role does engaging the history of a site, or just history in general, play to inform contemporary work? How do you not get caught up in the past of a place?

MB I find history in all of its forms very useful and not just the history of a particular place, but also architectural history in general. For me, as a designing architect, history is a kind of material, a medium, that I can play with and that I can work with, almost like any other. Not quite like any other, but it's a medium for me, especially a medium for finding inspiration, understanding the past, but also constructing a future, which I think is the most important thing, especially when you're making architecture. So for me, history is—I don't want to say that I try to instrumentalize history, but it is a kind of medium that I have figured out ways of working with.

D29 With a project like this where there are multiple teams working on the same site, how do you negotiate ambitions for the project, or do they emerge collectively? Did you work at all with other teams?

MB We all interacted when we had the site visit back in October, but we have been—and I don't know if it was intentional—more or less sequestered from one other since then (*laughs*). I can only speak for myself; maybe all of the other teams are talking and collaborating, but I think everything happened so fast that there wasn't a lot of time for all of that.

It'll be interesting to see everyone else's work.

D29 How do you, in your work, engage site-specific methods of working or processes? Is there a difference for you, of working on the site versus working from afar?

MB (*Pauses*) My work is heavily rooted in urbanism and urban design. The exogenous, external conditions, are stronger drivers for me in a project than the endogenous, or internal conditions. All those things matter, but I think I am weighted more towards the external aspect, so the specificities of the site are important, but I also work in a way where I would say I am not beholden to them because, especially when you're doing very large work, it also recreates the context. So again, like history, context is a medium. It's an incredibly useful medium and yes, I am heavily immersed in it. What's great about being an architect is that we have ways of accessing sites without actually being there. We don't have the luxury of always being able to be there on the site while we're working, so we use drawing, we of course use all of the GIS or other digital tools that we can to access the site. It's great actually, that you can now Google Earth everything and just get down on the ground from hundreds or thousands of miles away. There were many days in my studio where I needed to go back to the site virtually where I wasn't able to just get in my car and run out to Detroit. But I have

spent some time working in Detroit on other projects, so even though I don't know this particular site like the back of my hand, I also have some familiarity with Detroit and the issues. And not just from working in Detroit, but also from working here in Chicago, where we have similar kinds of sites and similar kinds of issues. Working around Eastern Market and the Dequindre Cut, these kinds of sites are not strange to me. In fact, I have worked a lot with these kinds of sites, so I would say that there's—I mean I wouldn't necessarily use the term "site specificity" because I think that's just a given in architecture. I think it's more about responsiveness than it is about specificity.

D29 Where would you say this project sits in your body of work? Do you find it's a continuation of a previous train of thought, or is it more of a new chapter?

MB I think it's a continuation in some senses because I have been doing a lot of work about American cities, decentralization, both writing and creating urban design work about those issues over the past 10 years. Also, work about infrastructural redevelopment, air rights development, and building on top of old infrastructures. I have been working on those things for quite a while. I would say it's something new in the sense that it's given me an opportunity to get back down to the building scale.

The project is a work of urban design as well, even though it's a single building, so I think that's the departure. I also think what's new is looking at how the things I have been thinking about, the urban scale, get reflected at the architectonic levels. Even at the scale of something as small as a column, a window, or even a wall.

D29 We often talk about Detroit as an archipelago urbanism. Do you find this strategy to be advantageous or challenging?

MB My project is definitely an archipelago project, so I am on board with that.

D29 How is it advantageous to work in that way?

MB I don't know if I would describe it as advantageous. I feel like it's kind of imperative. I think many people have talked about this archipelago idea because it seems to be a spatial model that responds to the emergent characteristic not just of Detroit, but many cities which are experiencing depopulation. One of the ways that we can still create collective space is through that model where intensities float within the larger grid, which is more dispersed.

I think it's just become a kind of provisional—not a solution—but a way of moving forward, let's say.

D29 How has your work leveraged Detroit? How has it leveraged partnerships with the other professions that exist in Detroit?

MB Well, I did have discussions very early on with Detroit Edison Public School Academy because I was interested in engaging them about the program for my project, which is a new campus for their school, but within a single building. It's a dramatic scaling up of their program, so I talked to them at the very beginning about their mission, etc. I think that's one way in which it has leveraged Detroit. If you think about scale, the kind of architectural references I was looking at include the Renaissance Center, now the GM Center. My project is a bit of a—I wouldn't say a homage, but I would say an extension of or let's say a next step for a project like the GM Center, or Lafayette Park, or even Cranbrook in a certain way. These are places in Detroit which I know well and which I love. I was looking to create another piece, or design another piece in that field of projects, as a kind of utopia, a fortunate place within the larger landscape.

D29 What surprised you about Detroit? Over the course of the project, especially having worked in Detroit in the past, what are some lessons that you took from this work in Detroit?



MB Well, one of the things that surprised me when I went for the initial site visit (it didn't surprise me, but the intensity of it surprised me) was the Detroit Design Festival. There were people making murals on every available surface (*laughs*), which I realize is something happening in the city right now. It's this very frantic attempt, it seems, to turn buildings, if not architecture, into art pieces. I found the scale and intensity of that effort kind of surprising and a bit strange and then eventually inspirational as well. It got me to thinking, "What if that actually went to another level? What if, in a city like Detroit, where property values are gone, where real estate exchange value is gone or extremely low, people are trying to instill some other kind of value; the value of the city as a work of art. Henri Lefebvre wrote about the pre-modern city, and this is something I reference in the text from my project. The way I like to read it is that some Detroiters are

trying to turn the city into a work of art, and it got me to thinking about a period in Le Corbusier's career where he started inscribing the form of the Modulor into the façade of the Unité d'Habitation. Not painting it, but actually imprinting it. In Detroit you have these older buildings where you have, for example, on the Coleman Young Municipal Center, these large human figures, which are embossed into the wall of the building. It seemed interesting to me that that attitude, activity, or strategy for making architecture could be somehow revived.

D29 How do you see the project performing internationally versus back here in Detroit?

MB I don't know. As an architect, I can't predict that. I think one hopes that it expands people's thinking about what's possible, either on that site, somewhere else in Detroit, or somewhere else in the world. What I always try to do with my work (whether or not it's successful) is to expand the possibilities of people's thinking about space, form, the city, and architecture.

D29 As these types of projects get compressed and translated from global to local scales, how do you see it benefiting Detroit in the long run?

MB Well, at the very least, it'll bring some much-needed, hopefully positive attention to the city from new audiences.

D29 To go back and look at the preliminary roundtable discussions, there was a lot of discussion about 'the architectural imagination.' Now that you've completed the work, how do you feel about that term? Has your definition of, or thinking on the architectural imagination of Detroit changed?

MB I think I said something about artifacts, about drawings, and models,

and all these things that we make. And I think that's the way I still feel.

D29 Is there a certain way that you can judge whether a project is successful in the end? Are there certain expectations that you have when you set up your work to determine whether it's acting positively?

MB This is a really tough question because it takes time, especially when a project is very large or complex. You may not understand the positive or negative effects of it, or success of it for five to ten years, because it takes time for a discourse to build around a project. I don't want to pre-emptively congratulate or condemn the work (*laughs*).

I haven't even seen it on the wall yet. I am very happy with the opportunity to make this project. I am very happy with the results just in terms of the level of craft, from the drawings to the models. However, success comes in many different forms and that's difficult to anticipate. What effect will it have on the discourse? Did somebody decide to build the thing? Does it create controversy? Does it get people talking? Do people love it? Do people hate it? It will take a long time to judge. Then there are not just the individual projects, but there's also how they interact. Part of the reception, by the architects and the public, will also be affected by how they interact with each other in the pavilion. That's an especially impossible question to answer right now because I have seen the work only in a vacuum in my studio. Let's use a Detroit analogy. Someone designs a car and builds the car, but it hasn't been driven yet. They've got to take it out and drive it for 100,000 miles before anyone really knows whether or not it's a good car.

No matter how much care and feeding they put into it before it rolled out on the factory floor, until it gets out on the road with other cars, in the snow, in the rain...I think architecture projects are the same. Even speculative architecture projects. They have to be out in the world for a while before we really know. I think people will have

to taste them and interact with them. The projects have to interact with one another, and then we'll really start to understand. I think only after we arrive in Venice will we really start to understand what was successful and what was less successful. Then the work is going to come to Detroit and it's going to get a whole other reception.

So it'll be a couple of years before we can start to really understand the work.

D29 In a roundtable discussion following yours, Thom Moran posited this idea that "we owe the world a new image for Detroit." What image do you think you want to see in Detroit? Do you feel the same way that you did at the start of this project, or has the evolution of your work influenced what you imagine that image to be?

MB I don't know about image because I don't think about image a lot when I am making my work. Of course we all make images or we make pictures, drawings, or photographs. But I don't think about image and I don't work through the idea of image. The way I would frame it is that I think that Detroit needs (*pauses*)—I mean this is tricky; telling Detroit what it needs is a little bit dangerous. So I would say (*pauses*) what I try to contribute, whether Detroit needs it or not, is an idea about architectural form and collectivity. That was the thing that I think my project really focuses on how to create a new idea about collectivity, the relation between architecture, institutional power, collective spaces, collective form, and civitas. A school for me is really about creating citizens, creating future citizens. And it seems like that's what Detroit needs is actually more citizens (*laughs*). That's just a fact. Architecture can't necessarily do that, but it can create the spaces where that might be possible, so for me, that's not a question of image; that is actually about real physical and spatial conditions. ■

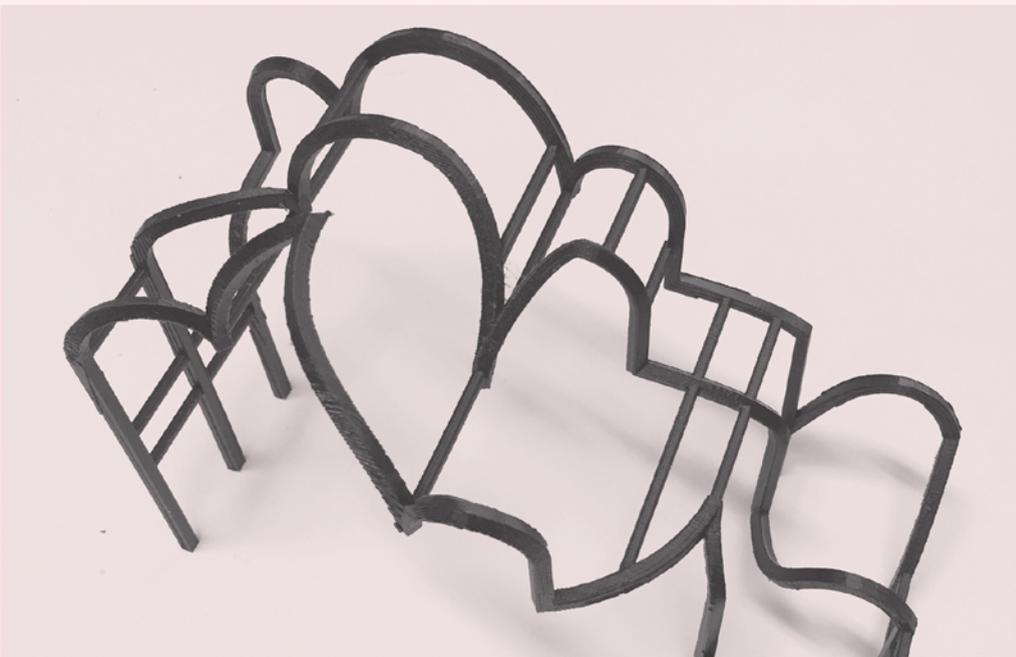
Interviewers: Brooke Dexter, Adam Wilbanks
Images: Courtesy of Marshall Brown

What I try to contribute, whether Detroit needs it or not, is an idea about architectural form and collectivity.

Interview with

Pita & Bloom is an architectural design collaborative based in Los Angeles. Started in 2010, Florencia Pita and Jackilin Hah Bloom focus their shared sensibilities on the production of figurative yet reimagined and unexpected designs. They employ vivid color and reconfigured geometries with unexpected forms to challenge traditional material conventions. The work of Pita & Bloom to date includes competition proposals for world-class buildings such as the Taichung City Cultural Center in Taiwan, a housing ideas project in Maribor, Slovenia and an urban park scheme in San Francisco, California. In January of 2014, Pita & Bloom were called “two female visionaries” in *ARCHITECT* magazine’s “Next Progressives” and were one of five finalists of the prestigious MoMA PS1: Young Architects Program competition. Florencia Pita is the Graduate Thesis Coordinator at SCI-Arc while teaching design studios and visual studies seminars. Jackilin Hah Bloom teaches design studios and visual studies seminars at SCI-Arc. Both are active in architectural academia.

Pita & Bloom



D29 How did you first start the project and with a site that is as loaded as this one, how are you balancing realities and stereotypes?

FP By creating new realities and new stereotypes (*laughs*).

JB Well, we approached this project as we approach many of our projects. We like to dive in by doing analytical drawings of the context, site, and building typologies of the project's region. We also developed a list of potential programs for the site and we ended with a theatre, an outdoor band shell, a winter garden, a marketplace for ad-hoc and permanent retail, a cultural center, and a recreation center. We also considered parking as a major part of the program. We did a whole series of research based on relevant typological projects and programs for the site that could be merged together.

FP So they're not one program, they're hybrids. A little bit like what exists in Detroit today, where you find an abandoned theater that has become

a parking lot. There is an exchange of program types that makes Detroit very interesting. It was our first time in Detroit so we were shocked because we actually found the city quite beautiful, even though we expected otherwise. There is a lot of open space between buildings. So our project looks at this hybrid typology mixture along with a new idea of public space or public parks between buildings.

D29 Where would you say this project sits within your body of work? Would you say it's a continuation of some earlier thinking, or more of like a fresh start or a new chapter?

JB It's definitely a continuation. I think in the last few years of our work, there is a theme. We are very interested in figuration and we're interested in color as materiality. So those themes manifest in this project as well.

D29 With this interest in figuration and color as materiality, does this find any specific application when

working within Mexicantown as a site in Detroit?

JB Maybe it's not a coincidence that we were given the Mexicantown site. We met with people from the community of the site in Mexicantown. It's mainly a community of immigrants who come from many different countries and cultures. So it was natural for our project to look at hybrid typologies and vivid color sources—all of this to be integrated with an idea of a new public space.

D29 How has your work leveraged Detroit, and how has it leveraged partnerships with other professions or local community groups, or has it done that?

JB This is a very interesting project because all of the teams were brought to Detroit—and I am pretty sure that all of us were introduced to the community members and residents around each site. Although it is a speculative project, by meeting real people of the community, it forced us to think about the project as a real problem. But at the same time, the title of the U.S. Pavilion is *The Architectural Imagination*. So for us it was about producing a powerful fantasy about Detroit that at the same time moderates the real needs of the site and community. The trick is to create this equilibrium between the unimaginable and the real.

D29 As a new place for you to be working, what surprised you over the course of the project and what lessons can be learned from Detroit?

FP One of the things that surprised me is how photogenic Detroit is because of all the raw nature that has grown around decaying buildings. It's very cinematic. You have this strange green space between houses and it makes for a beautiful scene of a city. It would be interesting to know what happens with this negative space you

Although it is a speculative project, by meeting real people of the community, it forced us to think about the project as a real problem.

have in the city. And again, in a way we worked with that notion of the negative space being potential for urban space, for public space.

D29 What is your anticipated reception of the project in Detroit? How do you envision Detroiters engaging with this project?

JB Our project is basically a raised plaza or city square and I think it will be received in that way because diagrammatically it reads that way. But our intent is to produce multiple readings, especially by an audience of Detroiters who come from diverse and sophisticated backgrounds.

FP We worked through an abstract process, but we also intended to have a conceivable, finished project. So for us, we took it on as a real project. We didn't reach the section and plans in detail, but we really looked at the project as a large intervention.

D29 Originally, in the roundtable discussions, there was a discussion of defining the term 'the architectural imagination' and what that means for producing things in Detroit. Has that changed? Has your perception of that term changed over the course of the project?

FP We enjoyed working through the theme of the imagination. I think in a way, that's how we work. We look at the tangible information, but we imagine it in a big way (*laughs*). So what's interesting is that through imagination, you can find novelty. People can engage with the project under the assumption of understanding imagination as a thinking tool for how we produce new ideas about the city.

D29 What image do you want to see in Detroit? We're curious if this is something that has evolved over the course of the project. In the final



roundtable discussion, Thom Moran said that, "we owe the world a new image for Detroit." So what is your take on that, now that the project has wrapped up?

JB I don't know if Detroit really needs a new image. I mean our attitude about Detroit is that it already has a powerful image, the image of ruins, entropy, and erasure. We tried to almost recreate this condition in our design process. So we were drawing, erasing and redrawing new figures and forms and make it an emblematic condition in a new public space. Instead of saying, "Detroit is bad. It needs a whole new image." Detroit is actually quite beautiful because of the layers of history that come from.

Detroit is actually quite beautiful because of the layers of history that come from.

FP When you look at the Renaissance Center complex, the image says, "Look, you need a new city." I think that type of image is very problematic as an intervention in Detroit. It's a top-down vision of urban renewal that I think is an old idea of how you have to revolutionize a city or completely

transform it. They are desperate urban renewal maneuvers that have done more damage to the city than what they have given back. So like Jacki said, we looked at the layers of Detroit and Mexicantown. Our project in a way starts with many layers to unravel and uncover things and present them as new conditions. It's as if we have a little bit of an excavation of history in Detroit from the very beginning to today. It's something without this kind of futuristic vision or this vision of something that can bring drastic change, like those towers. ■

Interviewers: Brooke Dexter, Adam Wilbanks
Images: Courtesy of Pita & Bloom

Robert

Robert Fishman, professor of architecture and urban planning, teaches in the urban design, architecture, and urban planning programs at Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. He received his Ph.D. and A.M. in history from Harvard and his A.B. in history from Stanford University. An internationally recognized expert in the areas of urban history and urban policy and planning, he has authored several books regarded as seminal texts on the history of cities and urbanism including *Bourgeois Utopias: The Rise and Fall of Suburbia* (1987) and *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, and Le Corbusier* (1977). His honors include the 2009 Laurence Gerckens Prize for lifetime achievement of the Society for City and Regional Planning History; the Walker Ames Lectureship, the University of Washington, Seattle, 2010; the Emil Lorch Professorship at the Taubman College, 2006-2009; Public Policy Scholar, the Wilson Center, Washington, D.C., 1999; the Cass Gilbert Professorship at the University of Minnesota, 1998; and visiting professorships at the University of Paris, Nanterre; the University of Pennsylvania; and Columbia University.

As of January 1, 2016, Fishman serves as interim dean. A national search is in progress and a new dean is expected to be appointed by summer 2016.

Fishman

Cities have had a difficult relationship with “the architectural imagination” for at least the last century. The modern movement declared war on the cities of the early 20th century, and sought to replace their “obsolete” forms through total urban renewal. In response, the postmodernists followed Robert Venturi in his 1962 declaration that Main Street (and by extension the existing city) was “almost all right,” an assertion that lesser figures transformed into a too-comfortable accommodation with developer-driven urbanism.

What is perhaps most impressive about the interviews with Stan Allen, Marshall Brown, and Florencia Pita and Jackilin Hah Bloom is the way in which all of them chart out a complex position for the “architectural imagination” vis-à-vis a city like Detroit. They have learned the key lesson from the failure of utopian modernism, namely that architecture can do little to remedy directly the overwhelming social and economic issues that have shaped Detroit and other shrinking cities. But they nevertheless see a very real agency for architecture, and one that follows directly from the special strengths of architecture itself.

Stan Allen aptly quotes his teacher Robert Slutsky’s comment, “We’re more real than the real world,” which Allen glosses to mean that an architecture project, however “speculative,” can have its own rigorous logic. I would push the comment one step further, and apply it in another way to the value and validity of speculative projects in

the context of Detroit. The “real” is never exhausted by the limited and discouraging prospects that can be discerned in the immediate present. Reality must include a broader sweep that takes into account a city’s history and opens up possibilities for its future. Precisely because a speculative project can *make visible* these otherwise hidden possibilities, it is arguably *more real* than projects that merely register and thus reinforce the limitations of the present.

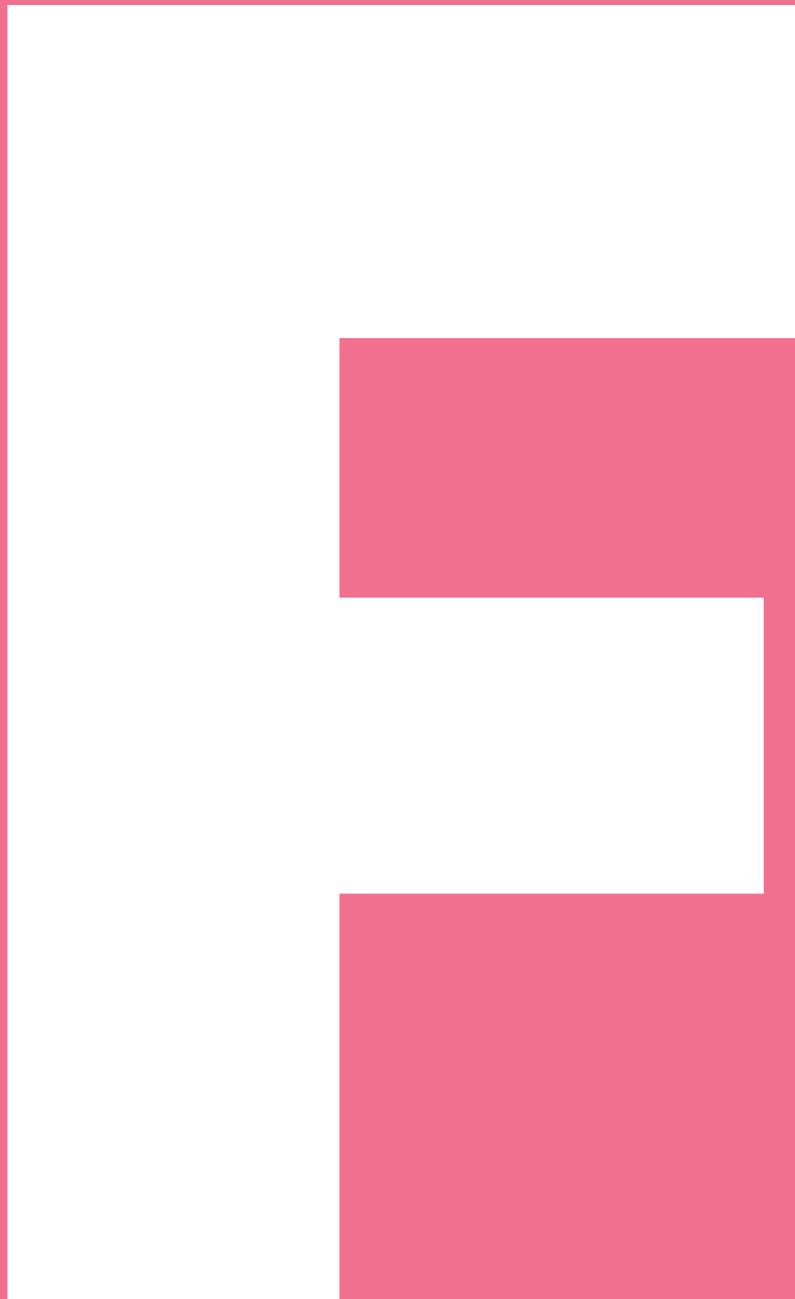
Thus, the botanical garden that SAA/Stan Allen Architect are proposing for the Packard Plant might seem to be a quixotic concept for a city that has only recently emerged from bankruptcy and is struggling to pay its (shockingly underpaid) teachers. But, as Allen observes, Detroit’s bankruptcy is the artifact of a politically-drawn set of boundaries that have isolated the central city from the resources of its still growing and prosperous suburbs. To take that boundary as inevitable and eternal is to succumb to a self-defeating presentism, whereas to design a new civic institution appropriate in scale and function for a renewed and re-united region is, I would argue, to grasp a deeper level of possibility that only a speculative project could reveal.

Indeed, all three projects discussed in the interviews are seeking to extend the boundaries of the possible. Marshall Brown has seen—or rather *foreseen*—what a multi-purpose school could accomplish on his site at the Dequindre Cut and Eastern Market. And Florencia Pita and Jackilin Hah Bloom have gone beyond the initial

interest in, for example, “50,000 square feet for my tortilla place” to envisage their difficult site at the edge of Mexicantown as genuine public space for the community.

As the interviewers clearly recognize, what unites the speculative projects is Oswald Mathias Ungers’s concept of the *archipelago*, formulated in the 1970s when Ungers imagined that Berlin might follow American cities in their radical depopulation. He imagined formerly dense and coherent cities dissolving into islands of activity surrounded by depopulated open spaces. But he also foresaw that each island would have its own special character and vitality, and thus the archipelago as a whole would preserve the diversity of a great city in spite of decline.

“The Architectural Imagination” in effect adapts Ungers’s concept to a Detroit that is beginning its revival—but only beginning. As the interviews show, none of the teams see their particular projects as the inevitable and only way to develop their sites. Indeed, following the archipelago idea, there is no need for a single overarching vision of the “new Detroit” such as the modernists had advocated. Instead, there will be many diverse islands of redevelopment, each with its special character, and each hopefully the outcome of a democratic process of discussion and action at the neighborhood level. But first there must be the vision that empowers these localities to think beyond their present condition. And this is the function and gift of “The Architectural Imagination.” ■



Fellows

Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning offers three fellowships in the areas of architectural research and instruction. Fellows spend a year at Taubman College, teaching three classes as they pursue their fellowship interests.

DESIGN / MUSCHENHEIM FELLOWSHIP

The Muschenheim Fellowship offers design instructors early in their career the opportunity to develop a body of work in the context of teaching. Muschenheim fellows play a significant role in the definition of studio culture while pursuing their own creative endeavors. Proposals for the Muschenheim Fellowship focus upon the development of a specific project individually or with students, outside of teaching or center upon a particular set of pedagogical themes to be engaged in the studio context.

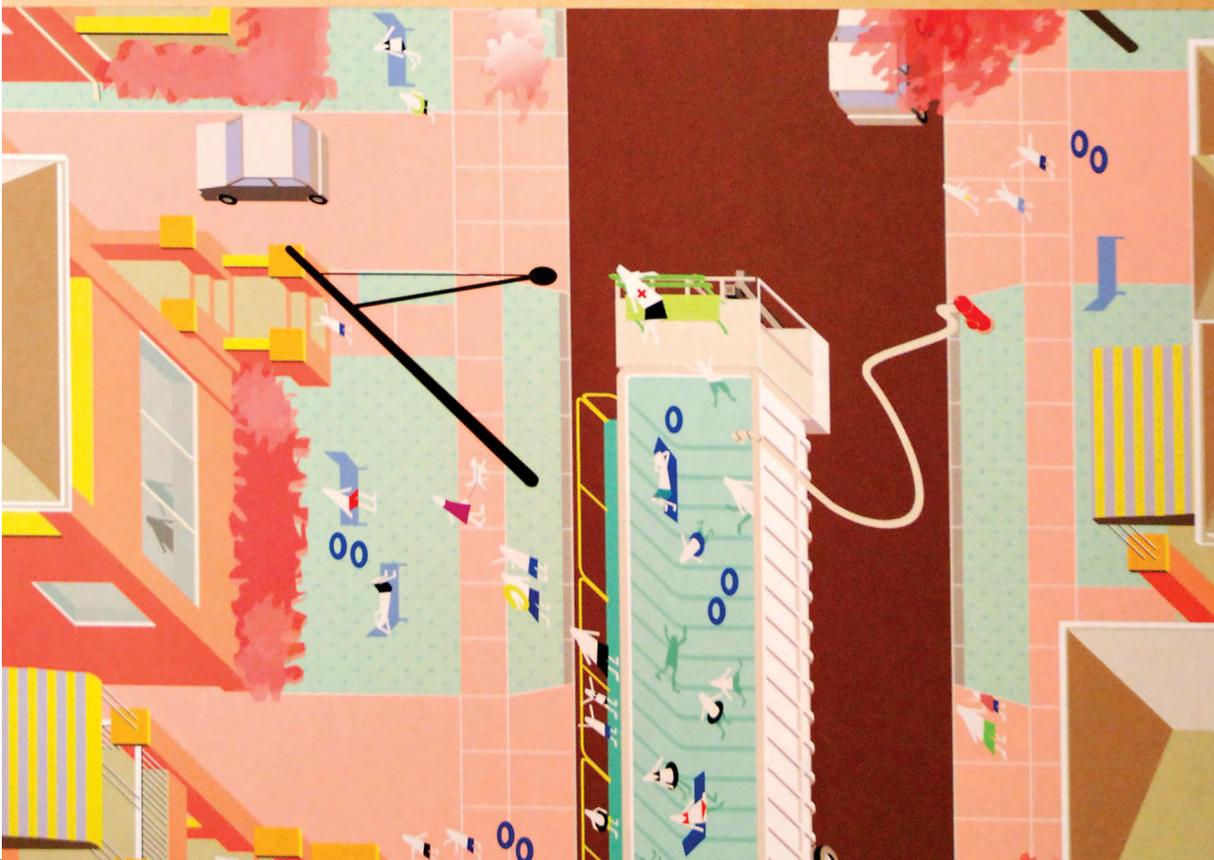
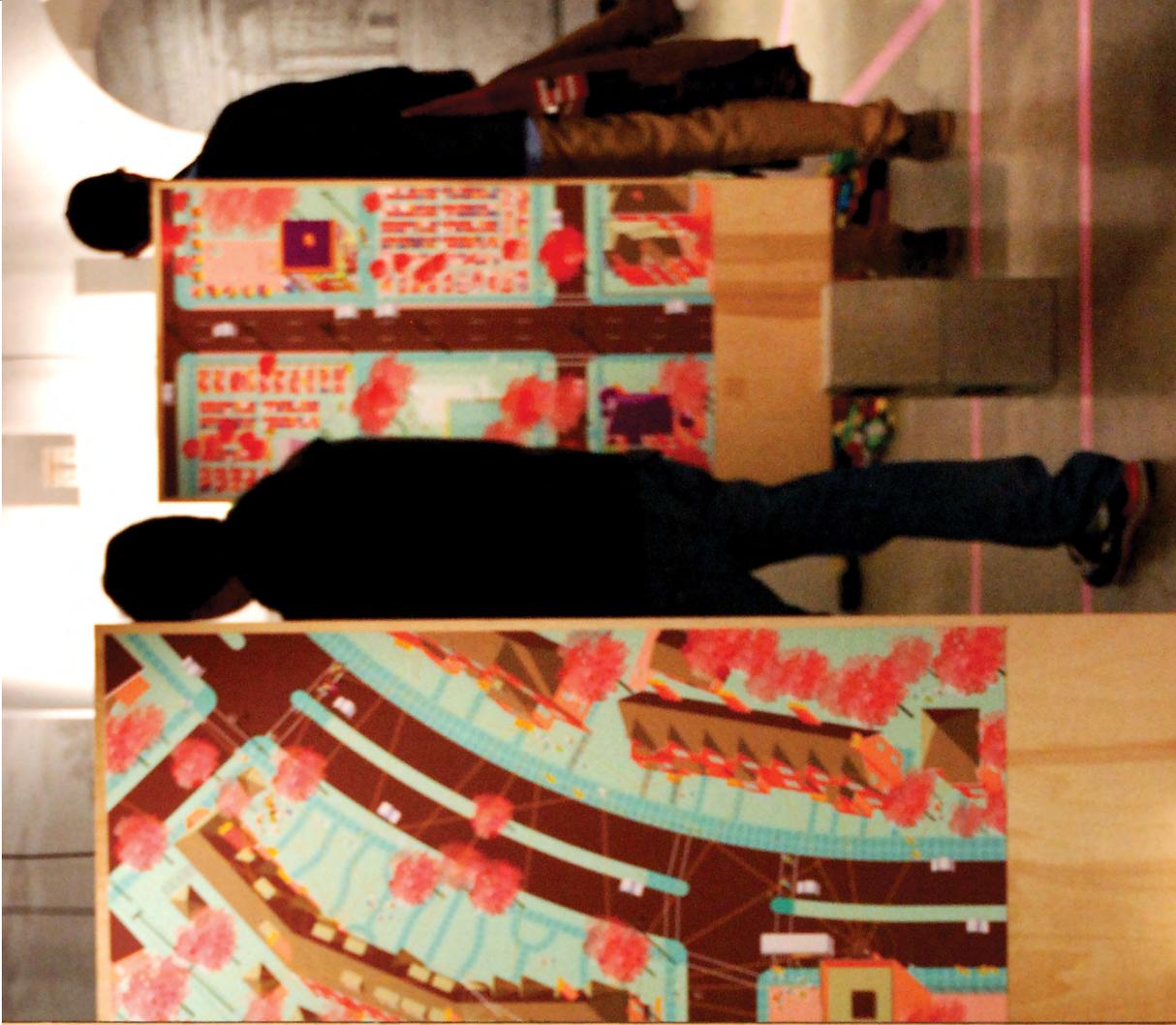
PROJECT / OBERDICK FELLOWSHIP

The Oberdick Project Fellowship facilitates the development and realization of a significant exploration

into some aspect of architectural speculation and production. Fellows are provided with resources for the execution of a project that may take the form of an exhibit, publication, installation, or any other material construction. Projects may range from the exploration of emergent building, fabrication, and environmental technologies to the realization of architectural works and endeavors typically unsupported within conventional models of practice.

RESEARCH / SANDERS FELLOWSHIP

The Sanders Fellowship supports individuals with significant, compelling and timely research dealing with architectural issues. Research could dwell within architectural, urban, landscape, or cultural history or theory; architectural or environmental technology; or design studies. These agendas could emerge from recently completed doctoral dissertations or other intense and rigorous research format. The fellowship will support both research and the development of research-related curriculum.



Placeholders

Eleven Spatial Strategies in Detroit

Detroiters are never passive about their city. There is a deep sense of community with many complex roots and interconnections. The residents of the city demand greater quantity and higher quality of space that is shared and used by all. In Detroit, individualism is secondary to the strong spirit of community, creativity, cooperation, and citizen participation. Echoing the powerful spirit of Detroiters, this article brings a different reading of Detroit's urban density through the analysis of eleven initiatives in the city, which all negotiate unique spatial conditions and citizen demands in the context of a large American city trying to rebuild itself. If the urbanist Jordi Borja points out that, "the public space is the city,"¹ and if the cities, as Fernando Carrión explains, are "the space of the

domestic or the private, the area where the population interacts (symbiosis), identifies (symbolic) and manifests (civic),"² then this rediscovery of spatial strategies in available space is a matter of both the city and its citizens. Saskia Sassen suggests that "multiple small interventions may not look like much, but together they give added meaning to the notion of incompleteness of our cities."³ The city of Detroit is one that serves as a framework to sample approaches that tactically engage what Sassen refers to as the incomplete. This time of post-bankruptcy is a hopeful and unique scenario for the city and its citizens in which alternative uses of available space through interventions that "hold, denote or reserve place" reinforce new ways to promote civic engagement and use of the city's open space.

ANA MORCILLO PALLARES

Daughter of a teacher and an architect, Ana is the apple that didn't fall far from the tree. As a child she was always at her dad's studio captivated by the aroma and light of a giant blueprint, which was oddly located in the office's kitchen. Always surrounded by architecture drawings, she took several art seminars but in the last moment she decided to pursue architecture. Ana studied at the ETSAV, Architecture School of Valencia, the Arkitekakolen Aarhus and the ETSAM, Architecture School of Madrid, where she recently obtained her PhD in architecture. Since 2005, Ana shares an office together with her partner Jonathan called Morcillo Pallares + Rule Arquitectos. Their adventures in architecture have led them to explore creative opportunities both locally and abroad which led Ana to a new appointment in her career as an assistant professor at Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan.



BMX



Today, Detroit is a product of many stakeholders who are modifying its structure for a variety of reasons. The analysis of the different projects reveals a comprehensive understanding of the current state and possibilities for the future participative role of Detroiters in the urban life of the city.

The projects analyzed cover a wide range of programmatic diversity including a mobile pool, a skate park on a basketball court, a soccer field on a market lot, a recycled urban mini golf, an educational recycling classroom located in a found-objects art park, a BMX park in an abandoned playground, an edible hut, an urban farm, a neighbor eco-WiFi network, and a sushi bar in a shipping container, designed by a team of college and high school students. In addition, they were chosen based on the three distinct criteria. First, based on their geographic diversification, as a way to reflect a broad spectrum of the city and understand the diversity of social, economic, architectural, and urban conditions of the different neighborhoods. Secondly, due to the overlap of public and private, where projects that create space for public activity are a result of what occurs between public ownership, regulations, private uses, individual interests, and land ownership. Lastly, their ability to alternatively use these projects needed to incorporate programmatic requirements not only driven by economic priorities, but by the need to resolve space deficits for education, recreation, contemplation, nutrition, and communication. These eleven examples reveal the imagination and fantasies of citizens through their participative roles that are anything but traditional and demonstrate the endless possibilities for the use of open space in the city.

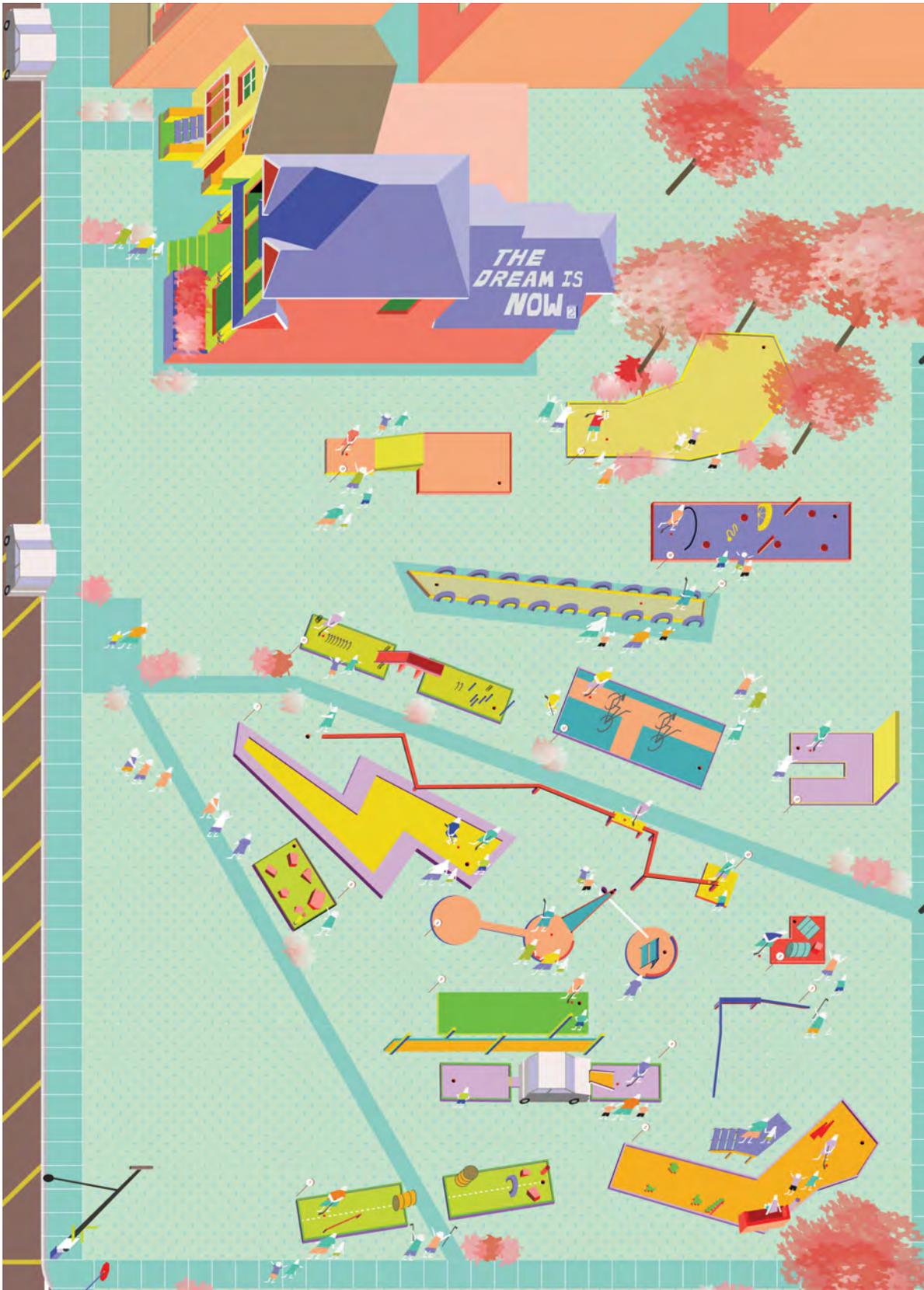
Through exploration of these examples, a new reading of the architectural project as a spatial mediator between collective demands and the use of open public space is revealed. From this position, it is possible to establish a different physical framework to reflect on, discuss, and clarify, as noted by the Spanish urban planner Oriol Bohigas, “the transitions from the individual creation to collective communication.”⁴ The projects allow the role of the citizen to become continually more apparent in the public realm of the city, while at the same time offering an opportunity for a greater understanding of common spatial strategies between them. The initiatives are analyzed based on a classification of common identifiable operations that include: aggregation, nesting, mobile ready-mades, soft/hard networks, and linear initiatives. Emphasis is to be placed on the logic of these built solutions by anonymous individuals that colonize, amplify, mutate, superimpose, or sensibly alter the existing condition of open space in the city.

As Kevin Lynch warned in his book, *The Image of the City*, “Not only is the city an object which is perceived (and perhaps enjoyed) by millions of people of widely diverse class and character, but it is a product of many builders who are constantly modifying the structure for reasons of their own. While it may be stable in general outlines for some time, it is ever changing in detail. Only partial control can be exercised over its growth and form. There is no final result, only a continuous succession of phases.”⁵

4. Bohigas, Oriol. “La ciudad como espacio proyectado.” *La ciudad viva*, 1999.

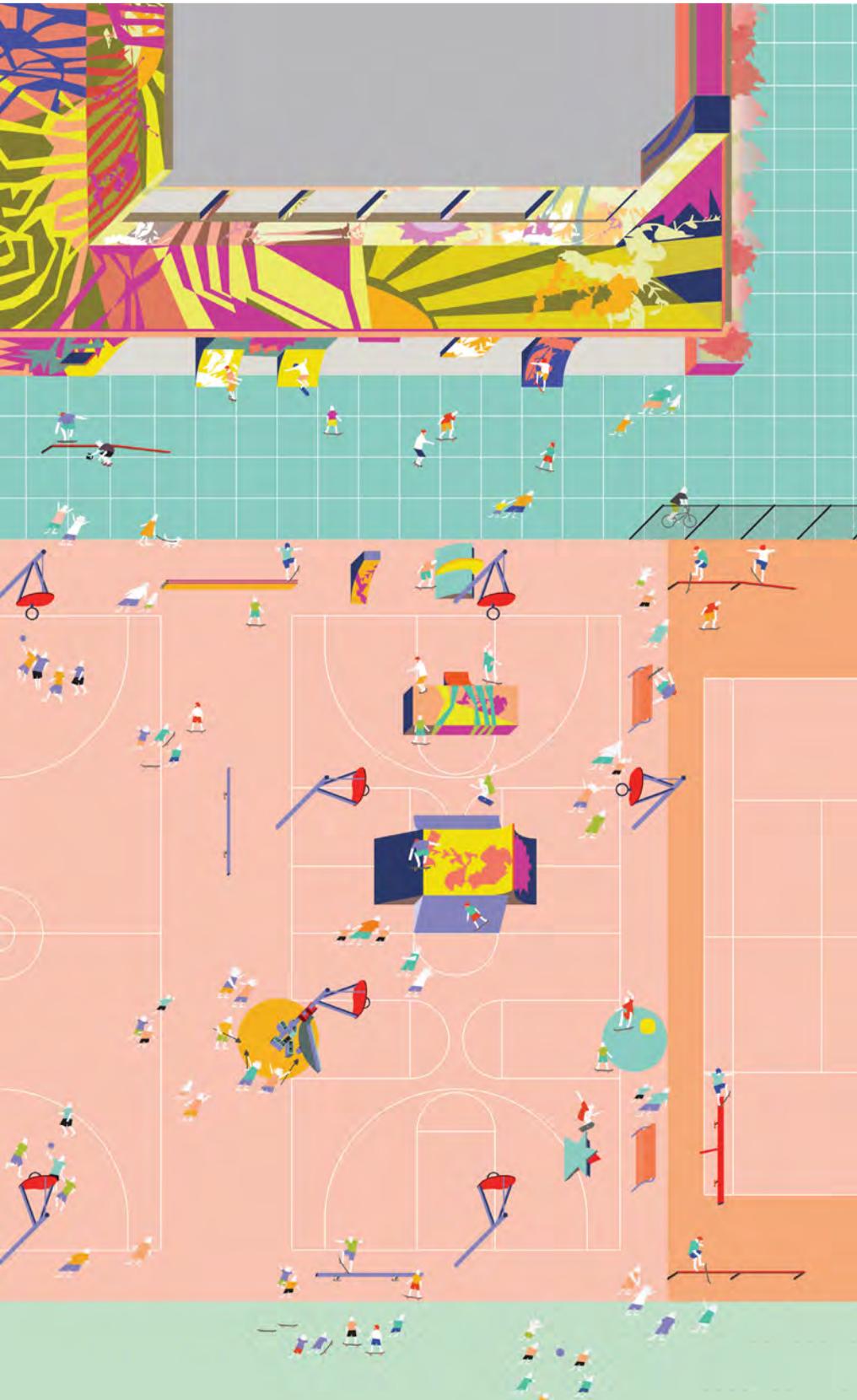
5. Lynch, Kevin. *The Image of the City*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960.





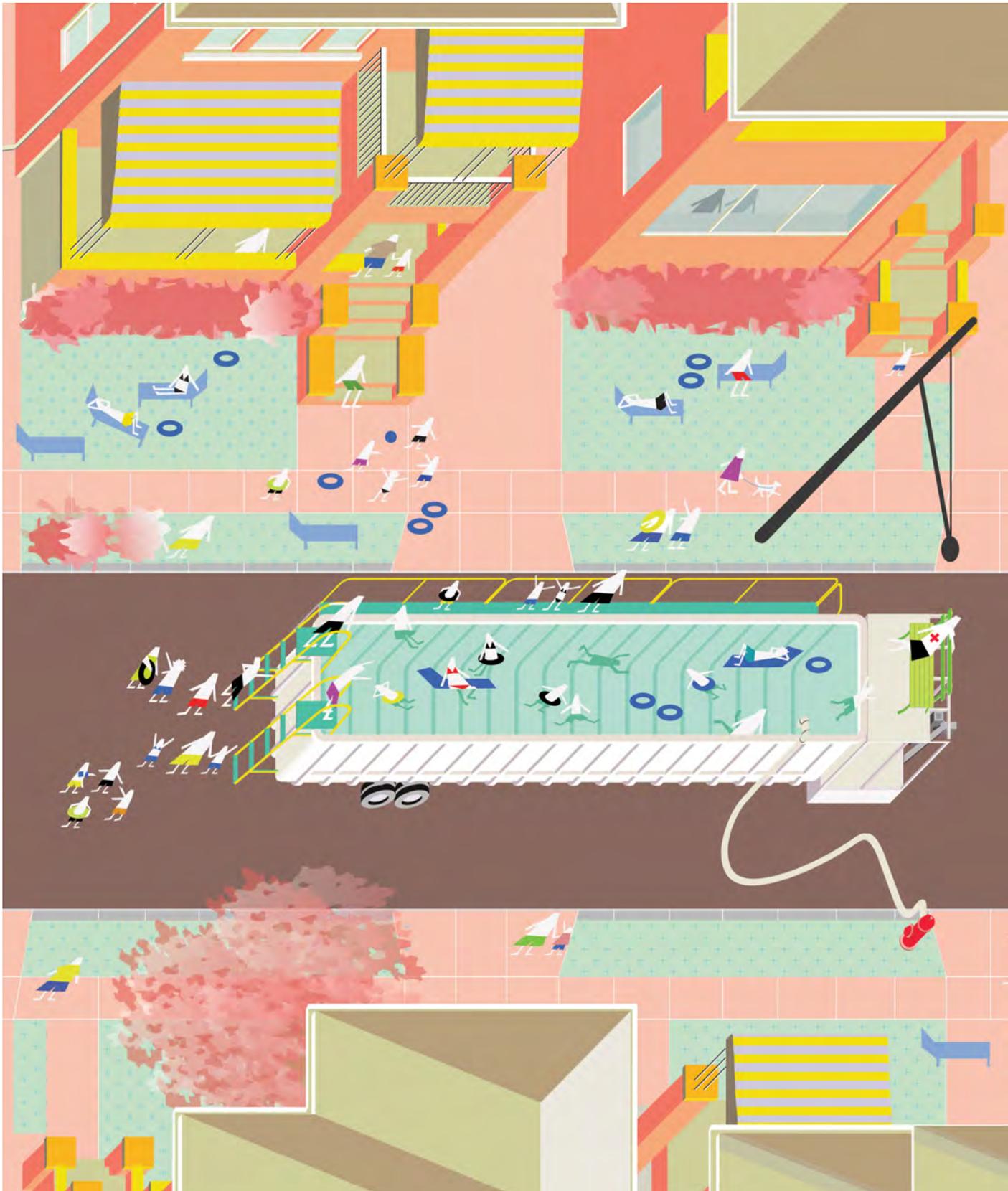
Urban Put Put



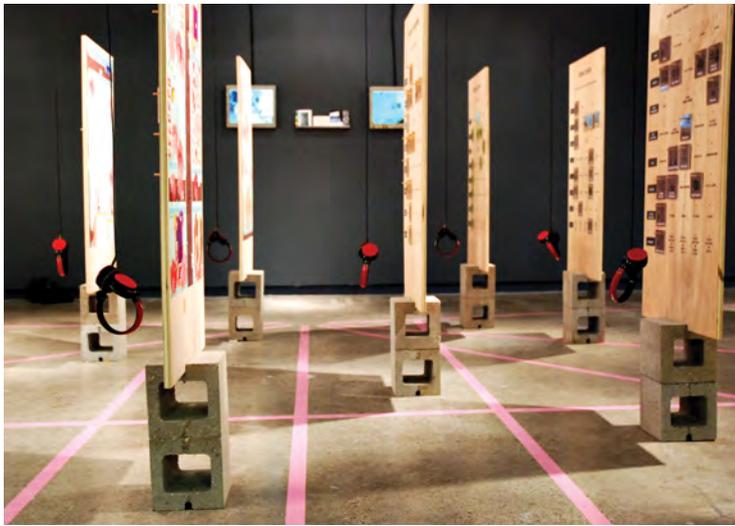
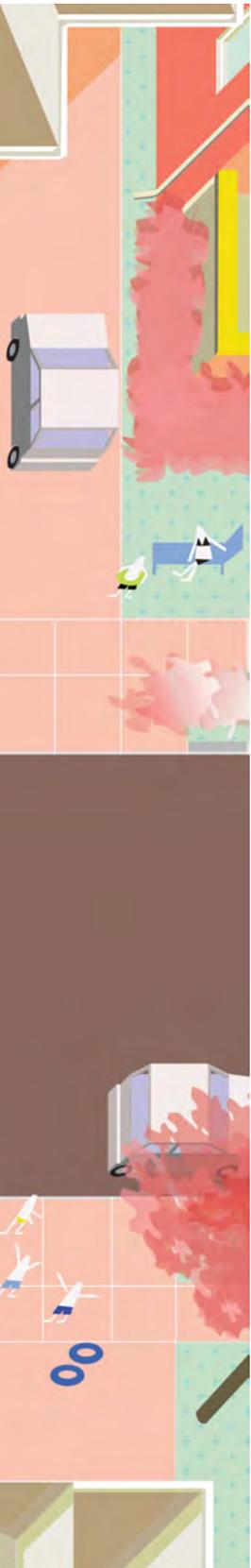


The continual use of urban space for many of these builders through the partial, temporal, or permanent initiatives leverage different strategies of aggregation, nesting, incorporating ready-mades, and colonizing through networks or linear interventions that share a common determination to hold, denote or reserve space. The study of these five spatial strategies does not only document the potential of available space, but also reveals the consequences of its transformation for the future of the city and its citizens. These adapted mechanisms by anonymous builders and new approaches to projects shed light on creative methods of participation and the process of public empowerment. These highlighted projects intend to manifest that not only large projects can help revive a great city, but that diversity, sensibility, close supervision and easy maintenance allowed for by the small scale are fundamental for the quality of urban life. With this knowledge, the work allows one to reflect on the true nature of the revitalization of the city's available space, understood through generative interactions that might not be a direct result of the project's intentions. The specific qualities of these projects, their spatial strategies, site, politics and aesthetics are a reference for present and future application by individuals who are recognized and valued for their contribution to the vitality of their city. ■

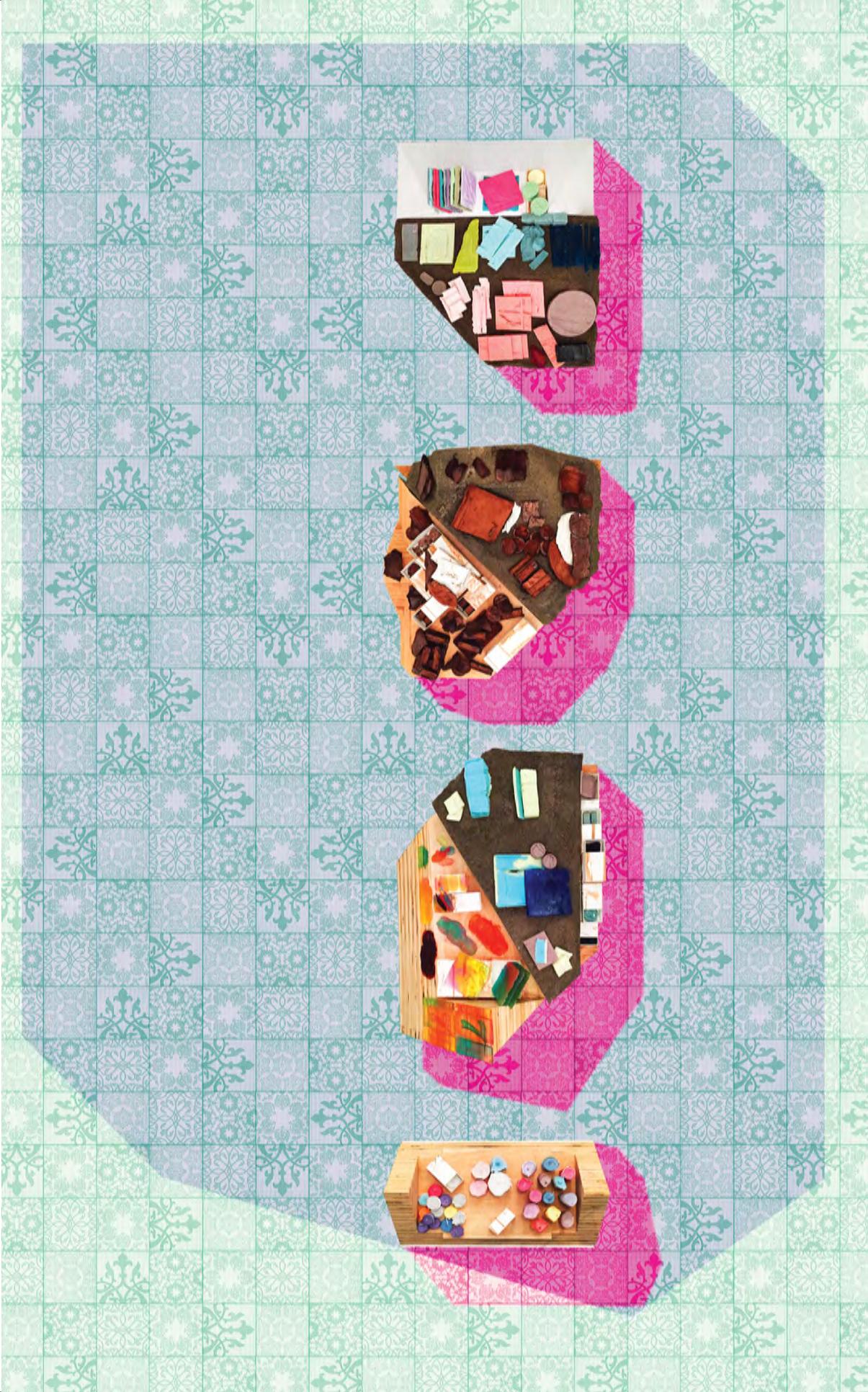
Acknowledgments:
Jonathan Rule, Steven Scharrer, Sydney Brown,
Gaurav Sardana, Xiaofei Liu



Swimmobile



Social Sushi



Jaffer Kolb is currently establishing an international practice in order to make things across scales in places for money. He'll probably make a difference and he sometimes does research.

HOUSE in three

JAFFER KOLB

Party romantic acts

To establish intimacy, don't be afraid to get close—closer, even. Typical conversations about preservation start with the question: what are we really preserving? Such a formulation can shift in predictable ways: why are we preserving, how are we preserving, and so on. Responses range from a desire to reveal, prolong, and maintain. Preservation seems to ask more—to require certain scales of intimate knowledge, to understand interface in addition to character.

New forms of intimacy manifest in the digital age. “Mukbang,” or “eating broadcast,” allows you to have a distal meal with another person, who will happily chatter at you as you eat, while preparing and eating their own dinner a continent away; pre-recorded and playable at any time on YouTube. In addition to watching people eat, you can watch them unpack a bag (*What's in there???*) or even fall asleep. In other words, domestic life is

moving away from the image of the house and focusing on things in ever-decreasing scales. With the death of the suburban ideal, we lost the outline of the cartoon home, replacing it instead with the small-scale intimacy of domestic behaviors and domestic situations.

As architects we must believe that there is still a place for that cartoon outline. That somehow the registration of space still matters. But are we then tasked with designing the stage for these new interactions? Do we start planning from the inside out? The domestic sphere has long been considered a place of the interior, but now the interior itself has been fragmented to the scale of a camera angle or a single action. The home, almost like a subway system, is a series of disconnected episodes whose in-between is increasingly obscured and irrelevant.

ACT I. TOUCHING

Returning, for a moment, to the aspirations of preservation, how can we begin to incorporate extant or observed material into these new scales? We might take many things from our architectural inheritance: space, form, representation and other ontological tenants of the discipline. How can we use those filters to translate between what we find and what we make—all the while responding to a new domestic landscape or even, at a smaller scale, a thingscape?

If the new domestic performs at the scale of a YouTube video, an action, or an experience, then perhaps we should look beyond the totality of the house and instead at its most banal moments, even as architectural conceits. Elements (window ledge, banister) couple with materials (wood, brick) and spaces (corner, planes) to create new catalogues of inhabitation generated from superficial flirtations.







ACT II. IMPRINTING

To first touch a subject is an act of curiosity; investigating a disciplinary framework in order to produce new kinds of formal and tectonic relationships. Imprinting suggests the importance of influence. Imprinting might work in many directions: from the trace of an impression to a genealogical tie of paternal care, it cuts deep or thin.

The form of the house itself might be considered a fixed vessel for an interior newly configured around different kinds of use. Secondary forms append intelligible exteriors, illustrating how imprinting is both reflective and transformative, selective and novel. Likewise, the domestic form splintered into discrete products encompasses imprinted objects themselves that collectively suggest a singular imprint of an unknowable whole.

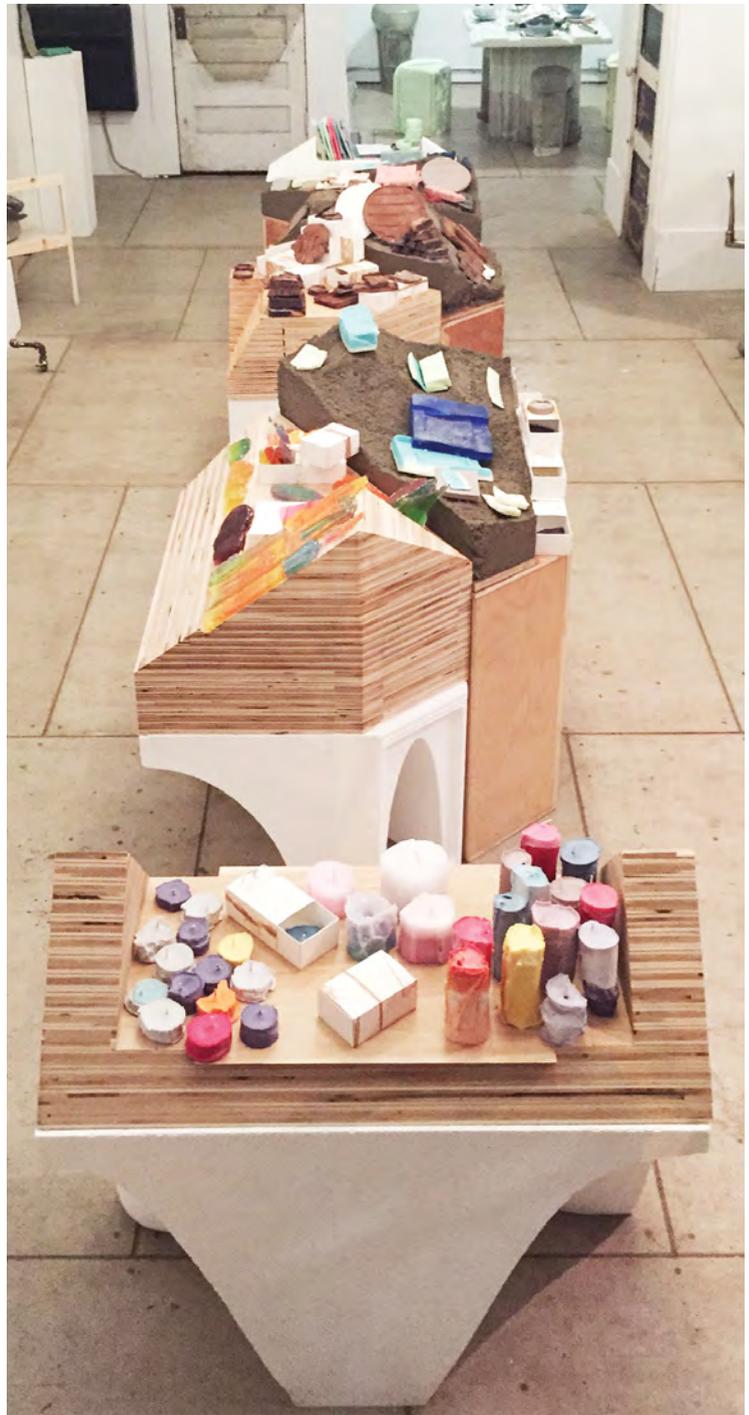


ACT III. TRADING

The imprint solidifies the act of formal disciplinary translation into something that functions both in isolation and as a collective body that might disseminate quickly. The staged architectural model is, as the domestic act itself, spatially unhinged. Unhinged, not to imply the irrational but instead the necessarily distributable.

The interior is thus replaced with not only multiple scales of interiority, but with the implication of motivated mobility. Movement itself, networks of exchange, and ultimately the use of architectural preservation as a productive instrument all together form the new "home." We move outside the walls of the cartoon house and land in loose systems of objects that are forever tied to physical reality while disassociated to the point where they become new, known, and used until their end.





Home Economics was conceived of as a store. It contained products that ranged in scale, but were conceived for home use and included scents, foods, and various kinds of furniture.

All objects were made from casts taken of nearby houses, bringing the scale of architectural preservation down to the

tangibility of a hand-held object while considering their deployment as super-infrastructure. ■

Acknowledgments:
Anne Graziano, Wesley Herr, Luis Orozco, Eric Harman, Diana Tsai, Anya Sirota







Some Views of Triumphal Arches

I cannot tell you where the project begins or ends. Initially it was important to identify the point of origin and the end; draw a line, attempt to make things clear and definitive, figure it out. But there were only starting points, lots of them. There was no way to draw a continuous line that added everything up. Things enter, they exit, and sometimes they return. That part—the part about things that return—this project has something to do with that.

In the gallery, everything points to, refers to, and comments on other things inside the room and outside of it. For a long time, it was possible to make simple associations and combinations; this plus that, this minus that, and this times that. But this began to develop a more complex position on things when that became both-and. When questions about the continuity of architectural thought, historicity, and what precedes or supersedes arose, this began to contradict that. Along with contradiction came ambiguity, and later, about the same time I entered the

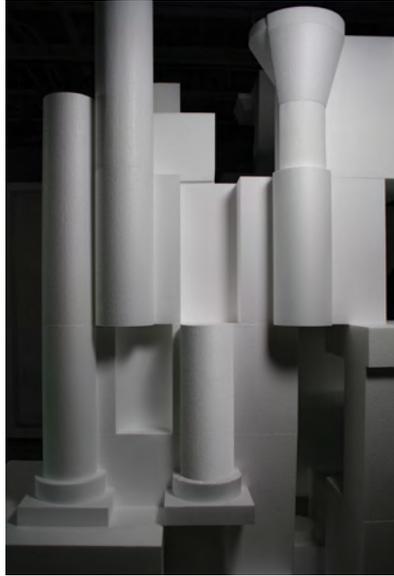
discussion, both-and welcomed even more stuff in. It was a very liberating moment where this and that—creative practice and history-theory—went their separate ways. It has been a mess ever since...

History and precedent are two terms that are often associated with my work, but I'm increasingly hesitant to use either. How I understand and use things from the past does not line up with how professional historians work with historical material and that word precedent, its connotations and associations, well, that word makes a lot of architects anxious. Sometimes people say I am misbehaving or misreading, but I am just trying to make architecture.

The idea that someone would label it as 'mis' anything is so essentialist. It does however seem problematic that within our contemporary field, that drawing on history, having a disciplined approach to architectural design, is often labeled as a frivolous navel-gazing activity, not only in the profession, but also within our academic institutions.

James Michael Tate is a decedent of the mythical gods Juno and Janus. Born to Terry and Tammy Tate on the first day of the first year of the 1980s, he is the banner-bearing pupo of the "Eighties" and link between Generation X and the Millennials. Tate comes from Texas and was raised on MTV, but he has lived most of his adult life passing through Alabama, New York City, Connecticut, California, and Michigan at this moment... It's as if he's searching for the ghost of Charles Moore. Tate's work confronts architectural history through creative practice. He understands history as an intellectual rather than stylistic problem, and champions the need to continually discipline the discipline. Architecture's histories are after all too important to be left to professional historians alone! He is invested in how architects act on our received inheritance. His teaching focuses ways of mobilizing historical references for design pursuits, in other words, new ways of being old school.

JAMES MICHAEL TATE

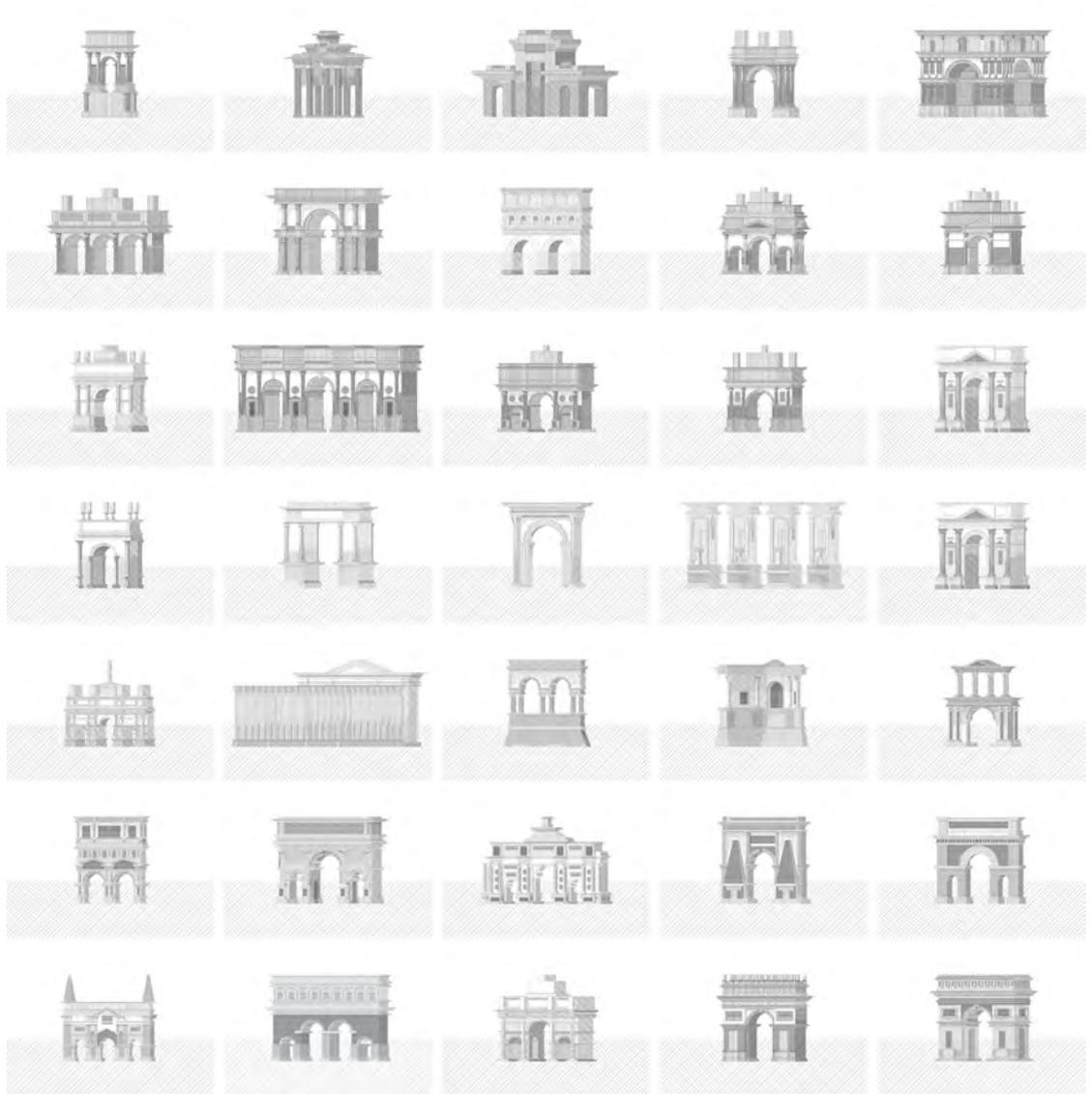




Some Views of Triumphal Arches builds upon a set of ideas about the activity of interpreting received architectural artifacts and histories through design—composition, technique, and description. The work proposes that architectural history is too important to be left to professional historians alone. I believe the ways designers mobilize historical references to produce contemporary architectural thought is distinct because of our responsibility to make design proposals. Forms of analysis and translation are a necessary but endangered activity in our field.

The installation positions and places value in architecture as a discipline, an intellectual framework and body of knowledge that exists in a state of ruins, a dense pile of rubble. We are in a moment when nothing is intact. The design of history through the contemporary practice of architecture is an act of disciplinary maintenance. It is a lot like rummaging through the garbage. It is less than ideal, but it is our collective inheritance. One thing I have discovered while sifting through the heap: it is less natural and more artificial; synthetic things persist!

Everything I collect and sort through has been abandoned by others: models and proposals that did not go according to plan. A bunch of discarded ideas that are broken into fragments and pieces. Nothing is whole, but there are a lot of holes in things, lots of gaps between things. Some moments are recognizable and familiar. A lot of it is weighty and monumental, but fractured. Even the most solid material is relatively unstable. From a distance it looks like stone, it has an aura of permanence, but upon closer inspection it is stagecraft, pure theater.



I am motivated by the activity of rethinking and reorganizing old broken parts, it both constrains and propels the work. While the fellowship installation is incoherent as a singular whole, it intends to be cohesive, a precise mess of orders upon orders and shape shifting identities that place different ideas in relation to each other within a common scaffold.

The investigation raises questions of coherence and difference with an interest in talking about, arguing and positioning, the same object in different ways or different objects in the same way. The work is an architectural project that operates discursively by picking up,

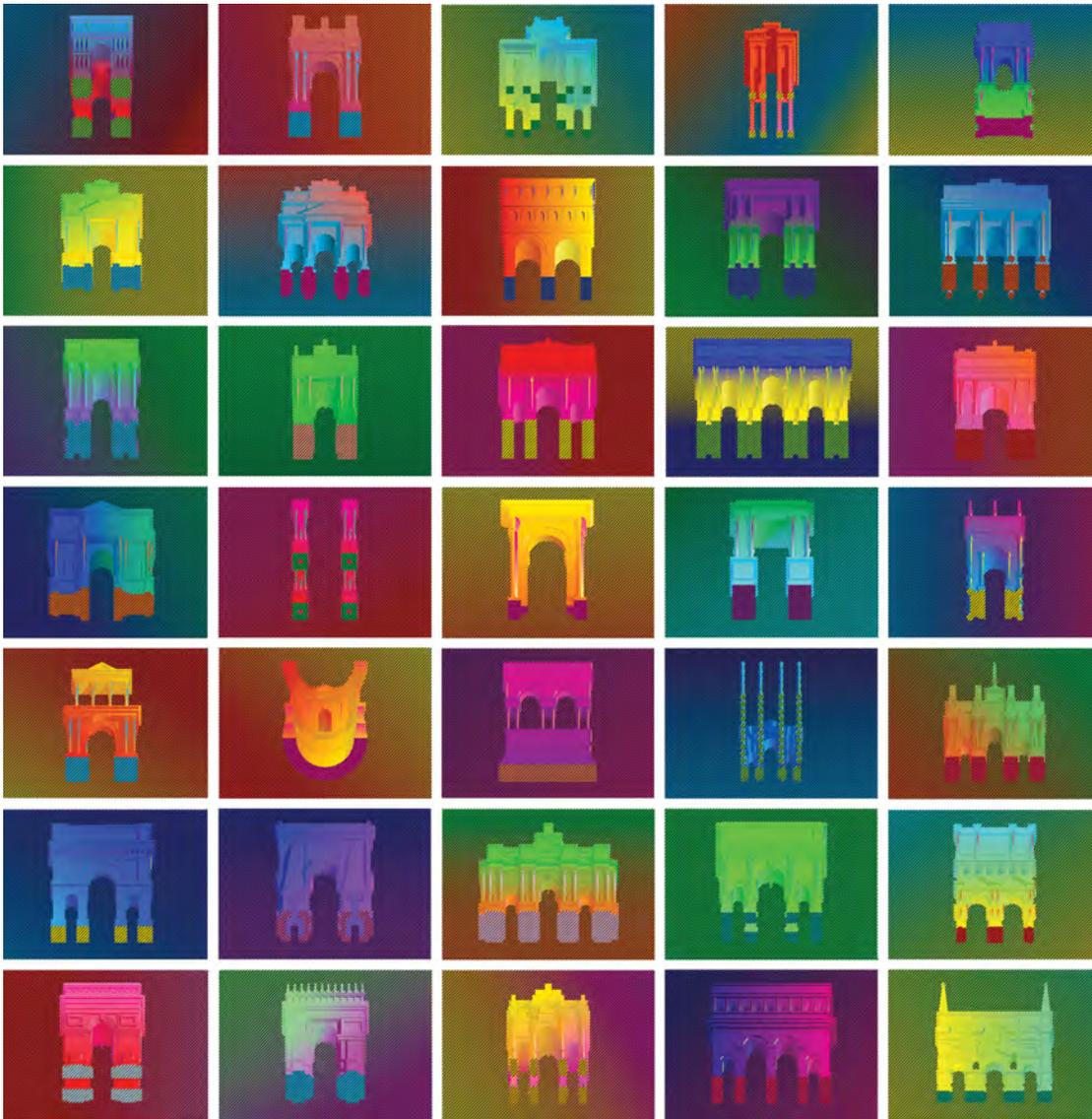
problematizing, and working on disciplinary issues and interests. It is likely architecture has never been coherent, only representations that suggest the possibility of something true and meaningful. Despite this, I still feel obligated to all of this old stuff. It seems necessary to subscribe to or have faith in the dense pile of parts. They almost add up to something!

WHOLE PARTS

Parts are scattered around, some are small, some are medium, some are large, and some are extra-large. While some are just pieces, some appear or suggest wholeness. It is hard to tell if they were ever in any kind of order,

if their sorting and organization is deliberate or ad-hoc. Some things about them suggests hierarchy—controlled and rule based—but a lot of them just divert attention away. Some parts have qualities of being overly determined, others are indeterminate. The articulation and characteristics of each part are worked on through devices that promote both literalness and abstraction.

In the project, recognizable parts are proliferated, each refers in some way to the archetypal source, and the relationships between the parts is specific but not absolutely defined. Much of the work explores different ways of playing and performing parts



in relation to other parts, reorganizing parts in different ways, and potentially producing unfamiliar wholes. The inclusion of hot glue guns among scattered piles of parts encourages visitors to directly interact with and contribute to the composition of the work.

DISCURSIVE HISTORY

In my practice and teaching, making architectural work is largely based around using contemporary situations to revisit old problems, discovering different ways of playing old things in new ways. My activities usually require being extremely diligent about some things, and releasing control over

other aspects. The fellowship project is invested in the idea of learning from and looking at history through the practice of architectural design. What does it mean to attach ones work to issues that are historical to the discipline? To invoke old discourses, old terms as a site of investigation? Reading through close disciplined study and looking at things through expedient reception are becoming a necessary aspect of how I go about working on a project. To this end, the installation attempts to build onto, reorganize, combine, and swerve existing things and received histories. Why start with something new when there is so much existing material

to work with? Instead, my practice experiments with ways of seeing old things anew and new ways of being old school.

The rumors are true that everything in the installation is based on excerpts from historically significant texts and projects. If asked to choose between confronting the weight of history versus the anxiety of being original, I will take the first. Being liberated from the problematics of architecture seems like an awful situation.

The project focuses a lot of attention on the act of disciplining and situating work in the discipline. It considers the idea of putting something into a

longer disciplinary context as a means of inserting and situating work within a set of recurring conversations. While these are primarily internal to architecture, they ultimately have the ambition to turn abstract ideas into materialized concepts in the world. The installation argues that architecture works through how various, even categorically different pieces and thoughts, might come together and be in conversation, if only for a passing moment. The project aims to articulate a contemporary attitude and approach to collecting and acting on various inherited histories simultaneously as a critical and productive design tool in the discursive cultural practice of architecture.

REPRESENTATION

Everything in the room is a representation of a representation, nothing is original. Each representation of the representation tries to argue for something. Each asks or calls something into question as much as it produces a physical space. Old projects, new delivery. The discipline of architecture is a dense collection of drawn lines that are constantly counter-positioning themselves, constantly redefining the discipline, it is primarily the representation of a thing.

Through the informal use of architecture's formal language and the material choices of foam, paper, paint, and sharpie marker, the project explores the creative potentiality of representation and reality, constructing and ruining, archaeology and speculation as informing one another intellectually and as a formal organization strategy. This is also achieved by making the foam arch occupiable, complimented by a wall

drawing that exceeds the size of people in the gallery. Drawings and models participate in our contemporary image culture. Drawings and models in this project are both bigger and smaller than they should be. Their odd scale attempts to confuse and delight the viewer's inability to draw a distinction between the conceptual and physical inhabitation of architecture.

REFERENCE

The intervention positions ready-mades, sort-of-fake artifacts, remakes, and studies of various relative sizes alongside one another into a loosely organized ensemble. Throughout the piece, obsessive adoration and reverence is countered with moments of disregard and ambivalence toward the authenticity of the source material. Visitors are confronted with moments of obsessive control—order—and moments of being irrational—ad-hoc or non-hierarchical—sophisticated and unsophisticated.

The project explores ways of producing contemporary work that uses the work of other architects as its primary point of departure. The work done during the yearlong fellowship attempts to be wholly unoriginal yet partly strange through its reorganization and representation of existing content. References make their way into the work in both direct and indirect ways. The idea of starting with existing things that have associations, whether referring to things we know well or things we have forgotten, exist as thoughts, visual artifacts, and ways of making drawings, models, images, and texts. I am both deeply involved and removed from the work presented. The tension and play between my roles as collector, editor, translator, and designer are important.

ARCHETYPE

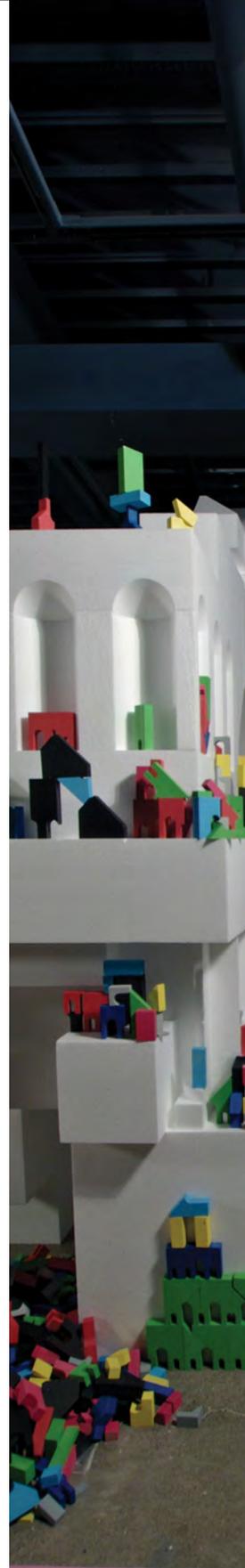
It is satisfying to typecast things. The yearlong investigation included a daily ritual of collecting and drawing the principal facade of one triumphal arch: drawn or standing somewhere in the world at some moment in time. This activity was done in parallel with a more careful disciplined study of the various and often competing ways triumphal arches have been theorized and used throughout historical time both within and outside of the architectural canon. A lot of attention was given to the ability to adopt different positions, the various different ways of talking about and producing different discussions around typological objects. Using triumphal arches as a typological muse, the work considers ideas about archetypal forms and the production of monumental form through fragmentation.

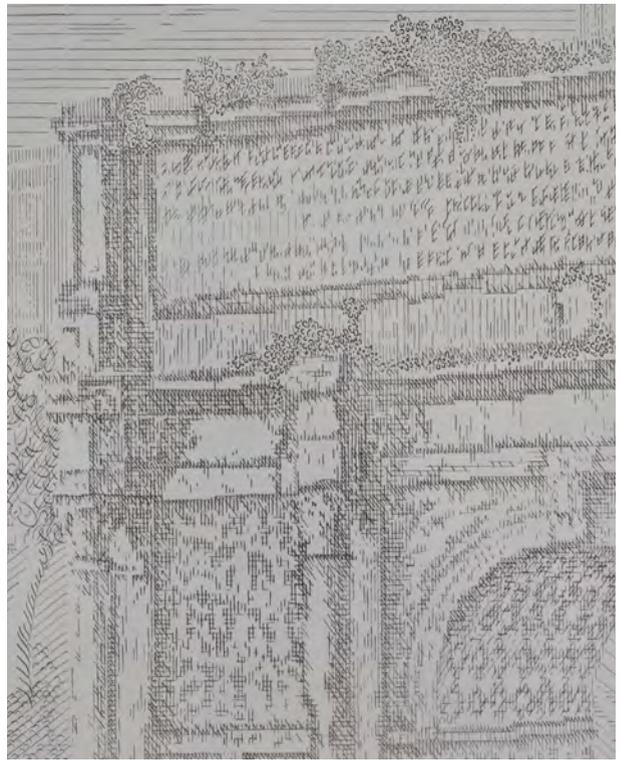
While the intervention is composed entirely of fragments, it attempts to be understood as a totality, an unfamiliar whole. ■

I take it as my responsibility to push architecture somewhere. Ours is not a moment of harmony, it is not our task to restore things to some perceived ideal state. Our inherited fictions give us a tremendous opportunity to concurrently tell and expand upon what were once discrete micro-histories, ultimately mixing them up into new agglomerated confections. Maybe the discipline was always intended to be a collection of parts that periodically reorganize within a field whose limits are subject to contexts that are inherently unstable.

Acknowledgments:

Anthony Chou, Alan Lucey, Hyun Min, Asa Peller, Taffim Rahman, Kevin Rosenberg, Diem Tran, Emily Trulson, Xu Zhang









Christian

Christian Unverzagt (oon-fair-zot) is an Assistant Professor of Practice in Architecture at Taubman College, where his teaching focuses on visual communication and interdisciplinary design methodologies. He teaches graduate design studios and serves as the faculty advisor for the student journal *Dimensions*. Unverzagt focuses his professional work as Design Director at M1/DTW, a nationally recognized, Detroit-based, multi-disciplinary studio operating at the intersection of design and cultural production. M1/DTW's clients range from emerging entrepreneurs to established cultural and educational institutions, with projects ranging from environments and adaptive reuse to business strategy and branding. Since its founding in 2000, the studio has completed over one-hundred commissioned works.

Unverzagt received an M.Arch with distinction from SCI-Arc and is a long-time resident of Lafayette Park, Detroit, where he is an active member of the community, helping steward the neighborhood's legacy of design while fostering awareness and discussion of its contemporary condition.

Unverzagt

The students have done it once more:
Two-hundred and eight days after
they first met, they shipped this
208-page volume to press. Perhaps
it is mere coincidence that brought
closure to such a long arc, but it was
their deliberate action that sought
to open up new avenues for the
journal. Nearly four decades since
Joy Division's Ian Curtis penned
Digital, which contemplated the trials
of routine and repetition, they were
anything but caught in a loop.

Feel it closing in
The fear of whom I call
Every time I call
I feel it closing in
Day in, day out
Day in, day out
Day in, day out
Day in, day out

Theirs was another kind of closing in;
one that gave form to a collection of
works and talks which called attention
to the state of the discipline and its
practices. In what could be described
as a penultimate year in more ways
than one, they proved to be much
more interested in the coming dawn
than the ensuing dusk and have
challenged us to get on with things.

I feel it closing in
As patterns seem to form
I feel it cold and warm
The shadows start to fall
I feel it closing in
Day in, day out
Day in, day out
Day in, day out
Day in, day out

They've also challenged me, and
hopefully I have challenged them.
"Never force people to change
orientation," I have said before. But
not here. Not now. How could I?
The world has changed and brought
with it new digital practices. Now I
could only say: "if you do, how do
you do it well?"

I'd have the world around
To see just whatever happens
Stood by the door alone
And then it's fade away
I see you fade away
Don't ever fade away
I need you here today
Don't ever fade away
Fade away, fade away
Fade away

Things do fade away: people, places,
and practices. Here's to the sunrise.

Dimensions

Dimensions

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Dimensions would like to thank the Victor Gondos, Jr. Archives Fund for their support. This fund was established as a memorial to Dr. Gondos ('25) by his widow, Dorothy Gondos Beers. Dr. Gondos was a distinguished archivist and historian who served 23 years with the National Archives in Washington, D.C. Mrs. Gondos Beers' intention was that the fund be used to assist architecture students in exercising and improving their writing skills. Since its inception, the fund has supported the publication of this journal for many years. Upon her passing, Mrs. Gondos Beers left a substantial bequest for the Victor Gondos, Jr. Archives Fund, which generously funds writing projects like *Dimensions*.

Dimensions 29 would also like to thank the following people for their efforts with this year's publication:

Marilyn Bealafeld
Jackilin Hah Bloom
Laura Brown
Marshall Brown
Jean-Louis Cohen
Peter Eisenman
Robert Fishman
Sharon Haar
Deniz McGee
John McMorrough
Michael Meredith
Erin Peterson
Florencia Pita
Mónica Ponce de León
Hilary Sample
James Michael Tate
Jeannette Turner
MaryAnn Wilkinson
Claire Zimmerman
Taubman College Media Center Staff

The staff would especially like to thank our advisor, Christian Unverzagt.

ISSN 1074-6536



177 1074 653003

Dimensions

