

(portfolio_final.pdf)

FIRST DAY OF CLASSES: MAY 27 2025

GRADUATION: MAY 20 2026

LAST MODIFIED: MAY 09 2026

A CURATION OF
ACADEMIC
PROJECTS
DEVELOPED
DURING MY
MASTER'S
STUDIES IN
ADVANCED
ARCHITECTURAL
DESIGN AT
COLUMBIA
GSAPP

GEORGE KOLTIRIS ©

AN ACADEMIC
PORTFOLIO OF
SPATIAL
EXPERIMENT-
ATIONS
ACROSS
DIFFERENT
SCALES AND
CONTEXTS

(3) SEMESTERS
(13) PROJECTS
(82) IMAGES
(3772) WORDS

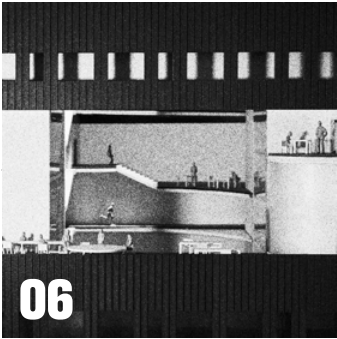
George Koltiris

Architect / Designer

Spatial Studies

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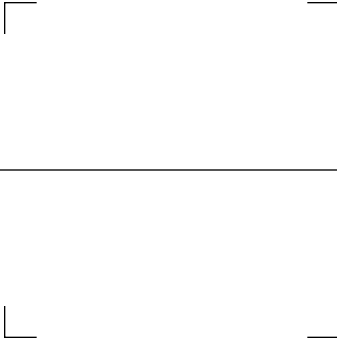
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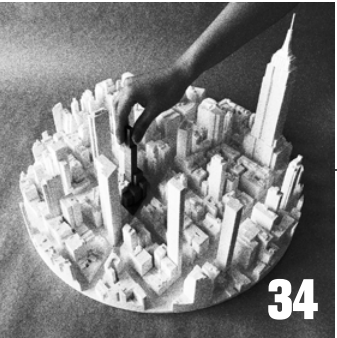
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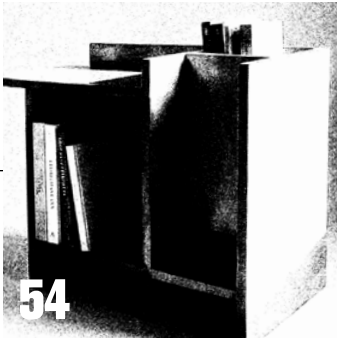
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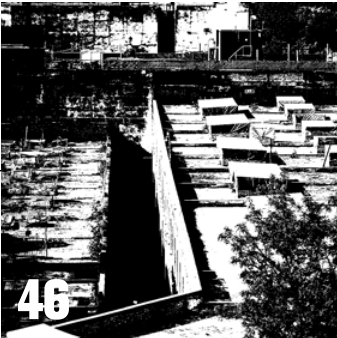
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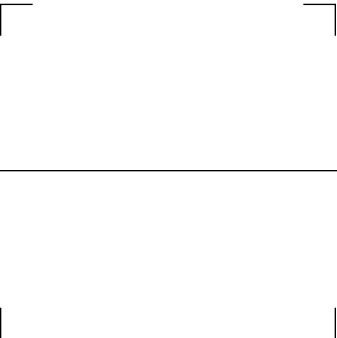
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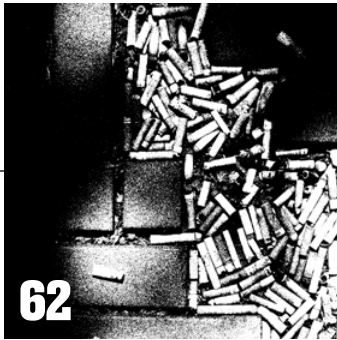
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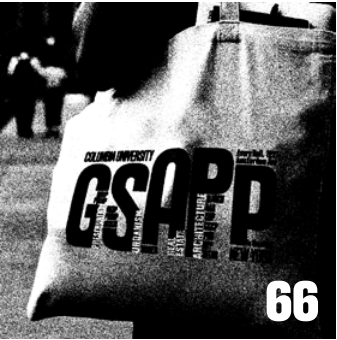
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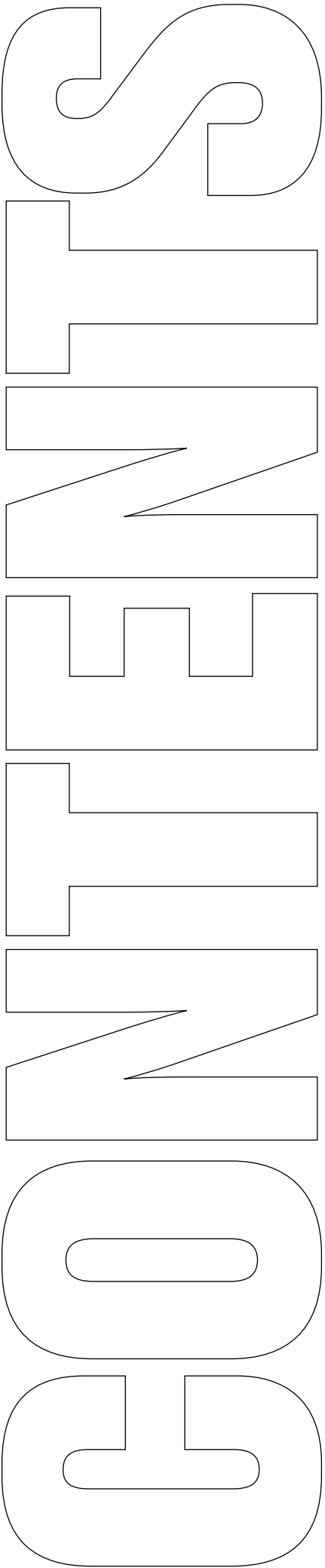
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A WAY TO STAY

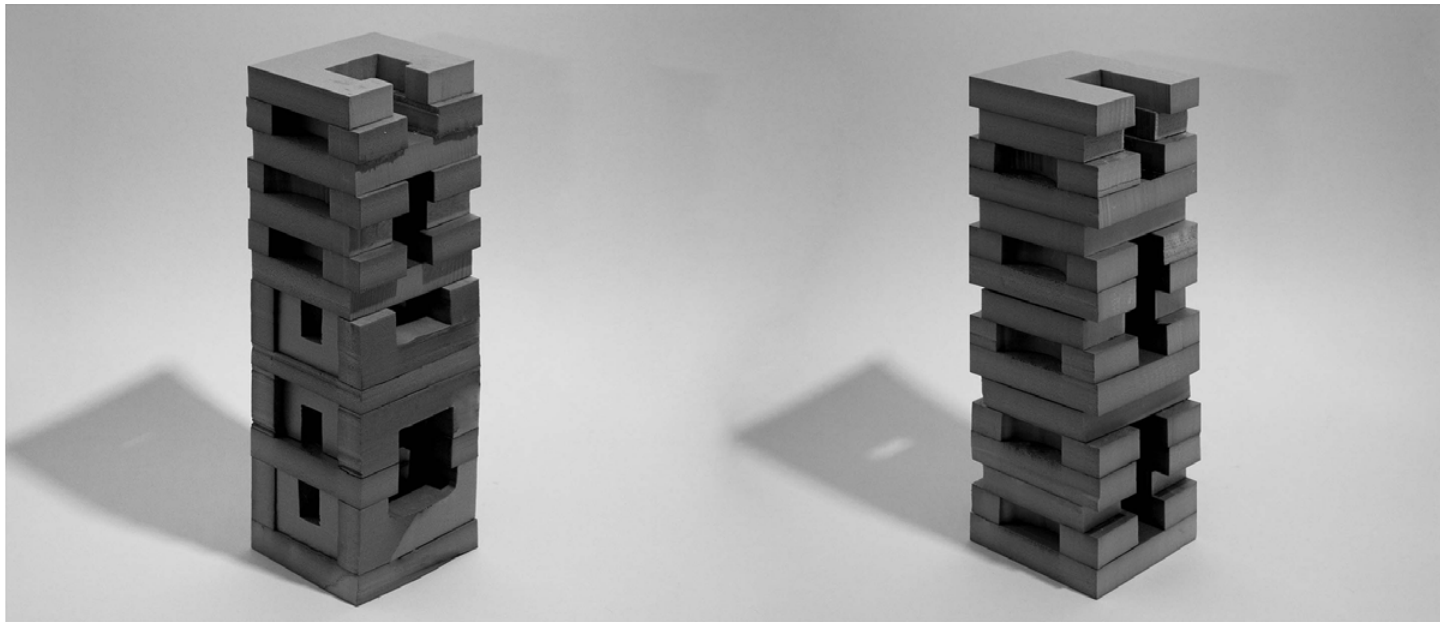
What does it mean to live in a city without young professionals?

The project's main focus is this demographic, which faces escalating economic pressures. Rent increases that consistently outpace wage growth, low vacancy rates, rising college tuition costs coupled with high interest rates on loans, and a hypercompetitive job market have become the primary financial strains for young professionals. Despite rising unaffordability, cities like New York remain powerful catalysts for upward mobility, early professional development, and long-term socioeconomic advancement, but only for those who can afford it. This highlights the need for long-term solutions that allow young professionals to sustainably build community over decades.

This proposal offers a pathway to remain in the city. Not just a building, but a model of living in which precarious and debt-laden professionals in New York can create lasting communities that enable them to lead full, stable lives without being priced out. In doing so, it helps preserve New York's social and cultural diversity, ensuring that it remains a place where people of varied backgrounds can coexist, contribute, and thrive, thus sustaining the city's dynamic character.

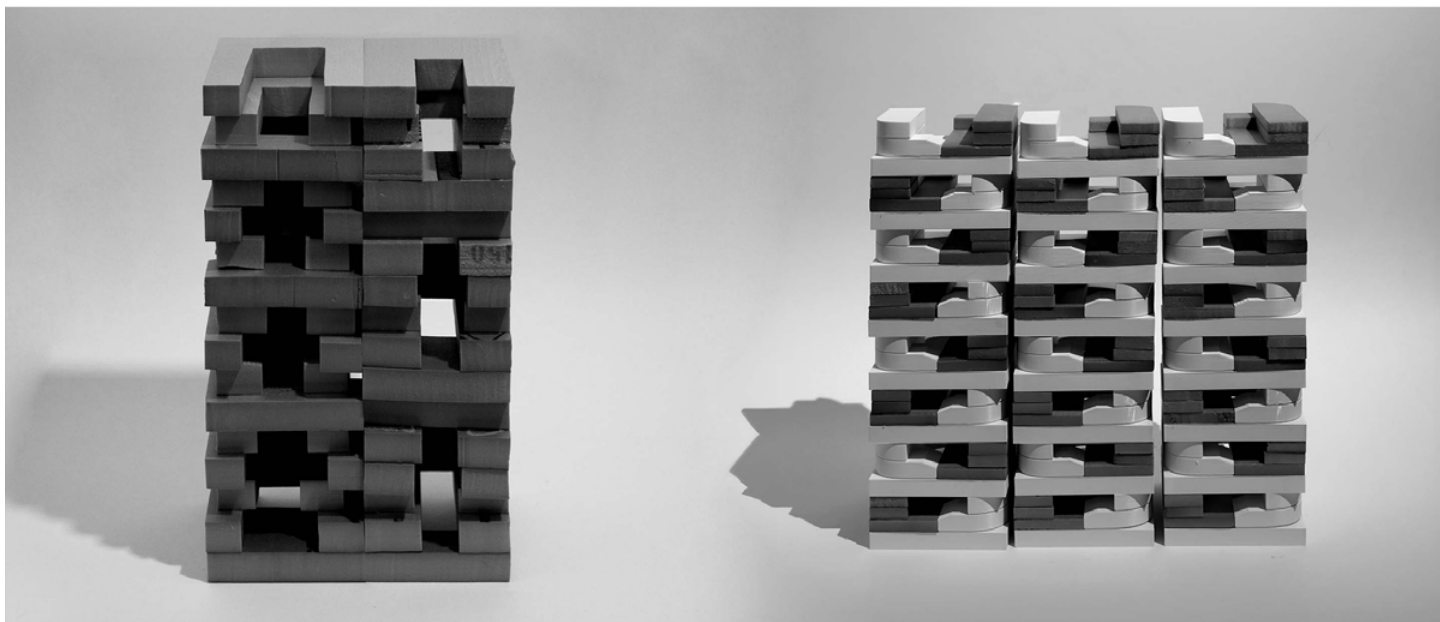
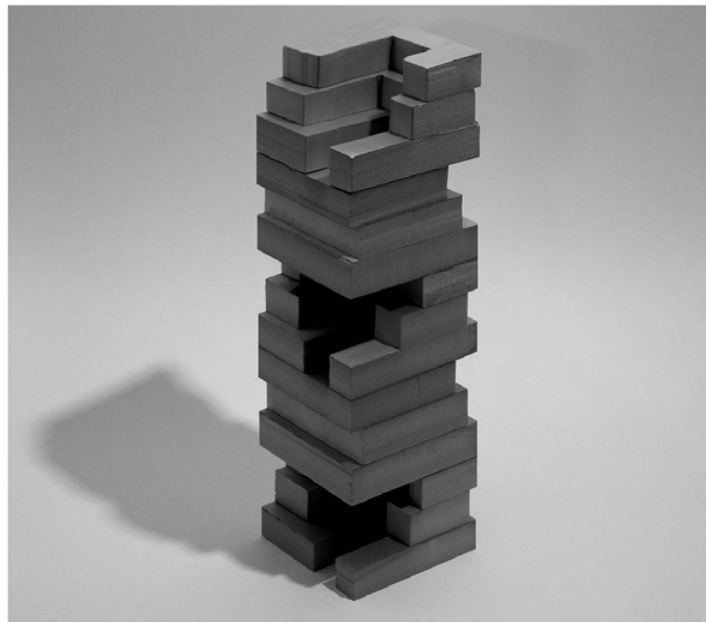
Course Advanced Architecture Studio IV / A New Grammar For Collective Housing
Term Summer '25
Location Manhattan, NY
Faculty Neeraj Bhatia, Adjunct Associate Professor
Khushi Rakesh Saraiya, Teaching Associate
Partner Violeta Mastronardi



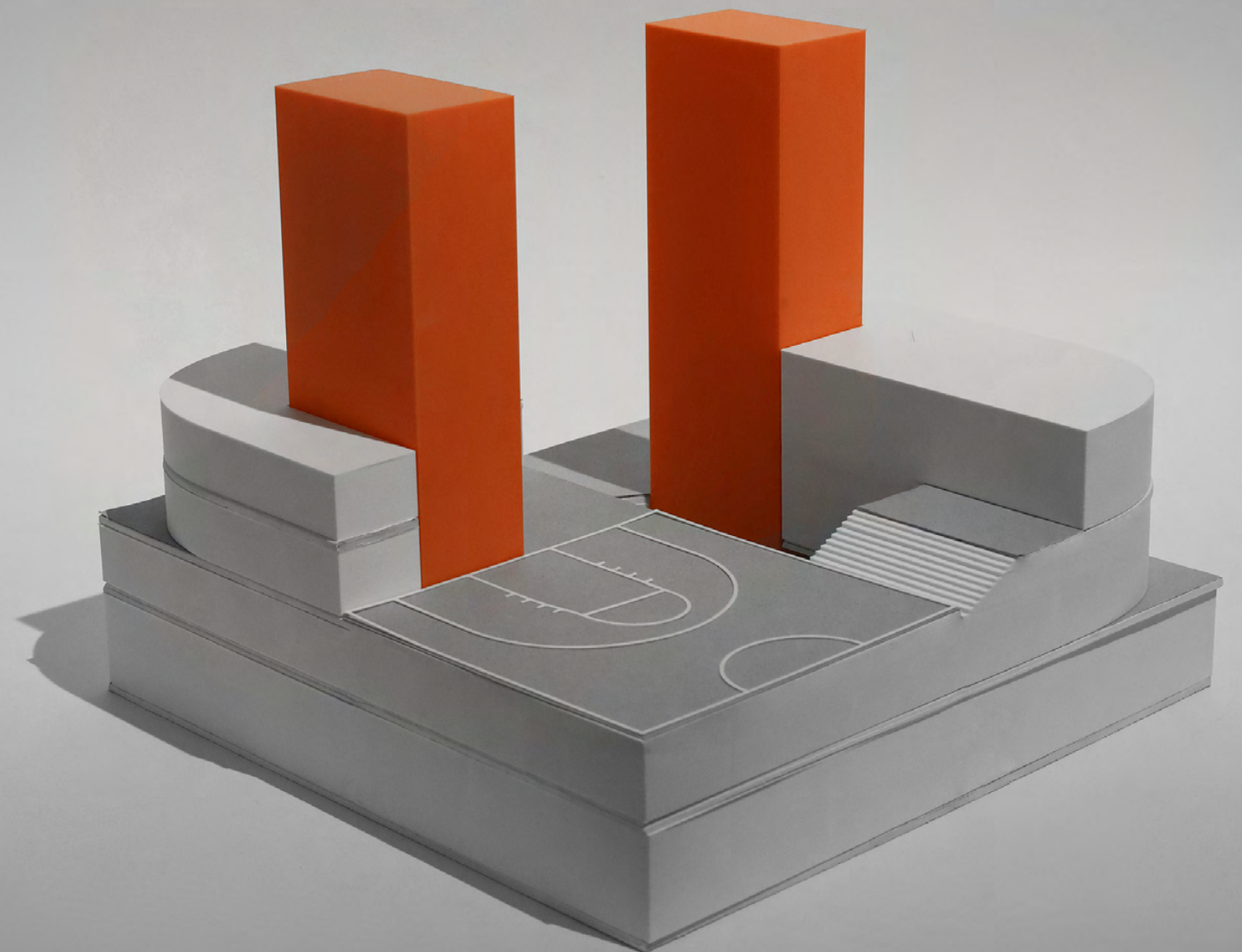


A spatial alternative is proposed through modular, letter-shaped forms, drawing directly from Steven Holl's typological study *Alphabetical City*. Rather than relying on a single strategy, the design assembles a hybrid composition to accommodate varying needs while creating spatial continuity and three-dimensional terraced platforms.

O- and U-shaped modules provide introverted layouts and maximize unit count per floor. L- and I-shaped modules are more porous, allowing more sunlight exposure. The stacking of modules adds diversity to a theory predominantly based on plan, increasing sunlight infiltration, improving air circulation, and promoting interaction.



Community forms at the neighborhood level for which reason sub-collective clusters are proposed to redistribute the line between the public and private spheres.



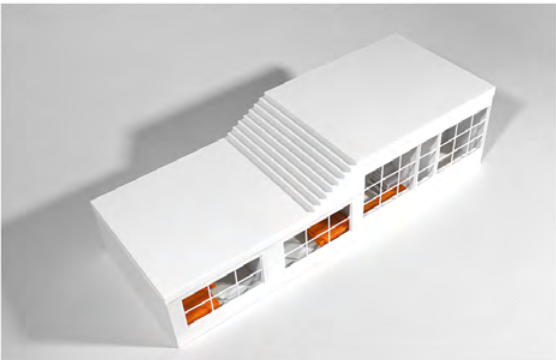
Cluster: Foam Board / Craft Paper / 3D-Printing (1:100 scale)

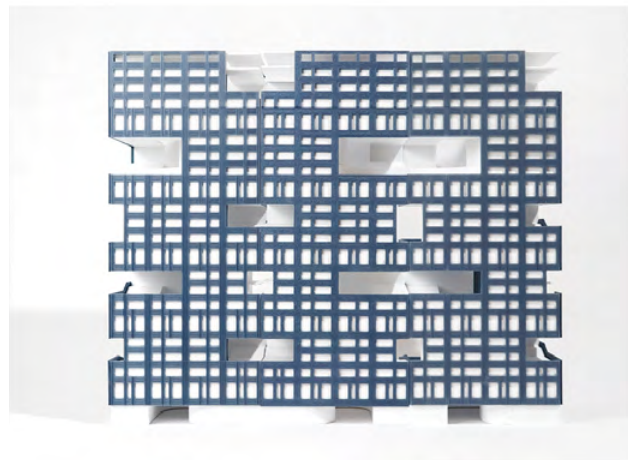


Two room types are defined, with one unit optimized for vertical aggregation, while the other is adaptable horizontally, capable of generating multiple layouts that combine with public programs and create a clear delineation of neighborhoods. When considering which aspects of day-to-day life should remain private, the minimum viable room was defined as a pixel that offers a bed, a desk, and a sink, thus establishing a baseline of autonomy.



This budget redistribution results in smaller individual units that increase the density of private spaces in favor of more shared amenities, bringing people together while promoting affordability.





Shared spaces are not only recreational but also administrative, enabled by a cooperative model that alleviates financial strain. Residents can participate in rotating tasks such as cleaning coordination, or event planning, in an attempt to lower rent and foster a sense of mutual responsibility and ownership.

Finally, as with the stacking logic of clusters, this design also suggests a logic of aggregation through mirroring at a larger scale, where the building can be repeated on neighboring lots to form conjoined complexes. These unified constructions enlarge communal areas to create varied spatial moments, some more introverted, others extroverted. These shared environments are extensions of the home and from solidarities within the spatial hierarchy.



OVEREXPOSED

The contemporary crisis of visual authenticity

Does meaning get diluted when everything starts to resemble everything else?

In an era where images are generated at an ever-increasing speed, our visual perception is collapsing at a similar pace. What was once rooted in originality and captured through the lens of photography is now transformed into an endless circulation of repetitiveness. Particularly in architecture, a discipline historically reliant on imagery to document, theorize, and disseminate ideas, the crisis of visual authenticity is now starkly apparent. Saturated by artificially generated content, the contemporary visual landscape is one where originality is not created but perpetually curated.

This essay examines the collapse of authenticity through the lens of photography in architectural culture reflecting on how we might reclaim attention within a world filled with “noise”.

Course	Arguments
Term	Summer '25
Faculty	Lydia Kallipoliti, Associate Professor, MSAAD Director Maur Dessauvage, Ph.D. Candidate
Partner	individual Project





The project was designed around the concept of analog information, storing the data on 3x5" index cards. This almost three century old technique aids the creation of an index for expedited search of information, perfect for small amounts of discrete data.

Photography in architecture is regarded as a promise of authenticity, a testament to each project's presence, form, and materiality. The dominance of image generation has further collapsed the boundary between original and derivative. Prompts feed datasets and datasets feed prompts. What emerges from this loop is a set of references that are hyperrealistic and evoke forms that seem familiar, not because they are real, but because they are a mixture of what is popular. This is the crisis of curation against creation. Fortunately, the unpredictability of human perception, injects instability back into an otherwise controlled visual system. The eye is guided by stimulation.

To be overexposed is not just to be repetitive, but also predictable. In architectural photography and visual culture at large, we are trapped in a visual regime that rewards repetition over revelation. The promise of photography to stop time and frame a unique experience is now filtered through trending aesthetics, and algorithmic logic. Architecture, too, must resist becoming mere content. It must reclaim presence, time, and the friction of material experience by reintroducing the unpredictable. If AI feeds on the predictable, then unpredictability is resistance.

Yet within this crisis lies a choice. We can continue to consume images passively or we can reclaim attention as an ethical act. We may once again find authenticity, not as a static truth, but as a renewed relationship to the world and to our senses. The task is not to escape the noise, but to learn how to operate differently within it.

A SHIFTING THRESHOLD

“TOOLS ARE USELESS”

The beach is the basis, a point of reference where no site has to be specified, mirroring its tidal nature. Ephemeral yet material, local yet relational. It is not an endpoint but a threshold that is constantly shifting, where land, sea and culture intersect. Drawing from Édouard Glissant, infrastructures are reinterpreted not as neutral technical systems but as relational, civic, and expressive forms shaped by the plural realities of urban life.

Studio “Oral (Infra)structures” proposed an architectural methodology that begins with embodied gesture and oral tradition to cultivate spatial practices capable of revealing hidden histories, counter-narratives, and cultural ecologies, guided in three parts: gesture, form, and relation. Having the opportunity to treat writing and film as a means of experimentation and not as the end result, combined with weekly journal entries, I ended with three essays, three films, three different perspectives, intertwined in one, culminating in a way the whole brainstorming process in this more refined representation.

Course	Advanced Architecture Studio V / Oral (Infra)Structures
Term	Fall '25
Location	Unspecified
Faculty	Joseph Zeal-Henry, Adjunct Assistant Professor Khloe Swanson, Teaching Associate
Partner	Individual Project





"Il Capo" (The Chief): a striking look at marble quarrying in the Italian Alps, released Aug. 8 2018, Youtube.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=du9_Kn2y2VA

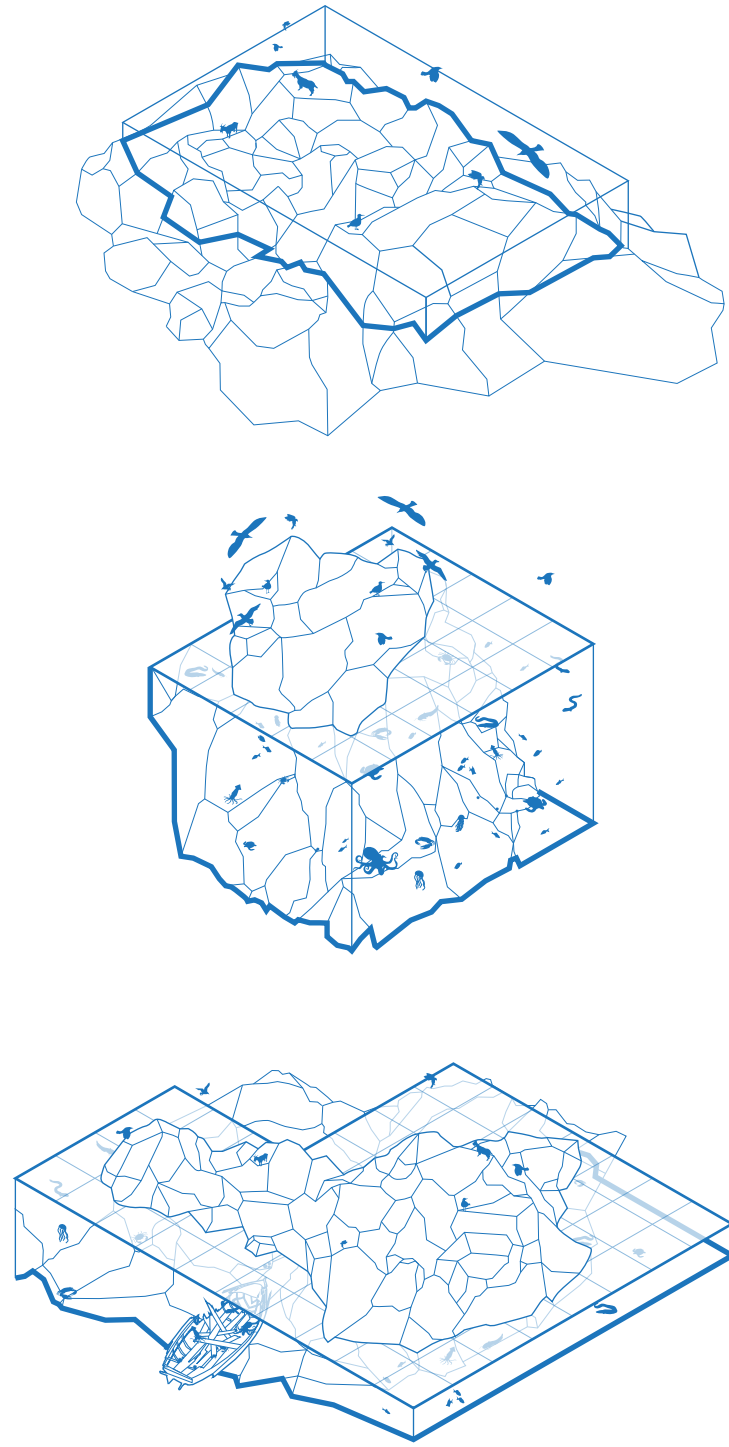


By approaching writing and filmmaking as iterative experiments rather than fixed outcomes, and supported by a rigorous weekly journaling entries, I produced a series of three essays, three films, three distinct perspectives, intertwined in one, culminating in a way the whole brainstorming process in a more refined and cohesive representation.



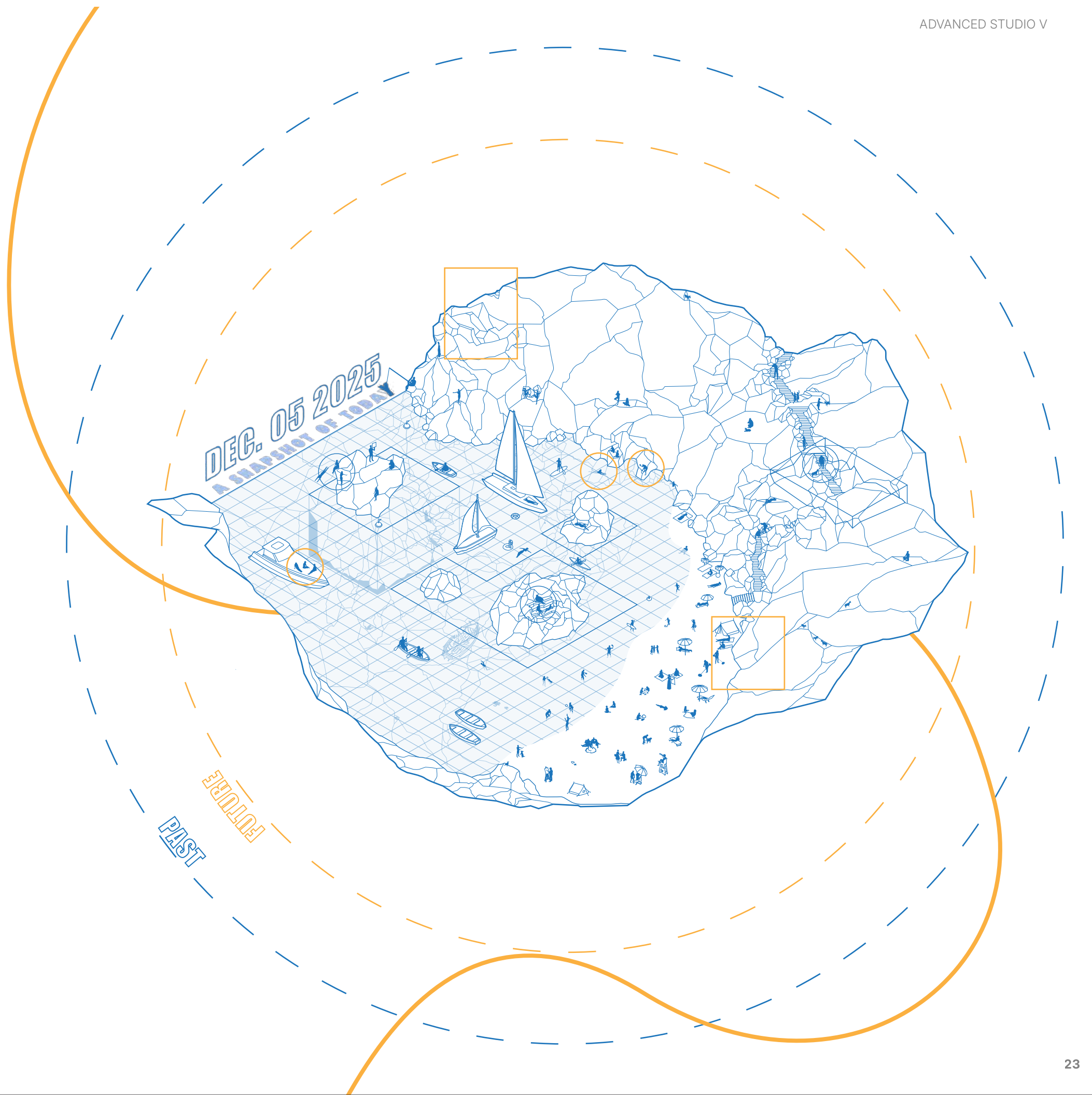
Who consents to a changing built environment, both in outcome and process? / Can architecture act as a bridge between the past and the future? / How genuine are tectonic questions in architecture? / At which point does labor become visible? / What is the value of anything when it no longer serves its original function?





The project serves the explorative purpose of addressing a social infrastructure that has been perceived dramatically differently throughout history, illustrating two parallel infrastructures of human and non-human forces.

On the one hand, human gesture indicates intentionality in an attempt to appropriate space, promote collectivity and assign value, involving tectonic questions in every aspect of this experimentation. On the other hand, nature performs its own never-ending labor revealing a continuous paradox where nothing is static, everything is durational, permanence is a myth and nothing is ever truly complete.





As the last experiment, the studio culminated with a collective one-day publication, entitled Current, Its limited timeframe forced us to unearth our most important and intuitive takes alongside our individual work. In this way, projects become part of an archipelagic web of relations rather than isolated objects. Things don't have to be fully aligned to be connected. Relations aren't always obvious.



SALT ARCHAEOLOGIES

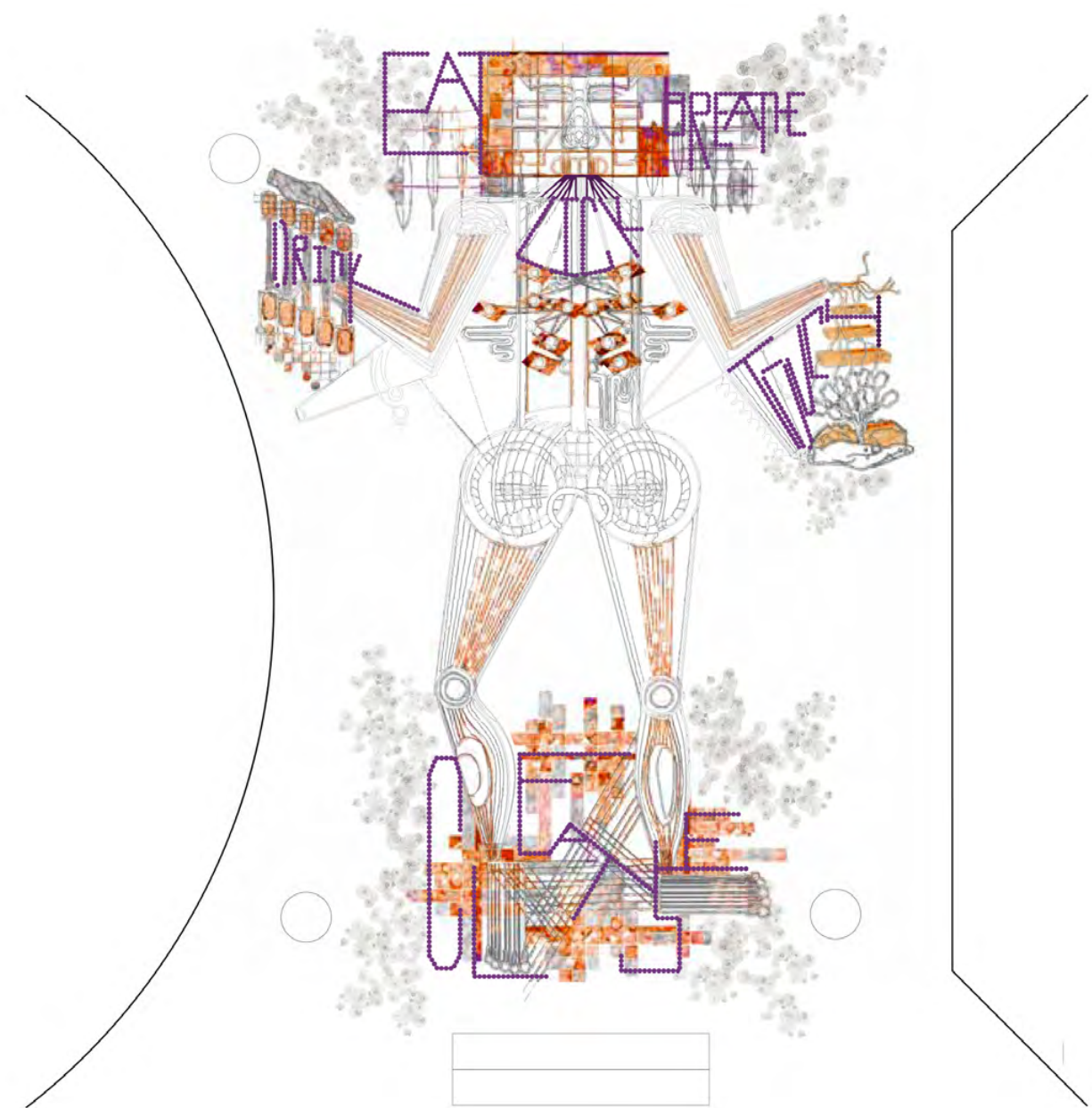
What if the world got saltier?

Salt Archaeologies is an edible installation that stages dining as an intimate bodily experience tied to the only rock we eat: salt.

Salt runs through air, soil, and water. It is the substance of our tears, our blood, and our sweat. An influx of salt from both land and sea and rising temperatures are condemning the world's waters to a saltier future, redistributing sodium chloride where it shouldn't be. Extraction and mining processes create tons of sea and rock salt waste. The world is getting saltier, and it's happening very fast.

Course AAD Competition / Edible Summit
Term Fall '25
Location Columbia University, NY
Partners Julio Viejo, Valeria Ramirez, Shannon Levkovitz, Vasiliki Zochiou





01	I licked	sweat	preserved in salt
02	I cleansed	salty air	of an owl
03	I tasted	body labor	in salt water
04	I traced	a salt brick	from ancient Pakistani mines
05	I observed	the tears	of cows on salt bricks
06	I breathed	my body	from a salt pan in Chile
07	I collected	vegetables	from ancient oceans
08	I drank	the tongues	to cut a salt brick

You are invited to a saltier world abundant with halophil organisms, the purple Earth, like the one humans are slowly recreating, the one we will have to survive in. In this speculative world, food and shelter are made of the same substance. Structure's demolition is seasoning; seasoning is a structural material.

A world like this used to exist billions of years ago, a world of low oxygen and very high salinity environments. It was a world abundant of thriving halophile organisms, harvesting the light in a different way than we do, with a retinal-based photosynthesis, that reflects red and blue colors, giving everything a purple complexion.



What kinds of food, species and architecture would survive in a saltier world?



CLEANSE

The scale of this station can resemble either a salt mine or a stackable toy, depending on imagination. Cutting, carrying, and assembling, extends the material's long chain of labor, from the extraction from Pakistani mines to its arrival in New York.

Formed by ancient seas, salt has shaped territories not through rapid industrial timeframes, but slow geological processes. Its immutability makes cleansing hands with salt water hold sacred meaning across many cultures, symbolizing loyalty and promise. Felt on the skin, it recalls an agency that exceeds conventional extraction narratives.



DRINK

Salt, or sodium chloride is produced by the reaction of an acid with a base. It triggers nerve impulses, fuels heartbeats, and composes our blood, sweat, and tears. All living species have different patterns of tears, and tears' patterns are different depending on emotion



Humans used to collect their beloved ones' tears in vessels called lachrymatory bottles. In a saltier world, one person's tears could be someone else's sodium chloride source. In these lachrymatory bottles, tears of different species have been collected, which guests are invited to taste and drink in drops.



LICK

The history of the world, as written by salt is simple. Animals first traced paths to salt licks and then humans followed. The trails became roads, with settlements and salt networks growing simultaneously beside them.



This station presents a tactile archive of carving. Guests are encouraged to trace the eroded ridges left by the tongue patterns of cows and horses over time. By licking the sculptures directly, one obtains essential sodium chloride and actively participates in the erosion process, creating new patterns of halophile traces, adding a human layer to this geological narrative.



EAT

Salt has been used as one of the first human currencies, or an offering to guests as a sign of hospitality. In this saltier world of climate crisis, energy must also be used wisely. Here, salt becomes a refrigerator without power, a mineral that slows decay.

Sixty bricks carry enough salt to preserve almost two tons of food, time held in mineral form. Food and dining table are made from the same substance. At this last station, we have built a dining shelter for you, and we invite you to sit around it, search and collect your food and taste it as it is flavoured by the very table it sits on.



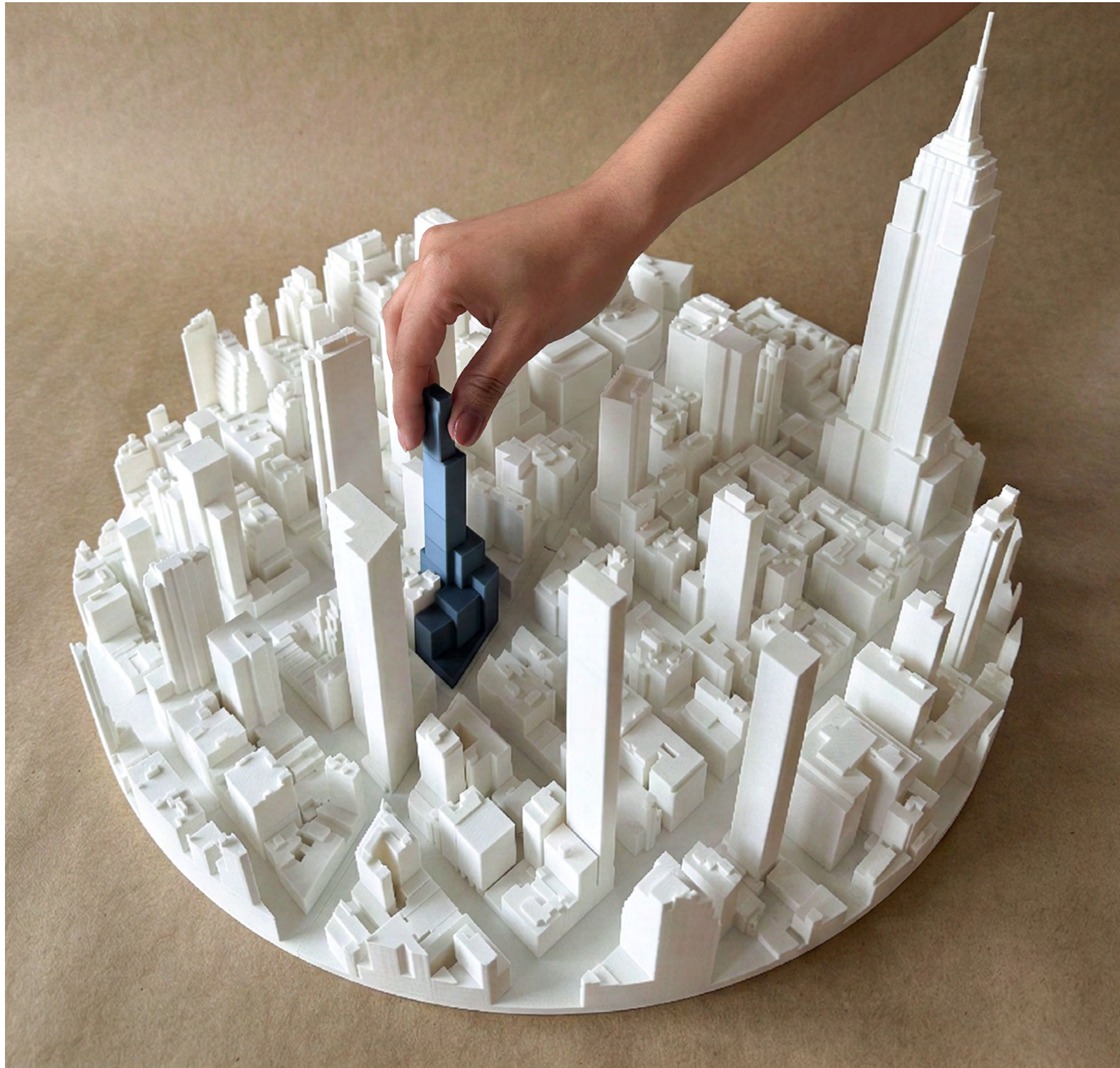
REFRAMING BROADWAY

*Zoning as opportunity
rather than limitation.*

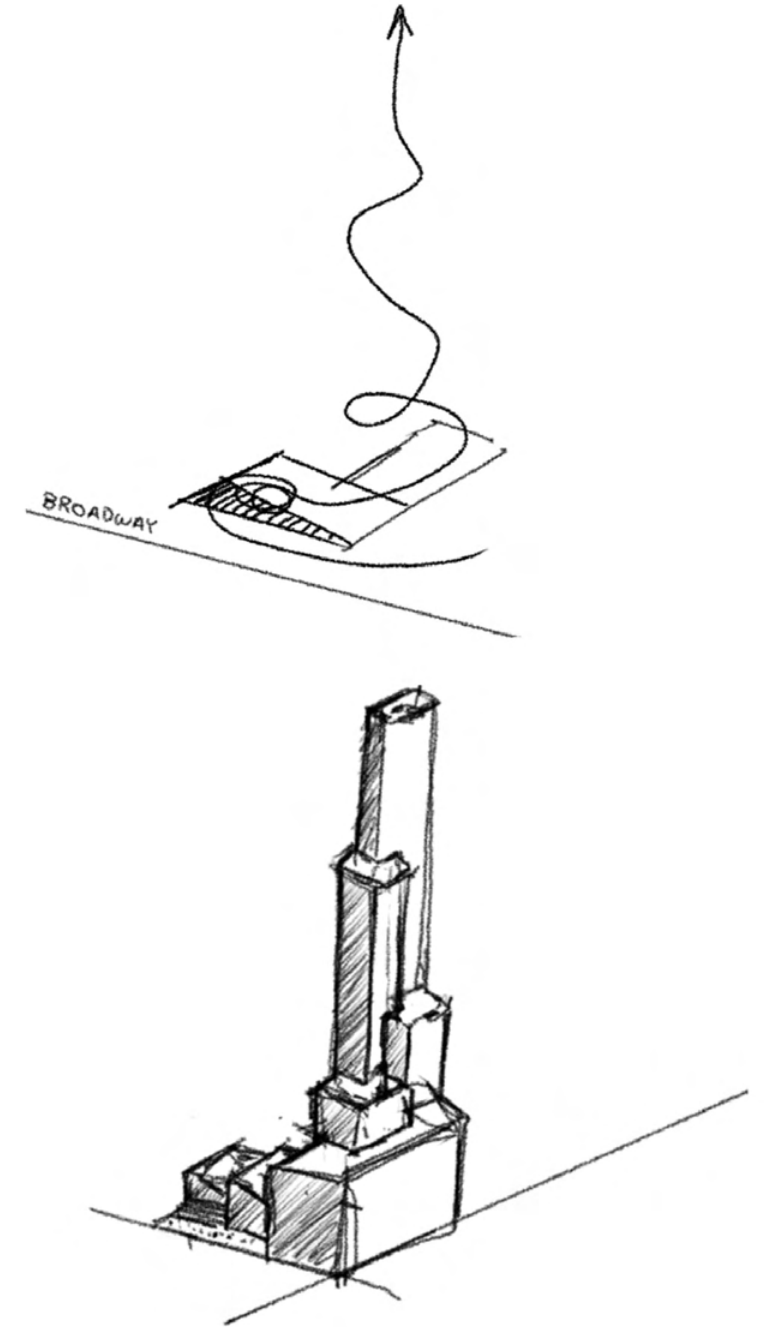
This project reimagines Manhattan's most iconic avenue not merely as a street, but as a vertical sequence of urban experiences. Situated at 1227 Broadway in the heart of Midtown, this proposal investigates how the avenue's historic adaptability and diagonal geometry can be translated into a responsive 70-story mixed-use skyscraper utilizing the new M1-8A / R12 zoning envelope. The design bridges the gap between architectural intuition and systemization through advanced computational design. Rather than viewing New York City's strict zoning regulations as limitations, they were utilized as active design drivers.

Course Computation Design Elective / Re-Thinking BIM
Term Fall '25
Location 1227 Broadway, NY
Faculty Joseph Brennan
Partner Nicolas Garcia, Valentina Lizcano

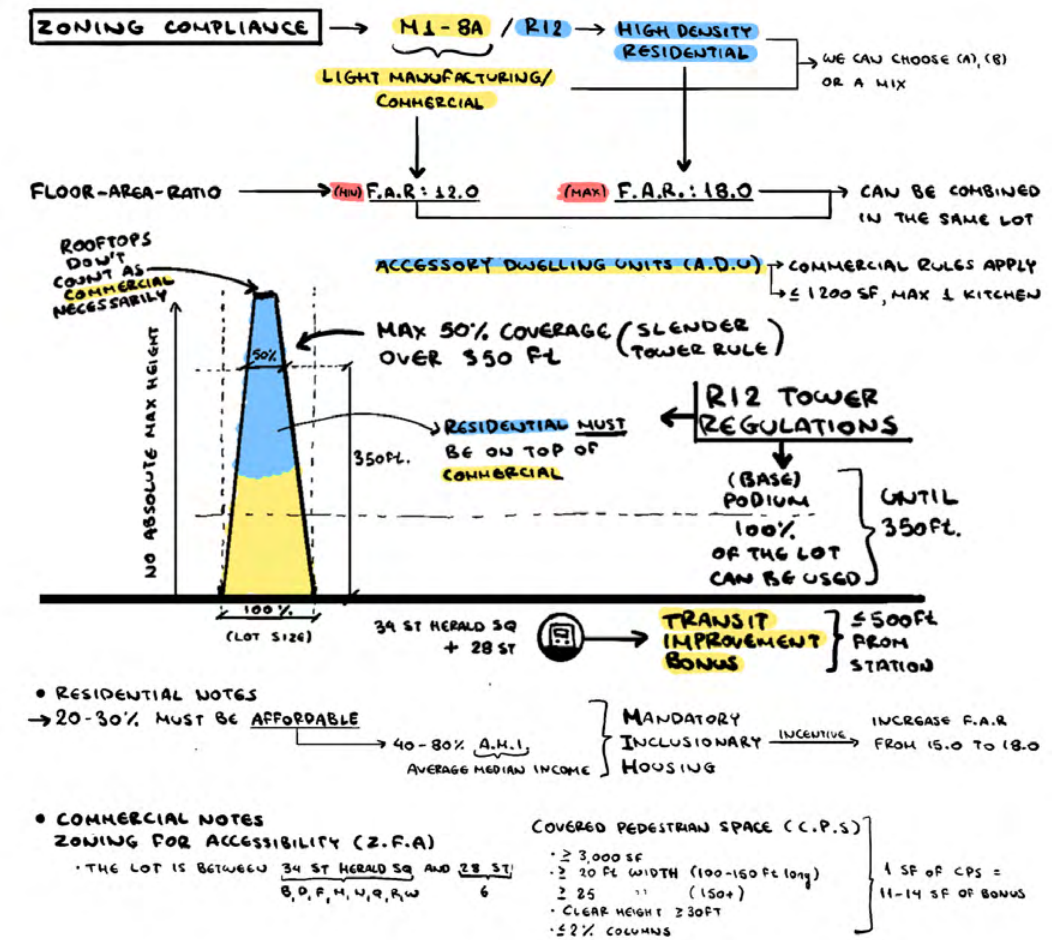




Broadway predates the orthogonal grid of New York City and cuts diagonally through it. What if that adaptability did not stop at the ground, and could continue vertically? Massing and stepping are no longer just design gestures, but controlled and measurable inputs. Additionally, landmarks such as the Empire State Building, neighboring tall buildings, and the sun's path acted as essential design drivers, shaping orientation, views, and spatial hierarchy.



Broadway was understood as a sequence of experiences rather than a mere frontage condition, ultimately becoming the foundation of the project



ALLOWABLE ZFA	
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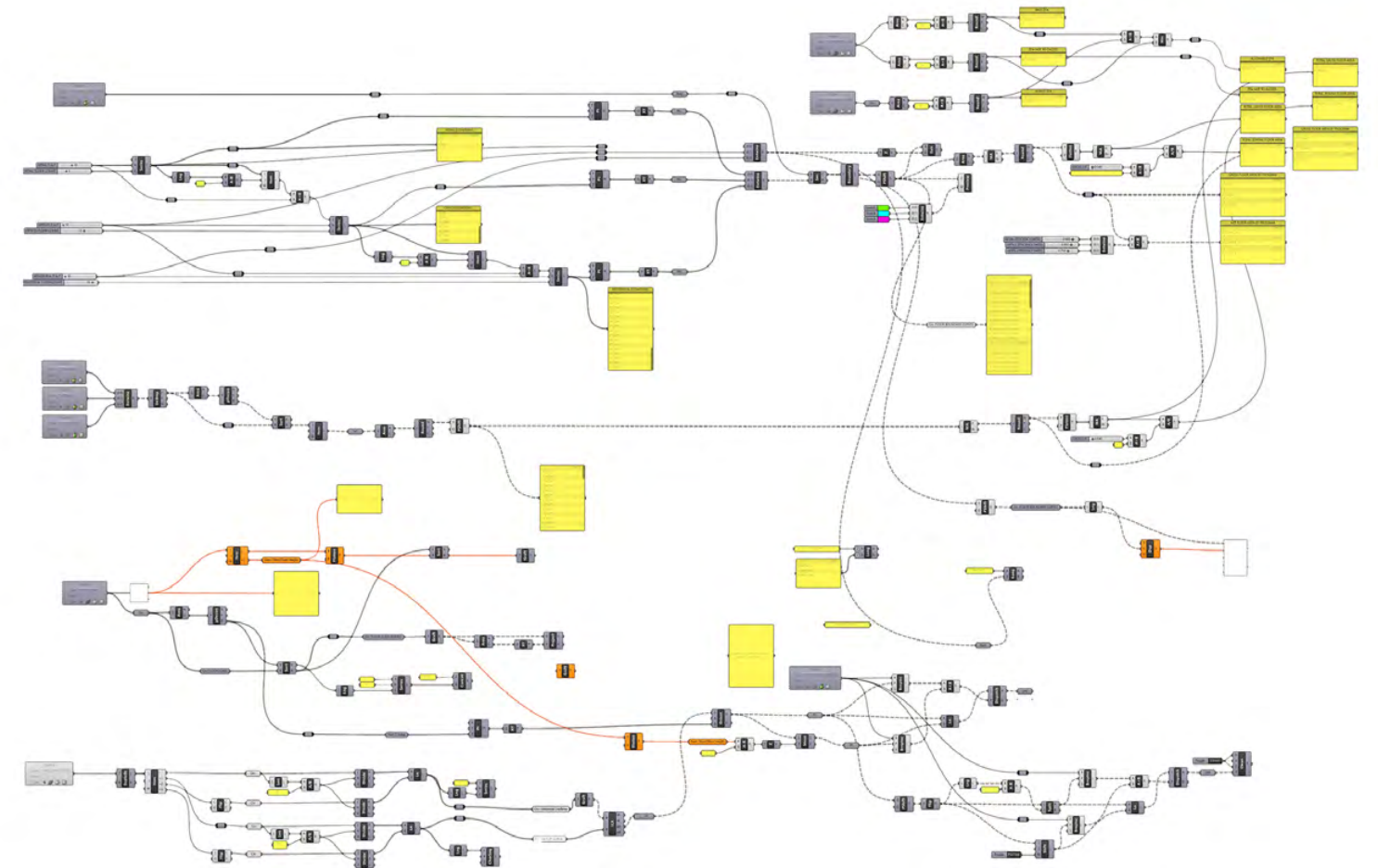
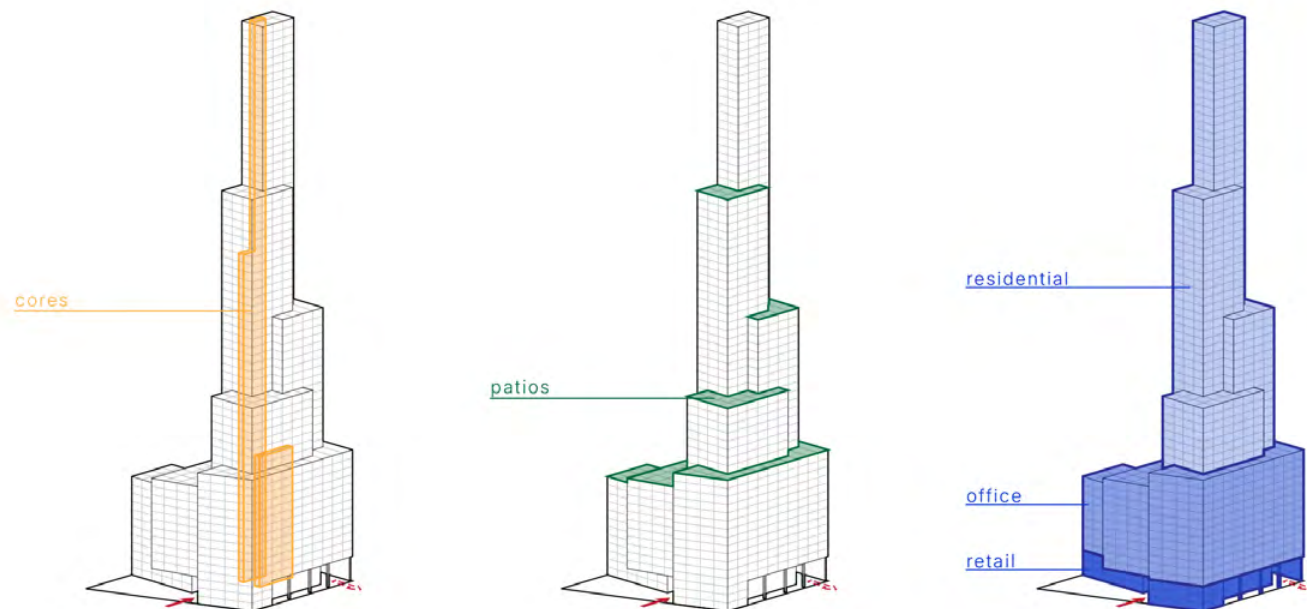
ZFA NOT TO EXCEED	
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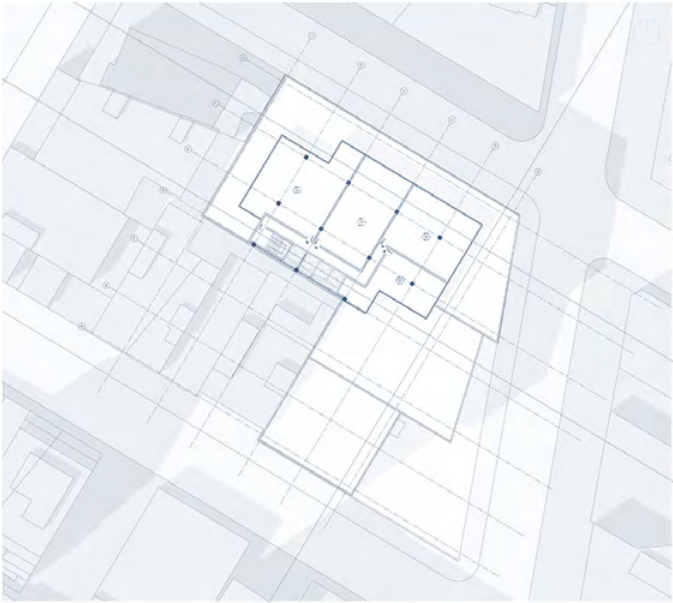
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	{0}
0	352.365

GROSS FLOOR AREA BY PROGRAM	
	{0:0}
0	39,568
	{0:1}
0	166,687
	{0:2}
0	146,110

Rather than treating zoning as a limitation, it became a design driver that actively shaped the building. The area allows for high-density office, residential and retail spaces that extends public life into the building. Grasshopper scripts were developed to verify FAR allocation, coverage, and use distribution for real time design decisions.

Consistency was critical for a 70-story building. The primary grid is spaced at 33 ft with a facade system subdivided to ensure constructibility and repetition without design compromises. Setbacks were placed strategically to meet regulations and programmatic requirements, creating terraces that improve environmental performance.





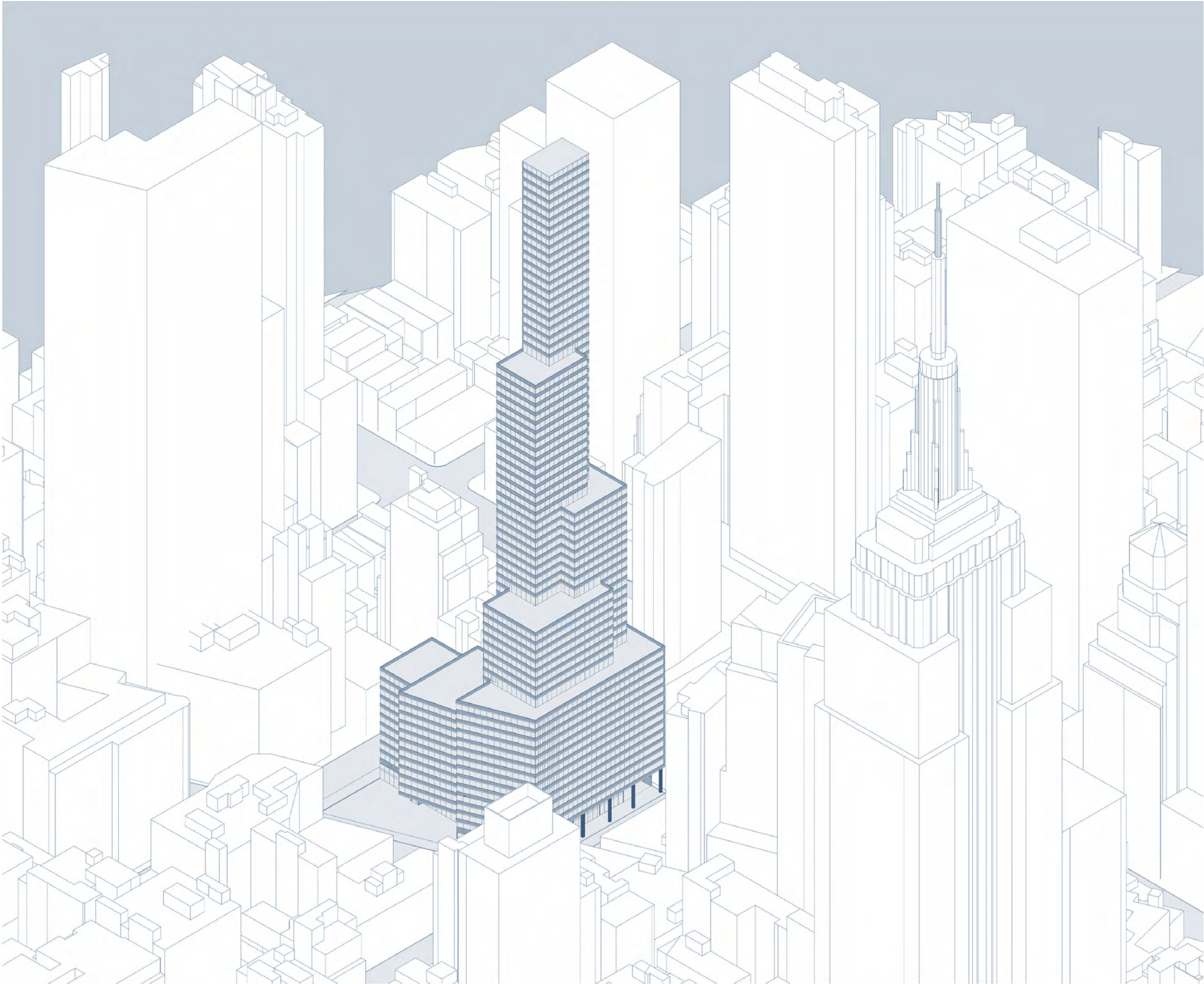
Residential



Offices



Ground Floor



THRESHOLD OF DECAY

Journeys across time and scale

"Two Passages" explores death, decay, and transformation through a series of material experiments using citrus fruits, liquids, stains, burns, and organic traces. The project documents processes of separation, delay, suspension, withering, incineration, and aftermath as ritualistic acts that reveal the passage of time and the physical transformation of matter.

Drawing from funerary traditions and historical understandings of death, the work examines how rituals leave behind traces and imprints that become records of both destruction and preservation. Through photography and material manipulation, the project reframes decay not as an end state, but as an active process of transition and memory.

Course Elective Design Seminar / Interlaced Existence
Term Fall '25
Faculty Karla Rothstein
Partner Maria Eleni Komninou





Tarnish



Ascend / Descend



Delay

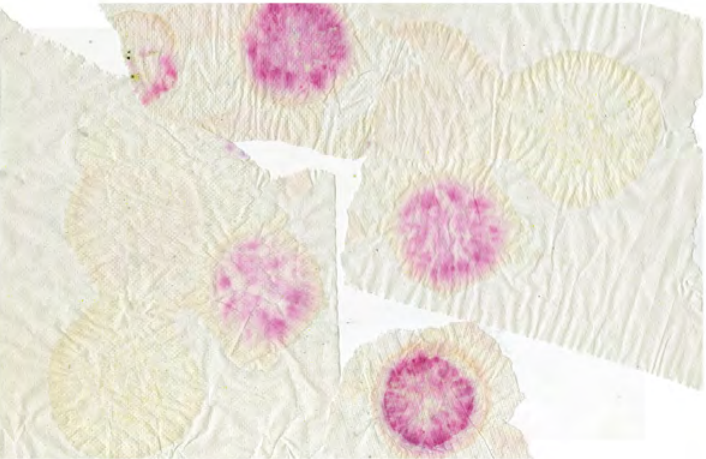


Suspend

The project investigates fruit decomposition through both macro and micro-scale photography, documenting the evolving textures, mold growth, and surface transformations that emerge over time. By focusing closely on these material changes, the work reveals a “topography of decay” that moves beyond the objectified scale of the object itself and instead captures the landscapes, traces, and hidden processes produced through deterioration. Through the intentional cultivation and documentation of decomposition, the project positions decay as a dynamic spatial and material condition rather than a fixed moment of death.



Wither



Trace



Footprint

A COMMON THREAD

Weaving the social fabric of Mexico City

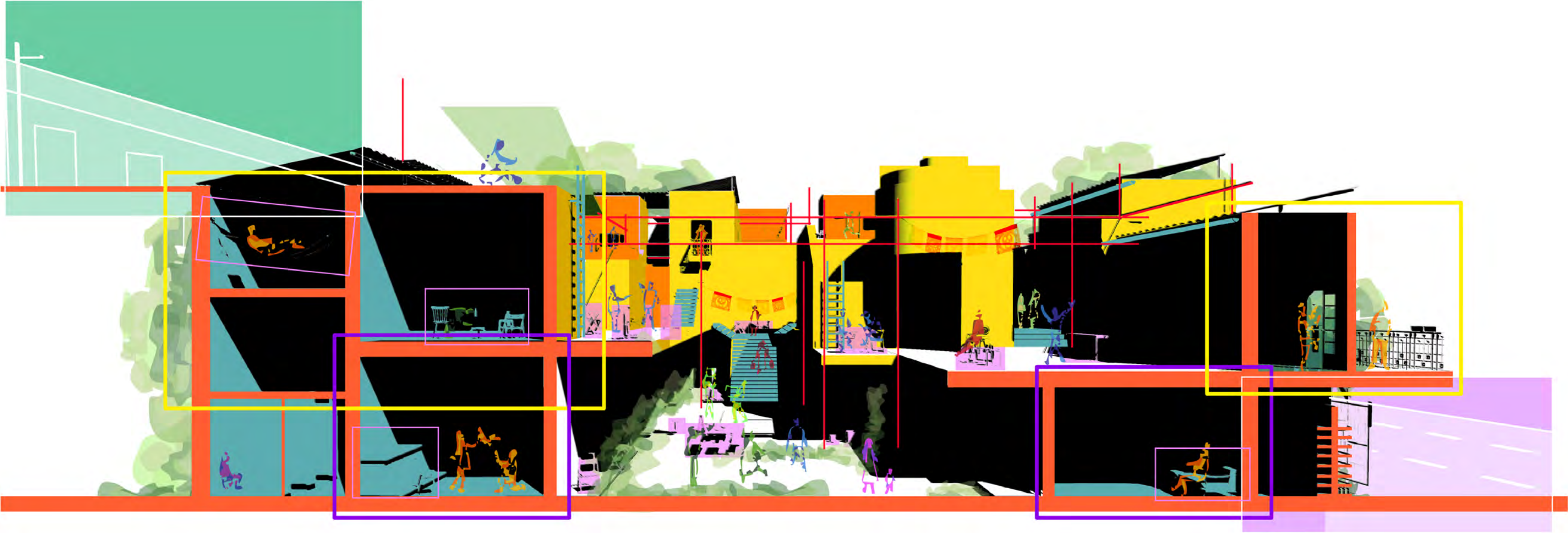
Mexico's deep cultural and historical relationship with fabric frames this project's approach to housing, labor, and community in Colonia Doctores. Here, fabric is not treated as a passive material, but as an active social device. For street vendors it provides shade and visibility, for textile workers it is labor and production, and for artisans it is craft and art.

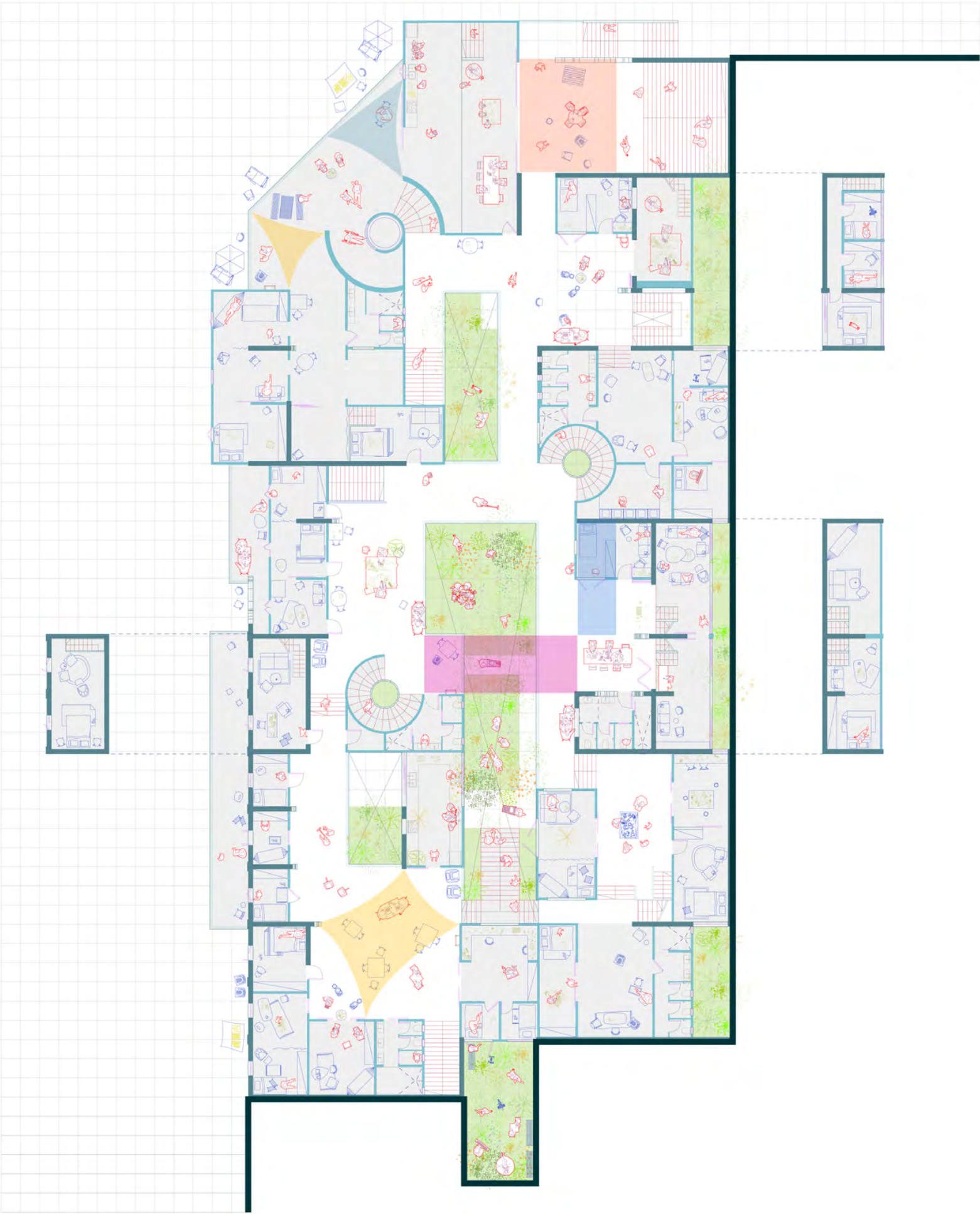
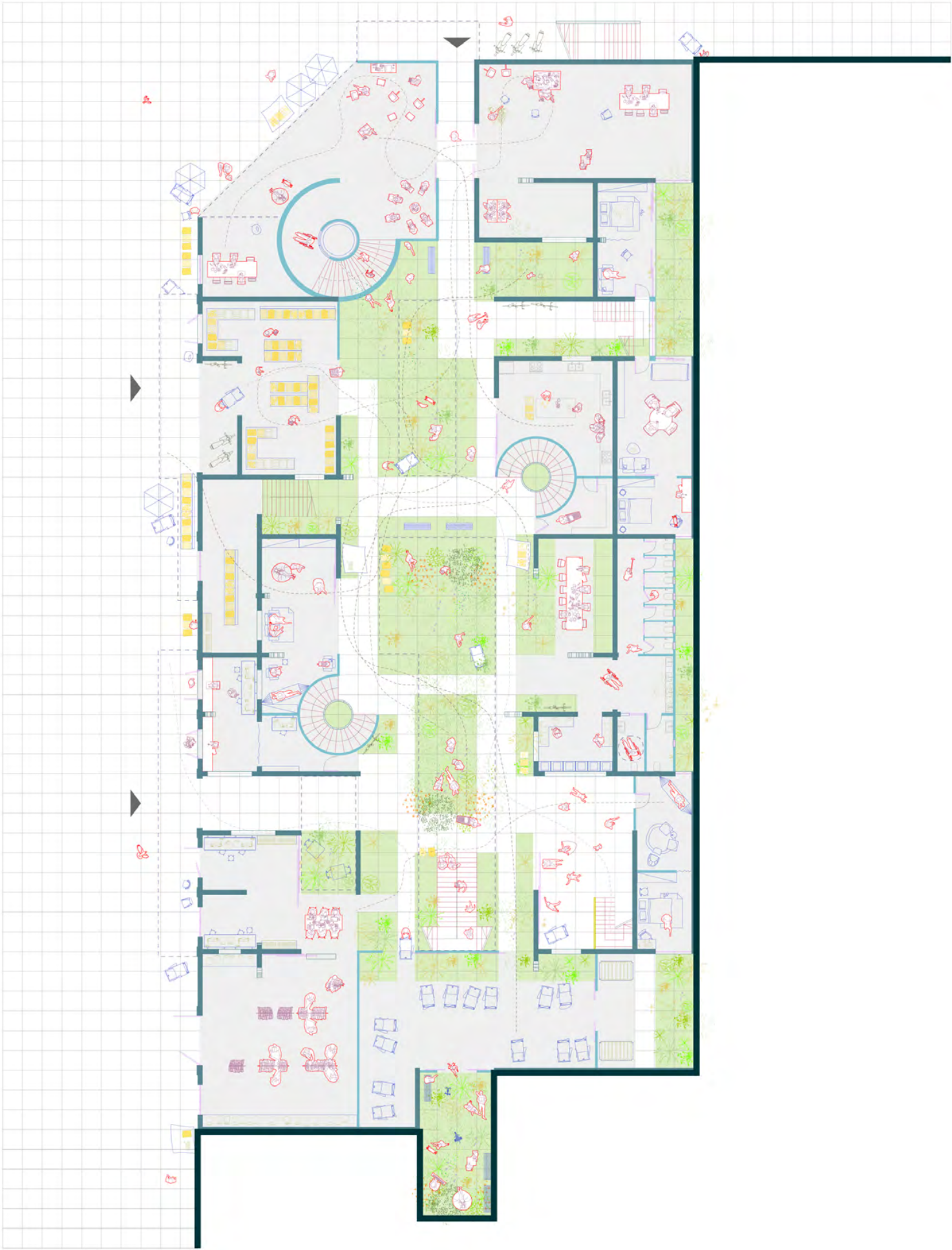
This project proposes a community-owned housing and production framework that uses fabric as both material and social infrastructure. By weaving together domestic life, informal economies, and craft-based labor, it transforms abandoned or underused sites into a network of courtyards, workshops, and housing. Fabric, understood as shade, labor, craft, and shelter, becomes the medium through which housing, work, and collective life are reassembled.

Course Advanced Architecture Studio VI / Non-Binary Habitable Landscapes
Term Spring '26
Location Colonia Doctores, Mexico City
Faculty Fernanda Canales, Dean's Visiting Assistant Professor
Foteini Kallikouni, Co-Teacher
Tsung-Pei Lin, Teaching Associate
Partner Fion Li









3x4

Pivot / Aggregate / Utilize

"3x4" is conceived as a versatile piece of furniture capable of operating in three distinct orientations, corresponding to seat heights of 16", 20", and 24". This flexibility allows it to function as a low lounge chair, a standard chair, or a stool, adapting to different spatial and programmatic needs. The object integrates storage and containment opportunities through a series of pockets, cavities, and openings that accommodate everyday items, reinforcing its utility beyond seating. It can also aggregate horizontally to become a longer iteration of itself.

Constructed from simple plywood components, it is designed for straightforward assembly, emphasizing clarity of structure and economy of means. Its form is defined by clean lines, exposed joints, and a direct expression of material logic, avoiding unnecessary ornament. The result is a utilitarian yet deliberate object, where proportion, repetition, and construction detail shape its aesthetic, positioning it between furniture and spatial device.

Course Building Science and Technology Elective / 1:1 Crafting and Fabrication of Details
Term Spring '26
Faculty Zachary E. Mulitauaopele, Adjunct Assistant Professor
Partner Violeta Mastronardi





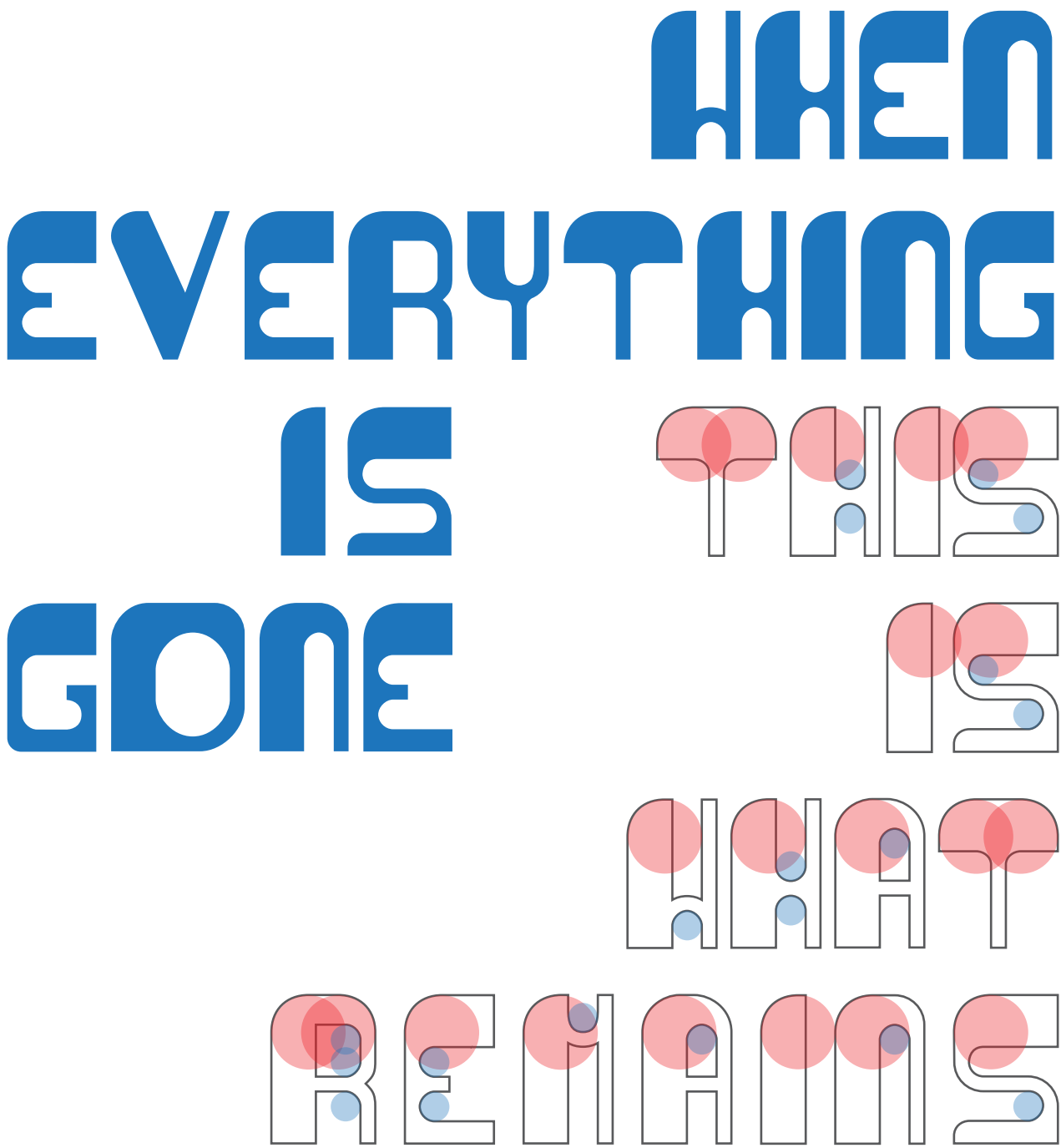
Remains

Self-Expression through Graphic Design

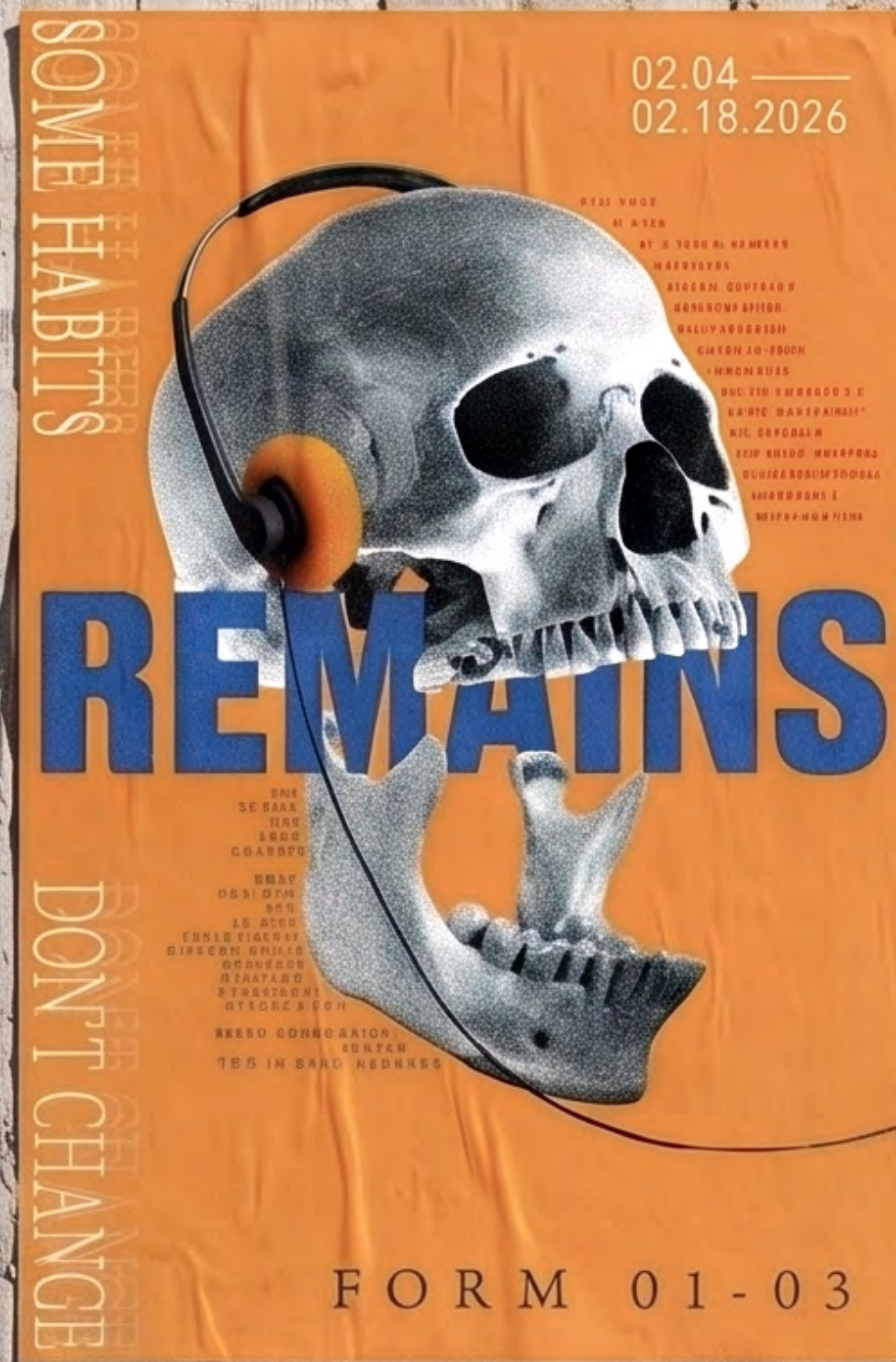
Remains is a typographic exploration that originated from a series of self-portraits, where the five objects that most define myself at the moment were identified and analyzed. By treating these personal artifacts as the “remains” of my identity, a series of experimental posters were developed to explore how our character is represented through our most significant belongings. This visual phase focused on the concept of the vessel, using raw graphic form to communicate the idea that when everything else is stripped away, our most significant belongings are what “remain”.

Following this exploration, I transitioned into the technical exercise of designing a custom functioning typeface, focusing on structure, proportion, and hierarchy. This phase required a shift toward systems thinking, where the consistency, spacing, and rhythm of the letterforms are refined to create a cohesive font.

Together, these two components demonstrate a progression from personal, object-based storytelling to the disciplined creation of a functional design tool, showcasing both expressive form-making and technical rigor.



Course Representation Elective / Multi Graphics and Representation
Term Spring '26
Faculty Wael Morcos, Adjunct Assistant Professor
Partner Individual Project



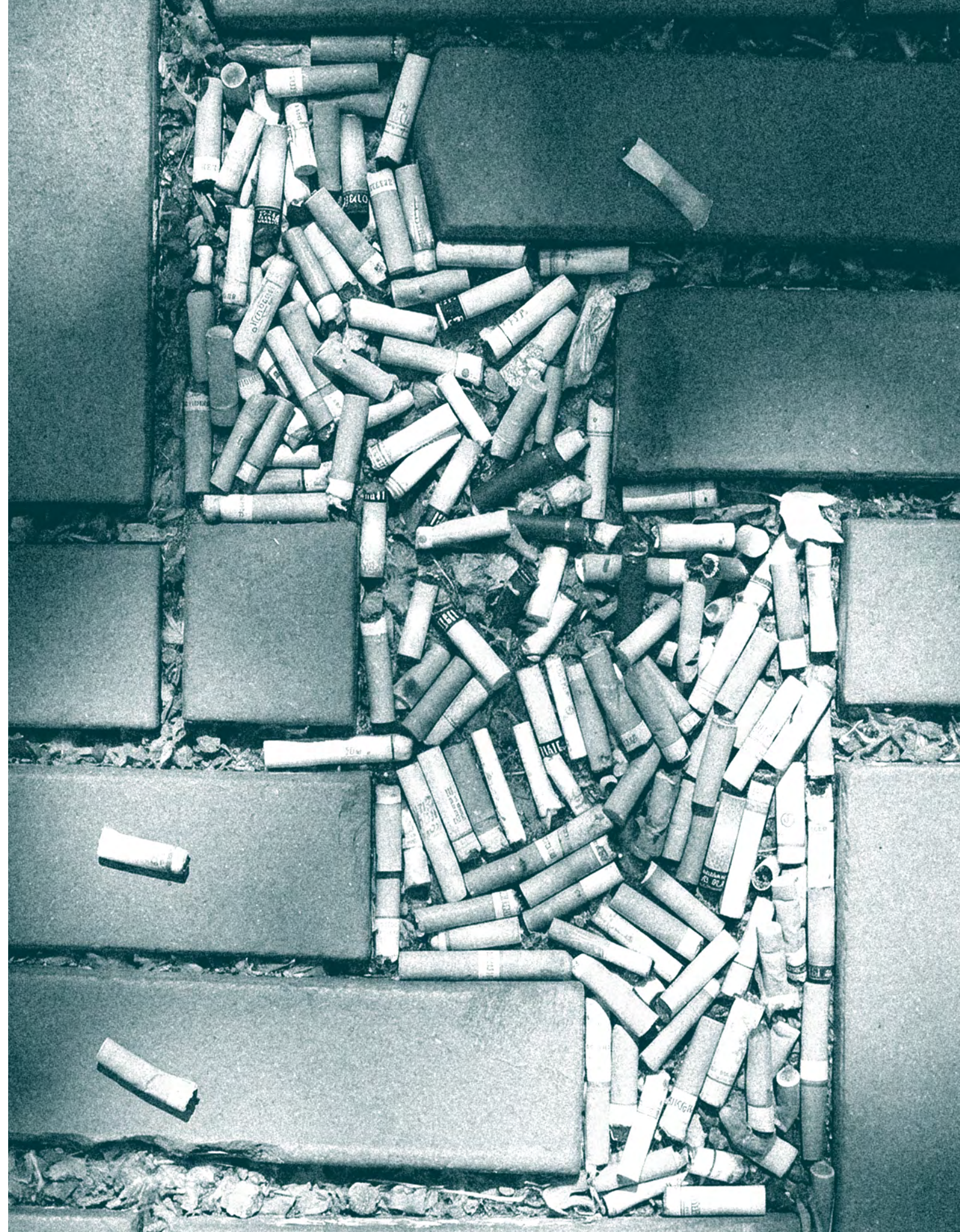
UN-FILTERED REALITY

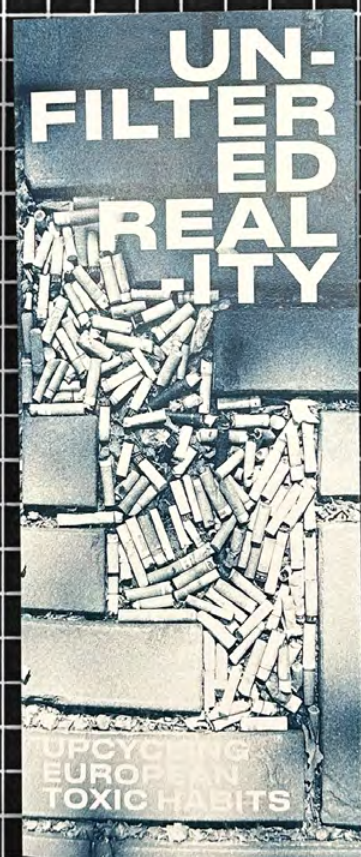
Upcycling European Toxic Habits

Can the most toxic consumer product be the answer to sustainability? The cigarette filter is the ultimate artifact of 20th-century industrial technology: a single-use biopolymer unit that concentrates over 7,000 chemicals into a non-biodegradable object, leaching heavy metals like lead, arsenic, and cadmium into the environment.

The opportunity arises when these industrial leftovers are utilized in construction. In Europe, the brick market is prominent, and incentives for reducing energy consumption are constantly growing. When 1% of a clay brick's weight is swapped with cigarette filters, the result is a lighter, better-insulating, and less energy-intensive product. At the same time, harmful compounds from the filters are neutralized or trapped within the brick during the firing process, preventing them from leaching into soil and water. This double-win scenario could prove beneficial for two of the most resilient sectors globally.

Course	Building Science and Technology Elective / Emerging Optimism + The 4th industrial revolution
Term	Spring '26
Location	Europe
Faculty	Sean Gallagher, Adjunct Assistant Professor
Partner	Individual





HOW CAN AN ENERGY-INTENSIVE INDUSTRY BECOME MORE SUSTAINABLE?

European regulations and tariffs on carbon emissions provide **incentives for reducing energy consumption** in a time of financial uncertainty

BRICK MARKET
\$64.0M

The construction industry in the continent is heavily based on brick and concrete with 65% of the total brick market being clay.

The European brick market, a mature industry with over 1,300 production sites, is projected to grow from \$640 million in 2023 to \$119 billion by 2033. Driven by sustainable building demands and urban development, the sector is experiencing a recovery with key players including Wienerberger, Forterra, and Ibstock



- **EU Emissions Trading System (ETS)**
Free carbon allowances are being phased out / Price per ton of CO2 is increasing.
- **Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism**
"Carbon Tariff" on energy-intensive imports entering the EU.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR)**
Tobacco companies are now legally required to pay for the collection of cigarette waste.

A toxic "ghost" in the global urban fabric. The cigarette filter is the ultimate artifact of the 20th-century industrial technology, a single-use biopolymer unit that concentrates 15,000 microplastic strands and over 7,000 chemicals into a highly mobile, non-biodegradable object.

The "industrial leftovers" represent the second-highest form of plastic pollution worldwide. They act as a microplastic time bomb, where a single discarded filter is leaches heavy metals like lead, arsenic, and cadmium into the environment.

VISUALIZING THE 4,500,000,000 CIGARETTE FILTERS LITTERED ANNUALLY

WEIGHT
1,125,000 metric tons
Empire State Building x3

LENGTH
85,510,090 miles
Moon and back x25

AREA
1,080 km²
Manhattan Island x18

CAN THE MOST TOXIC CONSUMER PRODUCT BE THE ANSWER TO SUSTAINABILITY?

TOBACCO INDUSTRY

One of the most resilient and high-margin sectors globally with a total market value of approximately \$970 billion (2025-2026) and expected to cross \$1 trillion by 2027, with gross Margins of ~90% and operating Margins of ~61-63%.

The filters are sterilized, dried, and mixed into the clay, usually at about 1% of the total density, maintaining the same structural integrity as regular bricks

During the firing process the bricks are fired in a kiln at temperatures exceeding 1,000°C. All harmful compounds are neutralized or trapped permanently with the structure

FILTER MARKET

Valued at \$40.8B in 2025 with 7% annual growth and traditional filtered cigarettes still account for over 82% of the total market value.



5 lbs
Normal clay brick weight

113 cigarettes
1% cigarette brick equals to 22.7g of cigarette filters per brick (0.2g per filter)

40bn bricks
Maximum amount that can be built from a year's worth of cigarette filters

If just 2.5% of the annual brick production in Europe incorporated 1% filters, it would completely offset the continent's annual cigarette production

THE ANSWER

THE 1% BRICK!

THE "DOUBLE WIN" SCENARIO

- Waste Reduction**
Offsets 25% of global cigarette waste if implemented at scale
- Low Energy Use**
The energy released from the burning plastic reduces the amount of natural gas needed to fire the kiln by up to 10%.
- Reduced Pollution**
Prevents heavy metals from leaching into soil and water
- Lightweight Bricks**
The burning butts leave behind tiny "micro-pores" in the brick that make the bricks lighter
- Better Insulation**
leading to lower energy costs in homes

PROJECT '26

Tote Bag Design

Project '26 is a literal and material archive of the GSAPP experience. The design utilizes a supergraphic approach, where the acronym is constructed through the literal density of its parts mapping every degree program and department within the school. Rather than existing as separate entities, the individual departments are nested within the negative space of the school's initials, symbolizing the interdisciplinary nature of the school.

The four-color palette (Purple, Brown, Blue, Green) is derived directly from the physical environment of Avery Hall, representing the iconic backdrops used during the past four semesters of midterms and finals. By sampling the colors against which models and drawings were displayed, the design transforms into a chromatic timeline of our academic journey.

Course GSAPP Competition / Merch Design
Term Spring '26
Partner Individual Project

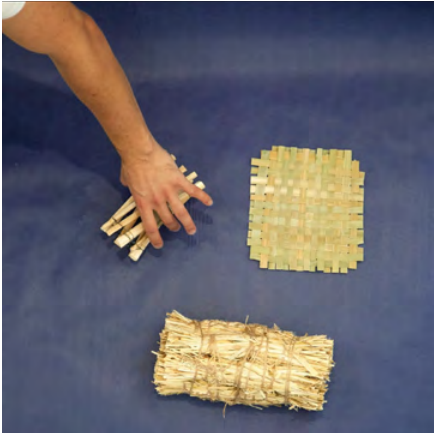




Spring '26



Fall '25



Summer '25



Spring '25

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