

ON CONTINUITY

Across scales and contexts - architecture between history, territory, and use.



FORMS OF RECIPROCITY

2025 , Columbia GSAP

New York, United States

Tuthor: Neeraj Bhatia

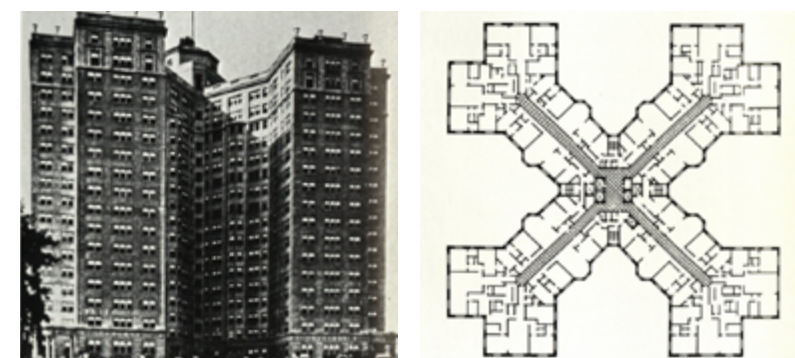
Authors: Natalia Riba, Valentina Lizcano

In New York City, raising a child has become a privilege. With childcare costs surpassing rent and little public support - especially for single parents - many are pushed out of the city by a system that fails to care. This project asks: how can architecture recreate the support of an extended family?

We were given a 30 x 30 meter plot - typical of Manhattan - as a starting point. From there, we explored massing strategies that could host a new kind of collective housing model, where shared space and mutual care are integrated into the structure of daily life.

We began at the individual scale, designing an adaptable one-bedroom unit anchored by a fixed bathroom and entrance. The rest of the space remains flexible, adapting to changing needs and users. From there, the design scales up to a cluster - where hybrid programs like laundry rooms combined with playgrounds support visibility, trust, and interaction between adults and children.

Before arriving at the final massing, we studied Steven Holl's Alphabetical City, focusing on the "X" as a generative form. We evolved it to create a four-quadrant layout, maximizing light, air, and shared courtyards. As the X repeats, mirrored forms generate diverse public spaces - square terraces forming plazas, semi-circles converging at a point - each shape offering different degrees of connection, exposure, and care.



A Inspired by Steven Holl's Alphabetical City, particularly the "X" form, referencing the Edgewater Beach Apartments, Chicago, designed by Benjamin H. Marshall.



Iteration 01
Exploring the X by rotating a T-shape both in plan and section.



Iteration 02
Exploring the X by rotating a T-shape only in plan



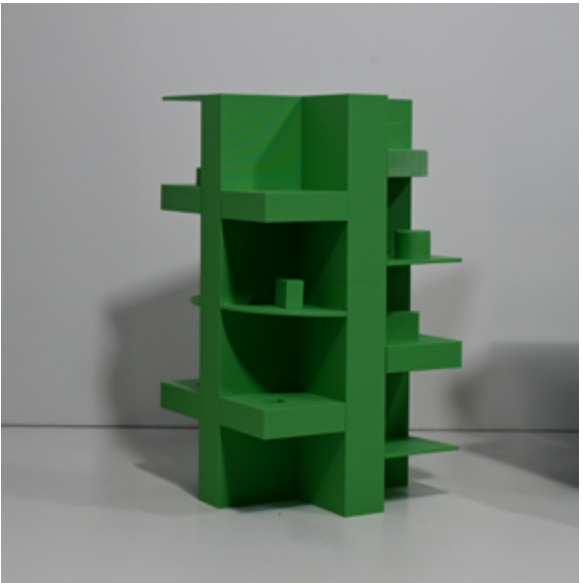
Iteration 03
Exploring the X by rotating a T-shape both in plan and section.



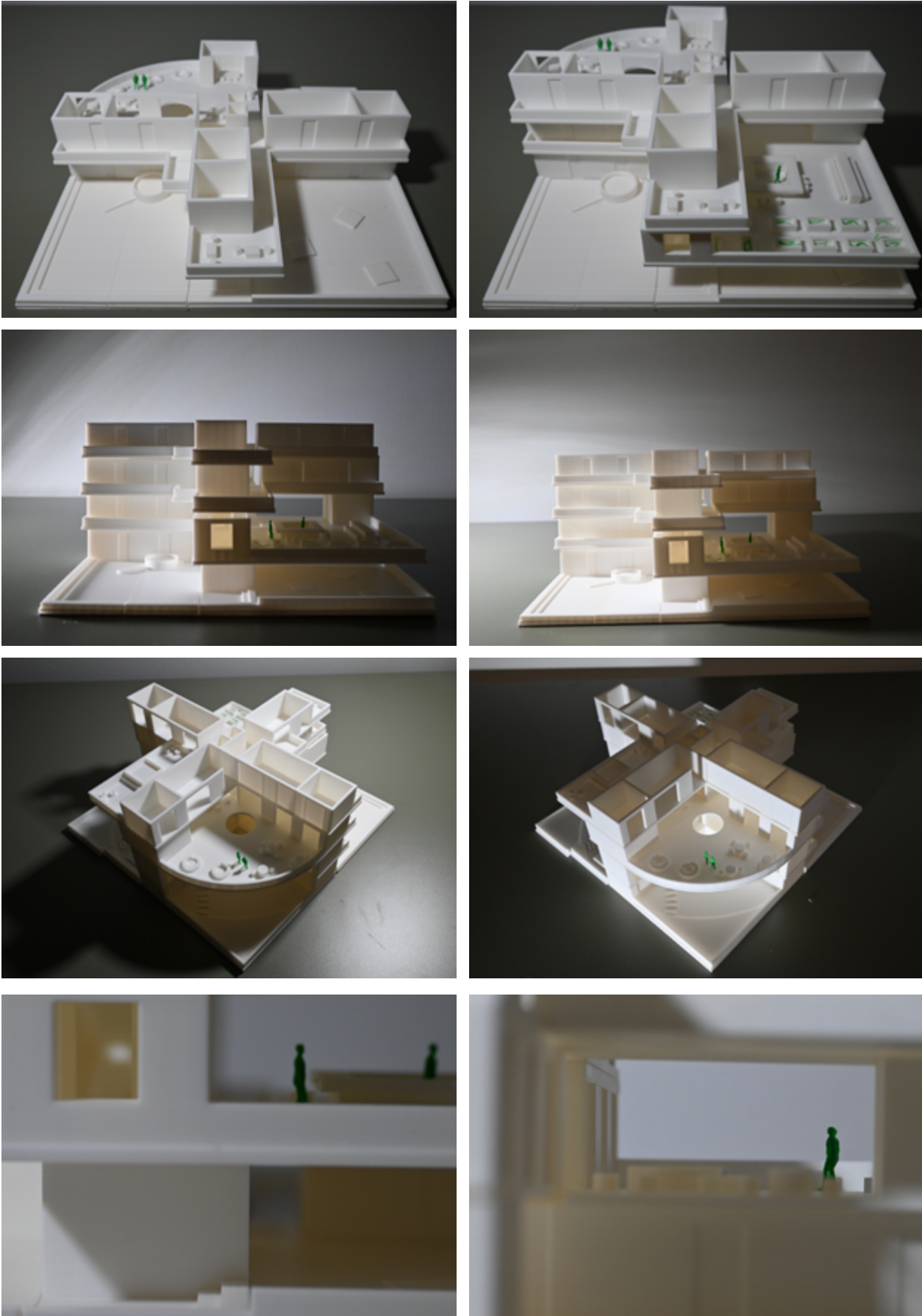
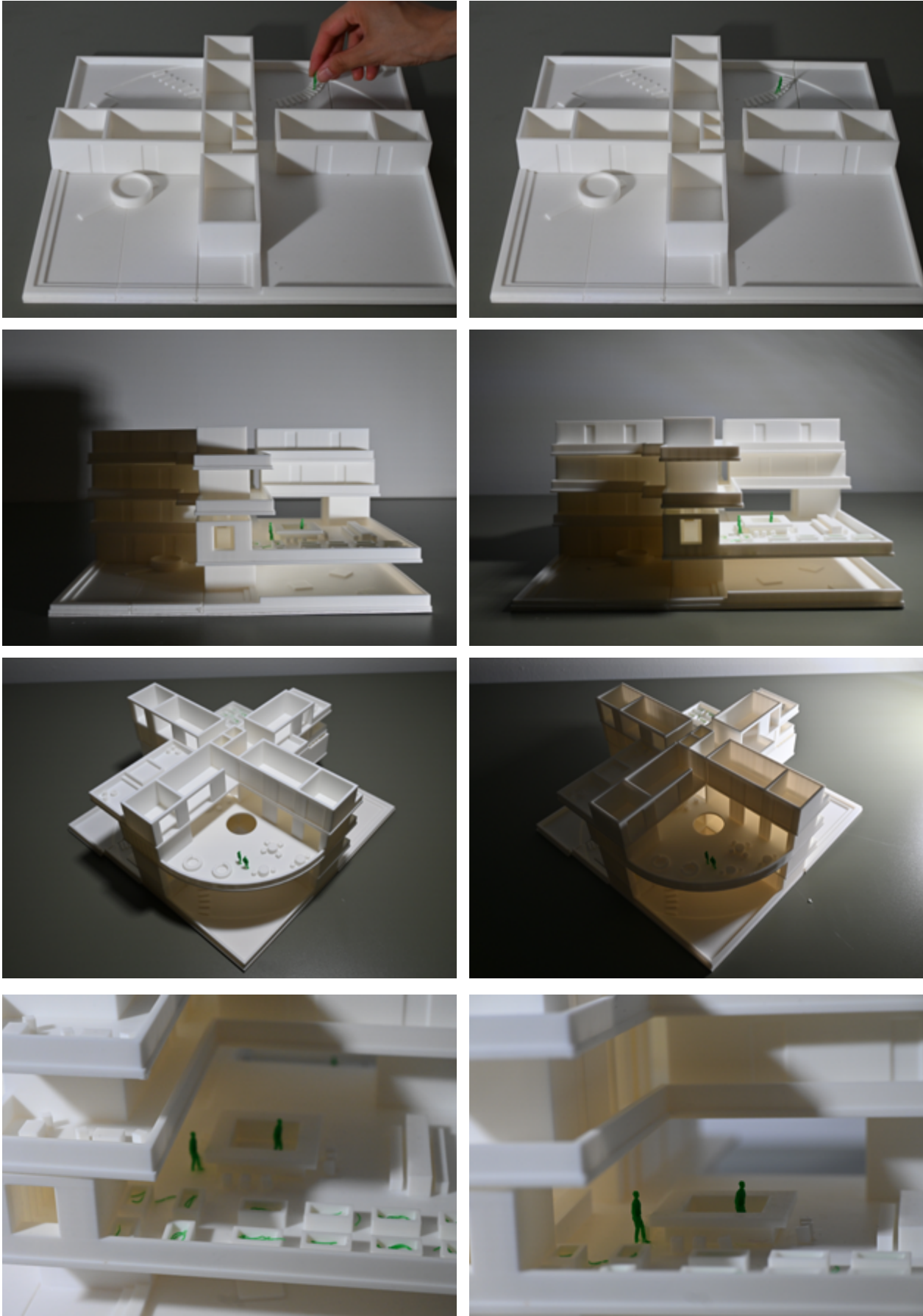
Iteration 01
Exploring the X by rotating a T-shape both in plan and section.

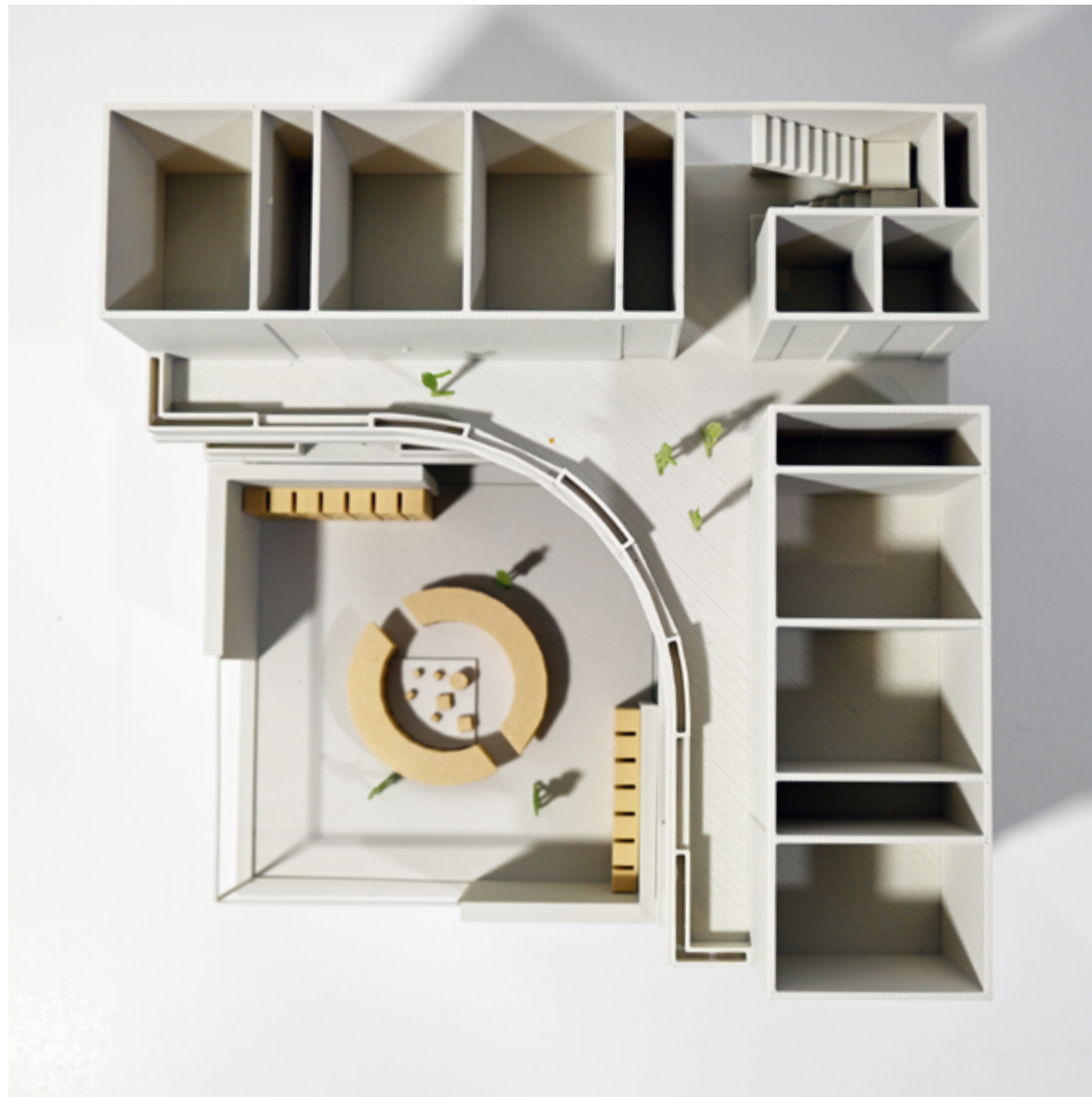


Iteration 02
Exploring the X by rotating a T-shape both in plan and section.



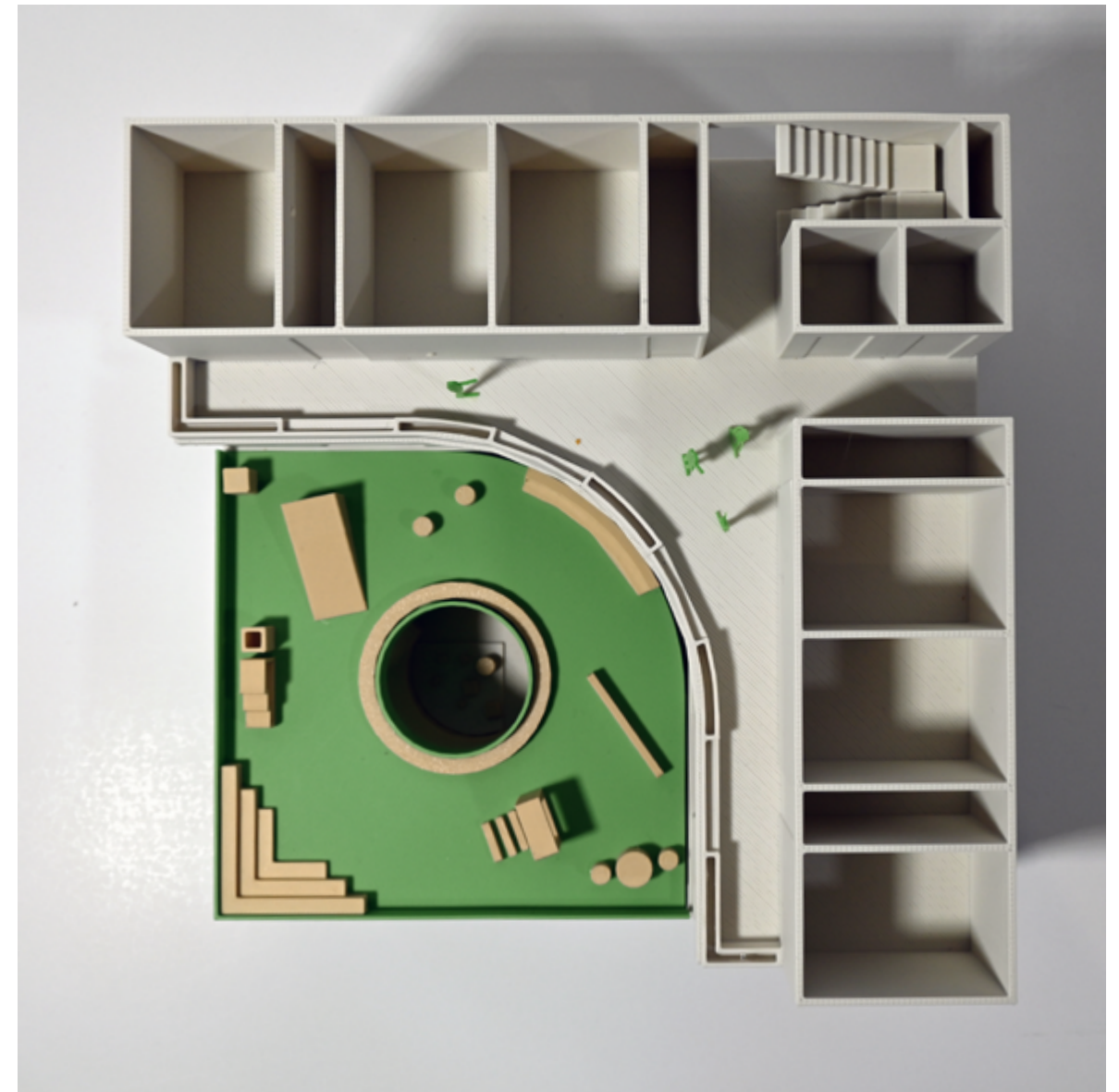
Iteration 03
Final massing adding the terraces and public spaces for gathering.





Laundry Room

This is an example of one hybrid program in the building. Within the cluster, a central laundry space wraps around a play area - allowing parents to fold clothes while keeping an eye on their children.



Playground

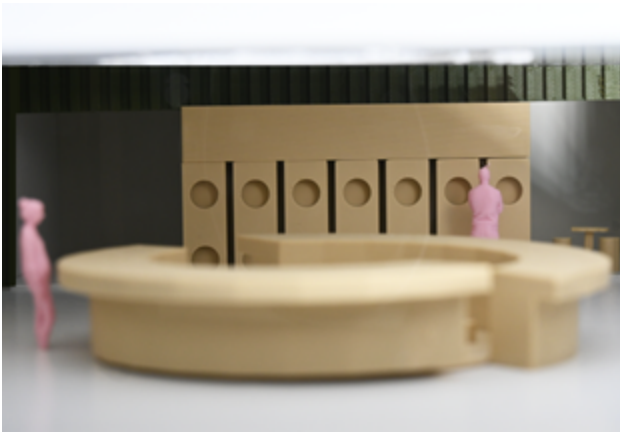
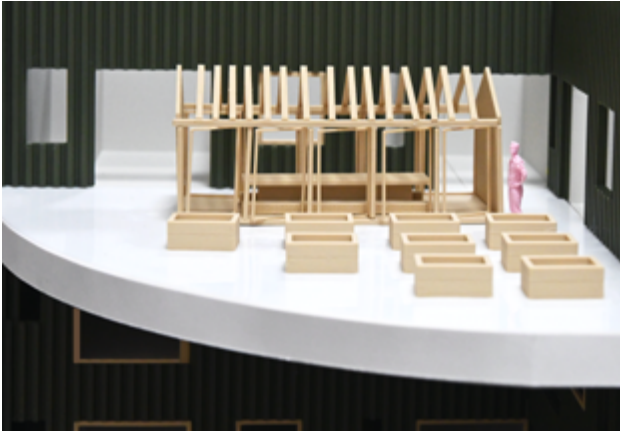
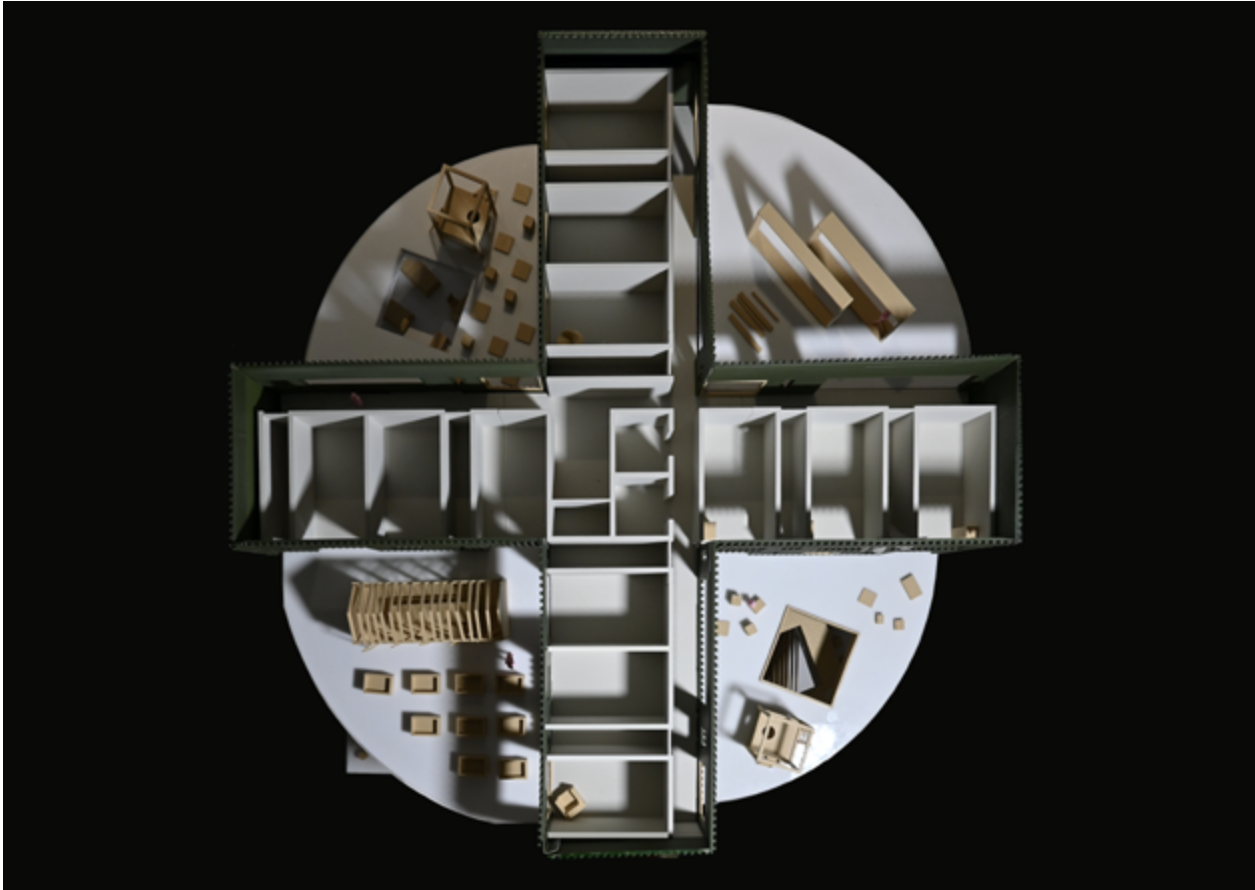
Above the laundry, an upper-level playground offers a second layer of interaction and visibility. This hybrid program encourages care through proximity, turning everyday tasks into moments of connection, supervision, and community support.

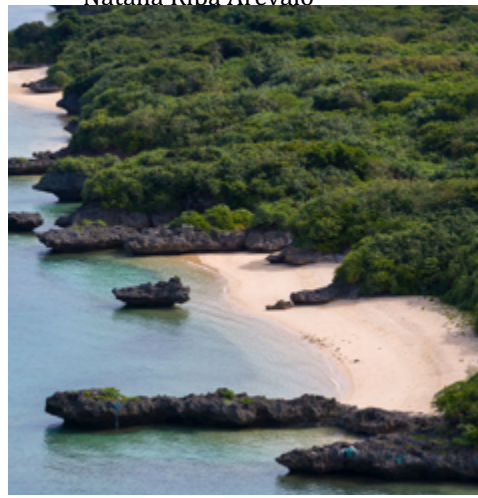
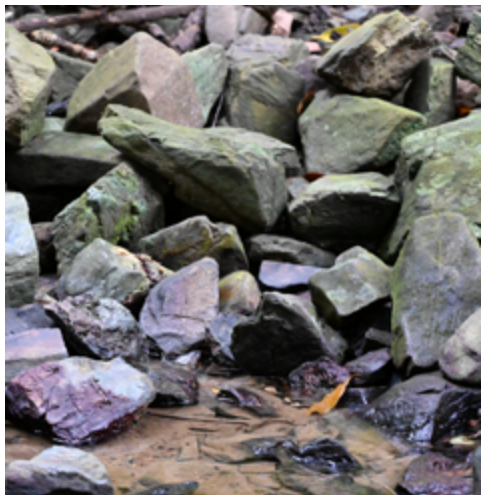


One Bedroom Unit & Two Bedroom Unit
This system supports transformation over time - from one to many, without needing to relocate.



Different Configurations of the Bedroom
As units expand, they also connect across shared spaces, creating opportunities for care, visibility, and support between neighbors. Flexibility at the scale of the unit enables connection and mutual support at the scale of the collective.





INHABITING THE ECOSYSTEM

2026 , Columbia GSAP

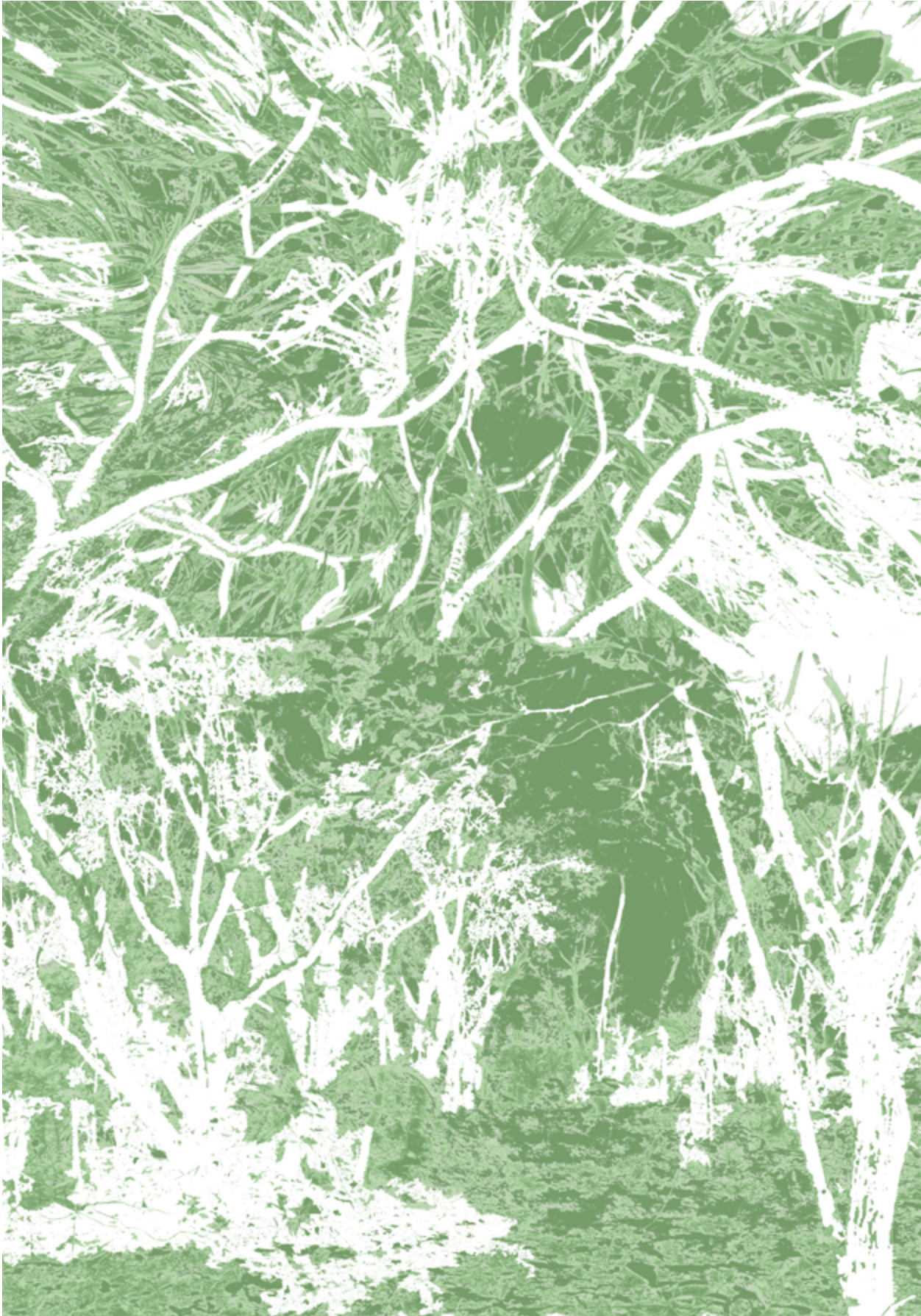
Ishigaki, Japan

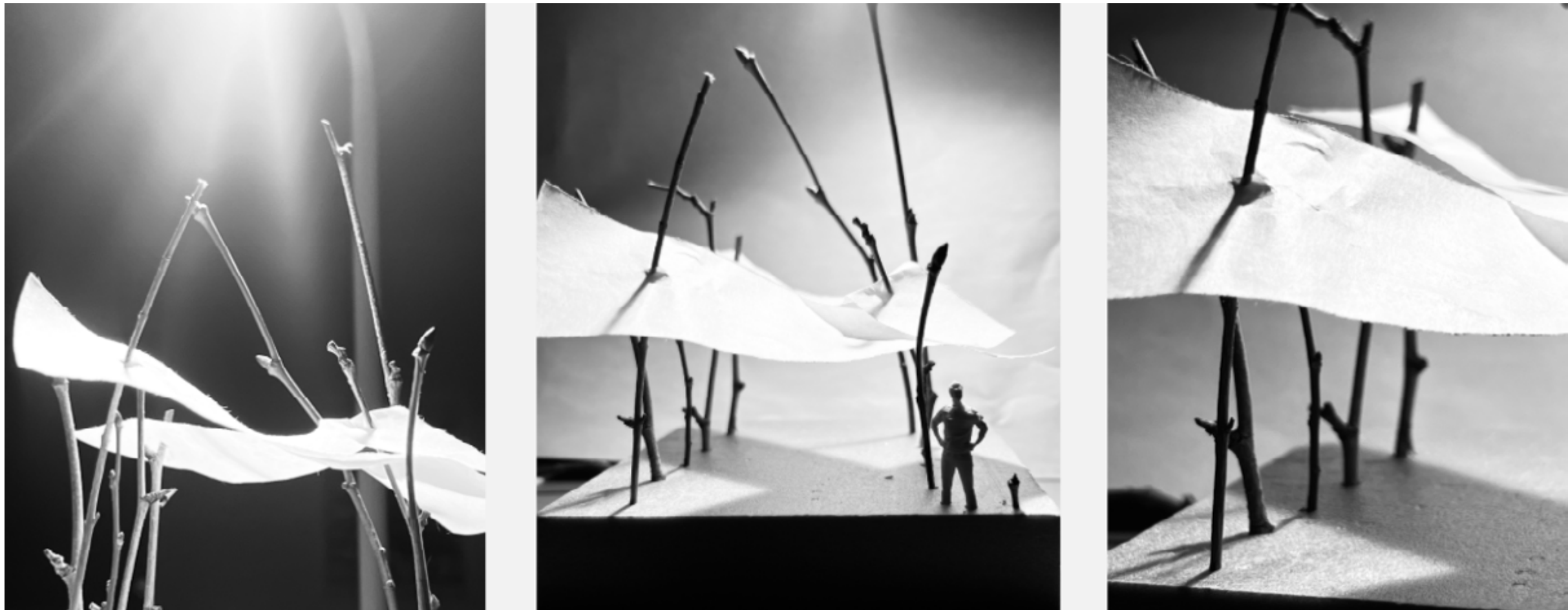
Tuthor: Jing Liu & Alessandra Chianchetta

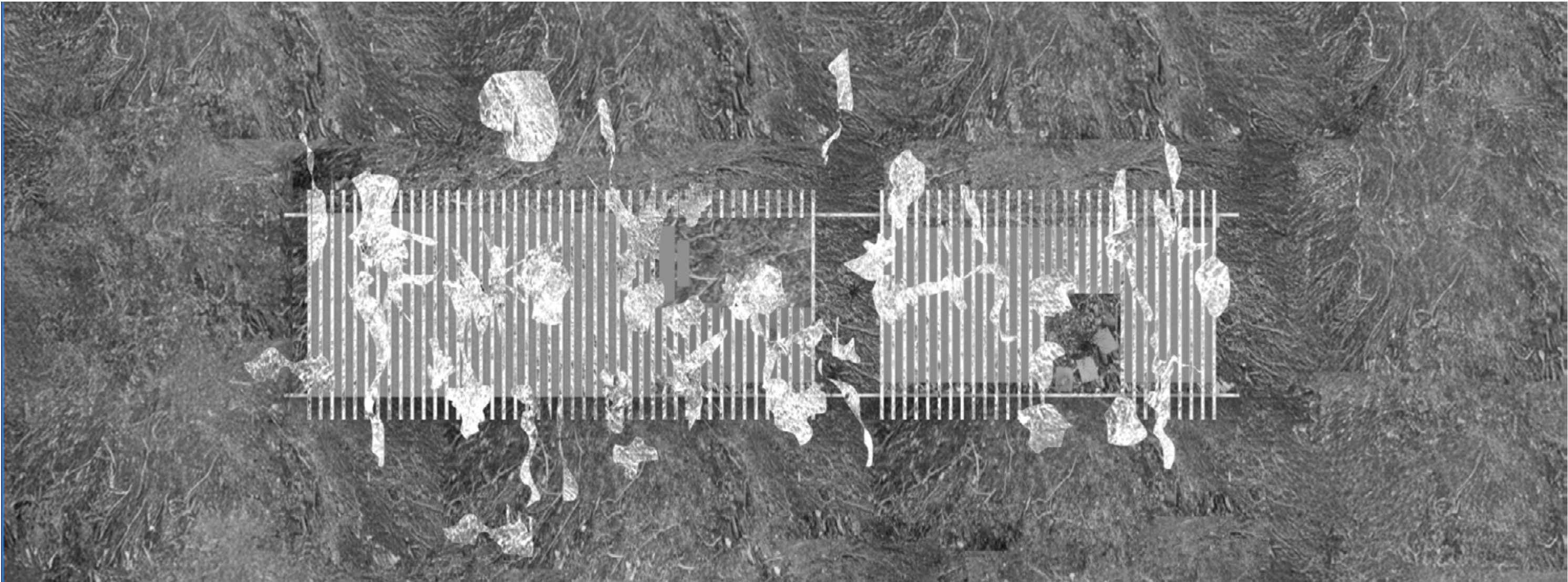
Authors: Natalia Riba

This project proposes a network of self-sustaining ecological communities across the island of Ishigaki, where each community is dedicated to protecting, regenerating, and interpreting a specific ecosystem. Organized around ground, water, forest, topography, and ocean, the project transforms ecology into a lived experience in which inhabitants and visitors learn directly from the landscape through cultivation, restoration, research, and collective inhabitation. Rather than treating nature as a backdrop, each community functions as both a custodian of the environment and a space of learning, reconnecting people to the ecological systems that sustain the island.

The architecture is conceived as a quiet extension of the landscape, dissolving the boundary between built form and nature. Defined by two horizontal planes - the ground and the roof - the project adapts to existing terrain, vegetation, light, rain, and topography with minimal intervention. Spaces emerge through pathways, openings, platforms, and lightweight structures that gently frame ecological experiences rather than dominate them. Through this approach, architecture becomes a mediator between humans and the environment, creating a condition where landscape, ecology, and habitation exist as one continuous system.

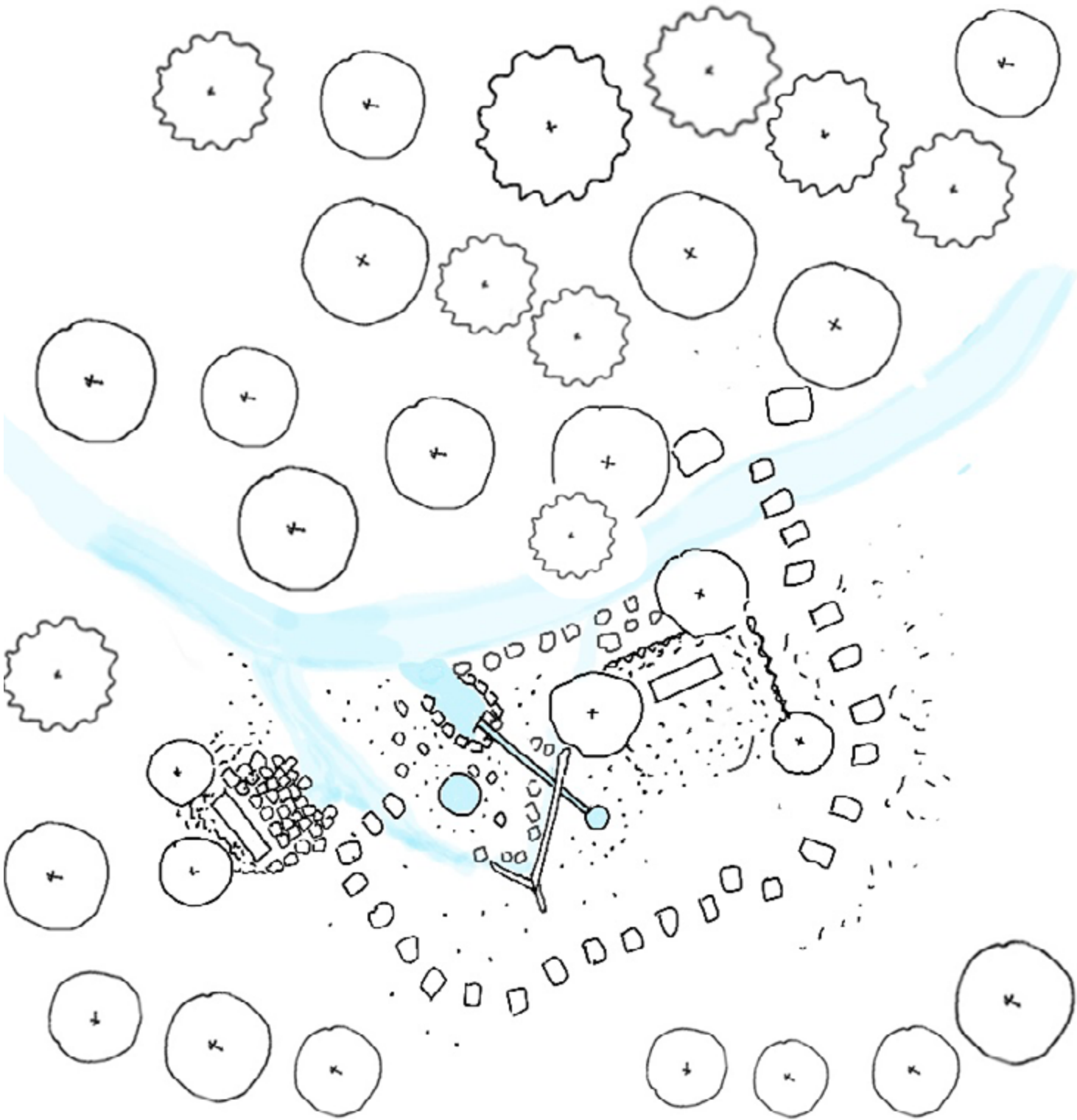






Architecture Reacting to Enviornmental Conditions

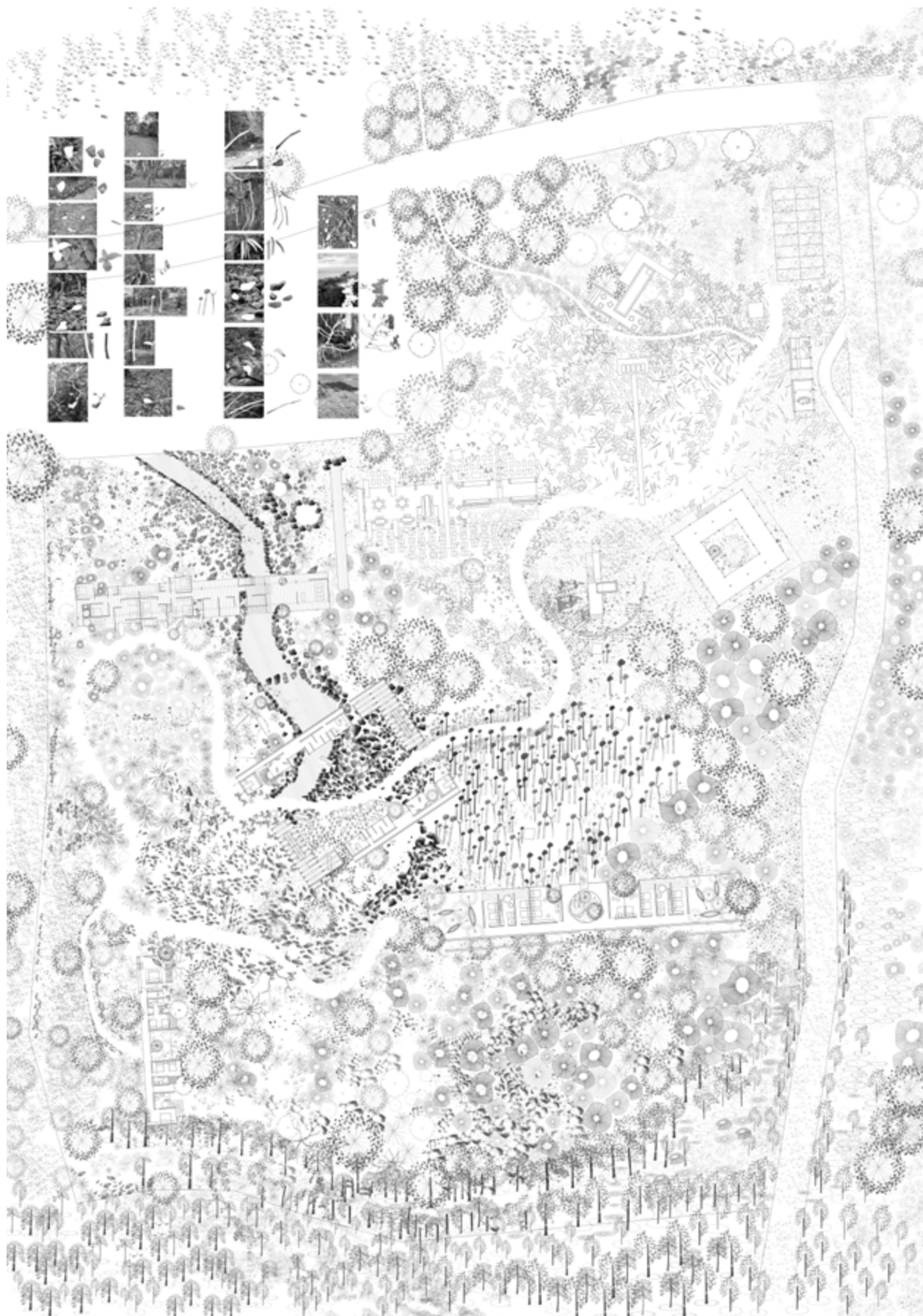








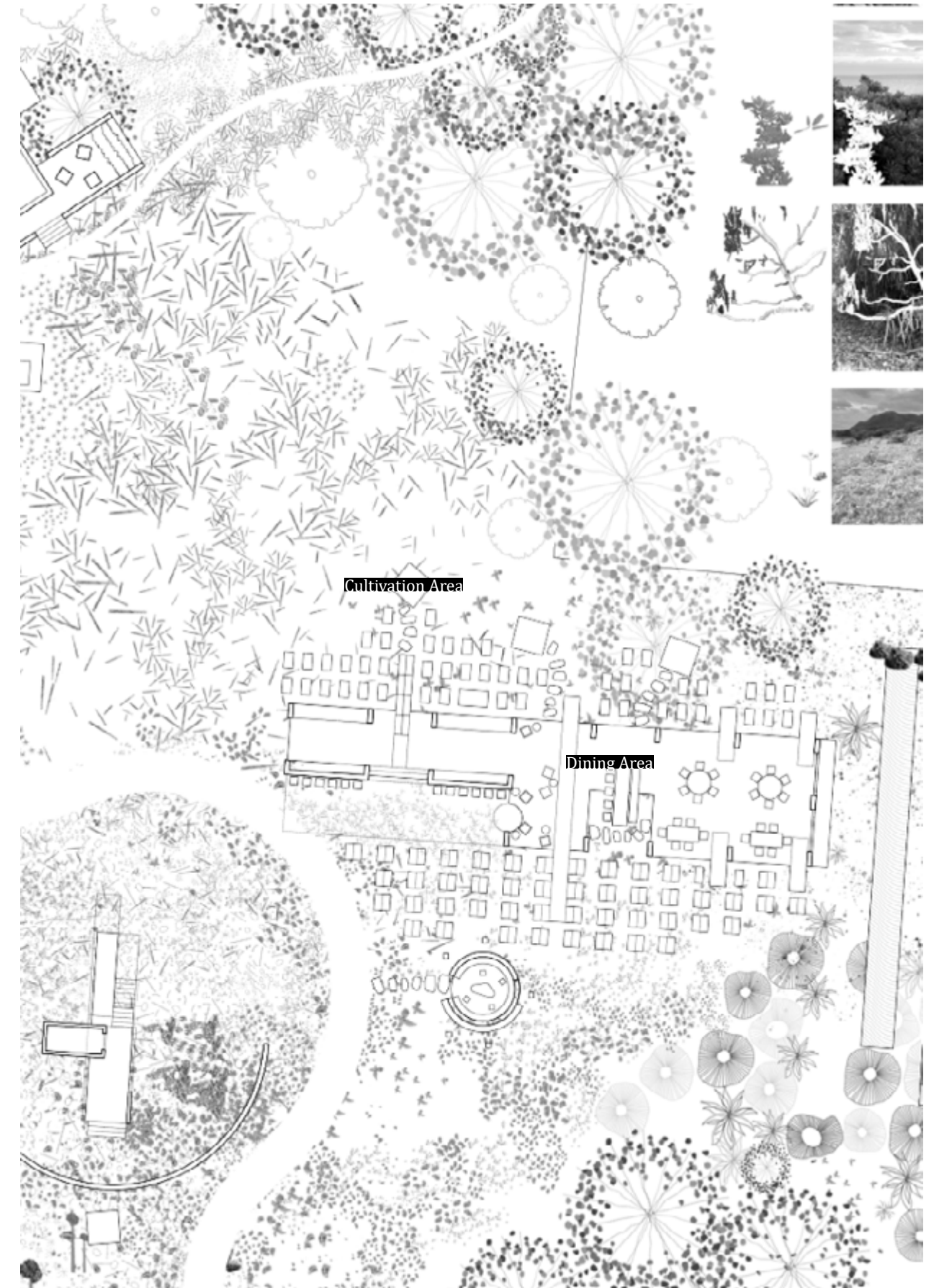
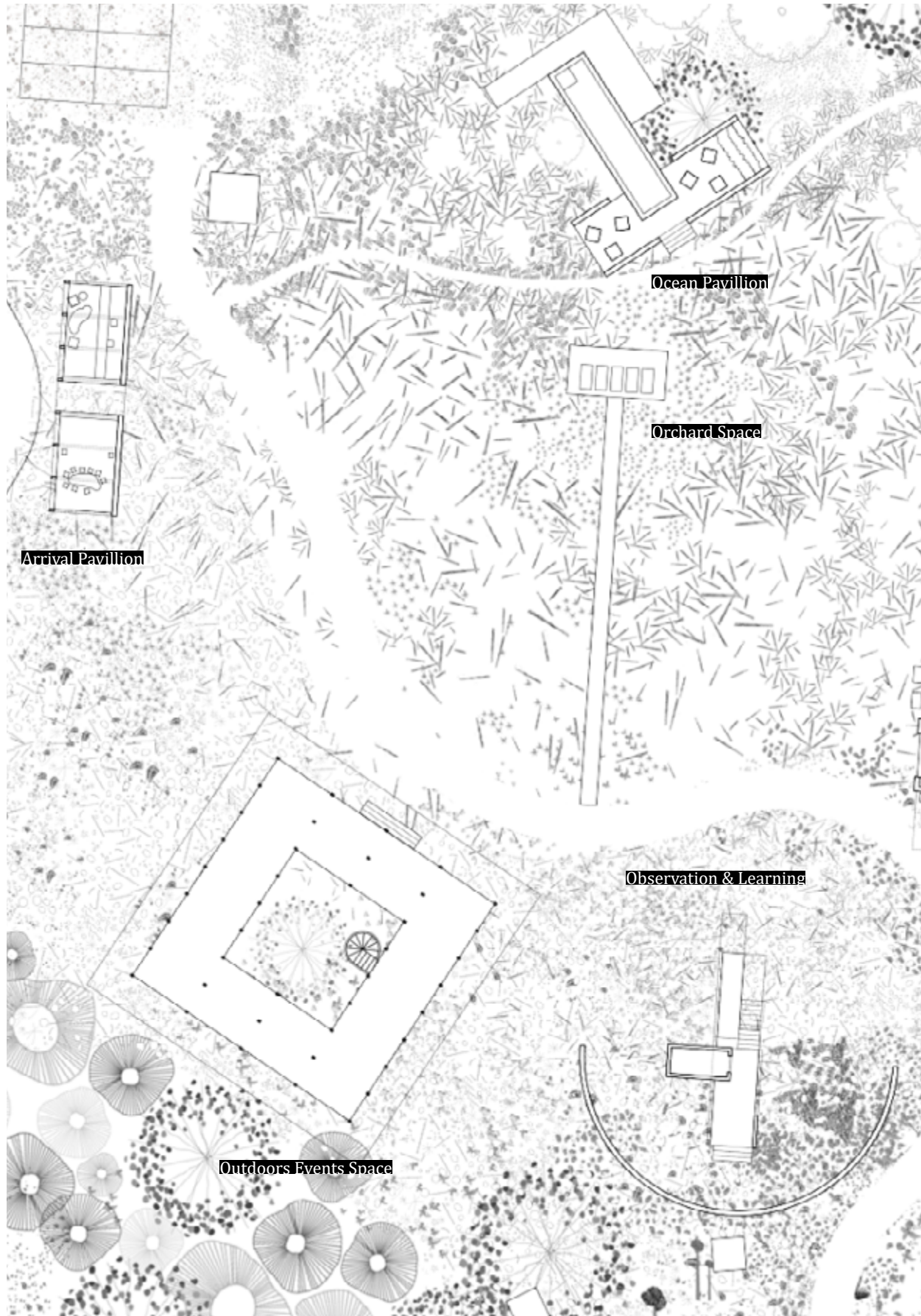


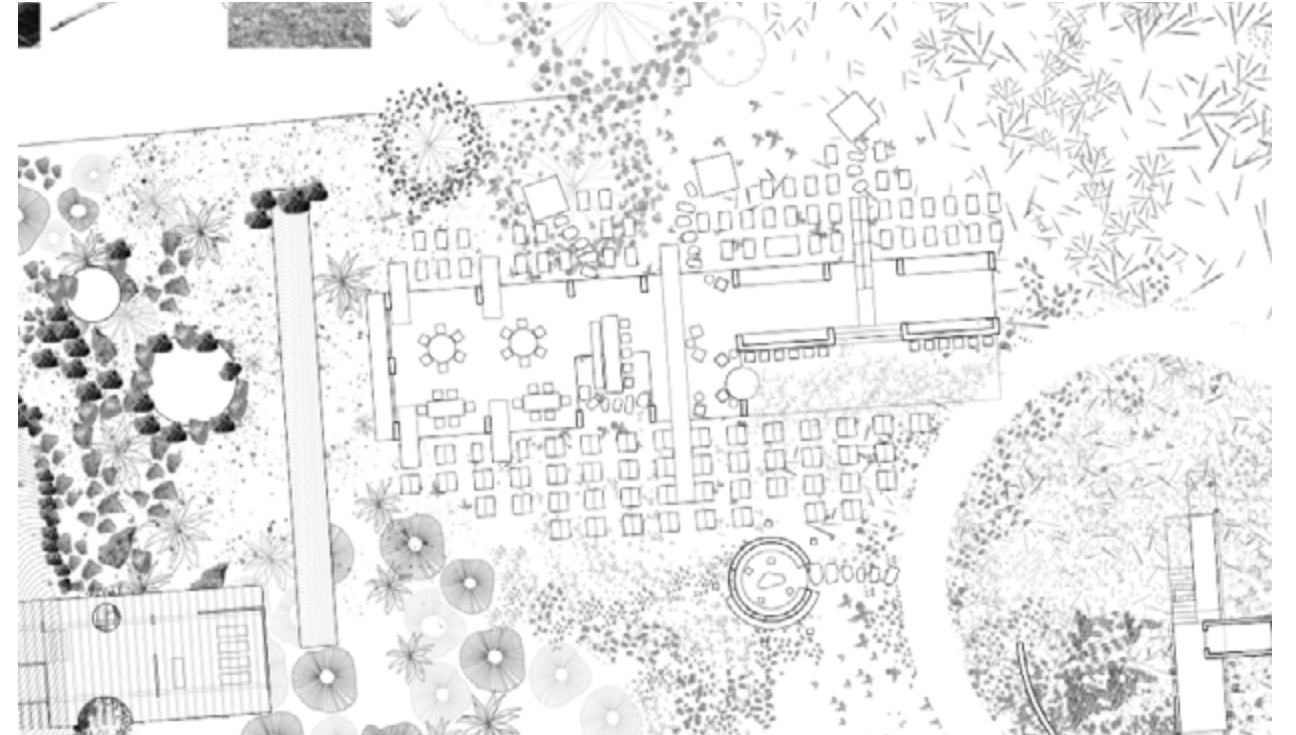


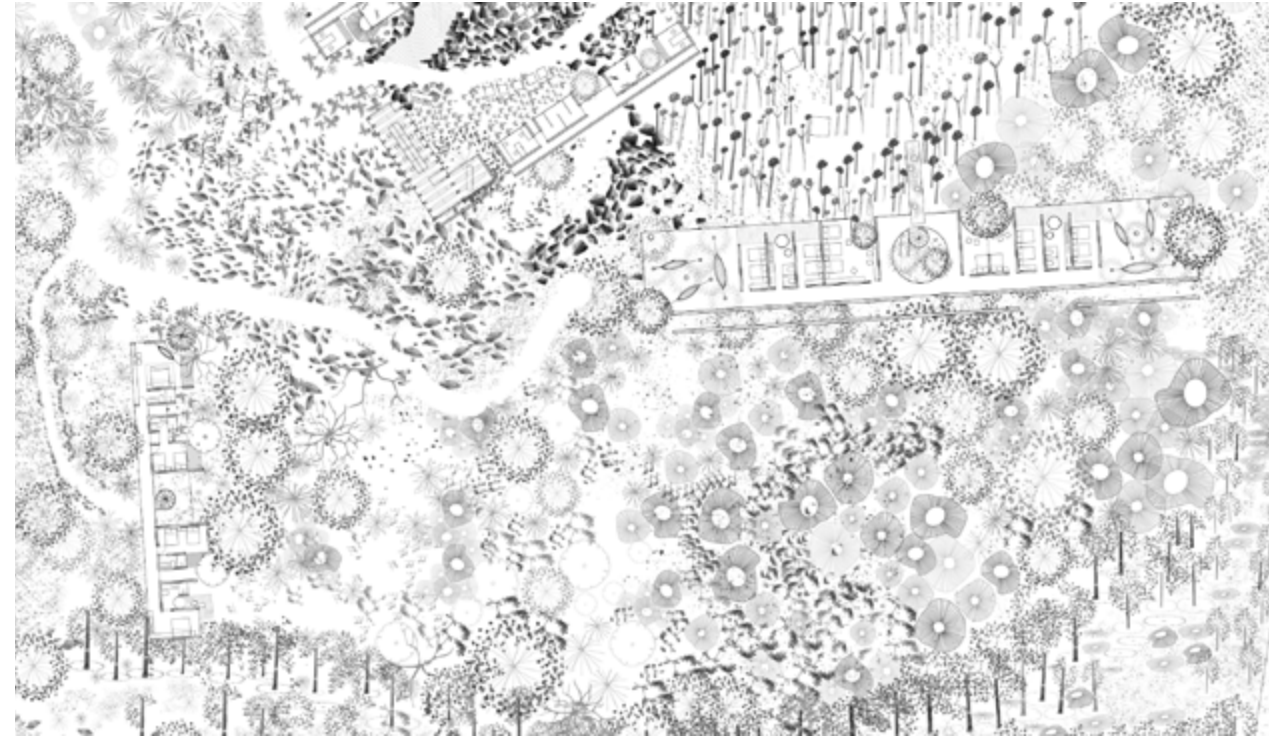
Masterplan Journey

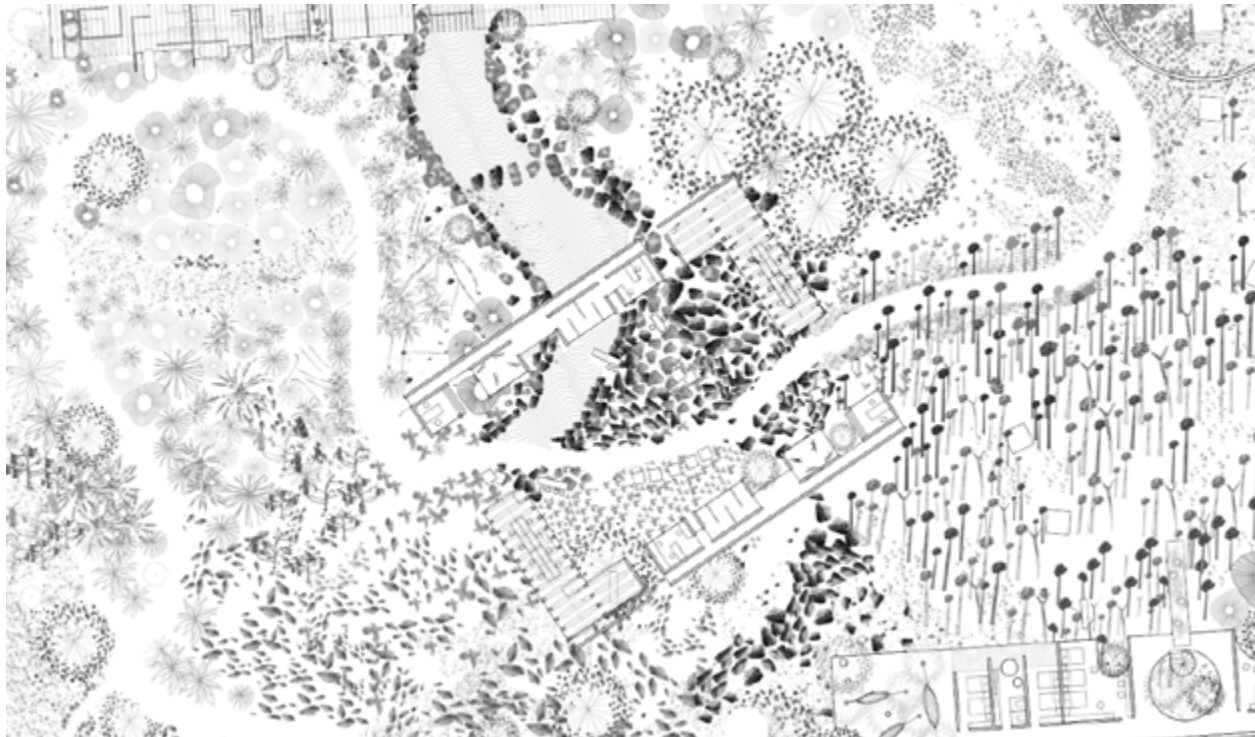
The masterplan organizes the project as a network of interconnected ecological communities distributed across the landscape of Ishigaki. Rather than concentrating activity into a single intervention, the proposal follows the island's existing ecological systems - water flows, forest density, agricultural ground, mountain topography, and coastal conditions - allowing each community to emerge from its specific environment. Paths and circulation routes connect these ecosystems, creating a continuous journey where visitors move gradually between different ecological experiences and scales of landscape.

Each community operates autonomously while remaining part of a larger regenerative system. Agricultural zones support food production, water communities collect and filter rainwater, forest areas preserve biodiversity and material research, mountain paths frame views and cultural narratives, and marine interventions focus on coral restoration and ocean awareness. Together, the masterplan creates a balance between habitation, education, and ecological preservation, transforming the island into a living framework where architecture acts as an extension of the land rather than an object imposed onto it.









MATTERING



MATTERING

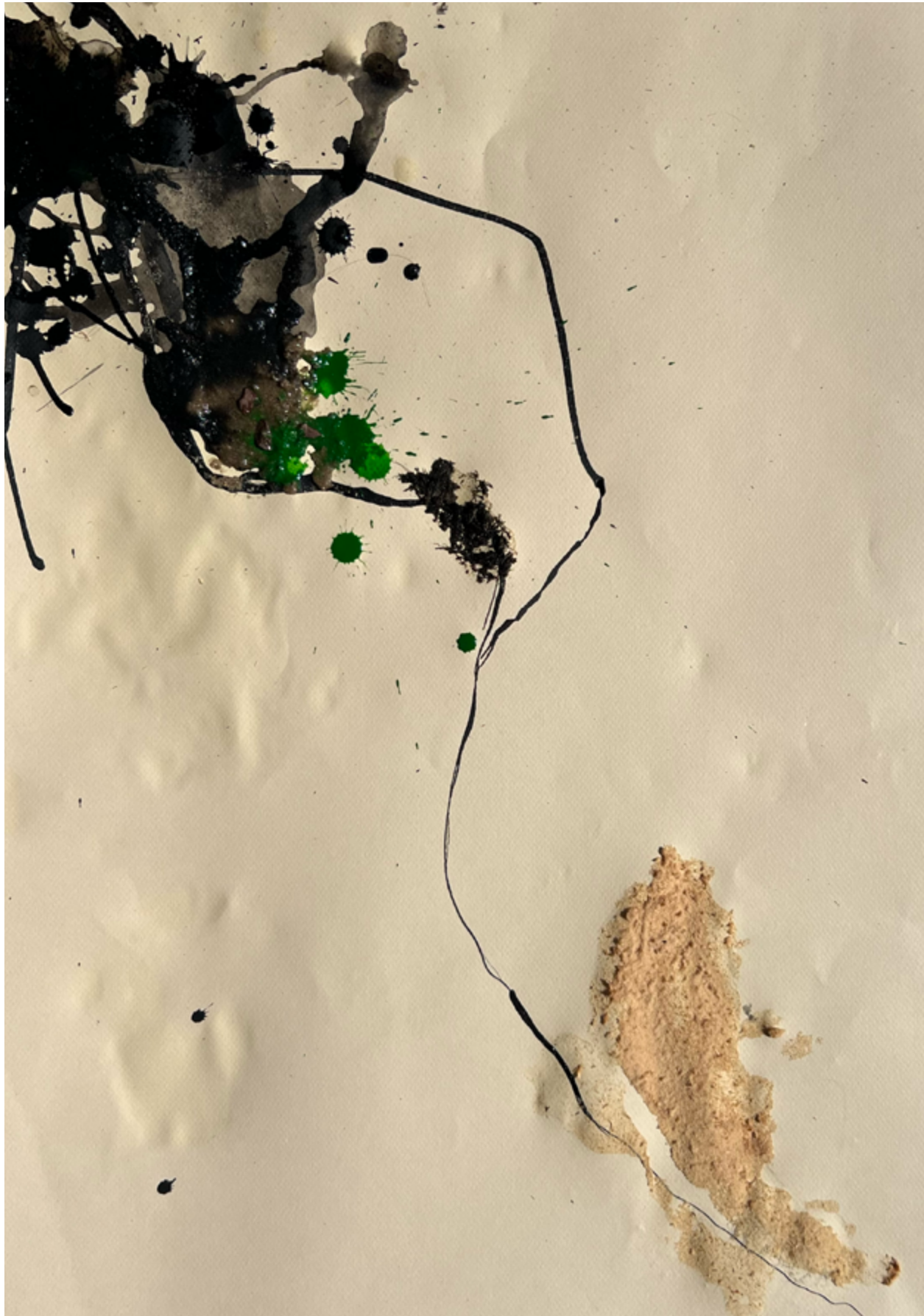
2025 , Columbia GSAP
Mexico City, Mexico
Tuthor: Mario Gooden
Author: Natalia Riba

This studio, led by Mario Gooden, explored architecture through the study of matter, beginning with the elemental conditions of earth, air, and water. Through material experimentation with wood, clay, and copper, we investigated how materials behave, transform, and respond to environmental conditions over time. These explorations became a way of understanding architecture not only as form, but as a living relationship between material, territory, and history.]

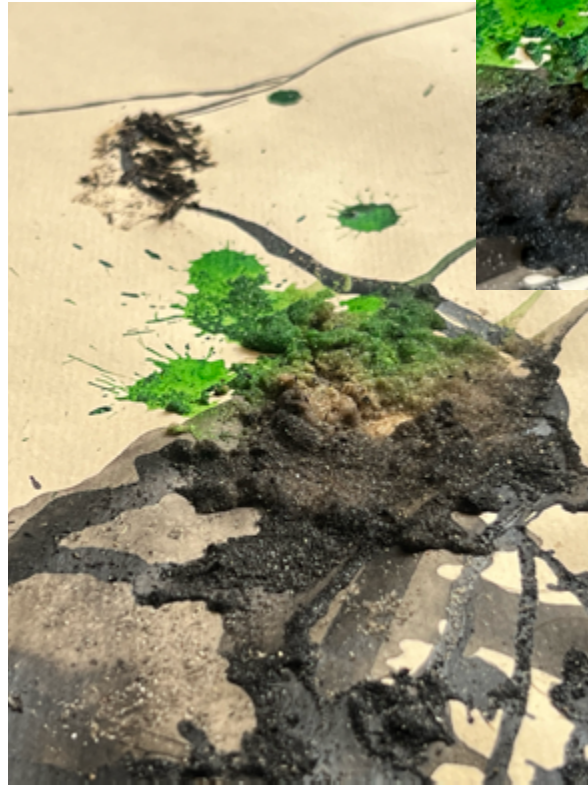
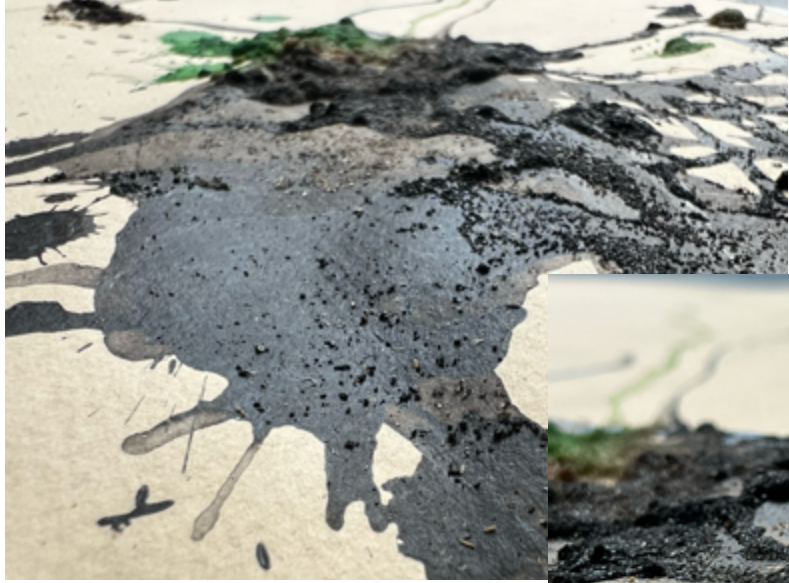
My project focused on the Palacio de Minería in Mexico City, a colonial institution built on the former lakebed of Tenochtitlan. Research into the site revealed how mining and colonial extraction transformed Indigenous relationships with land into systems of resource exploitation and control. The project developed as an architectural intervention that reconnects the building to the buried ecological and cosmological histories of the site through excavation, water, earth construction, and light.

The proposal unfolded through a sequence of spatial interventions that expose the hidden layers beneath the city and reintroduce the presence of the former lake and mountain landscape. Excavated ground, rammed-earth walls, reflective water vessels, and openings to the sky became architectural devices for revealing erased histories and restoring sensory connections to the territory. By bringing humidity, light, soil, and cosmological alignments back into the building, the project challenged the Palace's original role as an instrument of colonial extraction and transformed it into a space for collective memory and reflection.

Working through the material logic of earth, the proposal transforms the Palace of Mining from a monument of extraction into a space of memory, repair, and reconnection between land, water, sky, and Indigenous cosmology.

**From Wet to Coarse**

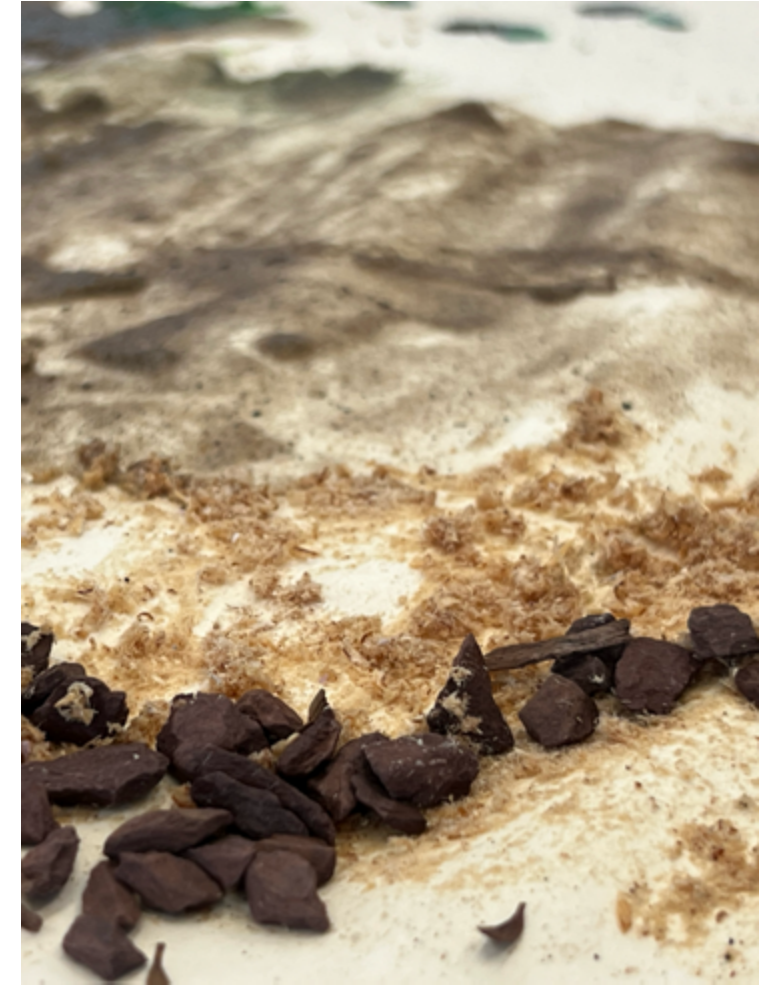
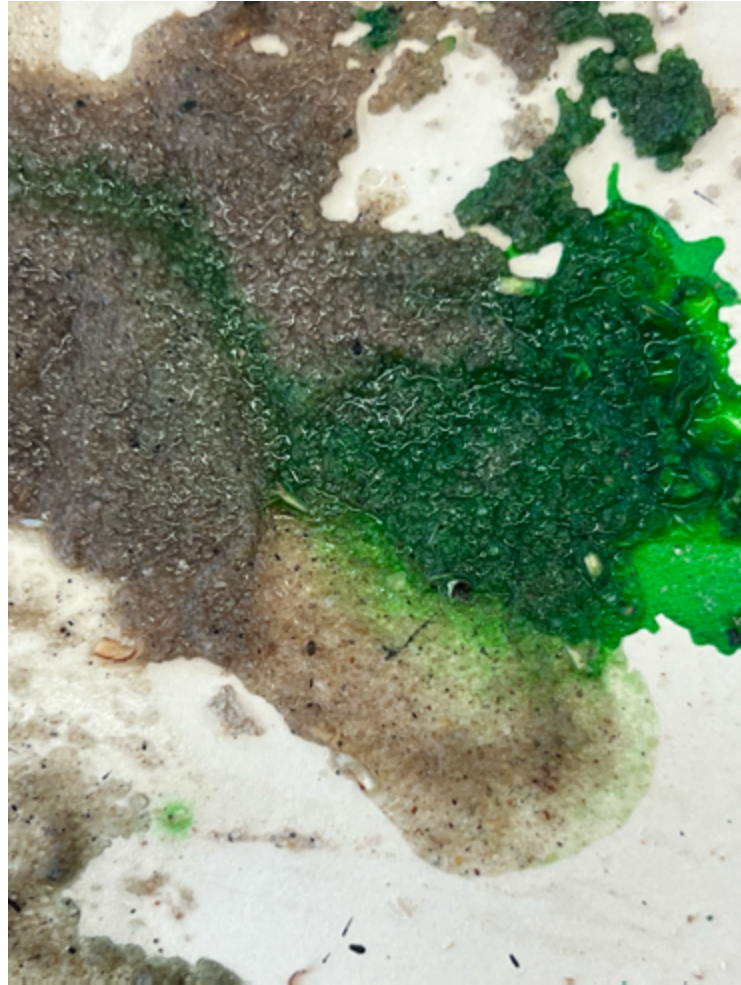
Exploration of the earth through sensation and transition. From the wet of the sea, where your feet do not yet touch the ground, to the first contact with marine life and rocks unknown, through wet sand, drying grains, and finally reaching the dry, coarse terrain.





Blur Inbetween

A top view of the earth's shifting textures. Focused on the blurred edge where one zone meets another, capturing the subtle transition and the space in between.





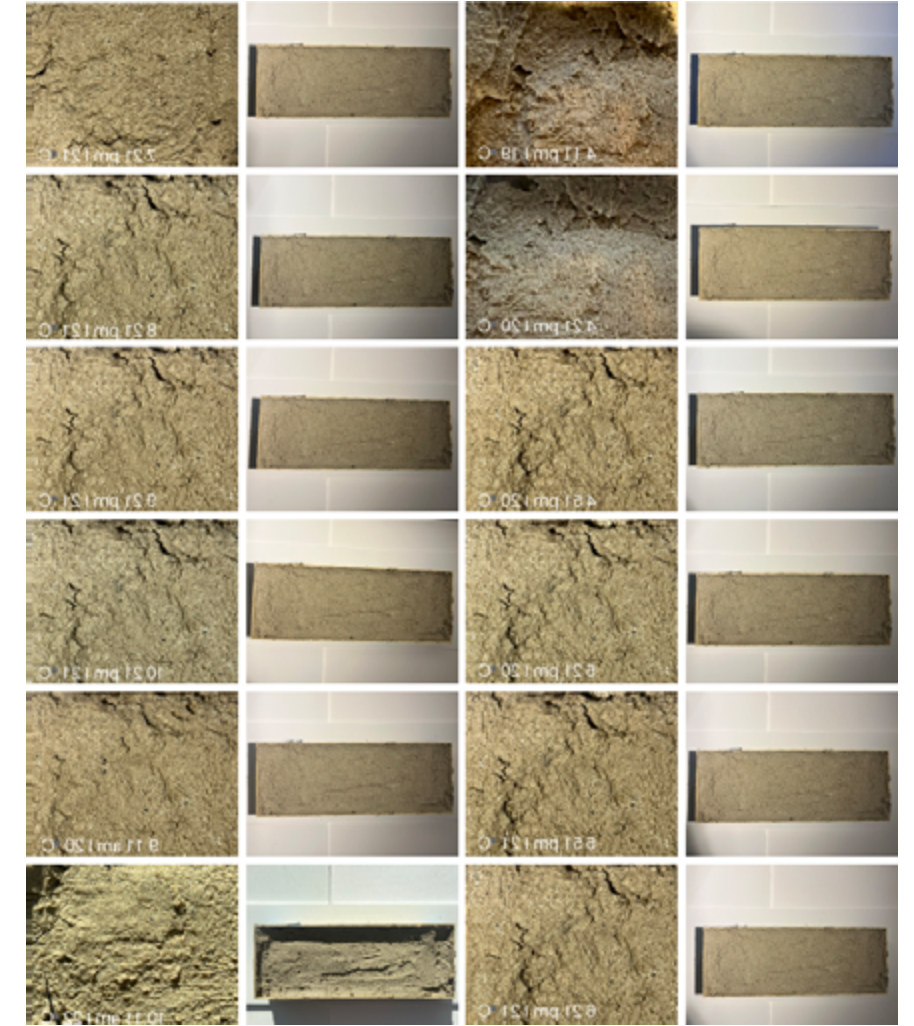
Blur Inbetween

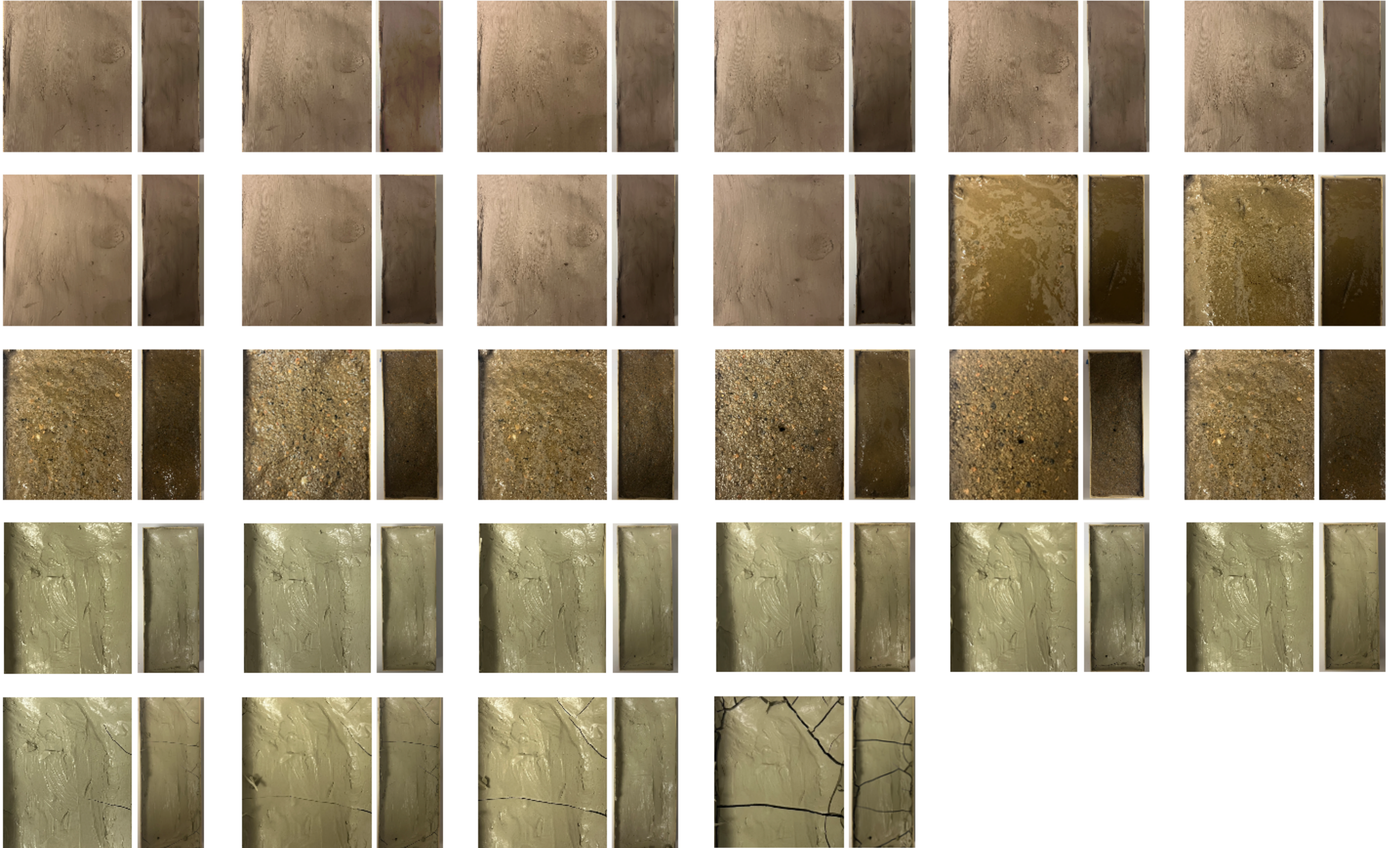
A top view of the earth's shifting textures. Focused on the blurred edge where one zone meets another, capturing the subtle transition and the space in between.



Clay Mixtures

As part of the material research, I developed and compared three different clay mixtures to understand how variations in composition affected texture, plasticity, cracking, and structural behavior. The first mixture used prepared commercial clay combined with small amounts of sand and water, producing a stable and highly workable material. The second mixture used locally collected earth that was filtered and mixed with water and sand, resulting in a more irregular texture that revealed the natural inconsistencies and cracking tendencies of raw soil. The third mixture combined calcium bentonite clay powder with sand and water, creating a finer and more plastic material with reduced cracking due to the higher sand content. Through these comparative experiments, I analyzed how each mixture responded differently to moisture, shrinkage, and handling, allowing material behavior itself to inform the architectural development of the project.



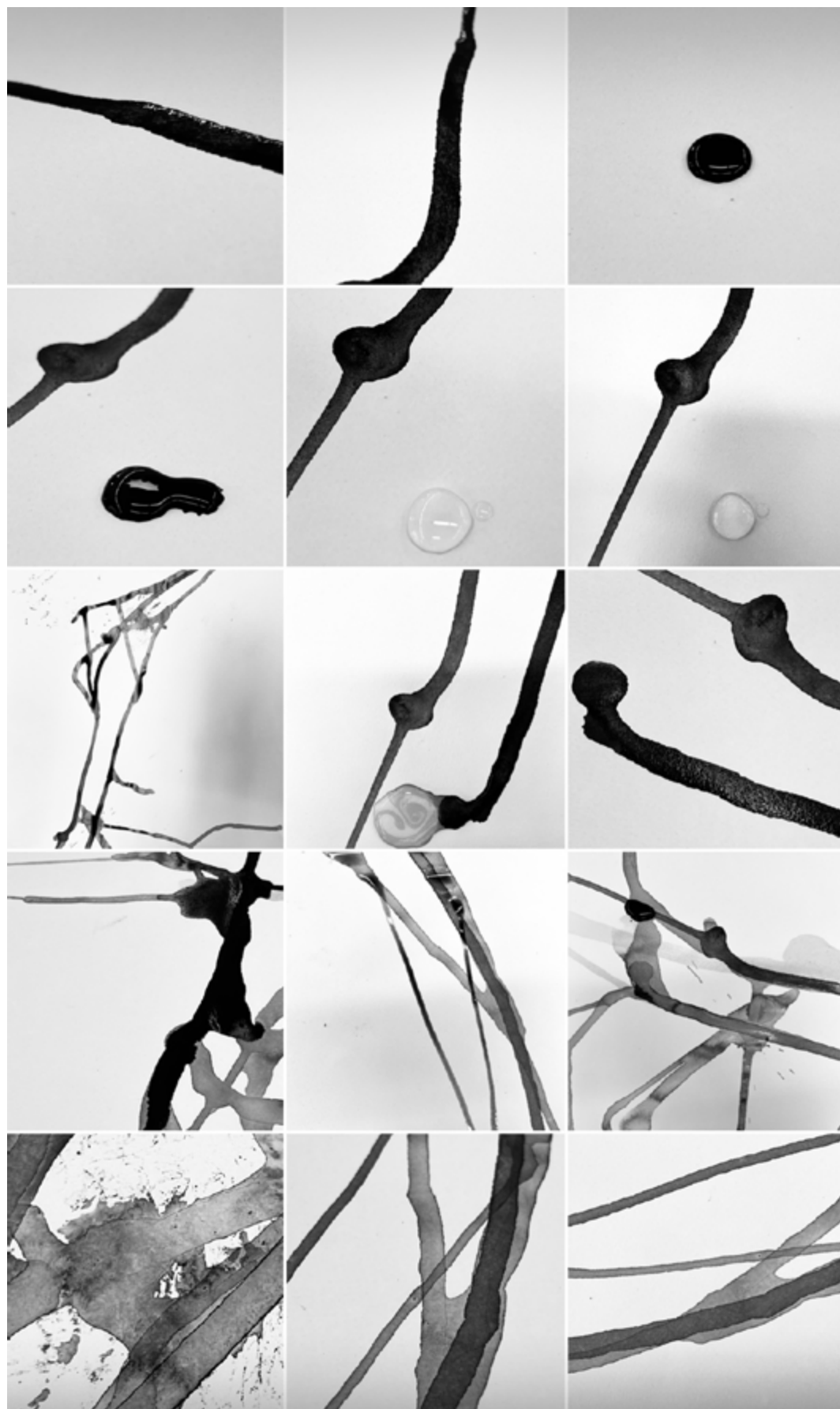






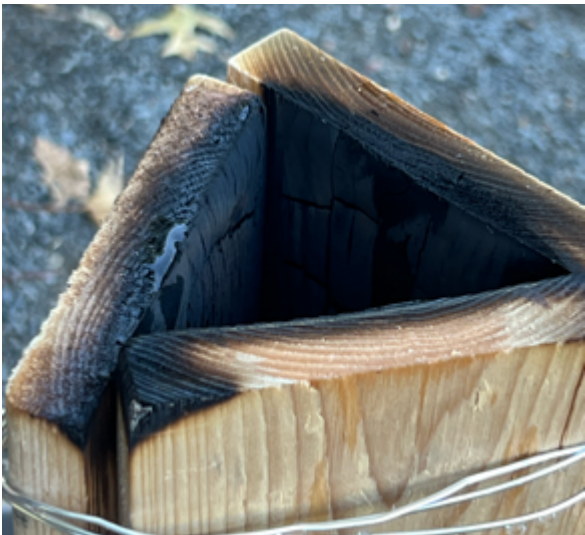
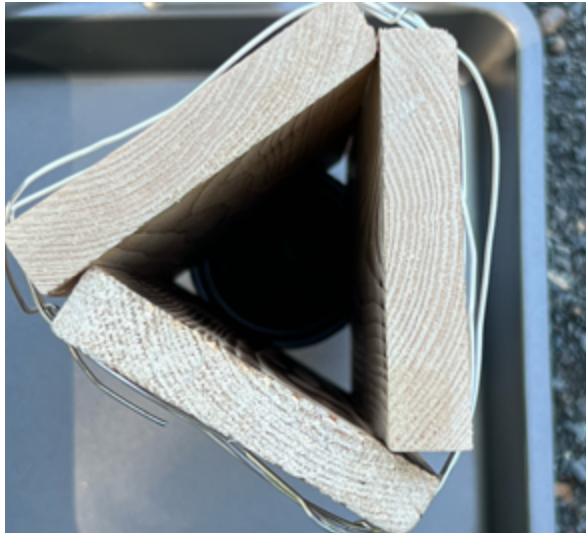
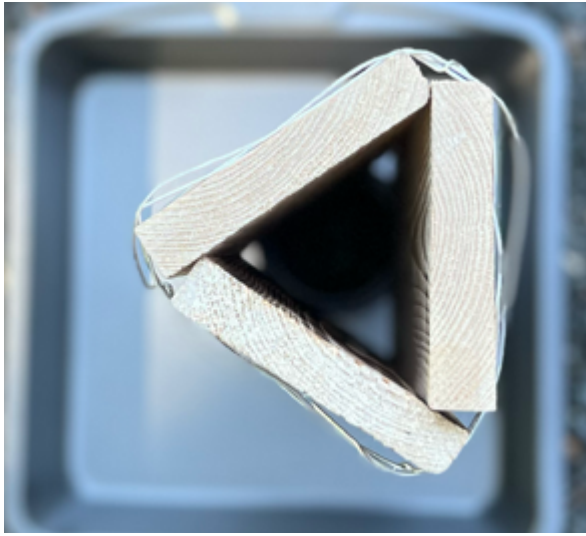
Clay Imprints on the Mold

A record of expansion and contraction in the mold, what we might call the memory of the earth. Each imprint is different, shaped by moisture and mixture, revealing diversity - never the same twice.



Movement Through Matter: Ink on Paper, Fire on Wood

The drop of ink traveled across the paper with help of air, Just as fire moved upward through the three planks of wood, transforming them into charcoal. Both trace the passage of elements through matter, leaving behind visible marks of change.

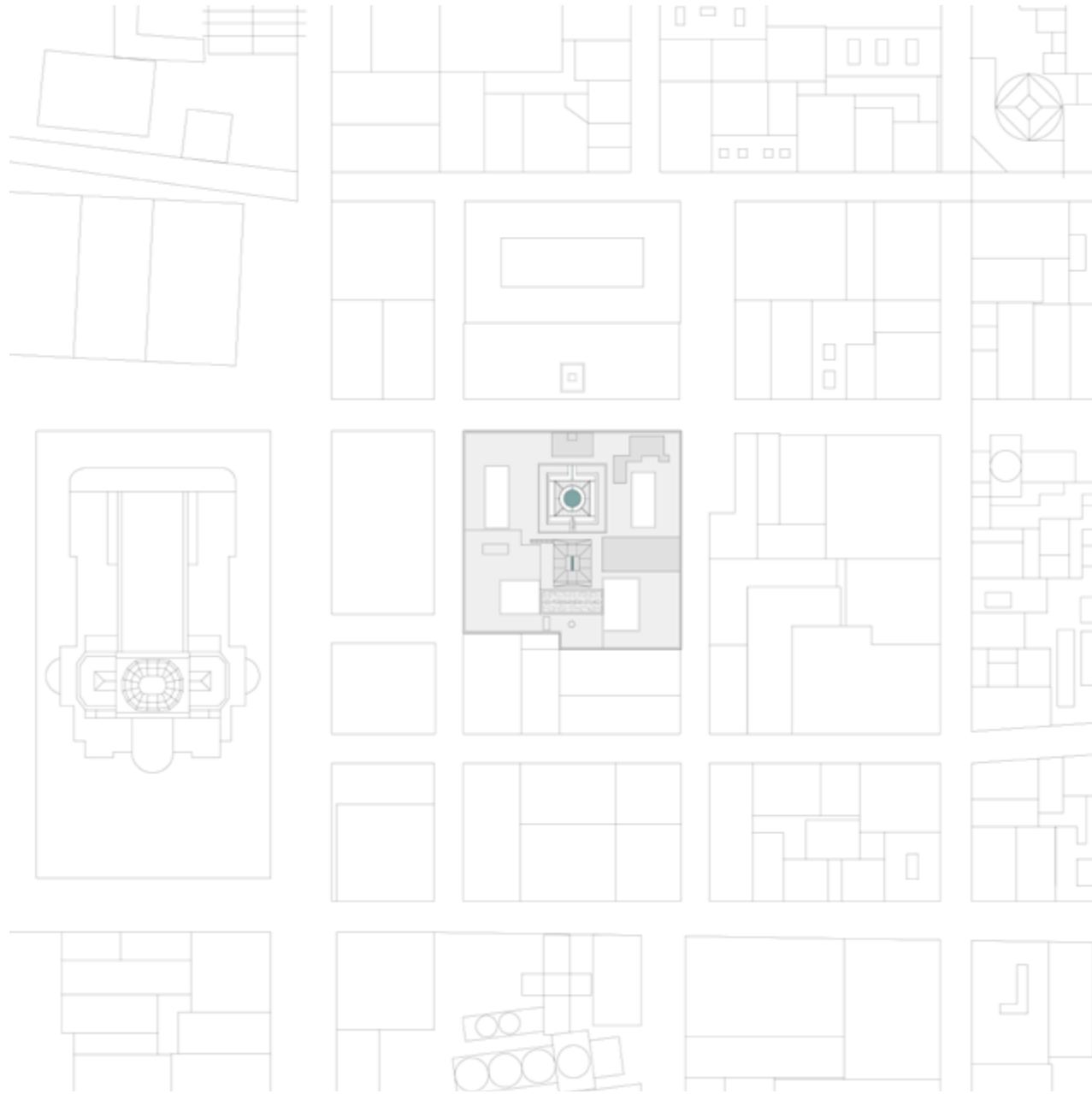






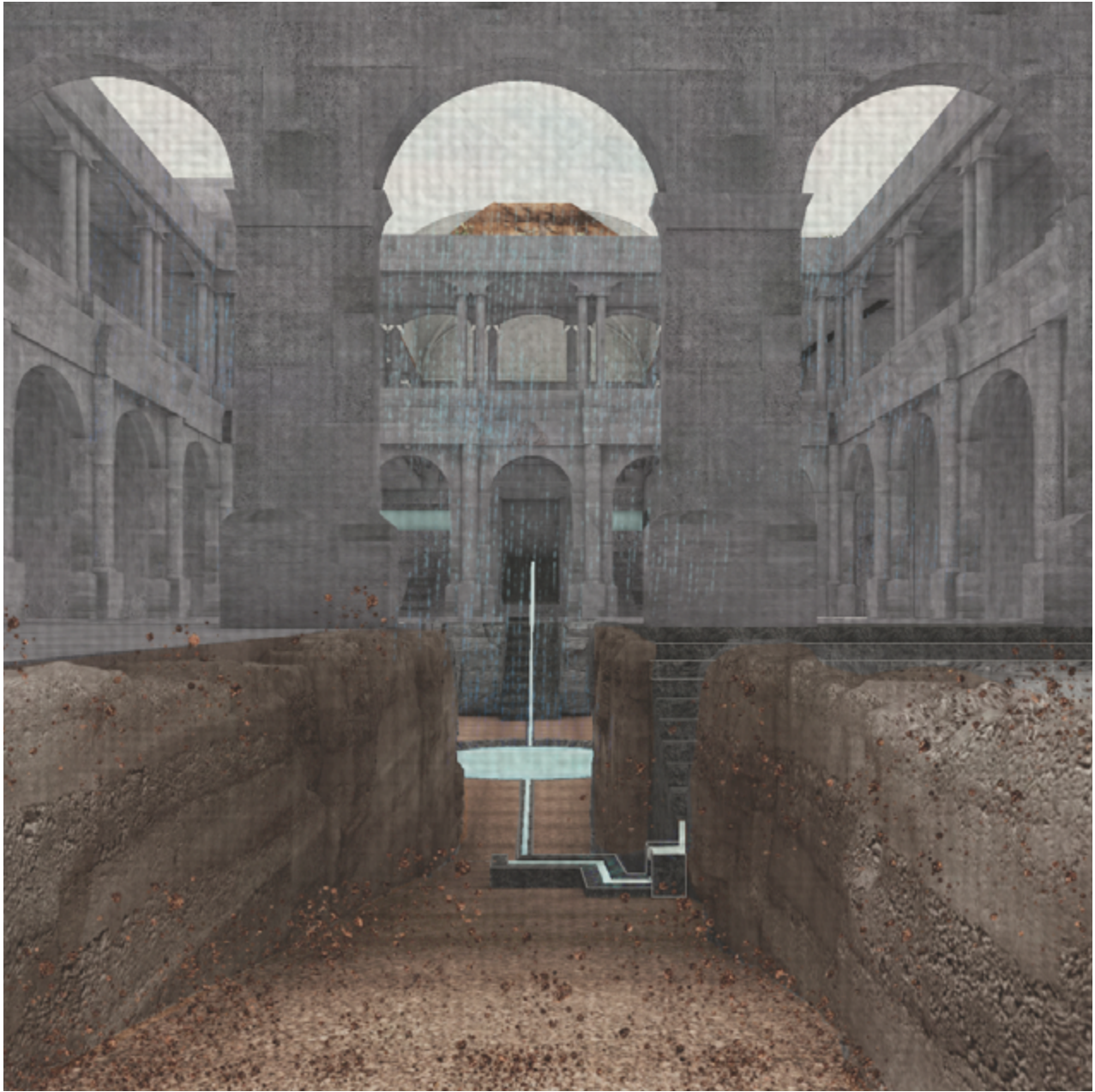
The Direction of Flame

When wood is burned inside a triangular frame that directs the airflow upward, each chars in a different way. The fire produces varying levels of carbonization, surface flaking, and directional textures, depending on the wood's grain orientation, and the way the heat and airflow shape the combustion and cracking process..

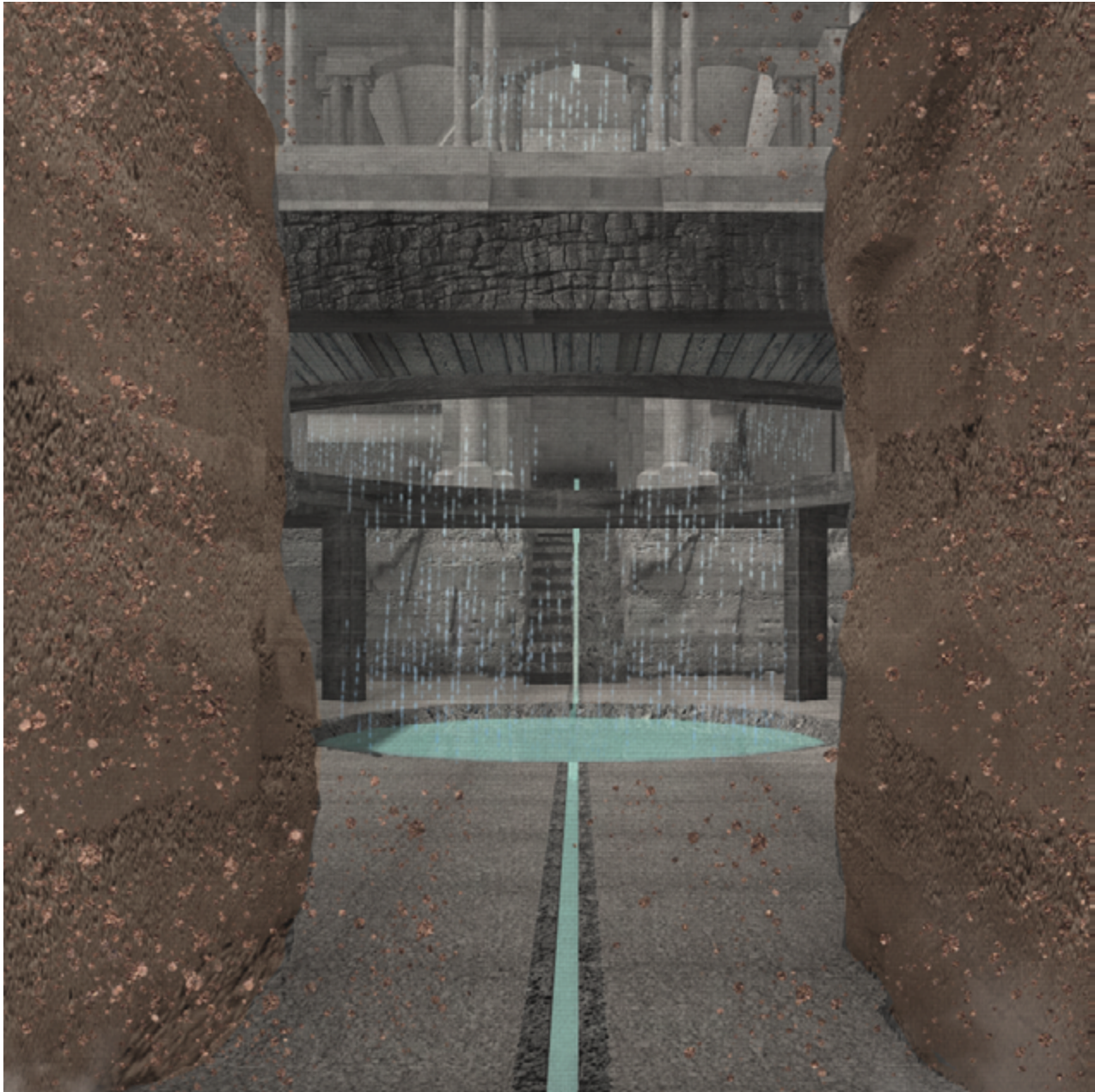


A Mountain Remembered - Site Plan

The intervention at the Palacio de Minería proposes a spatial and material reconnection to the Indigenous cosmologies erased through colonial extraction. Beginning with the site plan and continuing through sections and architectural interventions, the project seeks to “bring back the mountain” by revealing the buried relationship between land, water, sky, and memory that once shaped the territory of Tenochtitlan.



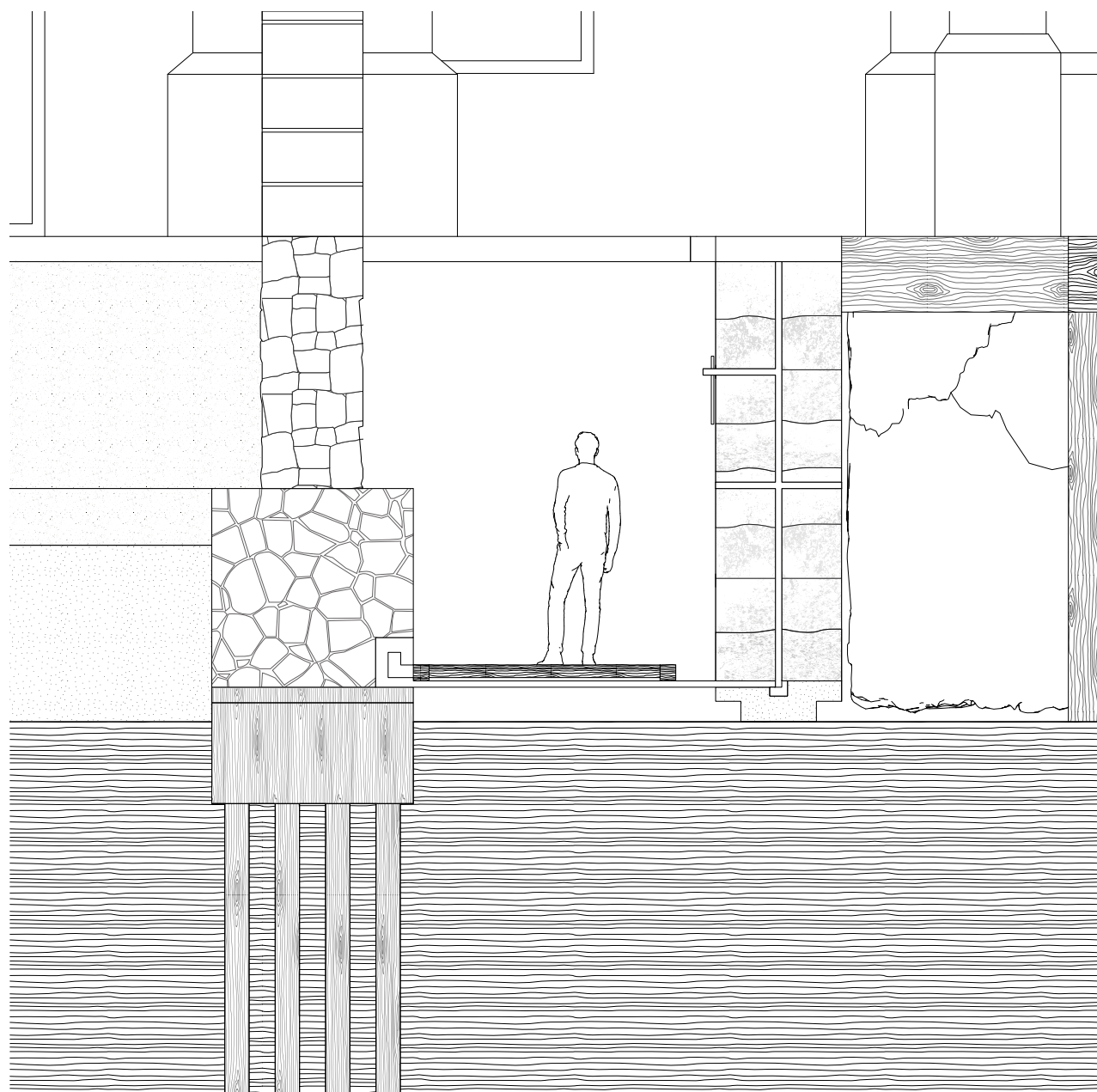
Revealing the Original Ground



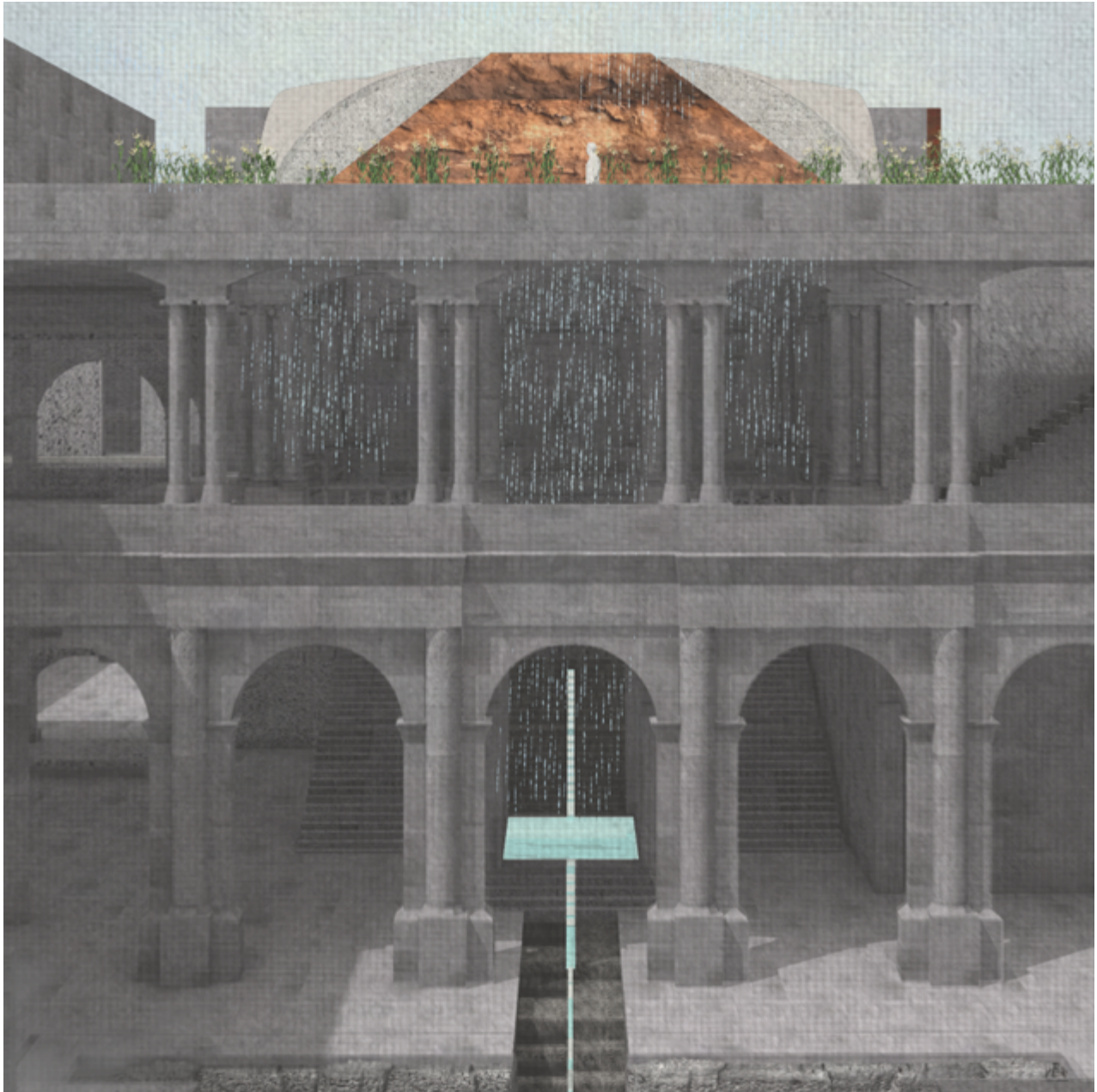
Vessel of Water and Memory



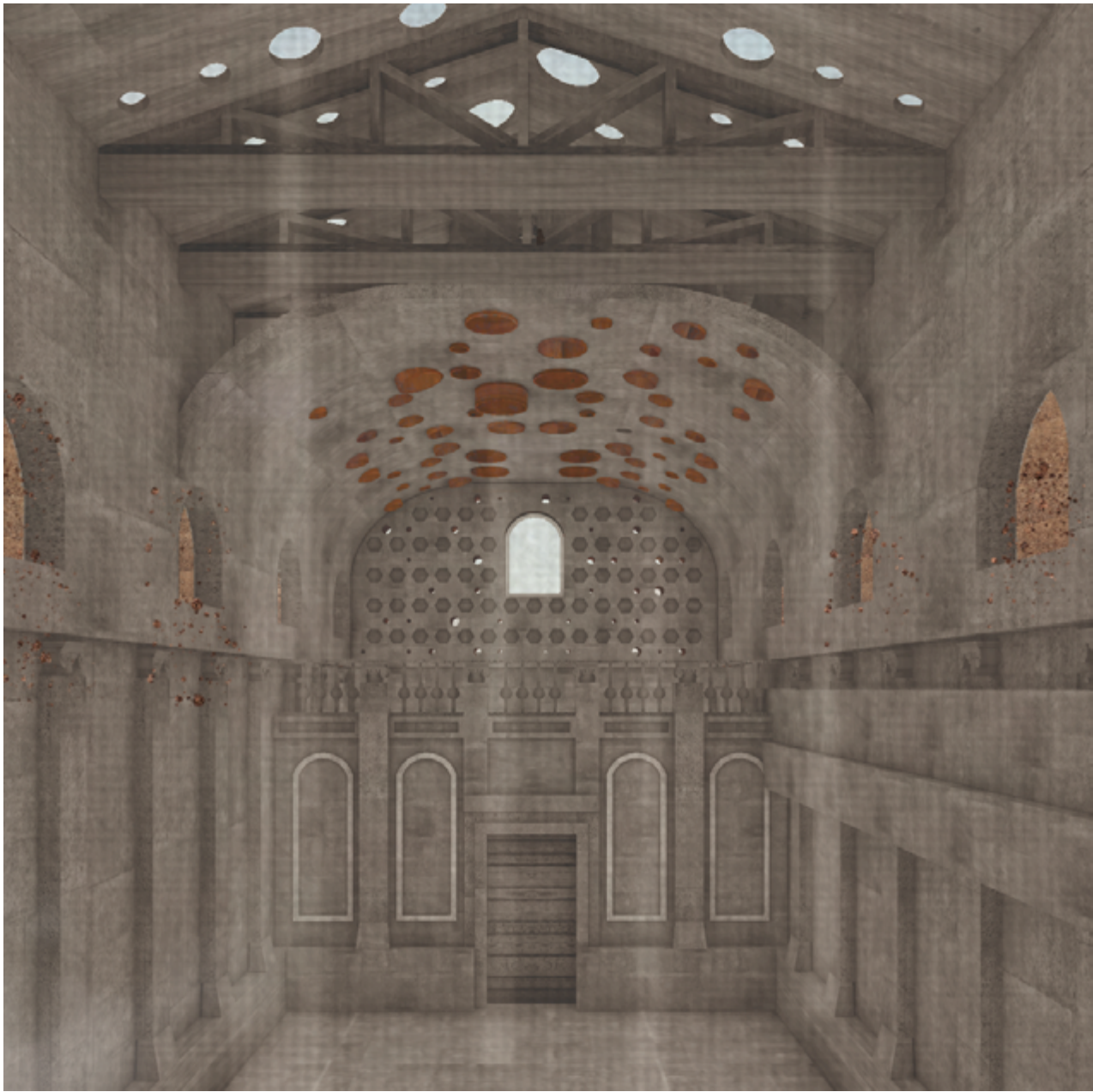
After the Rain



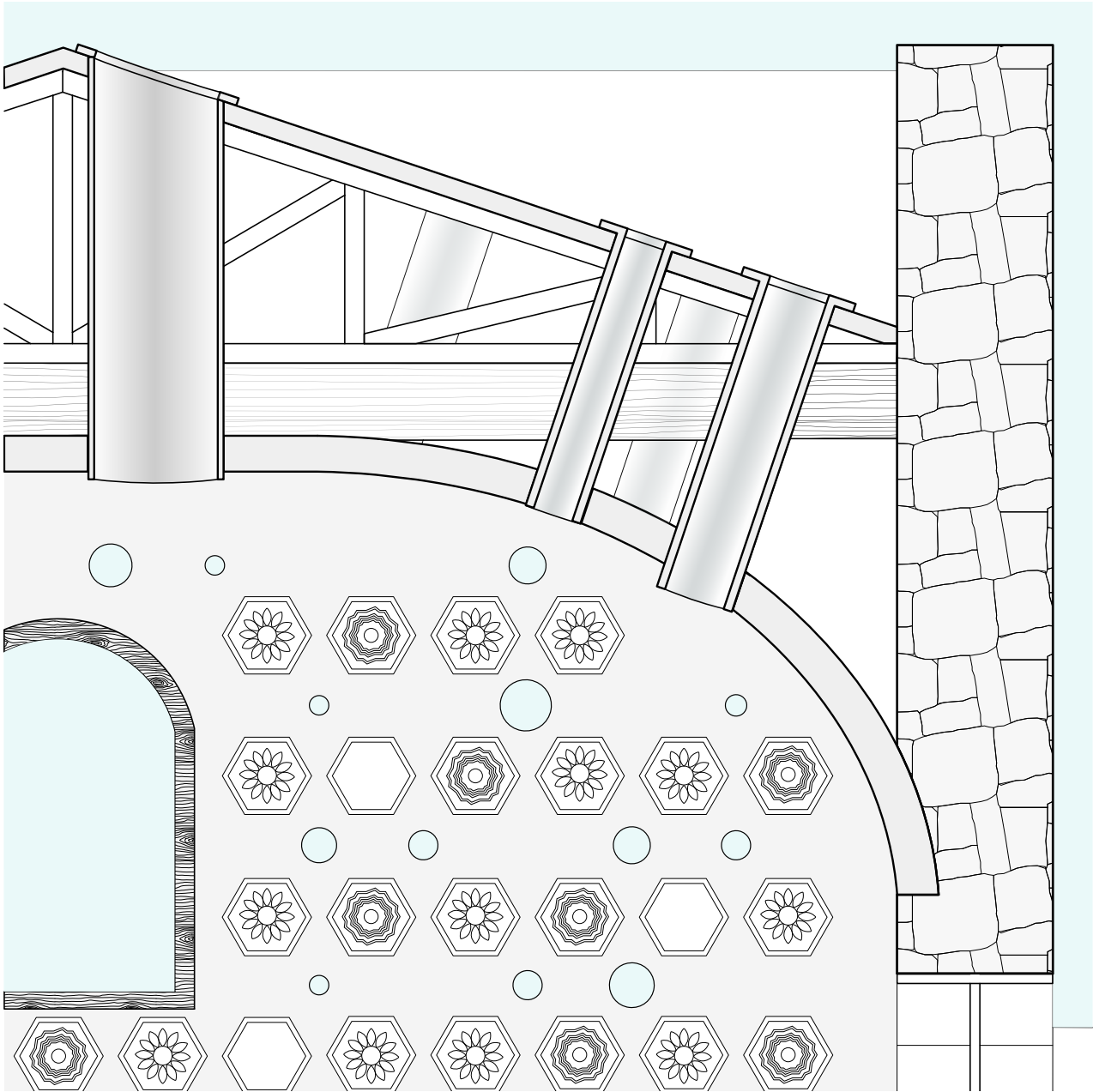
Walking Between Histories



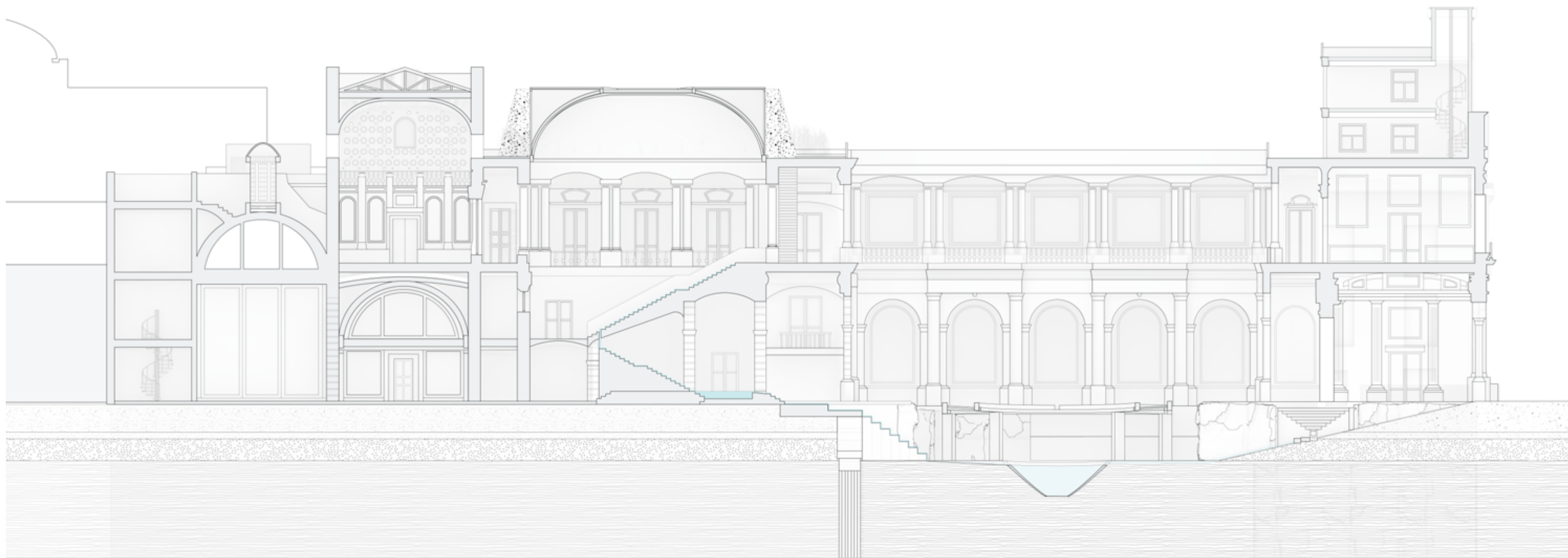
Where the Earth Returns



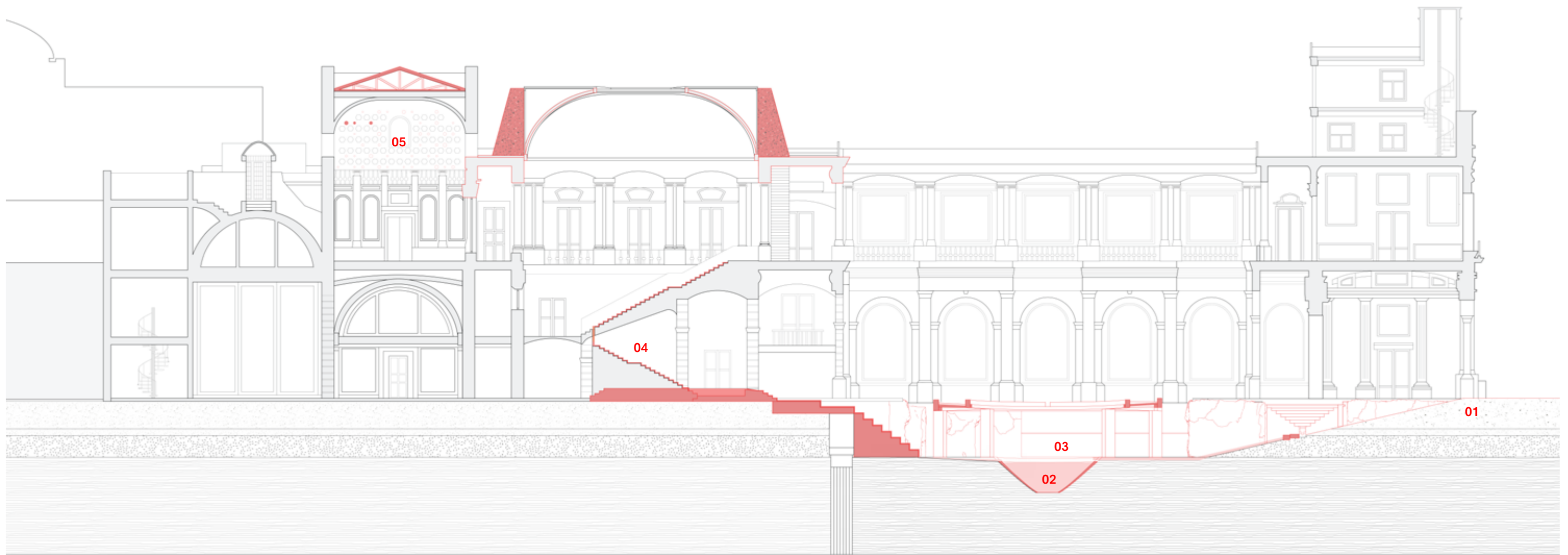
Restoring Cosmological Connection



Cosmological Aperture Detail



Intervention Within the Palace of Mining



Intervention Within the Palace of Mining

01 Earth as Commodity - Excavation and Water Canal

02 Disconnection Between Humans and Nature - Water Vessel

03 Material Extraction as the Foundation of Colonization - Raise Walkway

04 Historical Distortion Through Colonial Narratives - Staircase

05 Erasure and Replacement of Indigenous Knowledge - Chapel