

This portfolio explores architecture as a medium for shaping perception, producing knowledge, and making hidden relations visible. Across design projects, writings, and material experiments, the work investigates how space can reveal conditions that are often overlooked. Constructed ideas of nature, layered histories, and social, ecological, or material entanglements.

The first section examines how architecture reframes the boundary between nature and artifice. The second explores how spatial layers, artifacts, circulation, and sightlines can reconstruct historical understanding and intensify place. The third considers architecture as an operative device that reveals and reorganizes hidden relations across ecological, social, and material systems.

Together, these works position architecture not as a fixed object, but as a way of seeing, interpreting, and reconfiguring the world.

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Constructed Natures and the Politics of Perception

This section examines how architecture constructs what appears natural, public, or necessary. Through a research project at Orchard Beach and a theoretical essay on sensory legitimation, the work investigates how beaches, parks, infrastructures, structures, and technologies become politically convincing through material, ecological, and perceptual conditions.

The Orchard Beach project reveals the site an artificial landscape shaped by landfill, coastal engineering, buried estuary ecologies, and displaced material histories. The essay extends this question theoretically, arguing that architecture often gains authority not at the scale of its stated demand, but through the sensory scale of vision, sound, surface, repetition, and mediated perception. Together, the section frames architecture as a medium that makes constructed environments feel natural, legitimate, and inhabitable



Top: The Collage, stories of the Actors of the Bronx and the archipelago

Bottom: Material Experiments for collage

Fire as Renewal

Redistributing Sovereignty Through Islands Confederation

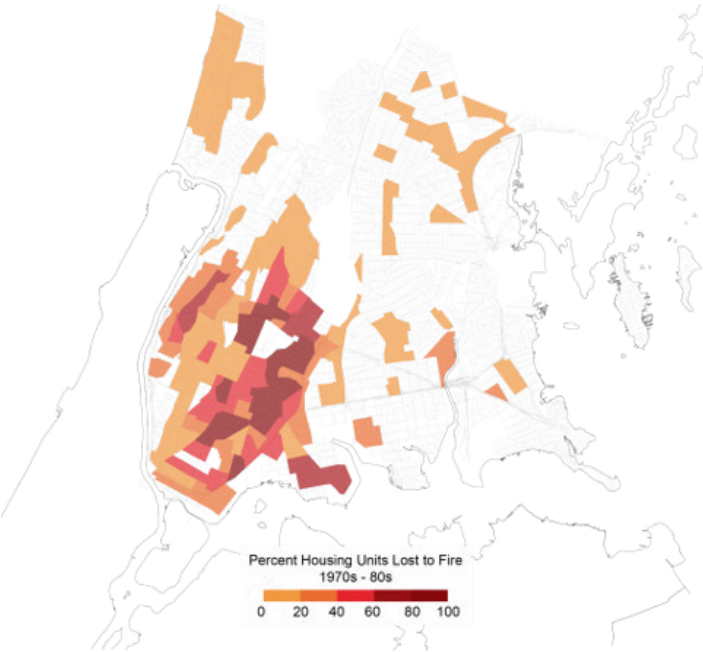
Course	ADV Design Studio
Type	Research, Speculative Design
Site	Bronx, New York, NY
Instructor	Nerea Calvillo
Work	Team of 3 (Panchencehn Feng and Churui Wang)
Role	Research, Narrative Development and Drawing
Date	May - Jul. 25

Slash and Burn Terraforming for Sovereignty

This project reimagines Orchard Beach and its surrounding islands as a living archive of displacement, resistance, and renewal. Once a landfill engineered under Robert Moses and later a refuge for Puerto Rican communities amid white flight and the burning Bronx, the site becomes a ground for reclamation through controlled slash-and-burn farming. By transforming fire, from a force of destruction into one of regeneration. The proposal restores soil fertility, addresses food insecurity in the South Bronx, and reconnects fragmented islands through water, memory, and community networks. Over time, the project envisions Orchard Beach evolving from a site of neglect into a resilient landscape where farming, ritual, and ecology merge to reclaim both land and sovereignty.

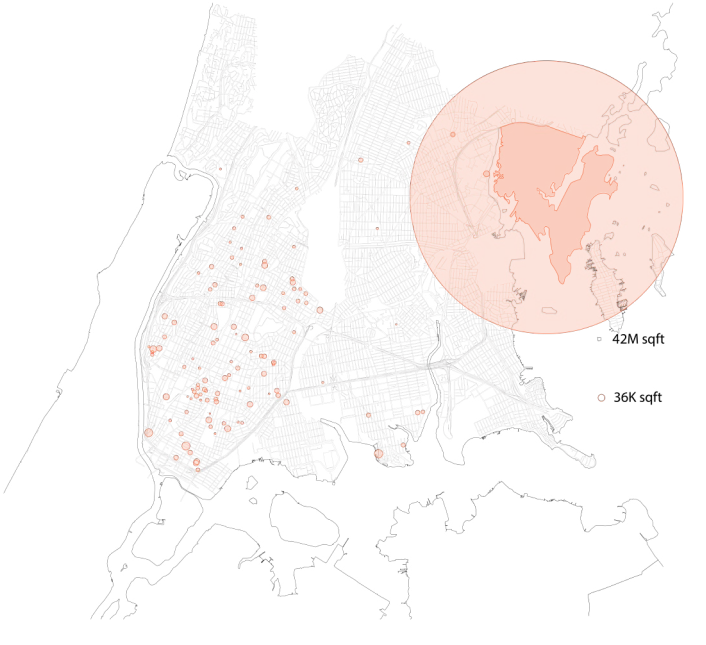
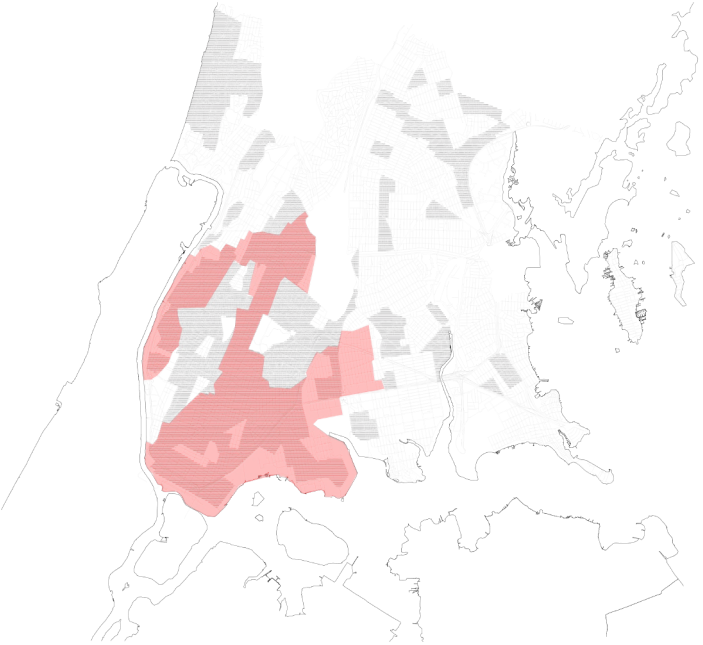


Stories of the Bronx and Puerto Ricans



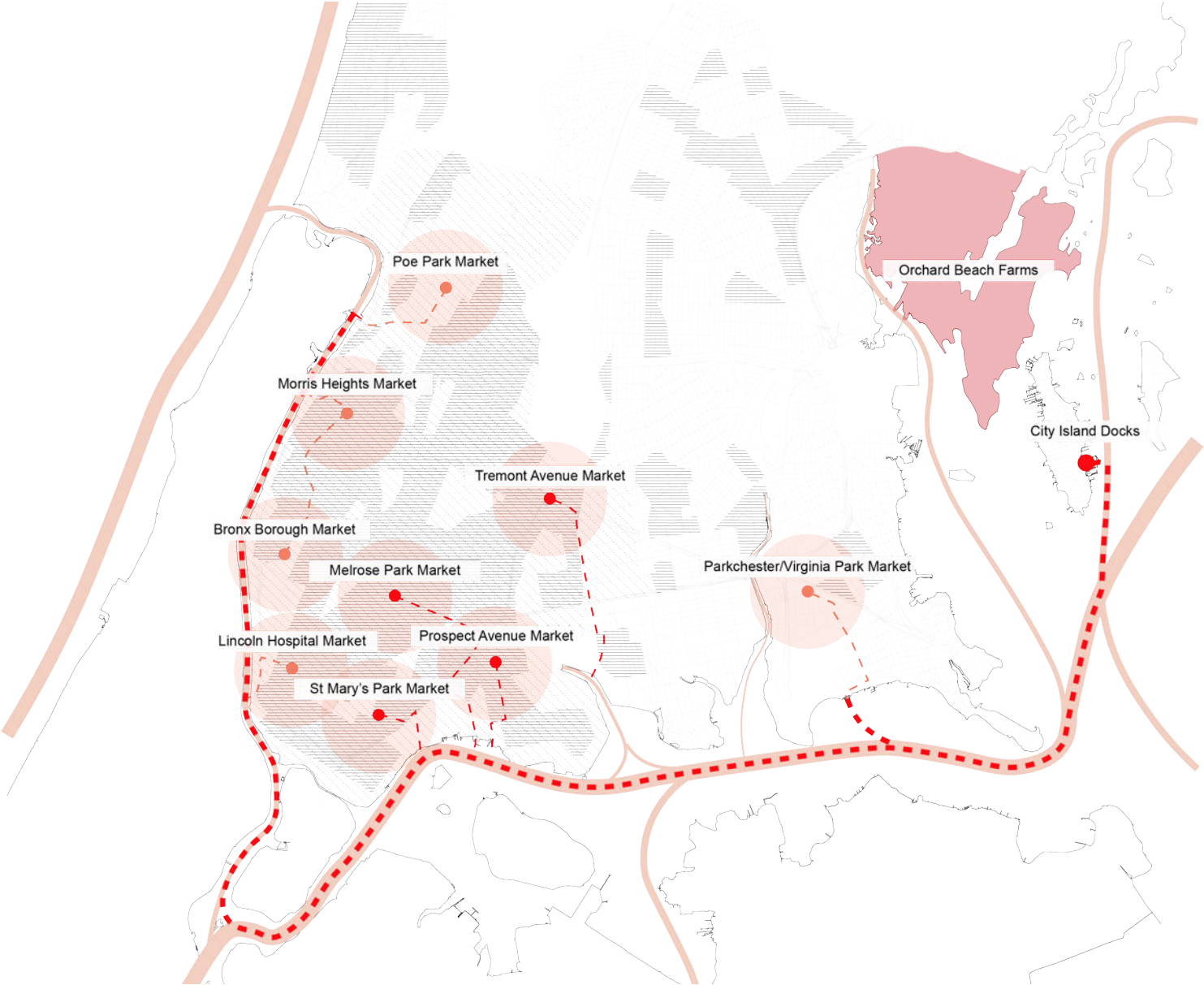
White Flight and Fire in Bronx

In the 1970s, the Bronx suffered rapid decline following white flight, as middle-class residents and capital drained away to the suburbs. Landlords, facing falling property values, began setting their own buildings on fire to claim insurance money, leaving blocks of the borough in ruins. The phrase “The Bronx is burning” came to symbolize this urban collapse born of racial segregation and economic abandonment.



Food Insecurity and Community Farms in Bronx

The same neighborhoods that once faced white flight and urban fires still struggle with food insecurity. In response, local activists have started community farms on vacant lots, providing fresh food and rebuilding a sense of care and collective resilience.

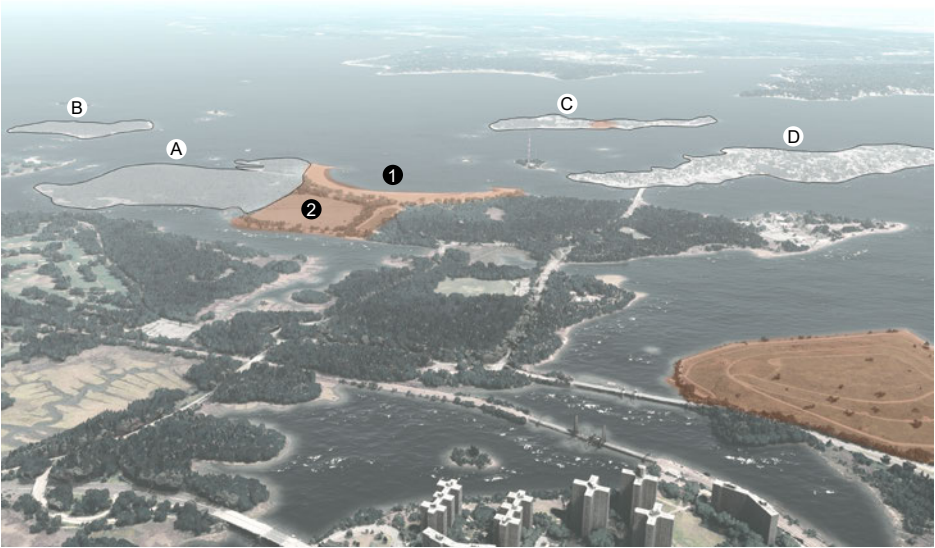


Can we Bring back Fire to empower local community farms with Fire?

Can we introduce Slash and Burn Farming to Reclaim regional sovereignty?



Stories of the Landfill and Archipelago

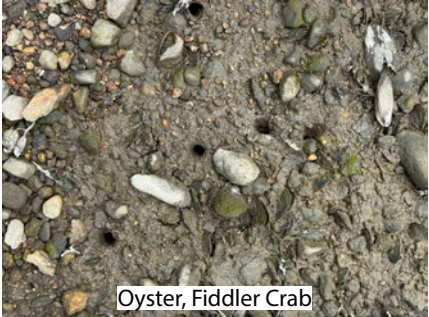


Islands of Movements, the “Unwanted”, and the Greenwashing

Along the Bronx shoreline a chain of islands reveals how beauty and exclusion intertwine. Orchard Beach was built over landfill and became a greenwashed paradise that hides waste and displacement. Hunter Island’s dense vegetation covers the scars of artificial landmaking while Davids Island holds the memory of the unwanted through its abandoned soldiers, animals, and ruins. Hart Island, a burial ground for the unclaimed, stands as the ultimate site of erasure. Together these islands form an archipelago where the city’s pursuit of purity conceals deep histories of neglect and resilience.



Rockweeds

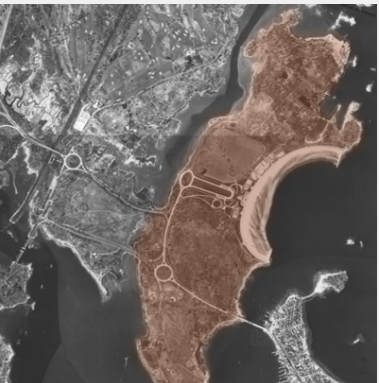
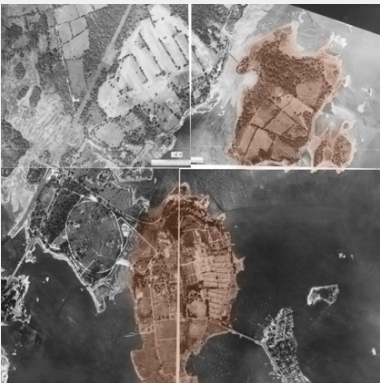


Oyster, Fiddler Crab

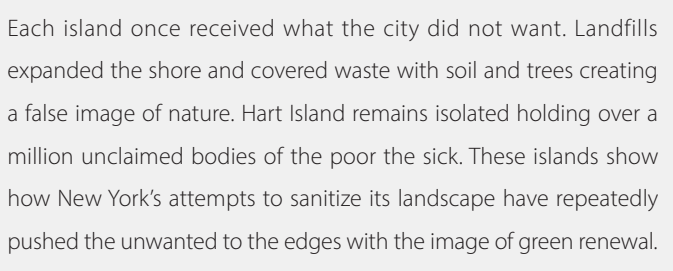
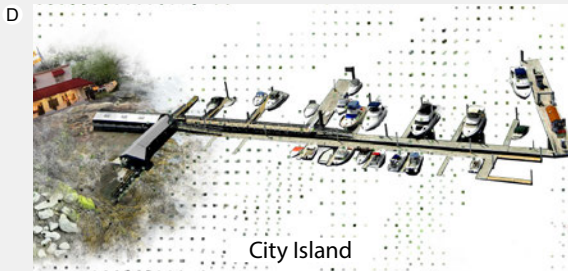
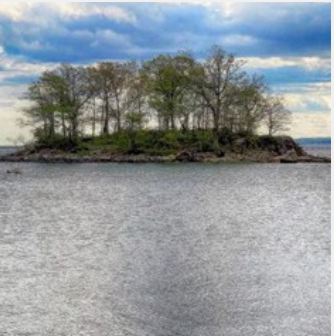


Salt Marsh Grass

Remaining Ecosystems after the Landfill



Orchard Beach was built on landfill that once buried marshlands under imported sand. Over time it became a cultural hub for Puerto Rican communities who turned the beach into a space of music. Yet the nearby parking lot where many families gather now floods.



Each island once received what the city did not want. Landfills expanded the shore and covered waste with soil and trees creating a false image of nature. Hart Island remains isolated holding over a million unclaimed bodies of the poor the sick. These islands show how New York’s attempts to sanitize its landscape have repeatedly pushed the unwanted to the edges with the image of green renewal.

PHASE 1 - YEAR 2027

The Construction of Farm Infrastructure



a Redistributing Sand to Rockaway Peninsula



b Reservoir as Water Resource



c Logging Trees and Canal Construction for Fire Containment



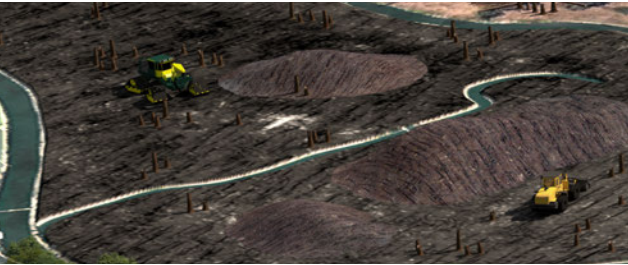
d New Piers for Connecting Davids and Hart Islands to City Island

PHASE 2 - YEAR 2050

The Slash and Burn Process



a Controlled Burnings while Canals Serve as Fire Breaks



b Ashes after Fire as Fertilizers for the Cultivating Ground



c Expansion of Community Farms and Amenities



d Returning Elephants to Davids Island, Docklands at City Island

PHASE 3 - YEAR 2100

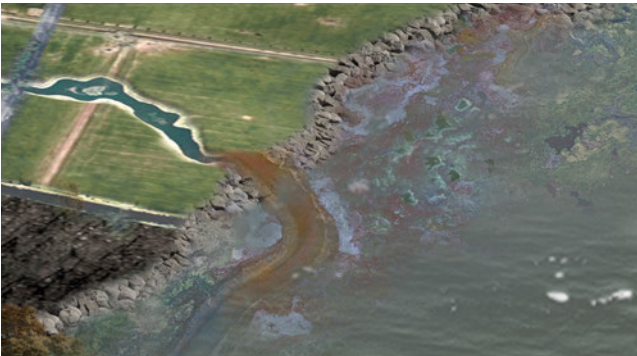
Farming Cycles and Celebration of the Dead



a Different Phases of Farming Continues



b Food Market at Pelham Bay



c Microbial Growth at the Outlets of Farm Canals



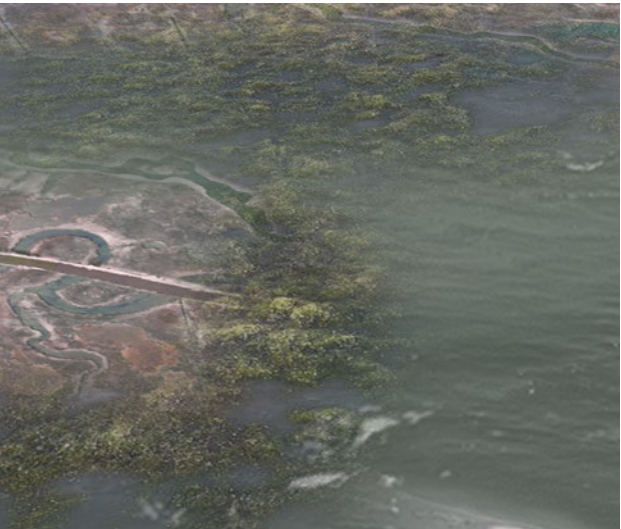
d Fire as Celebratory Ritual Honoring the Memories of the Deceased

PHASE 4 - YEAR 2300

Island Federation and Microbial Induced Swamps



a Boats Connecting Island Federation



b Microbial Induced Fungi

PHASE 1 - YEAR 2027

The Construction of Farm Infrastructure

- a Redistributing Sand to Rockaway Peninsula
- b Reservoir as Water Resource
- c Logging Trees and Canal Construction for Fire Containment
- d New Piers for Connecting Davids and Hart Islands to City Island

The rebuilding of Orchard Beach begins with the construction of new water infrastructure. The parking lot, once known for frequent flooding, becomes a working reservoir that stores and redistributes water across the site. From this center, a network of canals is carved into the landscape to control prescribed fires and to deliver irrigation to future farmlands. Excess water flows back into the ocean, reconnecting the system to its larger ecological cycle. The sand that Robert Moses once imported to fabricate the beach is now returned to the Rockaways, symbolically reversing the act of manipulation that created the landfill. In preparation for the first controlled burns, selected areas of forest are carefully cleared



PHASE 2 - YEAR 2050

The Slash and Burn Process

- a Controlled Burnings while Canals Serve as Fire Breaks
- b Ashes after Fire as Fertilizers for the Cultivating Ground
- c Expansion of Community Farms and Amenities
- d Returning Elephants to Davids Island, Docklands at City Island

The reservoir and canal network will make it possible to begin controlled slash and burn operations. Small plots, each less than two percent of the site, will be burned in rotation to limit smoke and carbon release. The canals act as natural firebreaks, guiding water and containing flames within defined boundaries. The ash produced from these burns enriches the soil, supporting the steady regrowth of vegetation and crops. Along the promenade, new community farms will expand, welcoming residents to take part in collective cultivation and food exchange. At the same time, wildlife once displaced from nearby Davids Island, including elephants that had been relocated to the Bronx Zoo, will return to their original habitat.

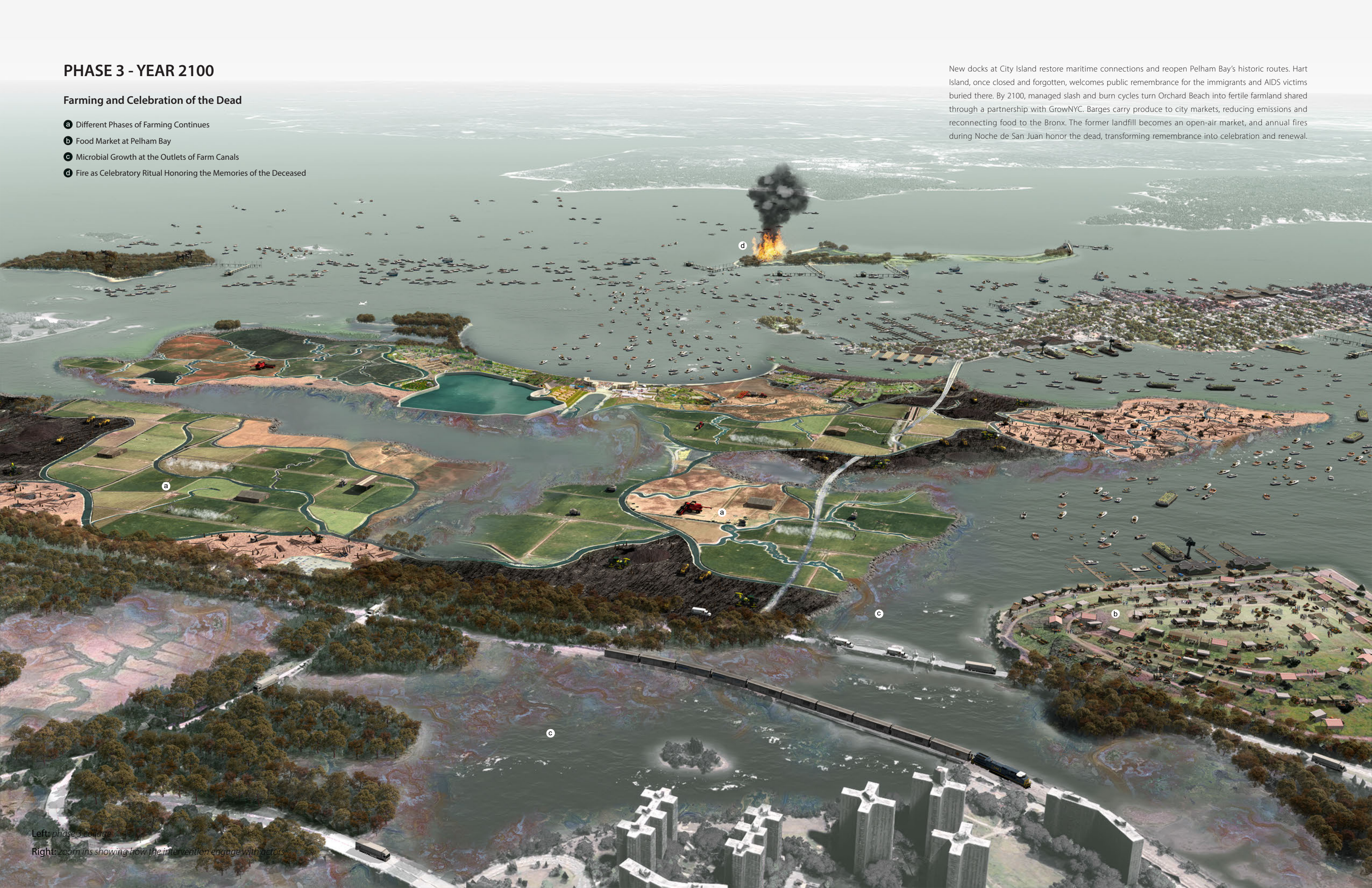


PHASE 3 - YEAR 2100

Farming and Celebration of the Dead

- a Different Phases of Farming Continues
- b Food Market at Pelham Bay
- c Microbial Growth at the Outlets of Farm Canals
- d Fire as Celebratory Ritual Honoring the Memories of the Deceased

New docks at City Island restore maritime connections and reopen Pelham Bay's historic routes. Hart Island, once closed and forgotten, welcomes public remembrance for the immigrants and AIDS victims buried there. By 2100, managed slash and burn cycles turn Orchard Beach into fertile farmland shared through a partnership with GrowNYC. Barges carry produce to city markets, reducing emissions and reconnecting food to the Bronx. The former landfill becomes an open-air market, and annual fires during Noche de San Juan honor the dead, transforming remembrance into celebration and renewal.



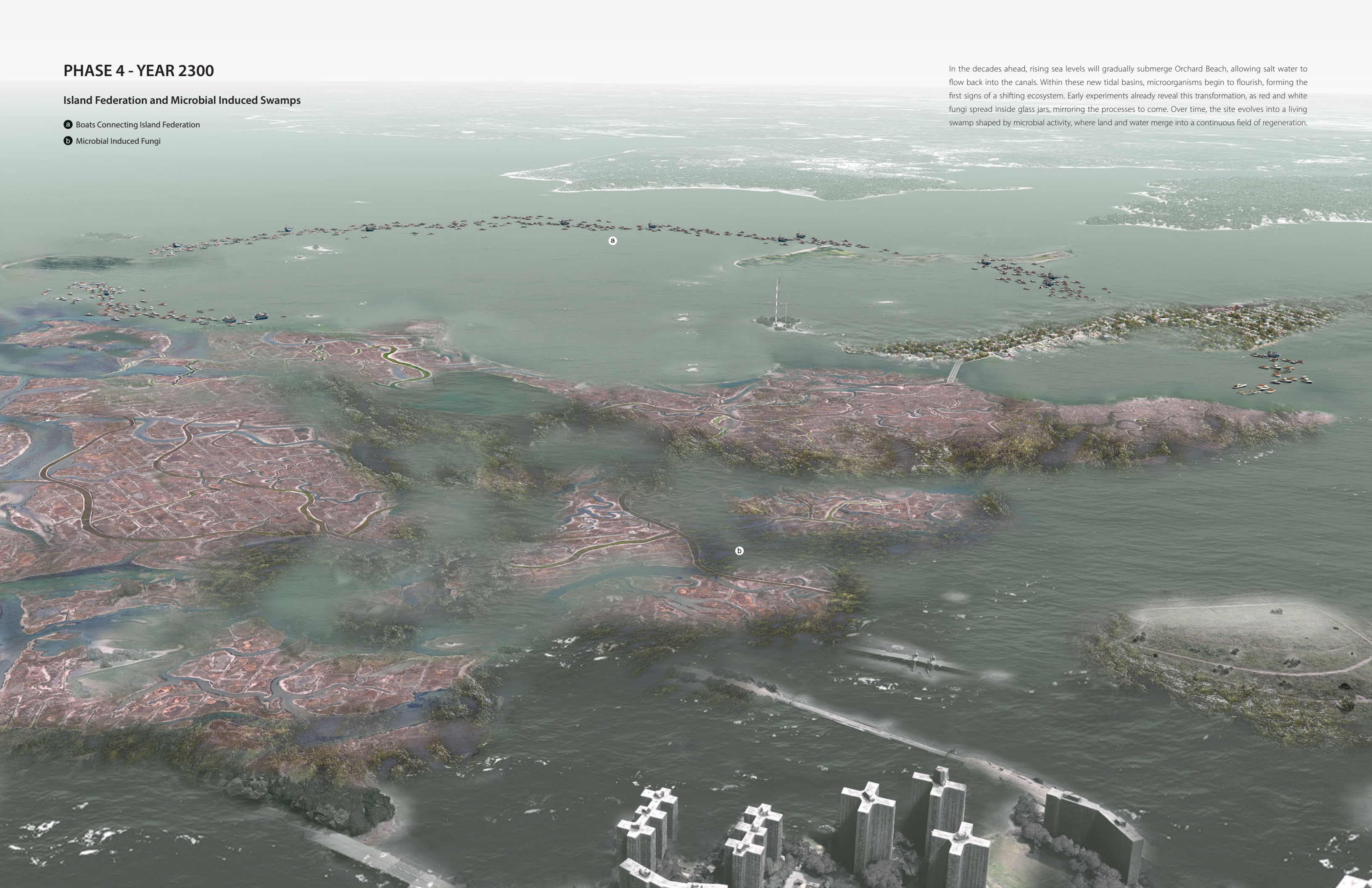
Left: phase 3 collage
Right: zoom ins showing how the intervention engage with actors

PHASE 4 - YEAR 2300

Island Federation and Microbial Induced Swamps

- a** Boats Connecting Island Federation
- b** Microbial Induced Fungi

In the decades ahead, rising sea levels will gradually submerge Orchard Beach, allowing salt water to flow back into the canals. Within these new tidal basins, microorganisms begin to flourish, forming the first signs of a shifting ecosystem. Early experiments already reveal this transformation, as red and white fungi spread inside glass jars, mirroring the processes to come. Over time, the site evolves into a living swamp shaped by microbial activity, where land and water merge into a continuous field of regeneration.



INTRODUCTION

Architecture is often justified through claims of efficiency, rationality, or technical necessity. Yet across its modern and contemporary manifestations, architectural projects rarely operate at the scale at which they are demanded. This paper argues that across projects justified through seemingly divergent demands, urban infrastructure, structural rationality, and forensic technology, architecture repeatedly relies on aesthetic and sensorial conditions as critical modes of political legitimation. As Mark Wigley has argued, total design is a fantasy of control in which the sensorial beauty of rational structures functions to shape and regulate perception. Read through Sylvia Lavin and Michael Young, aesthetic spectacle actively structures questions of access, control, and mediated perception, even as emerging technologies extend these dynamics beyond the limits of human sensation.

TAKING PLACE: HOW ARCHITECTURE ORGANIZES CONDITIONS THROUGH SENSORY HIERARCHY

Paul Rudolph’s spatial philosophy emphasized psychological experience and emotional responsiveness, drawing inspiration from Frank Lloyd Wright’s principles of vertical movement and spatial variation. In his interview with Robert Bruegmann, Rudolph critiques the flat repetition of Mies van der Rohe’s architecture as emotionally sterile, proposing instead a dynamic flow of space articulated through sectional shifts and fragmented views. While these concerns may initially appear aesthetic or affective, they underpin a broader architectural logic in which perception becomes a means through which spatial authority is established. Proposed by Robert Moses, the Lower Manhattan Expressway emerged in the 1950s amid the rapid expansion of container ports, truck-based logistics, and highway networks. Conceived as a bold east–west corridor cutting across Manhattan, the project was widely contested for its aggressive disregard for existing urban fabric and communities. As a conventional highway scheme, it implied massive demolition and violent transformation of the surrounding neighborhoods. It was under these conditions that Paul Rudolph’s proposal sought to reconceive Moses’s expressway not merely as a transportation artery, but as an urban infrastructure incorporating housing and public space. The Lower Manhattan Expressway was not conceived merely as an infrastructural solution to traffic circulation, but as an attempt to render infrastructural necessity perceptible and inhabitable, translating abstract demands of mobility and efficiency into sensory experiences capable of stabilizing political acceptance.

In this project, the logic of utilizing perception to establish spatial authority operates most forcefully at a much smaller, bodily scale. The megastructure engages visual and tactile sensation to choreograph how architecture operates within the city, rendering each spatial stratum a site of differential power. Rudolph’s monumental megastructure deploys prefabricated concrete housing units to articulate a clear sectional hierarchy, which is structured as expressway, public deck, and residential masses. Each layer

encodes a hierarchy of visibility by determining who can look down and who remains beneath the gaze. This infrastructural order relies on sensory experience to become legible and operative. For instance, a resident standing on the balcony of a housing unit occupies a visual upper hand over the cars on the expressway and pedestrians along the public deck below. This hierarchy of looking, regardless of whether actual surveillance occurs, embeds a spatial logic of power within the everyday sensory field. In this sense, the infrastructural layering and order does not merely organize the circulation and the program but it determines who commands the view and who becomes subject to it, politicizing the act of seeing.

Moreover, the repetitive modules of exposed concrete at eye-level, constructed through prefabrication, generate a visual field of uniformity and coarse texture that gradually becomes familiar to those inhabiting the space. This repetition does not simply aestheticize the structure, but it produces a sense of environmental normalcy that naturalizes the authority embedded in the sectional hierarchy. Infrastructural power is not imposed through abstraction alone, but stabilized through habitual sensory exposure. Furthermore, the vertically stacked repetition of identical material forms produces an overwhelming sense of mass at street level. This experience of bodily compression and visual dominance does not merely intimidate but evokes a sense of sublimity and awe through which architectural power is paradoxically perceived as stabilizing rather than destabilizing. This affective response, too, can be understood as part of the process through which architectural authority is rendered perceptible and experientially grounded.

This sensory organization can be further clarified through Mark Wigley’s notion of “taking place” from The Architecture of Deconstruction. As Wigley argues, place is not an inherent condition but an effect of institutional control, produced through mechanisms of perception and repression. Read through this lens, the sectional layering, material repetition, and perceptual habituation in Rudolph’s project function as techniques through which infrastructure takes place, establishing and legitimizing its authority by operating at the level of sensation. In this sense, the Lower Manhattan Expressway demonstrates that infrastructural authority is not legitimized at the scale at which it is demanded, but at the scale at which it is sensorially experienced, through spatial mechanisms such as vision, height, and repetition that render infrastructural hierarchy perceptible and naturalized.

“KISSABLE CONCRETE: THE ARCHITECTURE OF SENSORY ACCESS

Felix Candela’s acoustic shell is often praised as a rational and functional structure due to its thin, hyperbolic paraboloid form. However, as Sylvia Lavin argues in Form Follows Libido, modernist architecture, despite its surface claim of functionalism, in fact operates as a mechanism of desire, that is, a structure that organizes affective and sensory responses.

According to Wigley, the sectional layering, repetitive structure, and perceptual habituation in Rudolph’s project function as techniques through which architecture “takes place”.

Read through Lavin’s lens, Candela’s acoustic shell operates as a mechanism of desire, that is, a structure that organizes affective and sensory responses.

From Demand to Perception: Where Architecture Gains Its Operative Force

Transscalar Systems of Sensory Conditioning

Course	Transscalarities
Type	Writing
Instructor	Lydia Kalipoliti, Mahdi Sabbagh
Work	Individual
Date	May - Jul. 25

Key Concepts: Epistemology of Architecture, Layered Complexity, Existential Remnants, Living System, Woodsian Typology

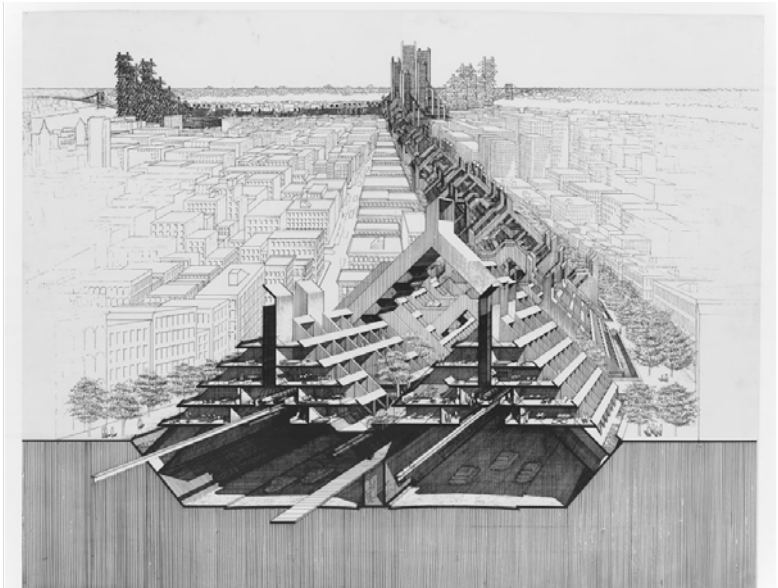


Figure1.

In this context, Candela’s acoustic shell can be reinterpreted through Lavin’s theoretical lens in *Kissing Architecture*, particularly the idea of architectural surface as a site of media contact. While Lavin originally focuses on video installations and digital imagery, this concept can be expanded toward architectural interactions with sound media and materiality. In this light, Candela’s shell is not merely a structurally efficient hyperbolic paraboloid, but a sensory device that organizes and distributes affect. Much like how Richard Neutra’s architecture, the structures are regulated physiological and psychological states to produce spatial conditions of pleasure. In the chapter “Confounding Mediums” from *Kissing Architecture*, Lavin asserts that “architecture’s most kissable aspect is its surface,” arguing that architectural surfaces serve as the threshold where architecture becomes something else through its contact with other media. In Candela’s case, the thin curved concrete shell meets and modulates sound, an auditory medium, forming a kind of acoustic interface. The shell’s surface reflects and focuses sound, generating spatial conditions that vary depending on one’s position in space. This produces a sensory hierarchy, in which who hears clearly and who does not. This disparity distributes bodies and positions in space via affective force rather than symbolic representation. In another chapter “Superarchitecture” from *Kissing Architecture*, Lavin further expands this argument, stating that only when architecture engages with time, movement, and immateriality does it become socially enveloping and politically effective. Though Candela’s shell is a fixed material structure, its interaction with sound, which is a time-based medium, produces precisely such effects. Reverberation, delay, and echo embed users in temporally unfolding sensory fields, where spatial clarity and perceptual privilege shift over time. Architecture, then, no longer serves merely as a container for sound but becomes a distributor of sensory access, presence, and marginality. Finally, the shell’s exposed concrete materiality plays a crucial role in this sensory politics. While the shell visually appears light and fluid, its material surface is solid, and rough. This textural dimension, although not time-based, contributes to the overall affective condition of the space. The friction between sonic immersion and tactile materiality enhances the multi-sensory experience and reinforces the spatial politics of proximity, attention, and bodily positioning. In this sense, concrete is not just a structural solution but a medium of affective governance.

Architecture, AI, and the Technological Sublime

According to *Forensic Architecture*, certain tear gas grenades have been repeatedly documented in contexts of border enforcement, crowd control, and civilian repression across different regions. Although these munitions are widely deployed, they are classified as “less-lethal” weapons and therefore fall outside the regulatory frameworks that govern the export and tracking of conventional military equipment. As a result, their circulation remains largely undocumented, rendering it difficult to determine where specific models are sold, by whom they are manufactured, and in

which conflicts or policing operations they are used. Under these conditions, publicly available images that are circulated through news media, social platforms, and activist documentation become the primary means through which the presence of tear gas grenades can be identified and traced. However, manually examining thousands of images to recognize specific canisters is labor intensive, slow, and unsustainable at a global scale. Triple Chaser was developed in response to this limitation. It is a machine-learning system trained to automatically analyze online images and detect the presence of specific tear gas grenades. Rather than producing new visual material, the project operates by classifying existing images, allowing patterns of use and circulation to become legible across large datasets. In this sense, Triple Chaser emerges from a demand to monitor violence that is officially untracked, and to render accountability possible at a scale beyond individual human perception. In Triple Chaser, sensory perception operates as the condition under which evidence becomes legible. Visual cues embedded in online images, such as the minute form, labeling, color, and surface texture of tear gas canisters, become the primary channels through which facts are recognized. Triple Chaser automates this process. What the machine-learning model learns is a sensory criterion through which visual features qualify an object as a tear gas canister. Once this criterion is operational, images cease to function as mere records and instead become an evidentiary infrastructure capable of enabling tracing, accountability, and public scrutiny. In this sense, Triple Chaser functions by establishing and maintaining the minimal sensory threshold at which violence can be said to have been seen.

At this point, Triple Chaser naturally extends the logic that runs through the previous two cases. In Paul Rudolph’s work, infrastructure was presented as a demand at the scale of the city, but political acceptance depended on the sensory internalization of hierarchy through vision, height, repetition, and overwhelming mass. In Félix Candela’s acoustic shells, geometry was justified through the language of structural rationality, yet its persuasive force ultimately emerged from the pleasures and immersion organized by sound, surface, and texture. In both cases, the request was articulated through large-scale logics, while justification and persuasion were secured at the scale at which sensory experience was organized. Triple Chaser translates this formula from building form to evidentiary form. Here, the demand is neither infrastructure nor performance, but the ethical and political imperative to render untracked violence accountable. The scale at which this demand becomes operative remains sensory, although sensory perception is no longer grounded in human-scale experience. Instead, it is transformed into a non-human, or supra-human perceptual system constituted through image classification, pattern recognition, and probabilistic thresholds. Triple Chaser thus reiterates the centrality of perception while elevating it to the condition under which legal and political judgment becomes possible.

Read through the lens of Michael Young, this operation becomes more

This political restructuring of perception triggers multiple forms of estrangement: reality appears unfamiliar, conventional hierarchies of seeing and knowing collapse, and we are confronted with information filtered through inaccessible and inscrutable systems.



legible. Young’s concept of the background shifts attention away from what appears as an object of perception toward the conditions that render perception possible in the first place. In *Triple Chaser*, the critical operation is not that AI sees on behalf of humans, but that it constructs the background conditions of visibility itself. Vast collections of online images, classification algorithms, synthetic training data, labeling protocols, and decision thresholds combine to form the background within which a statement such as “this is a Safariland tear gas canister” becomes perceptually and evidentially viable. This background is not neutral. Decisions regarding which features are standardized, which errors are tolerated, and which data are included in training directly shape what can be detected and what remains unseen, thereby determining which forms of violence are organized as evidence. In this sense, Triple Chaser produces what Jacques Rancière describes as a redistribution of the sensible. Rather than foregrounding perception, Triple Chaser constructs perception as a background infrastructure that politically modulates visibility itself. Through Young’s framework, the project can be understood as specifying how sensory conditions are designed and maintained such that responsibility and evidence can be established.

CONCLUSION

Architecture does not operate at the scale at which it is demanded. Whether framed as infrastructure, geometry, or technology, architectural projects become operative only when their logics are translated into a different scale in which sensory conditions are organized. Through the three cases examined here, sensory perception emerges as the primary mechanism through which authority, persuasion, and evidence are respectively produced. In Paul Rudolph’s infrastructural megastructures, perception stabilizes political hierarchy, in Félix Candela’s acoustic shells, it generates pleasure and desire, and in Triple Chaser, it establishes the conditions under which violence becomes legible as evidence. Taken together, these cases suggest that architecture’s capacity to operate, whether spatially, politically, or juridically, depends less on how sensory conditions are designed, organized, and maintained across scales.

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Layered Knowledges, Reconstructed Perceptions

This section explores architecture as a layered medium for reconstructing historical perception and producing a renewed sense of place. Bringing together a design project in Dublin and a theoretical reading of Lebbeus Woods, the work examines how new spatial insertions can operate between existing buildings, artifacts, circulation, and sightlines to intensify spatial narratives generated through transformation. Rather than restoring history as a coherent image, these projects use architectural layers to expose contradiction, rupture, and contested memory, allowing change itself to become the framework through which place is reinterpreted.

Transmission at the Boundary

Course	ADV Studio V
Type	Curation, Museum, Hotel
Site	Ballsbridge, Dublin
Instructor	Jorge Otero-Pailos + Mark Rakatansky
Work	Team of 2 (Tingrong Zheng)
Role	Research, Design, and Drawing
Date	Sep - Dec. 25



Artifacts for Exhibitions

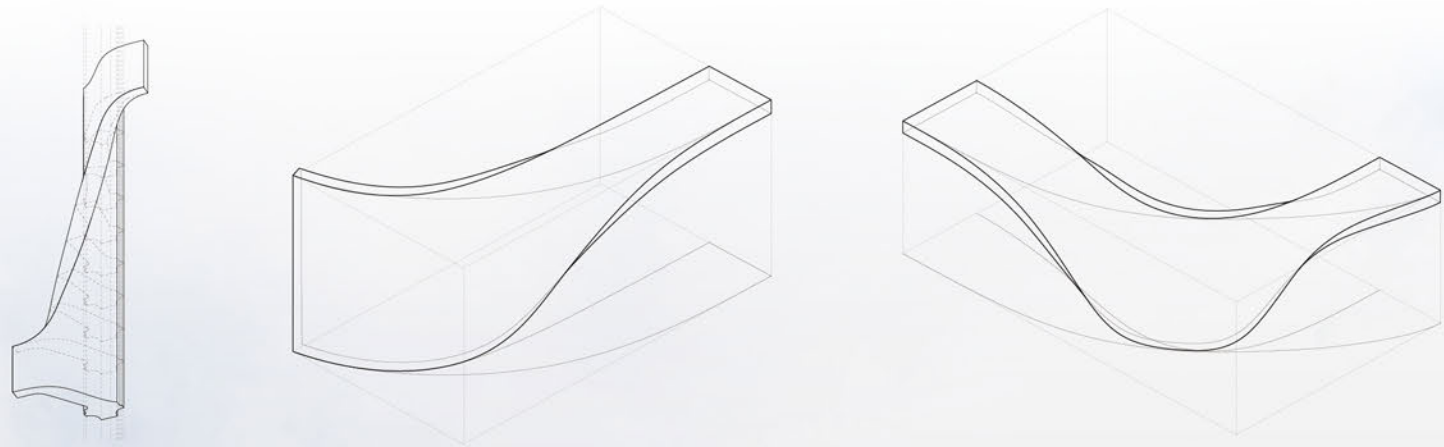


Embassy Building itself as an Artifact

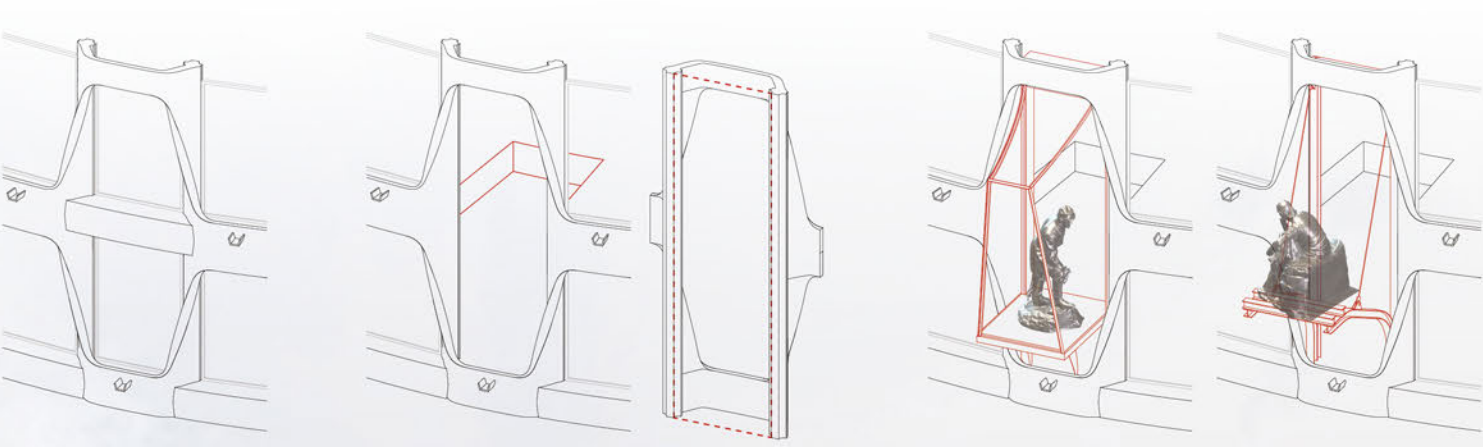
Advocate of the former US Dublin Embassy Building

This project reinterprets the existing Embassy building as an artifact by intensifying its boundaries between interior and exterior, old and new, and above and below ground. Through extensions and material transformations, it becomes a hybrid of museum, hotel, and restaurant where spatial conditions stage Irish American narratives, establishing a layered relationship between original and new elements that mediates between preservation and intervention.

Language for Extension



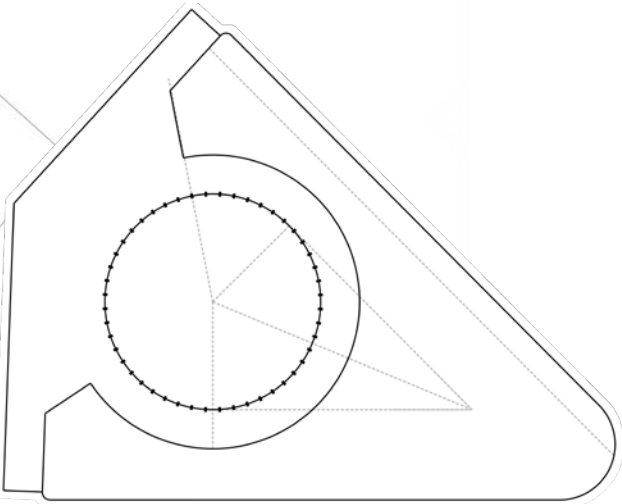
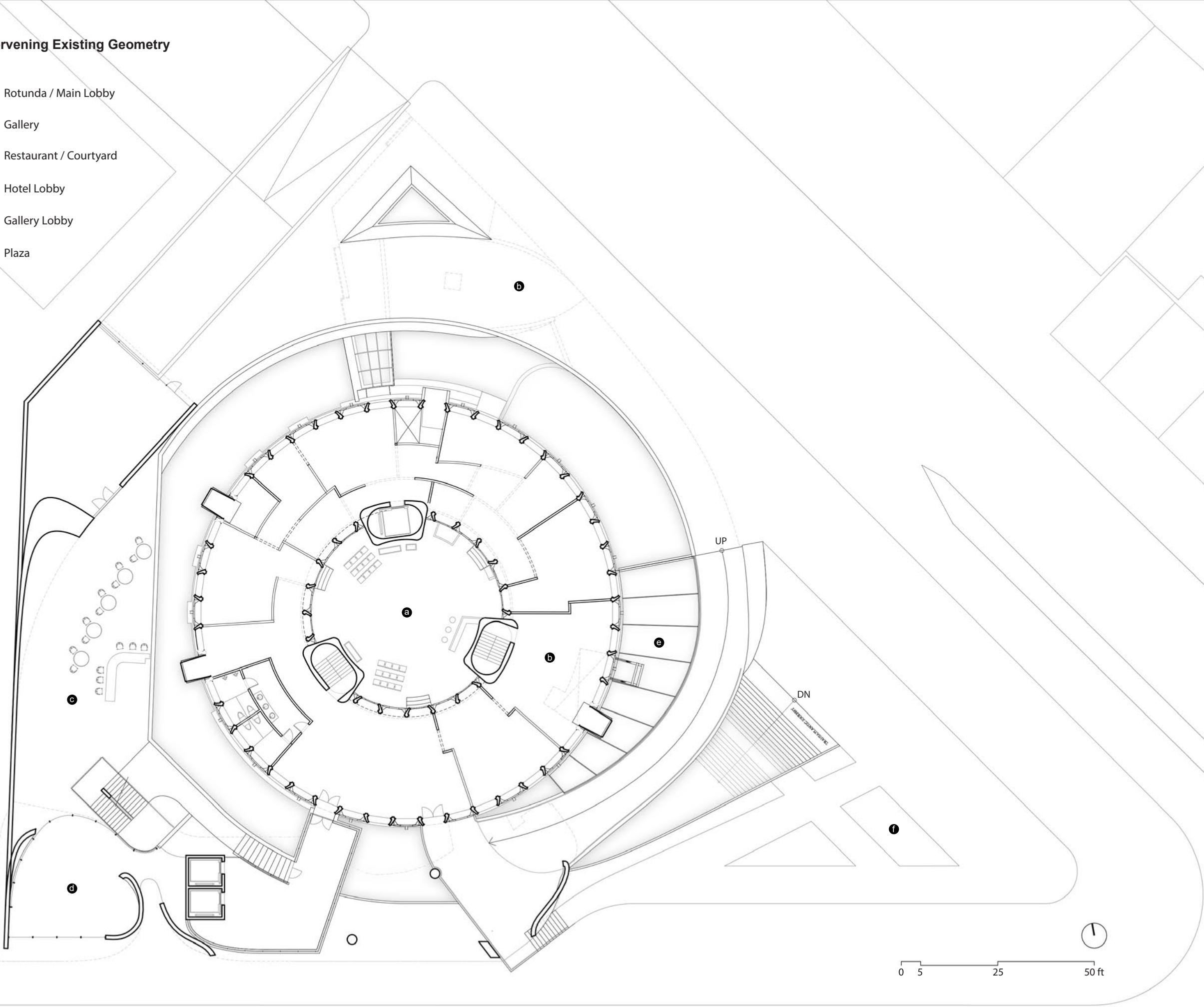
Exhibition on the Old Facade



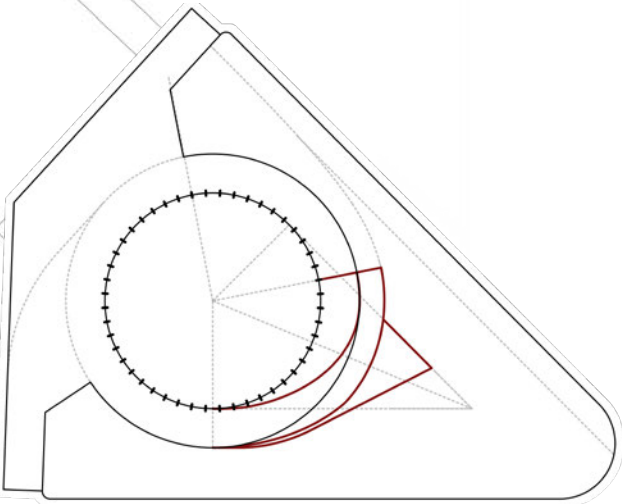
Responding to the Existing Facade

Intervening Existing Geometry

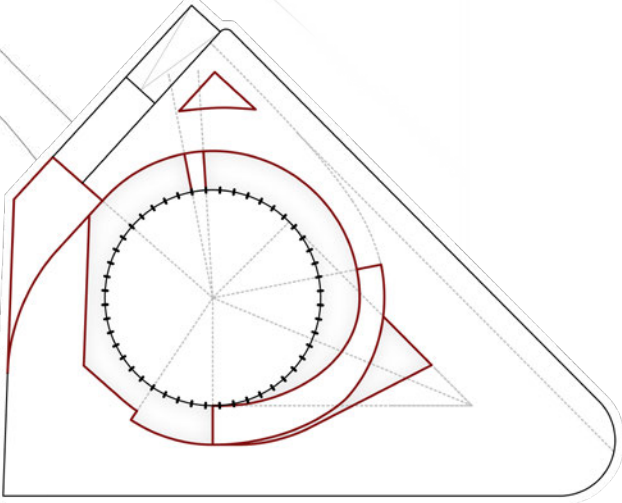
- a Rotunda / Main Lobby
- b Gallery
- c Restaurant / Courtyard
- d Hotel Lobby
- e Gallery Lobby
- f Plaza



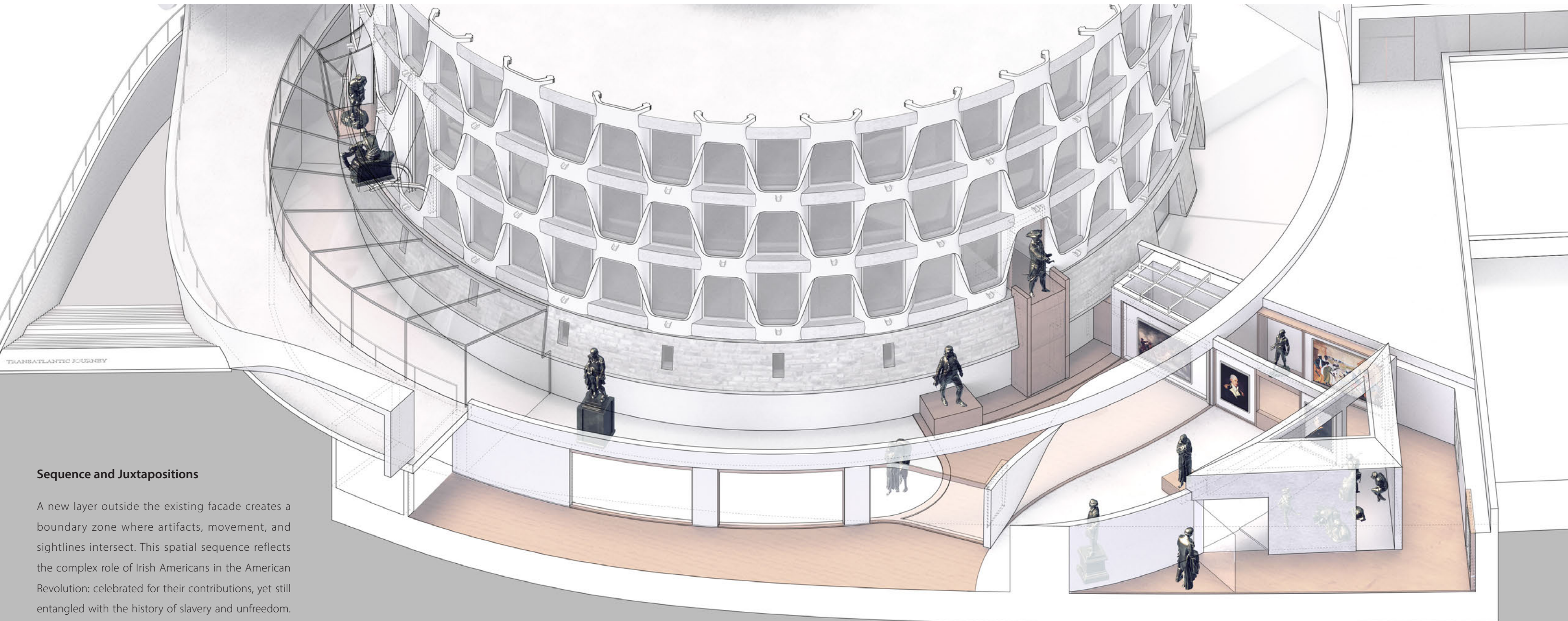
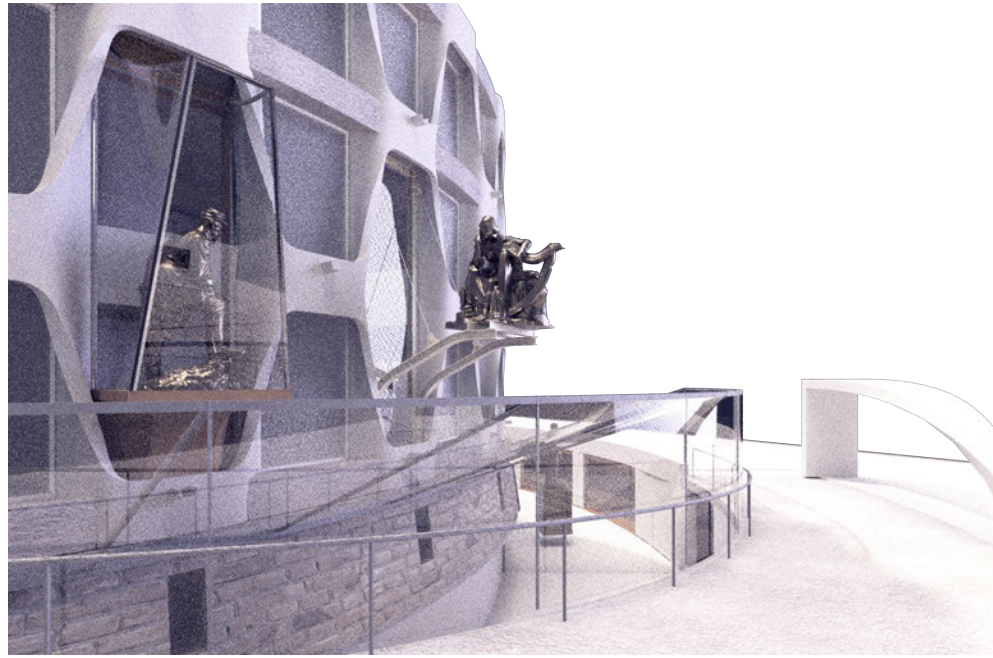
Existing Geometry



Extending Lines

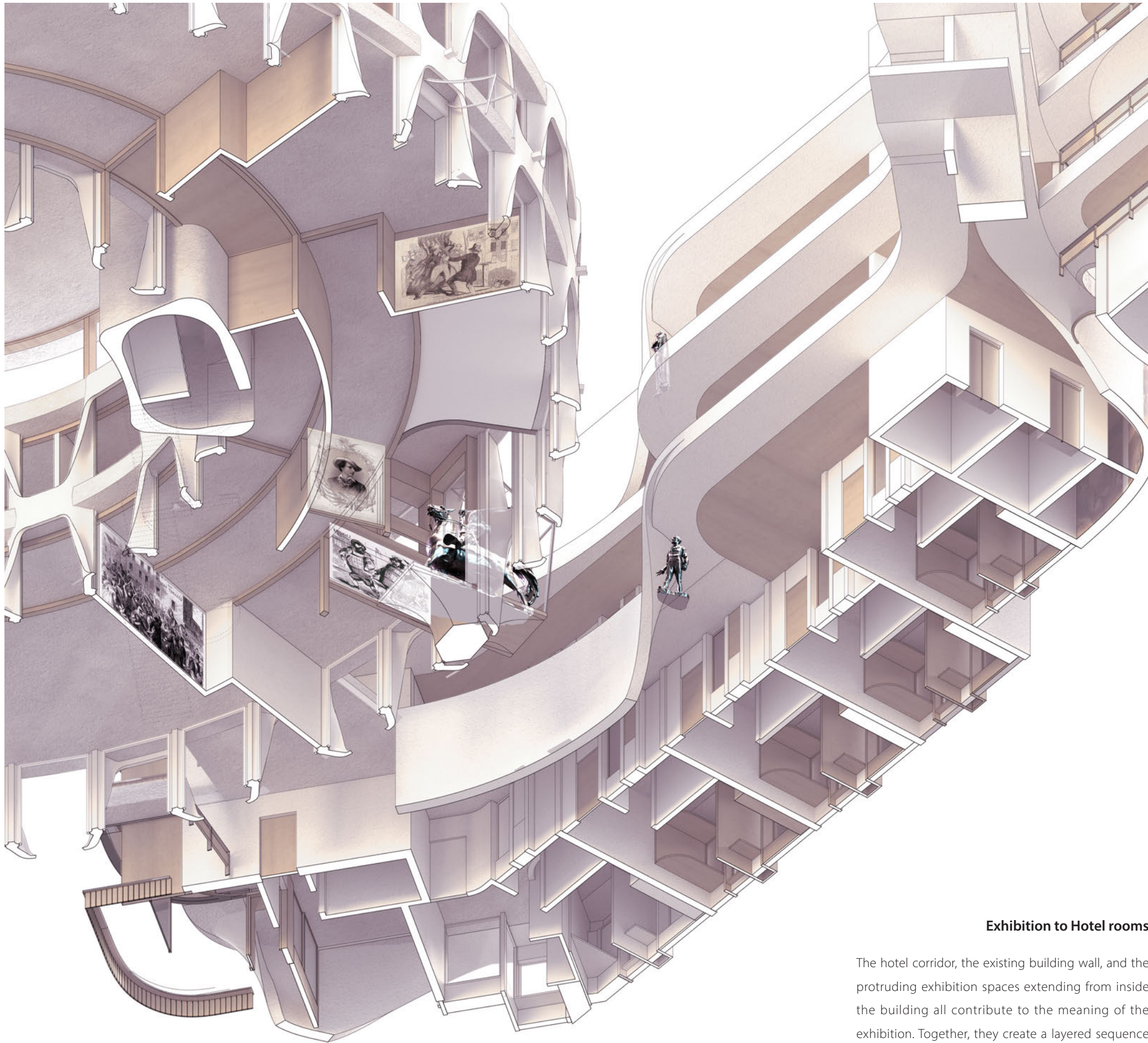


Connecting the Layers



Sequence and Juxtapositions

A new layer outside the existing facade creates a boundary zone where artifacts, movement, and sightlines intersect. This spatial sequence reflects the complex role of Irish Americans in the American Revolution: celebrated for their contributions, yet still entangled with the history of slavery and unfreedom.

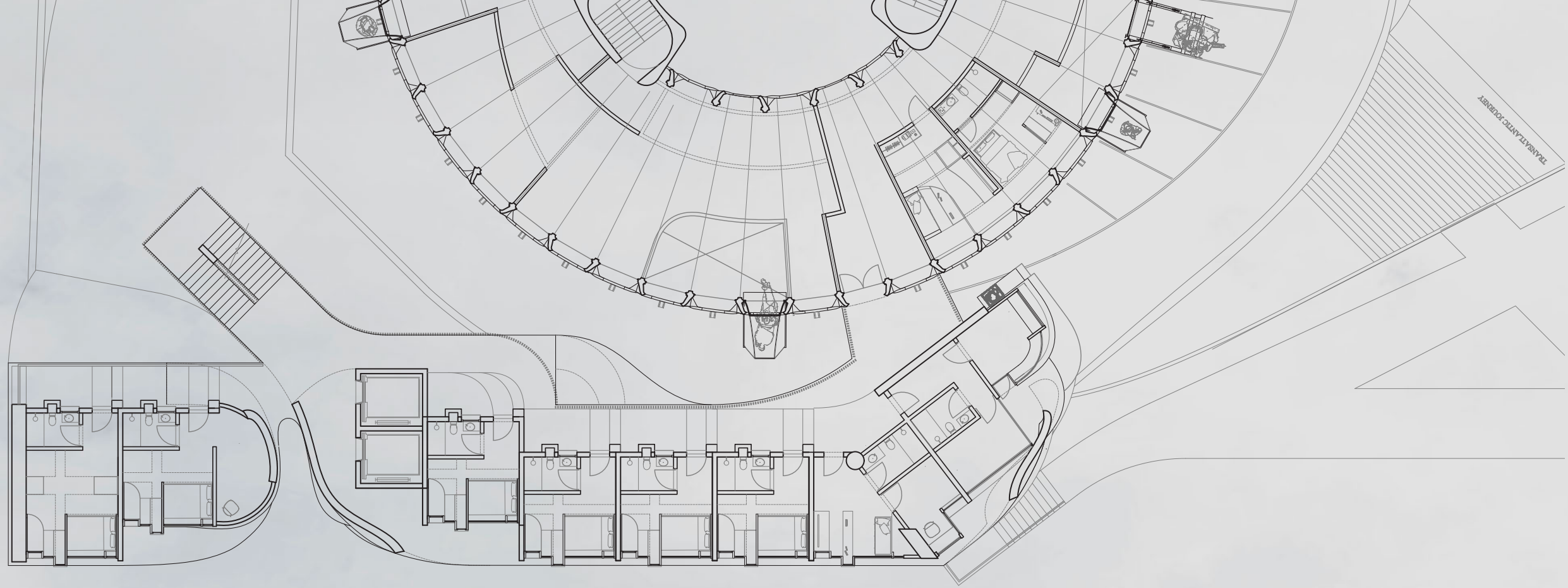


Exhibition to Hotel rooms

The hotel corridor, the existing building wall, and the protruding exhibition spaces extending from inside the building all contribute to the meaning of the exhibition. Together, they create a layered sequence where movement, boundary, and display reveal the complex historical entanglements behind the artifacts.



New Facade



PROLOGUE

“War is architecture.”

Lebbeus Woods begins with this paradox to suggest that war is not merely destruction, but a form of construction. It is a violent reorganization of knowledge, matter, and life. War and Architecture is not a manual for re-building cities after war, but a theory that reconstructs the very idea of architecture itself, transforming it from a physical practice into a living system of thought.

In the preface Lebbeus Woods writes, “Once set afire by the incendiary shells, there was no way to save them. Not only had the infrastructure with which to do so been destroyed, but also the delicate tissue of reasons to do so.” Woods interprets the ruins of Sarajevo, the former symbol of reason, tolerance, and hope, as the collapse not only of buildings but also of the ideological values architecture once embodied. Yet his interest does not lie in lamenting the tragedy or irrationality of war. Rather, he treats war as a catalyst for architectural transformation, a device that dismantles the premises of reason and fixed order, opening a new field of possibility. Woods does not describe the destruction through analytical or historical language but through affective expressions such as “vicious and pathological siege.” This sensory rhetoric resists abstraction and situates violence as an experiential condition. In the following paragraphs, he expands the scope of Sarajevo to the post Cold War world such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, Sri Lank, etc, listing places to show that war is no longer confined to a single geography but has become the shared reality of humankind. This enumeration transforms war from a local crisis into a global symptom. At the end of the preface, Woods writes, “But it is a picture that emerges of its own cruel strength, its disturbing but potentially healing necessity. . . Only by facing the insanity of willful destruction can reason begin to believe again in itself.” The hope of recovery is not placed outside the ruins but within them. Reason must confront its own collapse, only through this confrontation can it rediscover itself. Reason is therefore no longer an external, absolute order to be restored, but an unstable subject that must choose to believe in itself. In this gesture, Woods reframes rationality as an ethical rather than an ontological problem, emphasizing the responsibility to confront destruction rather than to deny or cosmetically repair it. The preface thus inaugurates his argument on a global stage, shifting architecture from the representation of order to the ethical reconstruction of thought itself.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF KNOWLEDGE, ARCHITECTURE IS AN EMBODIMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

In these two sections Woods explains how a changing worldview of knowledge demands a new role for architecture. Woods defines classical architecture as a system that spatializes public order and objective truth, celebrating permanence and authority. In this framework, art merely represents life within predetermined structures. After war dismantles these

hierarchies, reason itself becomes distrusted. Architecture can no longer exist as a fixed hierarchy, but it must function as a self-organizing system of knowledge known as heterarchy. This moment marks the text’s theoretical turning point.

Here, theory works as a mechanism that redefines the very purpose of architecture. Beginning from the recognition that “knowledge can no longer be verified by the assumption of a reality external to human cognition,” Woods repositions architecture as an active field of relations that produces meaning rather than containing it. Art and life cease to be separate or hierarchical. They become reciprocal, cyclical processes. Architecture, in this sense, is not a completed object but a continual act of re-making. Therefore the theoretical reasoning constructs and legitimizes the conceptual shift from hierarchy to heterarchy.

This redefinition extends beyond social pragmatism. By framing the question of architecture through the logic of knowledge itself, Woods overturns the premise of restoration. Traditional restoration assumes that the “original state” embodies truth, order, and beauty, treating damage as deviation and repair as a return to normality. Woods exposes this as a repetition of the same hierarchical violence. The desire to normalize through the illusion of coherence. His question is incisive: why do we always assume that the past order is “normal” and that destruction is “abnormal”? Ultimately, these sections compel the reader to question the hidden hierarchies beneath the concepts of restoration, order, reason, and truth. Woods is not proposing a new architectural style but reconstructing the system of thought that defines what architecture is. His theory performs architecture conceptually to build a new framework for thinking itself.

THE IDEOLOGIES ARE WRONG, THE OLD CITIES WERE HETERARCHIES

In these paragraphs, Woods presents a moment of epistemic transition in which conventional grand narratives and totalizing orders no longer function. He defines ideology as a system of enforced belief and non-choice, arguing that true freedom lies in the ability to choose among all possible options that conditions allow. In doing so, he shifts the idea of freedom from a question of political rights to one of epistemological operation. In otherwords, the freedom becomes a matter of how existence organizes itself through acts of choice. Thus, Woods’s writing translates the language of politics into the language of knowledge, performing an ideological critique from within architectural discourse. He then invokes the “old cities” to suggest that such a form of knowledge had already existed in the past. By not specifying a historical period, such as the medieval or Renaissance era, but referring instead to generic “old cities,” Woods strategically avoids historical specificity.

History here functions as a conceptual device, deployed to ground his later philosophy of reconstruction. The “old cities” are not concrete places

Reason must confront its own collapse
...order to believe in it-
self again
...rationality as an eth-
ical problem, not an
ontological one...shift-
ing architecture toward
thought itself

Theory operates not by
describing architecture,
but by constructing and
legitimizing a shift in
how knowledge itself is
organized.

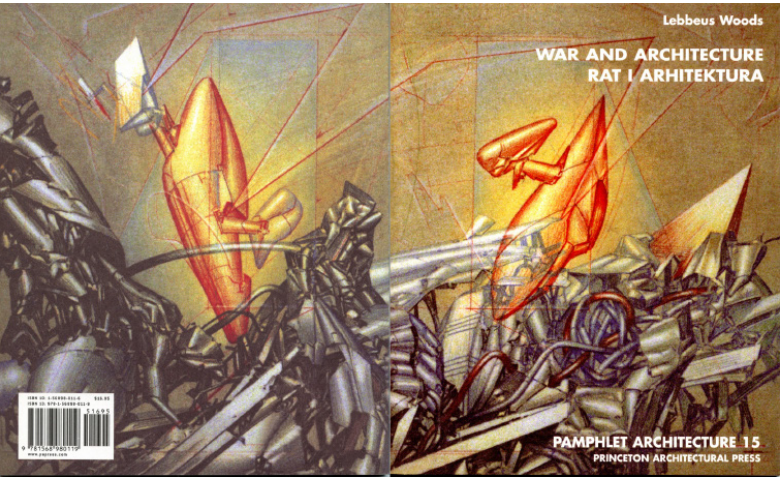
...language of politics
translated into the lan-
guage of knowledge
...an internal critique of
architecture

Reconstruction of Knowledge and Life

How Theory Works in Lebbeus Woods’ War and Architecture

Course	The History of Arch Theory
Type	Writing
Instructor	Mark Wigley, Johnny Michael Tran
Work	Individual
Date	Sep - Dec. 25

Key Concepts: Epistemology of Architecture, Layered Complexity, Existential Remnants, Living System, Woodsian Typology



in time but symbolic of layers of meaning and relationships accumulated across generations, which what he calls heterarchical complexity. In this way, Woods transforms his claim that the current hierarchical order must be overturned into a more persuasive argument. Not as a revolutionary break, but as a recovery of an already existing multiplicity. He then juxtaposes “modern mass technological culture” with “war” to describe how this complexity was erased. Both operate as hierarchical mechanisms that absorb and flatten the city’s multilayered organization. In the line, “War levels the old cities... reduces their multilayered complexity of meanings to one-layered tableaux,” war is no longer, as in the preface, a device that opens up possibilities through the dissolution of order, but is instead portrayed as a form of violence that fixes the city into a single, monolithic image, a tableau. Here, war assumes a double role. It is at once the ultimate expression of ideology and the condition for surpassing it. This self-contradictory structure prevents the reader from interpreting war as either pure evil or pure potential, leading instead to an understanding of heterarchy as an epistemological necessity rather than a moral choice. The accompanying photographs of Frankfurt before and after the war visually perform this logic. Prewar Frankfurt, the old city’s winding streets and subtle architectural variations embody the multiplicity and layered meanings that Woods associates with heterarchy. In contrast, the postwar image shows a complete flattening of that complexity. The city reduced to a one-layered tableau. The ruins, though visually complex at glance, no longer contain layered meaning. Through this contrast, Woods dramatizes the loss of complexity and visually reinforces the collapse from heterarchy into hierarchy. Woods’s use of the Frankfurt before-and-after photographs is not intended as documentary evidence but as a visual mechanism that performs the conceptual structure of his argument. The photograph, therefore, is not a historical document but a visual alibi, a sensory proof of the theory’s conceptual argument. The very selection and placement of these two photographs beside his theoretical text reinforces Woods’s claim that war compresses the city’s lived complexity into a singular, abstracted image imposed by ideological violence.

By invoking grand narratives and history as conceptual instruments, Woods secures the legitimacy of heterarchy. He concludes the paragraph with the question, “When they are rebuilt, on what form of knowledge will it be, and to what—and whose—ends?” This question shifts the issue of reconstruction from one of material rebuilding to one of redefining the form of knowledge on which rebuilding depends. It operates simultaneously as a critique of existing hierarchies and as a mechanism of theory, prompting the reader to ask: On what knowledge should a new city be founded? The following section, “The Case Against Restoration,” thus emerges as Woods’s response to this question, articulating the ethics and methods of heterarchical reconstruction.

THE CASE AGAINST RESTORATION , THE CASE AGAINST ERASURE

Here, Woods exposes how hierarchical thinking continues to operate with- in postwar reconstruction. He shows that rebuilding a destroyed city “as it once was” and the modernist impulse toward a tabula rasa both stem from the same hierarchical vision, the utopian belief that order can be imposed from above. What appears as renewal on either side merely reproduces the violence of control, reducing the city to a singular, purified image of reason. For Woods, restoration and erasure are both forms of war, each perpetuating ideological violence under the guise of renewal. Against this logic, Woods introduces heterarchy as an epistemological rupture rather than a stylistic alternative, a mode of reconstruction grounded in multi- plicity, autonomy, and self-organization. He therefore insists that the task of rebuilding must not belong to governments or corporations but to in- dividuals acting freely outside institutional authority. In this way, the dis- cussion of reconstruction becomes a continuation of the earlier argument on heterarchy, where collective knowledge replaces centralized power.

BUILDING ON THE EXISTENTIAL REMNANTS OF WAR, PATTERNS OF CHOICE AND INVENTION

This is the point where Woods consolidates his theoretical shift from de- struction to reconstruction. The ruin becomes not a dead fragment but the site of new possibilities, a field where architecture can reconstitute itself through acknowledgment rather than concealment. What emerges from loss is a “new category of order” rooted in the contingencies of the present. This thinking becomes spatially concrete as Woods identifies within the ruins a more intimate complexity. He shows the possibility of ruin as a liv- ing network of relationships that supports the formation of a heterarchical community. Architecture thus transforms from a representation of stability into an evolving process of choice and invention, preparing the ground for the performative logic developed in the subsequent sections such as “The Injection” and “The Scab”. By juxtaposing his speculative drawings with the text, Woods allows theory itself to operate visually and spatially.

INJECTION

In “Injection,” Woods names his method of reconstruction through a bio- logical metaphor. He chooses the term “injection”, rather than “insertion” or “addition”, to describe architecture as the act of introducing a foreign substance into the body of the city, provoking disturbance and transfor- mation. This term imply how the injected element never fits perfectly, it always triggers resistance, rejection, or immune reaction. Here again, Woods invites readers to grasp the theory through the sensory qualities of language, just as he does in the preface. This perpetual tension embodies his assertion that “Architecture is war.” Architecture does not heal the social body but generates new equilibria through collision and conflict. It becomes a bottom-up process of inven- tion emerging from instability. Through this use of biological language,

War functions simul- taneously as ideology and its own undoing

Heterarchy emerges as an epistemological necessity, not a moral choice.

...repetition produces a typology only by undo- ing its own stability ...a mechanism of knowledge

By allowing a type to form only so that it may collapse, the theory prevents closure

the theory becomes a simulation of architectural mechanics itself: a living system in which adap- tation and transformation are the means of survival. Yet Woods’s drawings also expose a paradox. He claims that his designs defy typology and context, yet their repetitive language and forms ultimately constitute a “Woodsian typology” of their own. This self-contradiction, however, is not a flaw. By continually undoing its own stability, the theory performs the heterarchical principle it advocates. Rather than proposing a fixed system, Woods’s writing exists as a living structure that renews itself through contradiction. Therefore, what emerges as a “Woodsian typology” is not a typology of form or style he presents in his drawings, but a typology of operation that defy its own system repeatedly once it has a possibility of becoming a norm. His repeated drawings and textual strategies of rupture, misalignment and unresolved junctions, does not stabilize into a formal system. Instead, it generates a self-negating type, one that becomes legible only to the extent that it immediately undermines its own coherence. In this sense, Woodsian typology is not a contradiction to heterarchy but its very mechanism. By allowing a type to form only so that it may collapse, Woods prevents architecture from settling into a closed system of meaning. This self-made contradiction enables the reconstruction of systems and ideas by keeping them perma- nently provisional, always subject to reinvention and never authorized as final. Typology no longer guarantees order, but it becomes a device for exposing the fragility of order itself. Through this recursive instability, architecture operates not as a solution to postwar conditions, but as a con- tinuous reorganization of knowledge. In this sense, War and Architecture is not simply a discourse about postwar reconstruction but a mechanism that enacts the very process of knowledge. It shows a continual cycle of dissolution, discovery, and reorganization.

WOODSIAN TYPOLOGY AS OPERATIONAL LENS

If Woodsian typology is understood not as a formal category but as a mode of operation that pro- duces architectural change, the subsequent figures of the Scab and the Scar can be read as articu- lations of how this typology transforms architecture over time. Rather than representing different versions of heterarchy, they constitute distinct states of a single typology in which time functions as a critical variable. Because Woodsian typology is never finalized, it cannot exist outside temporal processes. It is carried forward not as a fixed model but as a trace that mutates as it encounters new conditions. Typology therefore operates across time rather than above it, enabling architecture to register historical rupture without resolving it into a unified narrative. Through this process, what is ultimately reconstructed is not the city as an object, but the conditions under which systems and ideas can continue to reorganize themselves.

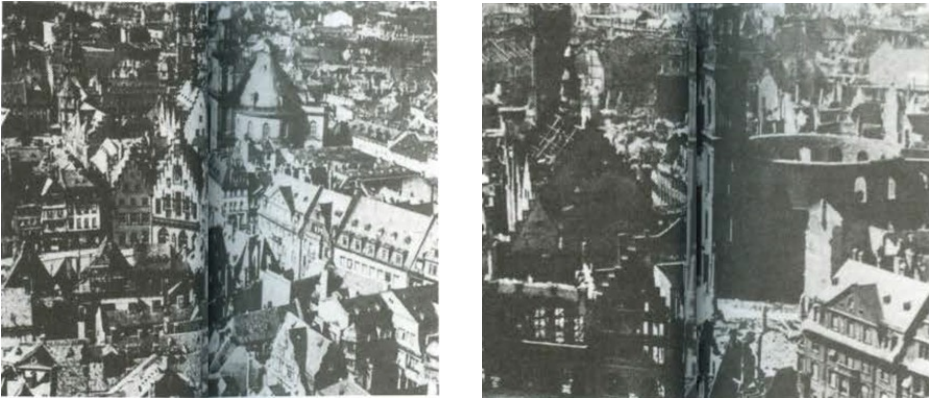


Figure1. Frankfurt, the Old City, before and after World War II.

TIME AS AN OPERATIVE CONDITION IN WOODSIAN TYPOLOGY

To understand how Woodsian typology operates through the figures of the Scab and the Scar, it is first necessary to examine the role of time within this typological logic. Here, time does not function as a neutral backdrop against which change occurs, but as an internal operative condition that produces change. Woodsian typology can only exist within temporal processes, as it depends on duration, delay, and transformation rather than immediate resolution.

In Woodsian typology, hierarchical order is prevented from stabilizing through temporal processes that delay closure and resist finalization. Hierarchy depends on immediately legible order, completed structure, and the visual consolidation of stability, often expressed through the facade. For hierarchy to function, delay must be minimized and unfinished conditions are interpreted as failure. Time, by contrast, undermines this logic. Architectural conditions that remain unfinished, layered, and in transition resist hierarchical closure precisely because they unfold over time.

In this sense, time becomes a necessary condition for heterarchy. Attempts to restore order immediately after war, whether that order was previously hierarchical or heterarchical, tend to reproduce hierarchical structures through normalization and closure. Heterarchy, by contrast, emerges through temporal processes that allow multiple interventions to coexist without becoming fixed norms. Time thus functions as the engine that prevents typology from becoming institutionalized, sustaining instability as an operative condition.

Through this temporal logic, architecture ceases to operate as a static object and instead functions as a process-based epistemological system. Woods mobilizes time as a strategic device for knowledge production, transforming architecture into a living structure that reorganizes itself through duration rather than resolution.

SCAB

In the section “The Scab”, Woods once again allows the nuance of language to mirror the nuance of theory. Woods deliberately chooses the ugly and uncomfortable word “scab” to emphasize that the process of architectural healing is never smooth, polished, or aesthetically complete. He refuses to frame the postwar recovery of the city within classical ideals of beauty, and instead he describes it as a rough, localized, and uneven process of adaptation.

In this sense, the Scab operates within Woodsian typology as a braking mechanism that prevents typology from becoming institutionalized. At the moment when reconstruction, flattened by the external force of war, begins to take on recognizable form, the scab’s “ugliness” blocks that form from stabilizing into a style. As a result, renovation initiates the emergence of new form, but this form does not consolidate into a coherent whole encompassing old and new. It remains legible as a state in transition, an

ongoing process of transformation rather than a completed object. Rather than closing typology, this aesthetic resistance keeps it open as a continually transforming concept. This is the moment in which self-made contradiction becomes most explicit, when typology sustains itself precisely by undermining its own coherence.

For Woods, architectural beauty does not arise from formal perfection but from existential authenticity. This notion continues the thread established from the beginning of War and Architecture, the fusion of life and art. Architecture is no longer a “noble art” that represents abstract truths but a sensual, existential act that directly engages with the rawest strata of life. In this sense, the “scab” repositions architecture from the realm of idealized art into a concrete process that operates upon the wounds of existence. Woods redefines healing not as a cosmetic restoration, but as an organic regeneration that reorganizes itself while keeping the wound visible. The scab, therefore, is not the result of recovery but the visible form of recovery in progress. This idea is made palpable in Woods’s drawings. New structures attached awkwardly to the remnants of ruined buildings, different materials and geometries colliding to produce a coarse, irregular surface, which is the literal expression of the “scab.”

These drawings reject aesthetic harmony, revealing instead a new vitality emerging from discord. Ultimately, the scab is not merely a protective layer upon war’s destruction, but a site for the moment when life and art become indistinguishable. The drawing shows the moment when architecture is reborn within the sensory stratum of existence. Here, ugliness is redefined not as aesthetic failure but as evidence of life itself. Without this condition of failure, architectural form would stabilize into a coherent image, allowing hierarchy to reassert itself.

SOLID STATE, FLUID STATE

The following section functions as a hinge between the Scab and the Scar, translating the physical process of healing into an epistemological one. In other words, when read through a Woodsian typology, this section articulates how architectural logic shifts across time, allowing the Scab and the Scar to be understood as successive states rather than separate responses. Woods contrasts the material remnants of war with the immaterial flows of the information age, showing that reconstruction operates not only on a physical level but also on a cognitive and informational one. “The other dimension exists in the tangible but highly fluid domain of electronics and the instruments of a new, information age.” Here, war destroys existing orders indiscriminately, rupturing the material structures through which architectural hierarchy had been stabilized. The informational and electronic domain does not replace this destruction with heterarchy, but opens a different dimension in which heterarchical thinking may re-emerge. The “electronic instruments” thus symbolize not literal technologies but mediators of a new epistemic order. Through these tools postwar humani-

Heterarchy depends on time...delay, duration, and unfinished states.

Theory ceases to function as explanation and instead becomes a cognitive event

Hierarchical knowledge is not replaced, but reprocessed through destruction into heterarchical reorganization.

ty reorganizes its perception and existence. The subsequent phrase, “including the tools of play essential to experimental living,” expands this further. For Woods, “play” means self-organizing emergence, an experimental act freed from predetermined rules. If ideology dictates behavior through control, heterarchy allows it to unfold like play: unpredictable, autonomous, and generative. Hence, electronic instruments + play form an apparatus for experimenting with heterarchy at the immaterial level.

This section also completes the allegorical recursion that structures the entire text. Woods aligns three symbolic systems: (1) the Platonic/Cartesian order as the hierarchical regime of classical knowledge; (2) war, which destroys that order; and (3) the electronic/informational order, which reconstructs knowledge as dynamic, self-organizing flow. This sequence does not describe a clean replacement of hierarchy by heterarchy, but a layered condition in which hierarchical logics persist as latent residues within heterarchical reorganization. Wood utilizes this sequence of hierarchical knowledge → destruction → heterarchical reorganization to map an epistemological evolution. The movement from material to immaterial, from the ruins of war to the flow of information, reframes architecture itself as an epistemological model of space. The theory extends its own boundaries through this shift. Its expansion becoming its mechanism of operation. Thus, War and Architecture functions not merely as a self-performing mechanism, a heterarchical writing that enacts the very operation of thought after war.

Juxtaposed with a drawing that is deliberately difficult to read, this passage acquires a significance that exceeds a merely historical shift from top-down to bottom-up processes. The image withholds stable points of reference. It is unclear whether it represents a top view, an elevation, a view from below, or from an eye level view and its overlapping zones of light and darkness offer no hierarchical ordering. Unlike many of Woods’s other collaged drawings, which remain anchored to existing buildings and retain a legible sense of scale, this image actively destroys scale as a reliable interpretive framework. As a result, conventional modes of architectural reading fail. This sensory failure is not accidental but constitutive. The viewer does not decipher the drawing so much as endure it, experiencing architecture as strained, contorted, and bound to forces beyond prediction. Through this pairing, theory ceases to function as a discursive explanation and instead becomes a cognitive event. Meaning is no longer transmitted through clarity but produced through disorientation. In this moment, Woods’s theory works not by describing heterarchy as a concept, but by situating the reader within its operational condition, where architecture, like thought itself, is unstable, illegible, and perpetually incomplete.

SCAR

The “scar” does not signify the end of change but the continuation of transformation. It marks the coexistence of loss and renewal, destruction and growth. When Woods writes, “a deeper level of construction fuses the new and the old,” he clarifies that reconstruction is not about harmony but about joining while preserving difference. By adding “without compromising either one in the name of unity,” he rejects the notion of contextual or cosmetic reconciliation. True healing, for Woods, is not a seamless restoration but a visible coexistence of ruptures, which is an unhidden condition of vitality. “The scar is a mark of pride and of honor, both for what has been lost and what has been gained.” Here, the scar becomes an ontological record, a “mutant tissue” that carries within it the potential for unpredictable regeneration. It embodies the idea that healing is not cosmetic but a process that, by articulating differences, both divides and joins.

The scar thus materializes the principle of heterarchy, revealing an order built from overlapping

differences rather than imposed unities.

Socially, the scar expands this logic to the city. In “the city of self-responsible people,” each individual’s wound becomes a personal narrative. Together, these stories form a heterarchical community, a collective history written through singular experiences. Knowledge here moves from institutional authority to individual cognition, making the scar a mediator of epistemological transformation. Visually, Woods’ drawings render this concept tangible. The imperfect junctions between old and new structures, the seams that refuse to disappear, the rough surfaces that remain visible. All of them becomes visual manifestations of the scar. These scars do not conceal damage but affirm life through incompleteness, functioning as living diagrams of transformation.

Read through a Woodsian typology, the scar does not resolve instability but secures it in time. While the scab prevents typology from closing into a norm, the scar ensures that this non-closure is not erased. It inscribes difference without normalizing it, allowing typology to persist as a trace rather than a model. In this sense, the scar is not the endpoint of transformation but the condition that allows transformation to remain legible without becoming prescriptive.

The scab represents the open process of healing, the condition of an unfinished adaptation in which gaps remain visible. As Woods notes in the “Injections” paragraph, “These gaps can only be filled in time.” He introduces time, as the agent of reconciliation. The scar, then, is the moment after time has passed through those gaps. It is a condition in which the wound has not been erased but transformed into a trace of difference. Through this temporal progression, Woods transforms architecture from a material problem into an epistemological system that operates through time. Architecture is no longer a static object but a living structure of knowledge, continuously reorganizing itself as time unfolds. From the open wound of the scab to the inscribed memory of the scar, Woods constructs a temporal narrative of healing that becomes a theory of knowledge formation. This sequence again visualizes how architecture reorganizes itself as an act of living, corresponding to the earlier argument about how living and art enter into a reciprocal relationship. In doing so, the theory itself becomes the mechanism of transformation of living epistemology where time, matter, and thought endlessly reconstruct one another. In this sense, what has unfolded throughout War and Architecture can be understood as a Woodsian typology whose operation lies in the sustained reorganization of life, knowledge, and space through time.

At this point, it becomes clear that Woods’s theory does not operate by clarifying concepts, but by reorganizing perception itself. The reader’s discomfort is not a byproduct of the argument but its primary mode of operation.

IMAGE AS EPISTEMOLOGICAL OPERATOR

Across War and Architecture, and especially SCAB to SCAR, images operate as epistemological operators that perform the same work as theory itself, but through sensory disruption rather than conceptual explanation, preventing perception from stabilizing into hierarchical clarity. Woods’ speculative drawings do not propose alternative forms to be decoded but generate perceptual strain. Their overlapping geometries, indeterminate viewpoints, and unresolved junctions produce a condition in which seeing itself becomes uncertain. The viewer does not extract meaning from these images but is instead forced to inhabit their instability. Vision becomes an active, effortful process rather than a passive reception of information. This recurring visual strategy is highly intentional and structural. By making images difficult to read, Woods ensures that perception cannot function hierarchically. Just as heterarchy resists fixed order in space and time, these images resist visual closure. They train the viewer to tolerate incompleteness, delay, and contradiction, extending the logic of heterarchy into the act of seeing. The image thus becomes a site where theory is enacted rather than represented.

Through this coupling of textual argument and visual disruption, Woods transforms theory from a discursive system into a cognitive event. Images do not clarify the argument but actively destabilize the reader’s perceptual habits, aligning sensory experience with epistemological critique. In this way, architecture is no longer communicated as a set of forms or solutions but operates as a mode of thought that reorganizes how space, time, and order are perceived. The work of theory, therefore, occurs not only in what Woods writes, but in what his images compel the viewer to endure.

WHO INHABITS FREESPACES, WHO OWNS FREESPACES, WHO PAYS FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF FREESPACES

In these following three sections, Woods poses and answers questions about how architecture operates, prompting readers to question the structures of existing society. It shifts from defining architecture as an epistemological concept to exploring what is required to make it operate in reality. His answer to the first question is neither the powerful nor the secure, but those displaced by hierarchy. “People from every social class who... transform their everyday patterns of life from the fixed to the fluid.” These are not victims but the subjects of new knowledge. Individuals forced by crisis to invent new ways of living. They are, as Woods writes, “the ones who must perpetually begin again.” This phrase encapsulates the existential rhythm of War and Architecture: the continual cycle of destruction and regeneration, of scab and scar, now enacted through human life itself. In this passage, the theoretical principles of heterarchy and self-organization become embodied. Woods transforms the discussion of architecture’s recovery into the recovery of the human subject, turning theory into an act of existence.

scar ensures non-closure, transforming architecture from a material problem into an epistemological system that operates through time.

Theory does not clarify concepts ...it reorganizes perception itself...

Overlapping geometries and unresolved junctions render seeing uncertain, training the viewer to tolerate incompleteness and contradiction.

The next section introduces the question of economy. Woods’ answers radically to the question, “how can these spaces exist materially?” “Certainly the banks will not finance Freespaces, nor will the corporations, the governments, and the institutions of culture...” In rejecting institutional power and financial systems, he relocates the foundation of building “from below.” He imagines a society that begins with barter and eventually develops a new currency. “Eventually it may be possible to create a new form of currency: information.” Here, information is not mere data but the currency of knowledge. A symbolic economy in which value arises from exchange, invention, and communication rather than ownership or hierarchy. Knowledge becomes both the material and the medium of construction. The theory therefore operates by recoding the economy into an epistemological system. The capital is replaced by cognition, production by participation, and hierarchy by heterarchy. In doing so, War and Architecture ceases to be a discourse about architecture. It becomes an epistemic machine, redesigning social, political, and economic relations through the language of architecture.

THE NEW TISSUE

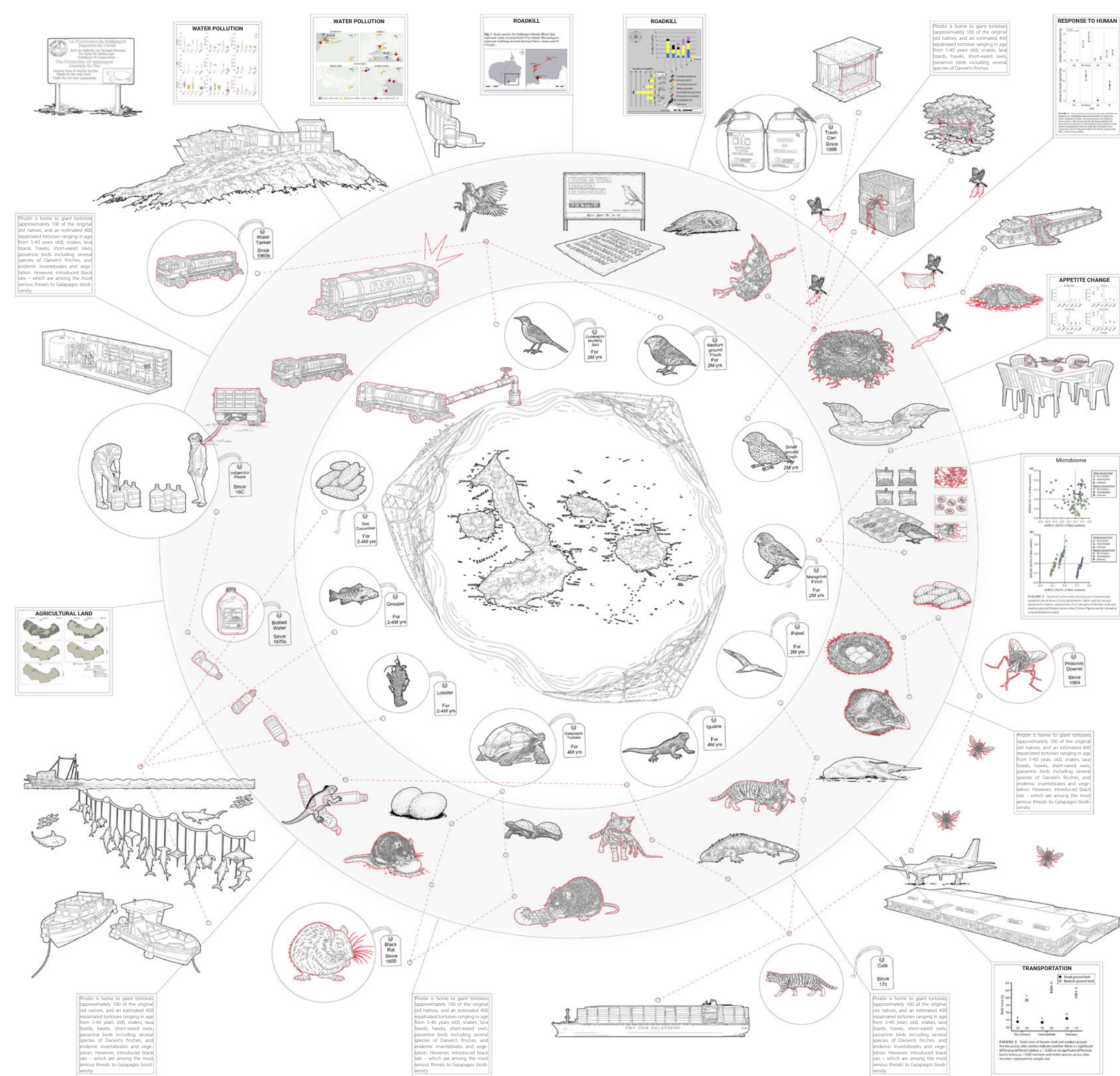
“The New Tissue” unfolds in long, flowing sentences that continuously enumerate the forms of a heterarchical architecture. The absence of full stops in this final passage once again makes the reader feel that architecture gains its meaning not through stability, but through continuous change. The text fuses all previous elements, scab, scar, play, information, and freespaces into a single organic structure. “The new cities demand an architecture that rises from and sinks back into fluidity, into the turbulence of a continually changing matrix of conditions.” In addition, the drawings accompanying “The New Tissue” do not function as representations of a future city, but as mechanisms that prevent the city from being conceived as a finished object. Their lack of clear boundaries, scales, and hierarchies mirrors the syntactic flow of the text itself, which unfolds without full stops or stable resolutions. Together, image and language refuse architectural closure. Rather than projecting a vision to be realized, they condition the reader to inhabit a continuous state of transformation. In this way, “The New Tissue” dissolves the logic of the scab and the scar, into an environmental condition, where architecture is no longer an intervention upon wounds, but the medium of life’s ongoing reorganization. In the drawings accompanying “The New Tissue,” the distinction between old and new collapses entirely. Scale disappears, orientation dissolves, and architectural elements can no longer be parsed as discrete interventions. Vision no longer registers transformation through difference, as in the scab or the scar, but encounters architecture as an immersive field of becoming. The new tissue is not a fixed urban form but a living, self-renewing organism. It grows, decays, and regenerates in continual motion.



Figure2. *New Tissue*

Architectural Devices of Visibility and Reconfiguration

This section examines architecture, writing, and installation as devices that make hidden relations visible and operative. Across ecological, social, historical, and material scales, the works investigate systems that are usually dispersed, suppressed, or naturalized: tourism and nonhuman species in the Galápagos, social relations organized through the architectural logic of the social condenser, and extraction, pollution, and decay recorded through rust. These works use spatial organization, theoretical analysis, and material processes to reveal, record, and reconfigure the conditions through which relations become legible.



After Pristine

Instruments for Capture, Containment and Coexistence

Course ADV Studio VI
Type Ecological Infrastructure
Site Santa Cruz, Galapagos
Instructor Mireia Luzzaraga
Work Individual
Date Jan - Apr. 2026

Visualizing and Reconfiguring Non-Pristine Ecologies

The project begins with the contradiction between the Galápagos' image as a pristine natural environment and the complex entanglements that already exist within it. Tourism infrastructure has produced less visible forms of infiltration between human and nonhuman actors, invasive and indigenous species, waste, water, and habitat systems. Rather than treating these conditions as problems to be simply removed or solved, the project uses architecture to visualize and reconfigure them. Through a series of targeted interventions, it makes hidden relationships legible and transforms them into new forms of coexistence, where architecture becomes a mediator between conservation, occupation, and ecological adaptation.

Interventions on Different Altitude

A. FOG CAPTURING FOR SCALESIA

1. Captured in the device



Santa Cruz is defined by distinct ecological zones that shift with elevation, from arid coastal areas to humid highlands. Shaped by trade winds, the upper elevations frequently collect dense fog, producing specific climatic and ecological conditions. Responding to these altitude-based environments, the project proposes a series of targeted interventions that reconfigure existing relationships between human and nonhuman actors, invasive and indigenous species, and natural forces and constructed systems.

Intervention 1: Fog Capturing for Scalesia

2. Scalesia Grows

1. Captured in the device

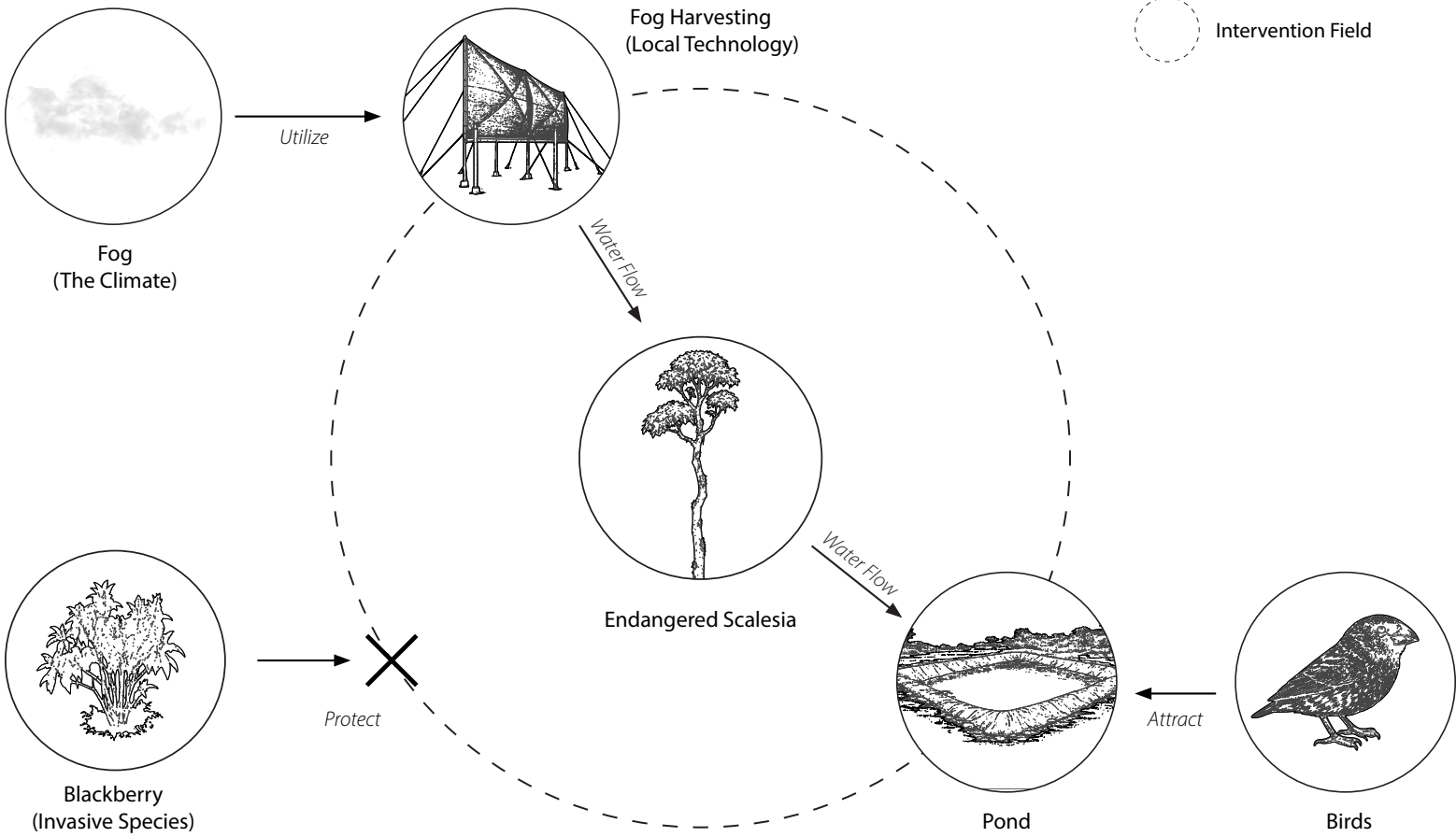
4. Scalesia forest preserved

0. Trade wind makes fog

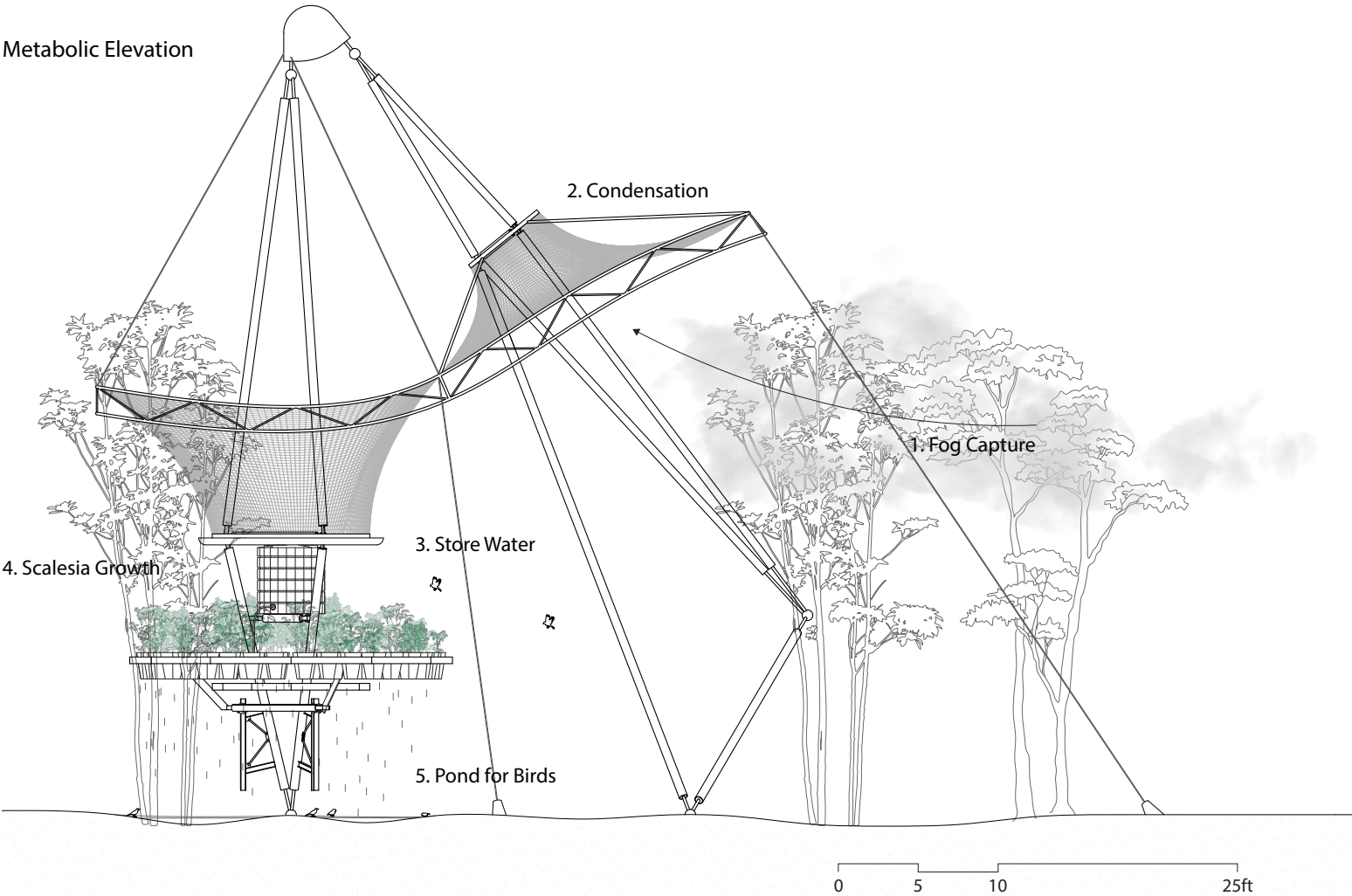
3. Transplant

The intervention reconfigures existing relationships between fog, water scarcity, invasive blackberry, and endangered Scalesia. Trade winds bring fog to the highlands, where it is captured and used to irrigate Scalesia. Excess runoff collects below as small ponds, creating additional habitat for birds and other species.

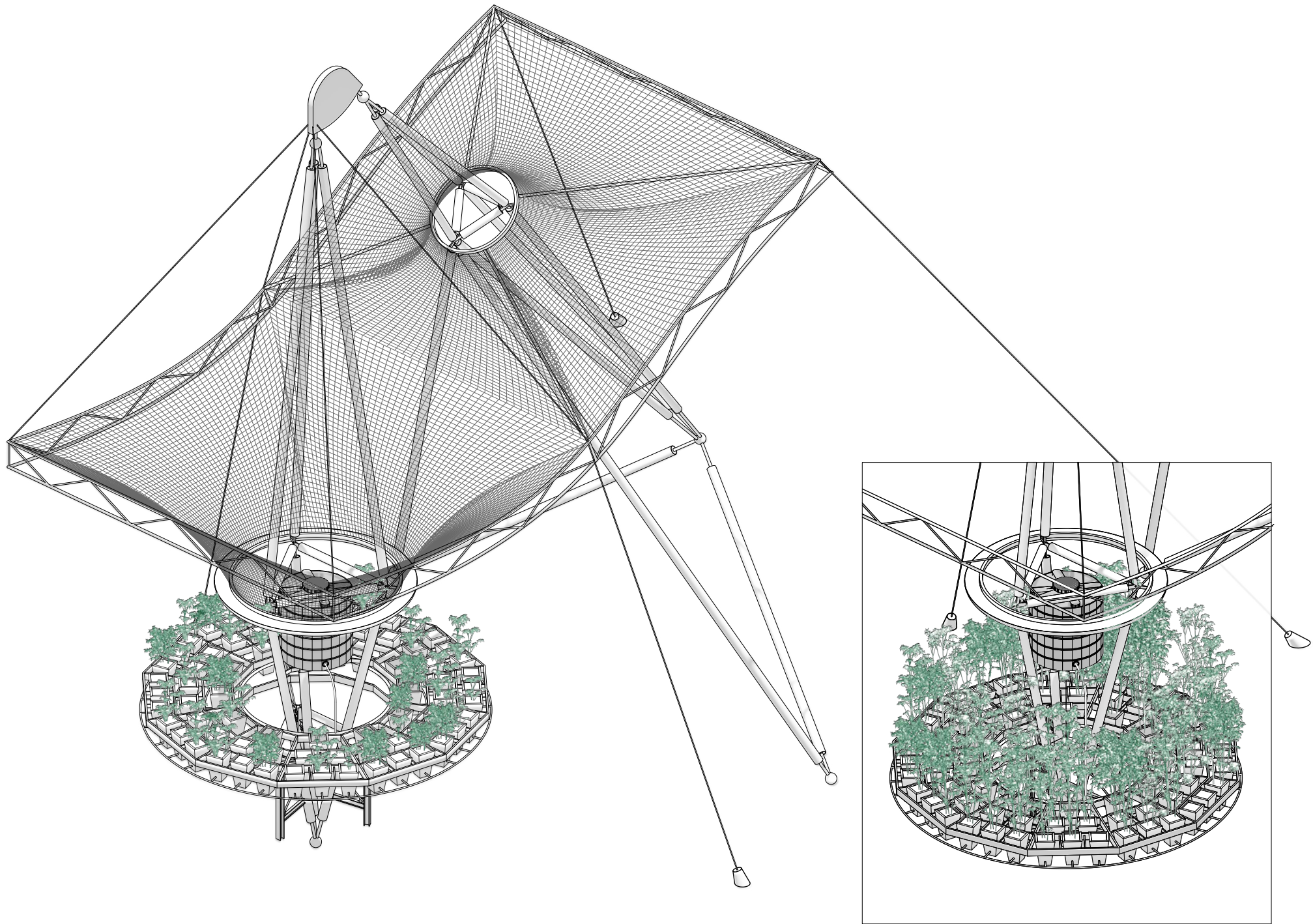
Metabolic Cycle of the Intervention



Metabolic Elevation

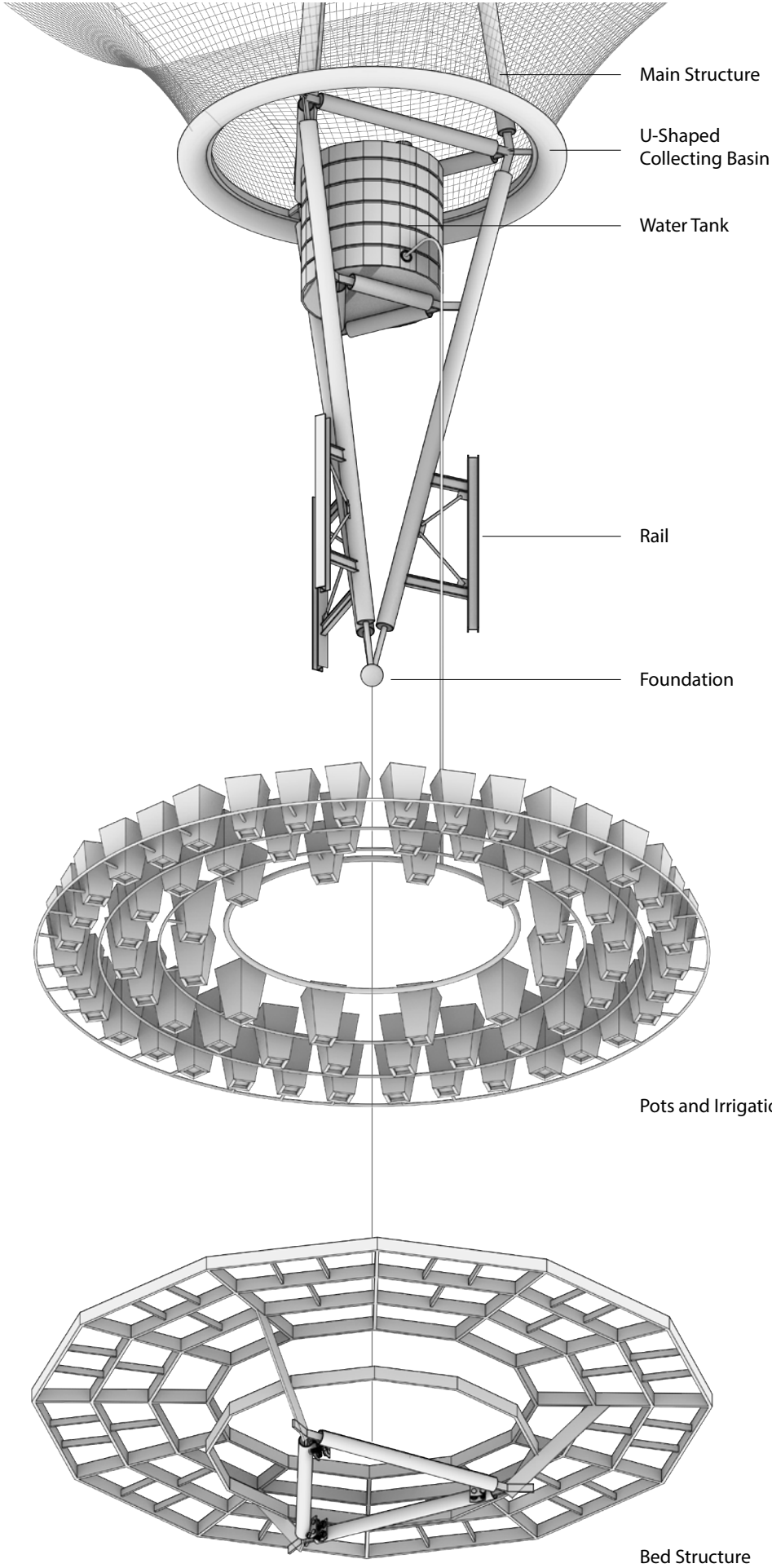


Intervention 1: Fog Capturing for Scalesia



Young Scalesia

Bed Descends as Scalesia Grows



Main Structure

U-Shaped Collecting Basin

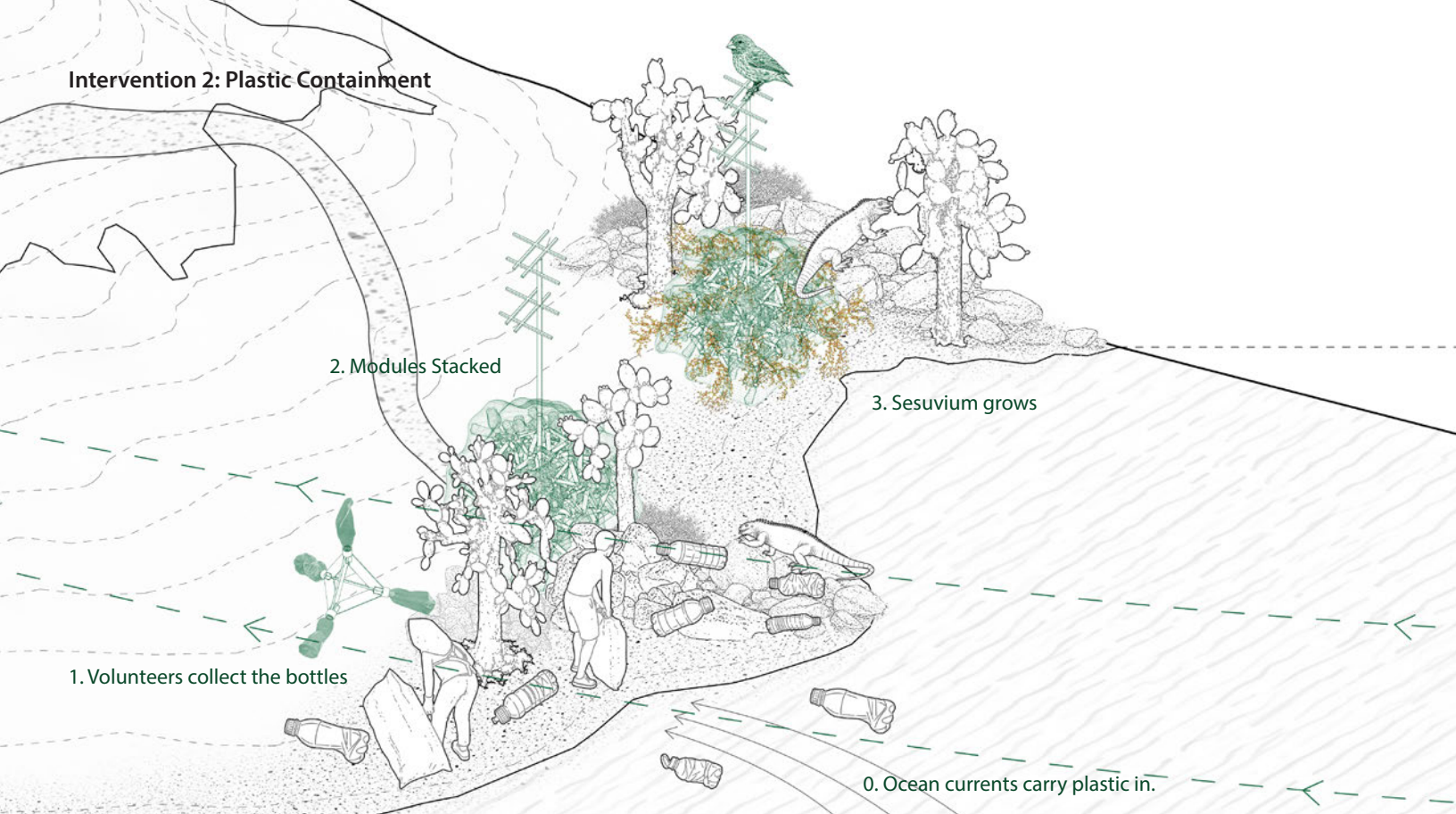
Water Tank

Rail

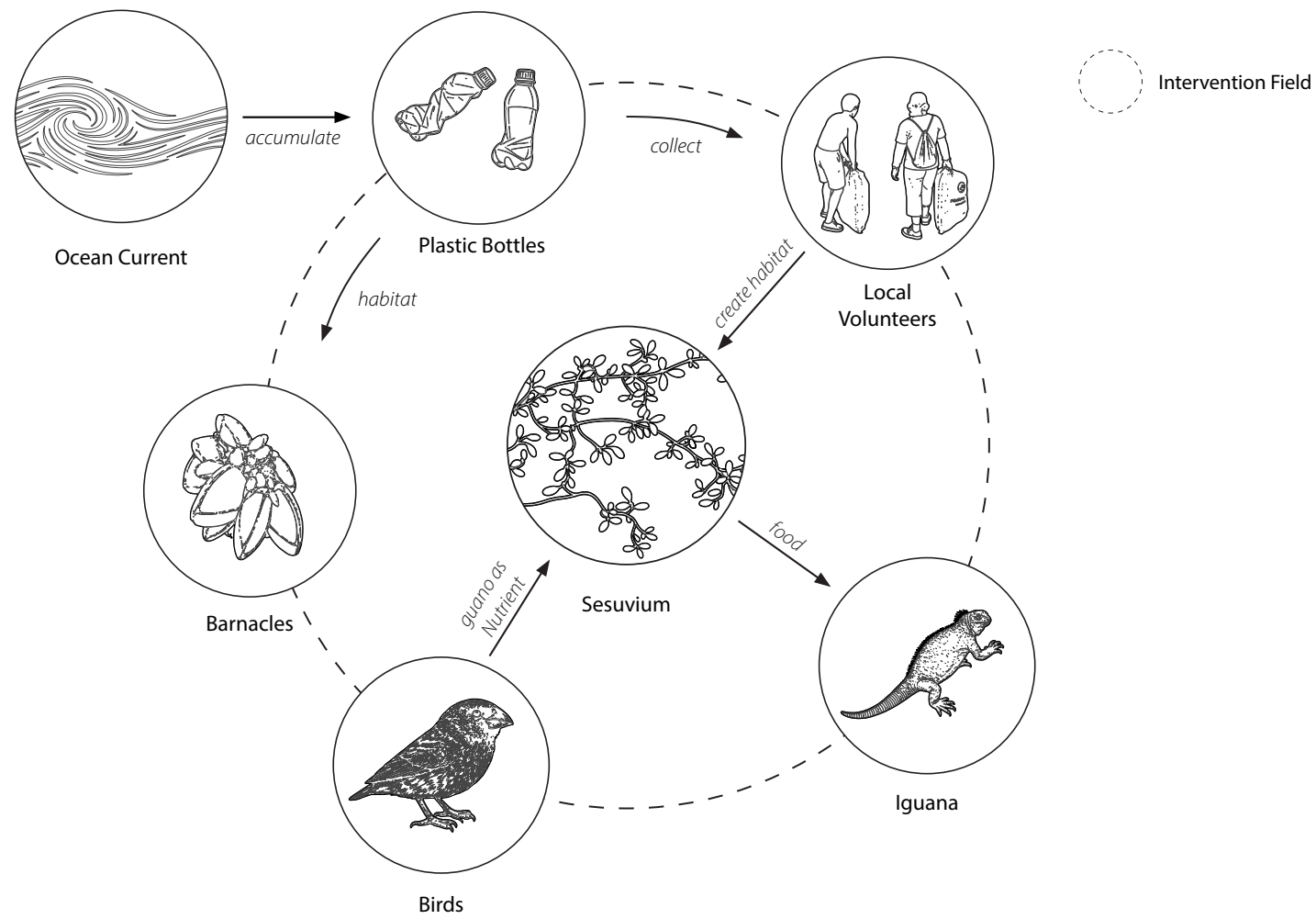
Foundation

Pots and Irrigation

Bed Structure

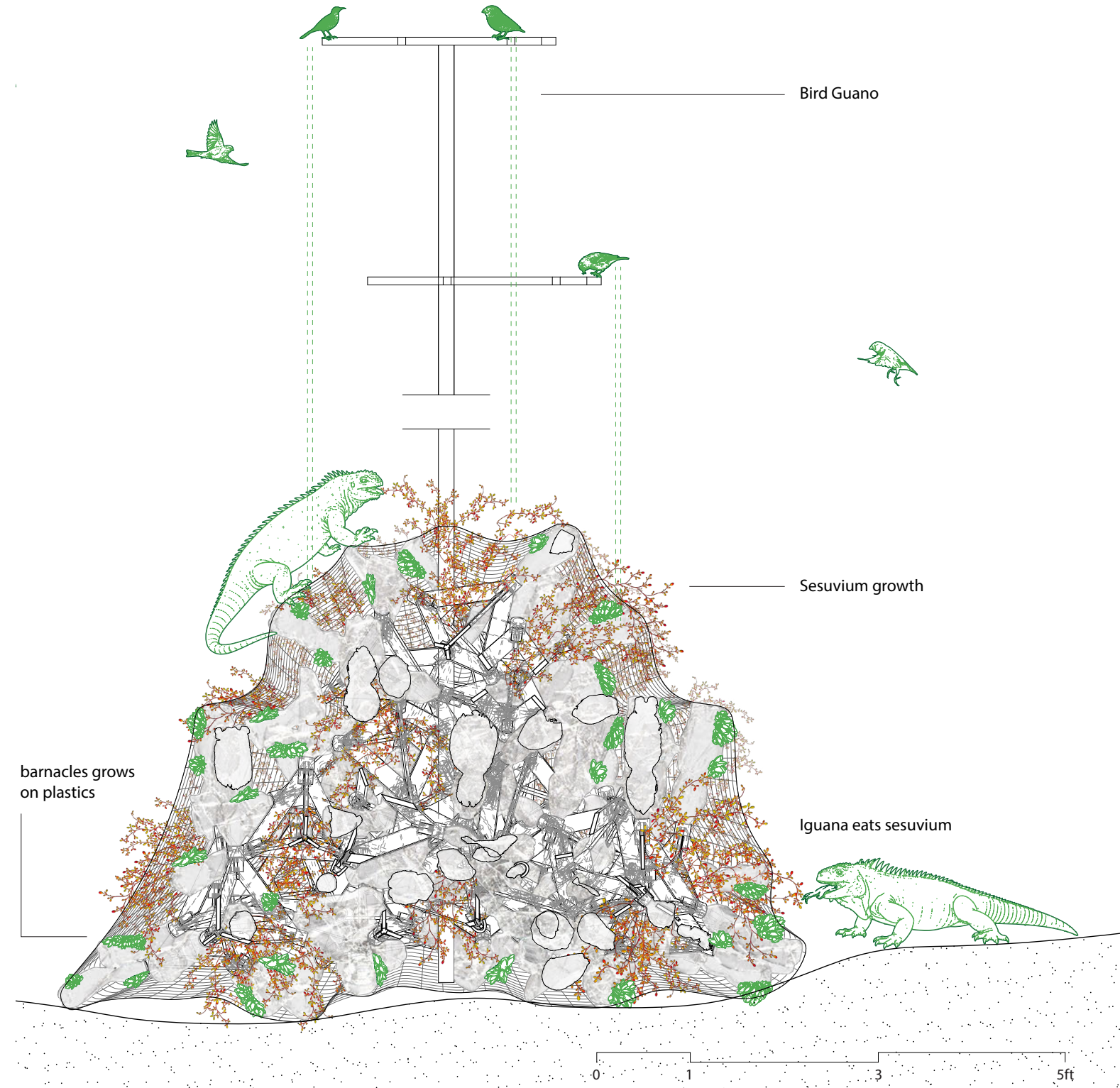


Metabolic Cycle of the Intervention

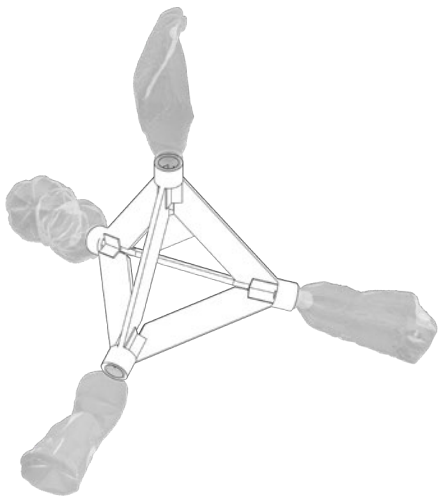


Metabolic Section

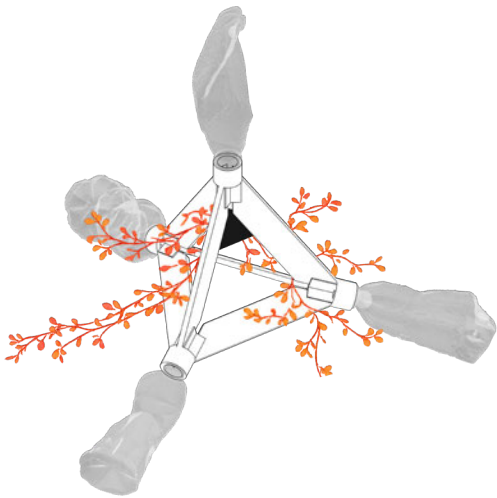
Collected plastic is sealed into the landscape as a stable substrate, where Sesuvium grows across the surface and anchors the structure. Birds' droppings provide nutrients for them to grow and as it becomes a living ground, marine iguanas, and barnacles occupy different layers of the device, transforming plastic waste into a shared ecological landscape.



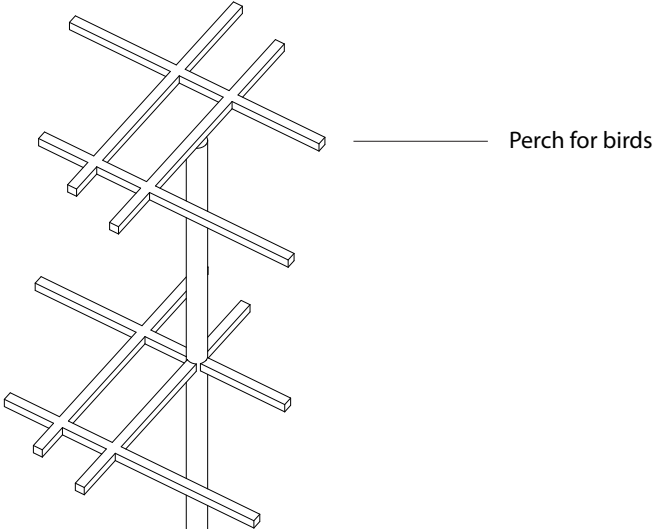
Intervention 2: Plastic Containment



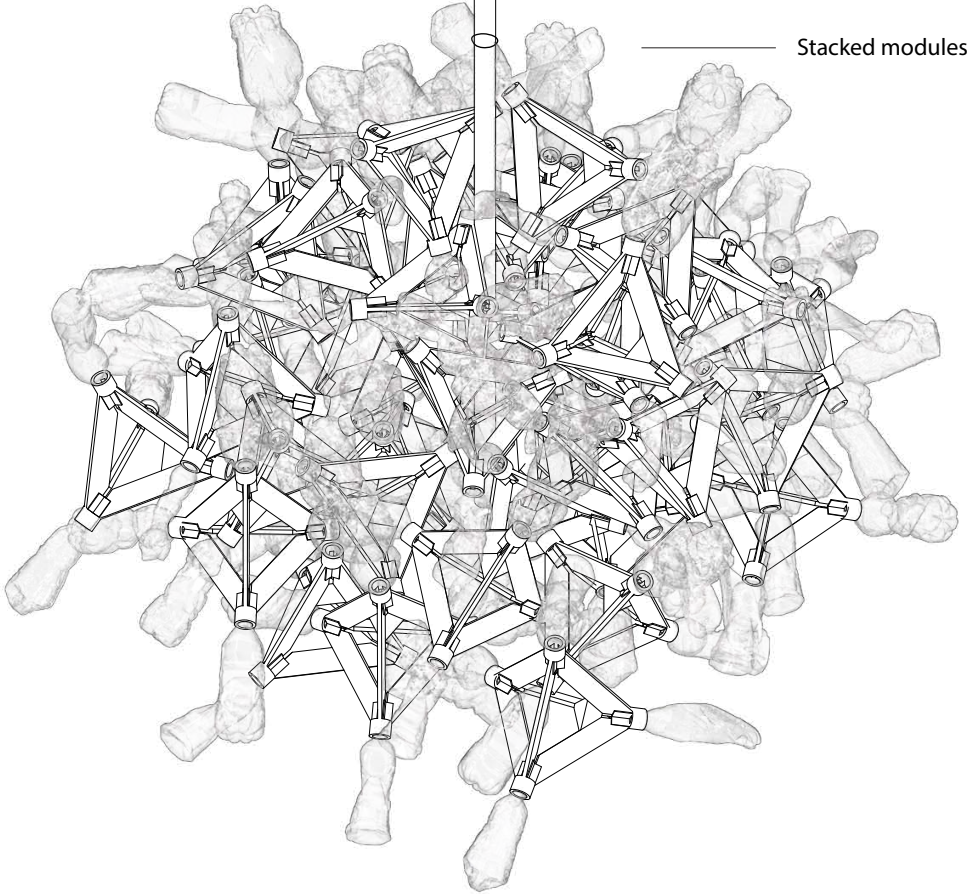
Tripod made with plastic bottles



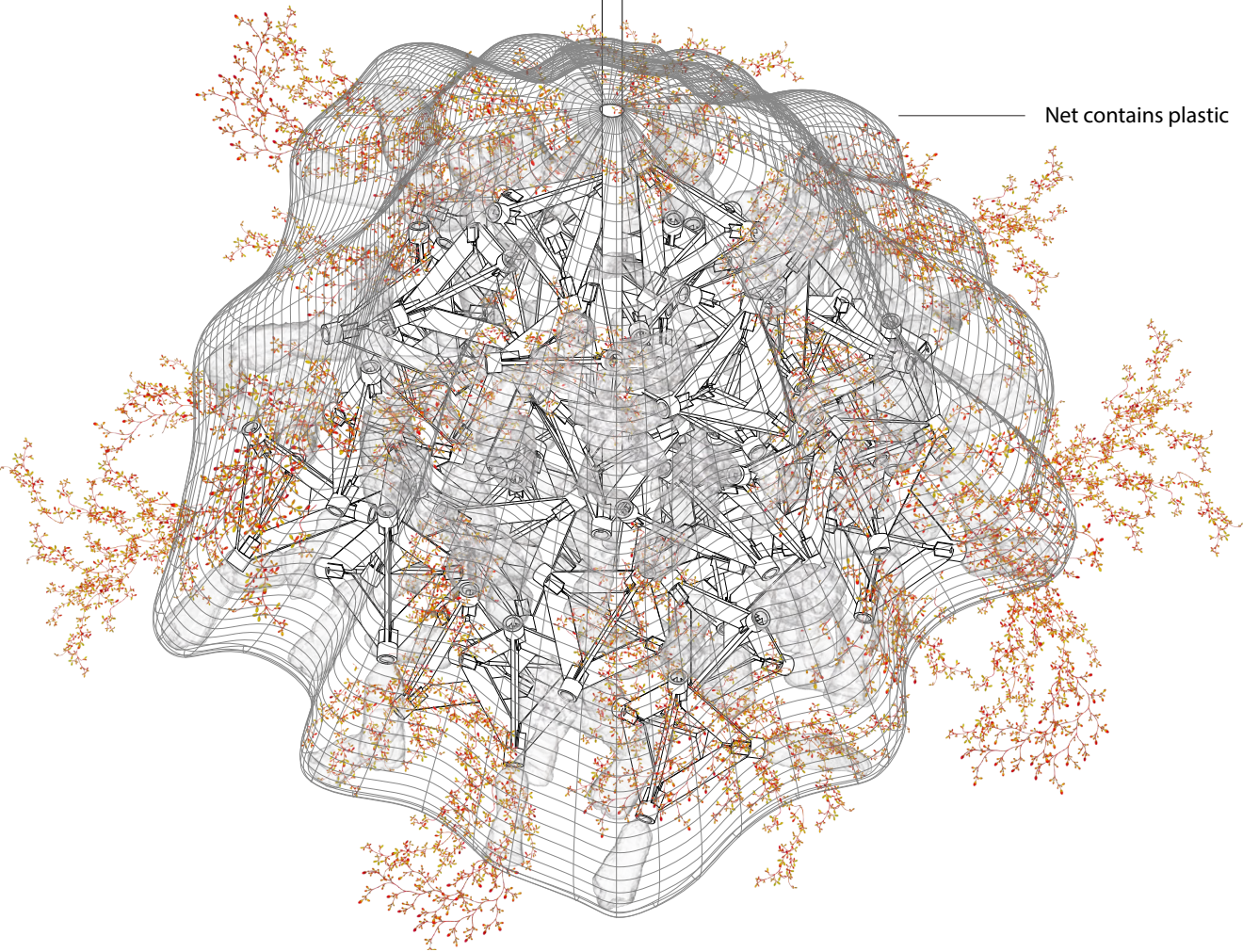
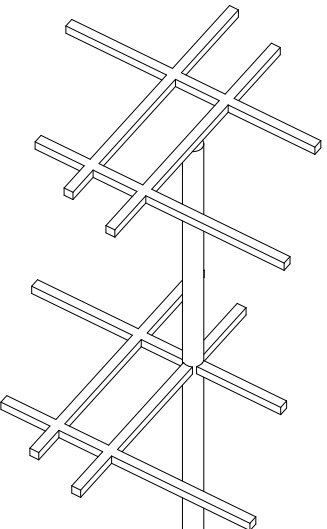
Sesuvium seeds



Perch for birds



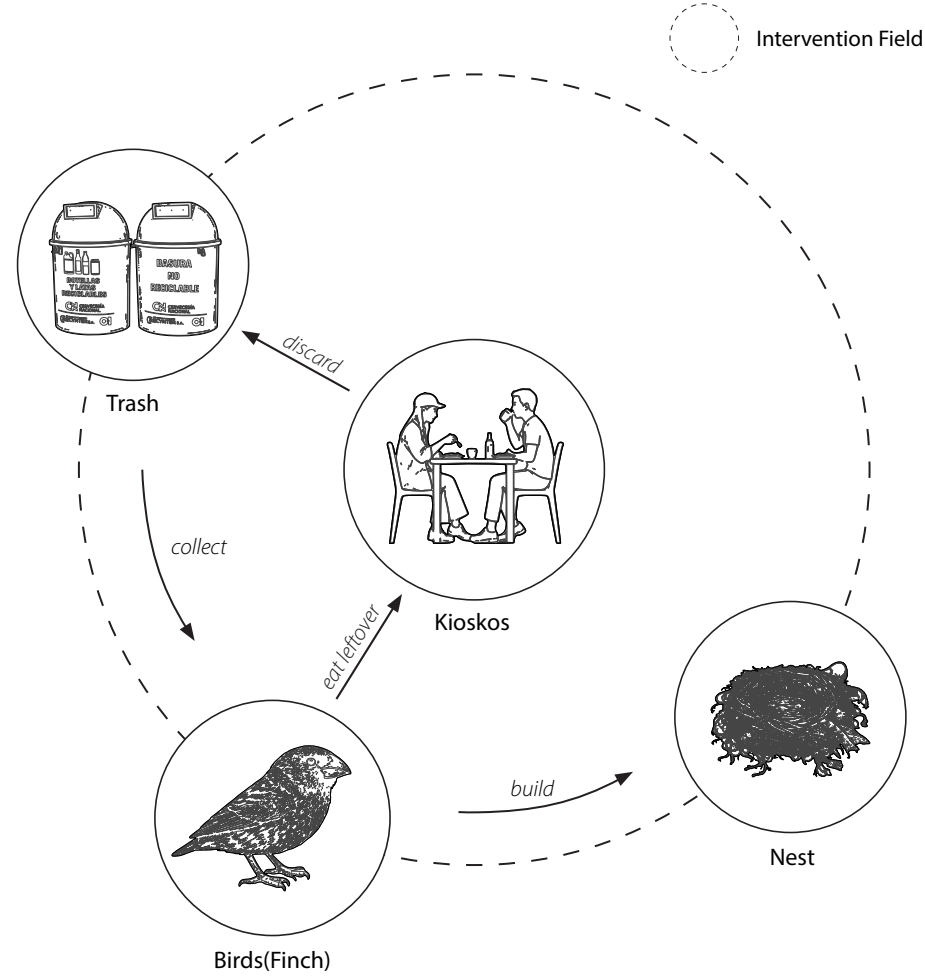
Stacked modules



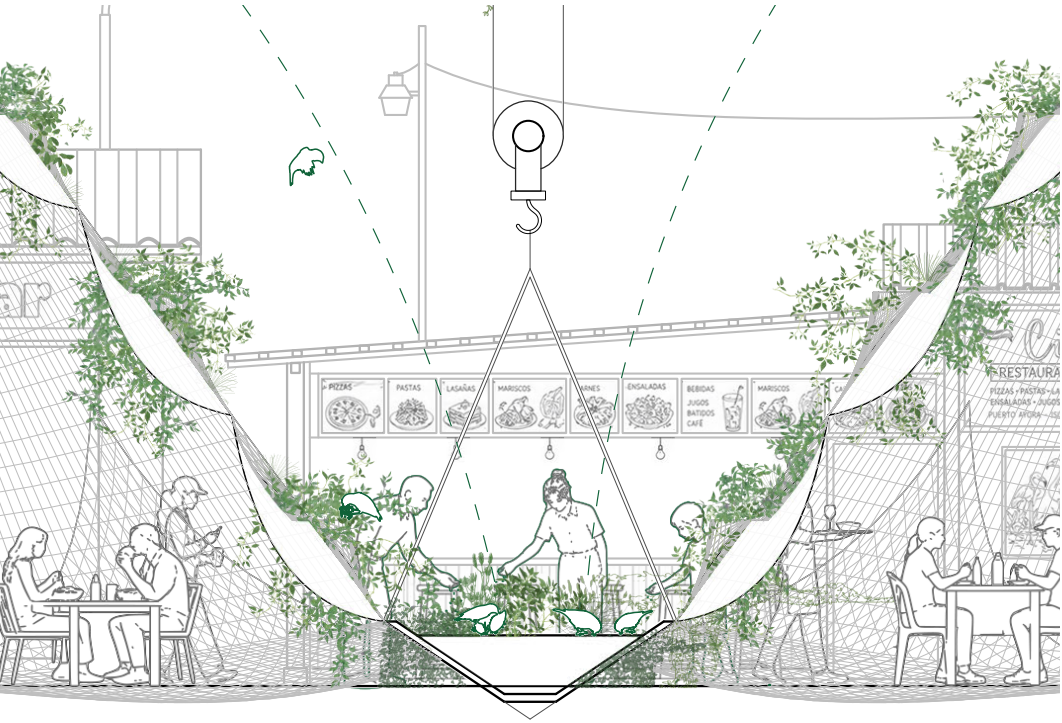
Net contains plastic

Intervention 3: Visualizing and Reconfiguring Bird - Human Relations

Metabolic Cycle

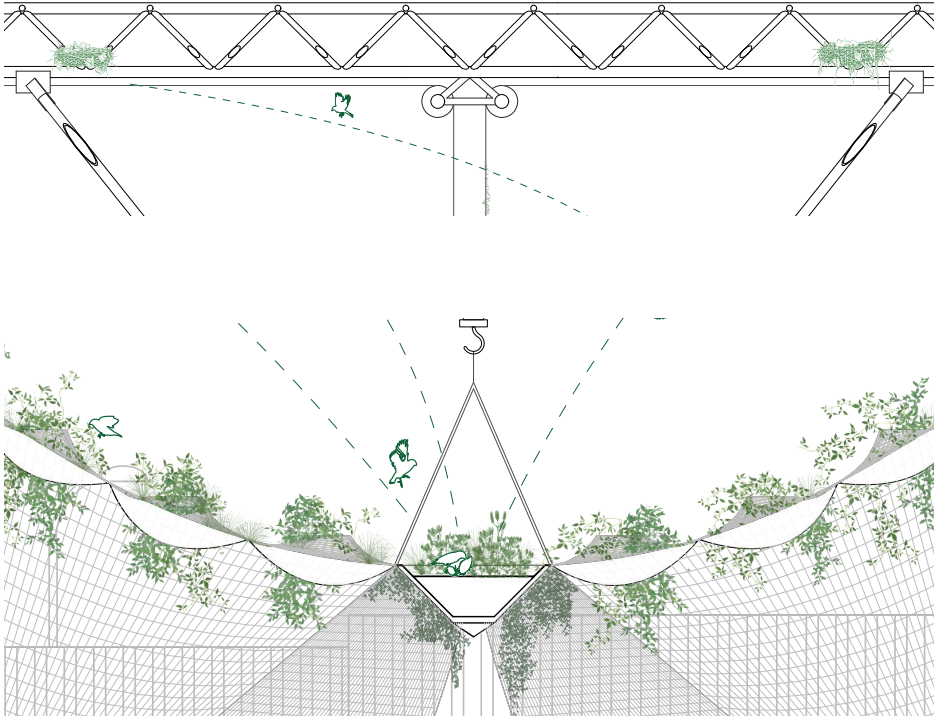


Metabolic Section

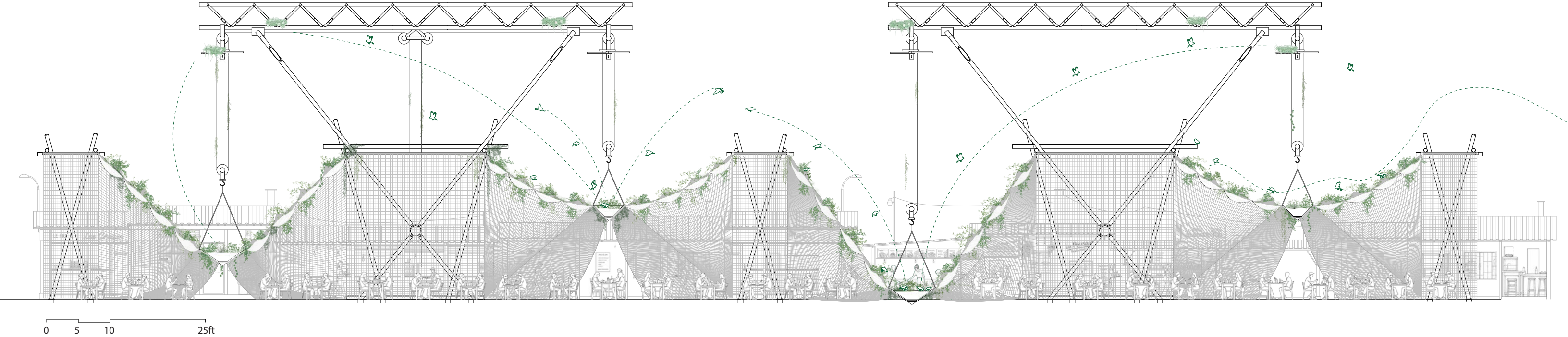


Feeding finch when lowered

This intervention intensifies the existing entanglement between finches and the urban food culture of Puerto Ayora's kioskos. In this area, finches feed on leftover food and use human debris as nesting material. The intervention makes these behaviors visible and spatially regulated by clarifying the territories of birds and humans. Through height-adjustable pots that support nesting and perching, the canopy can be modulated in both form and density, transforming an informal coexistence into a deliberate architectural relationship.

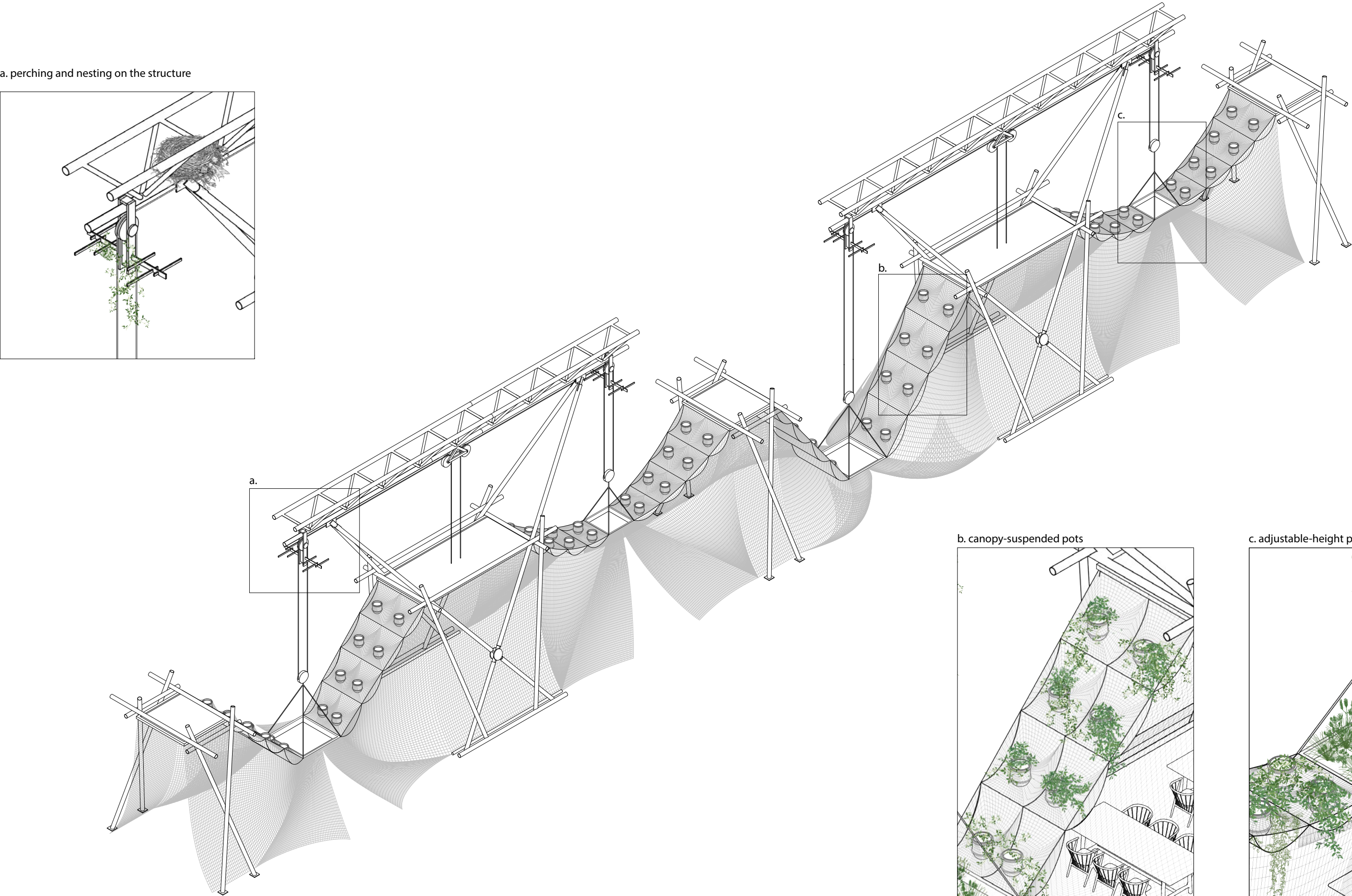
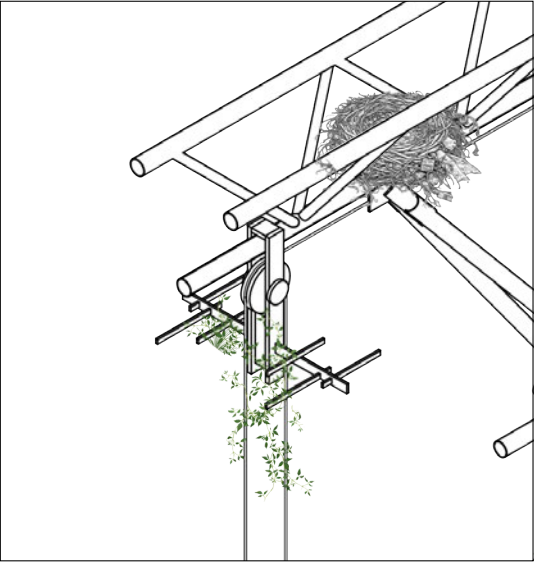


Finch's territory above the kioskos

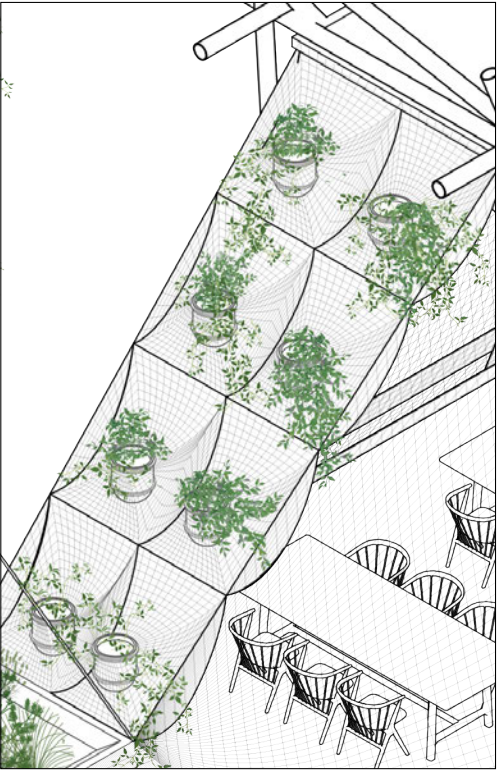


Intervention 3: Visualizing and Reconfiguring Bird - Human Relations

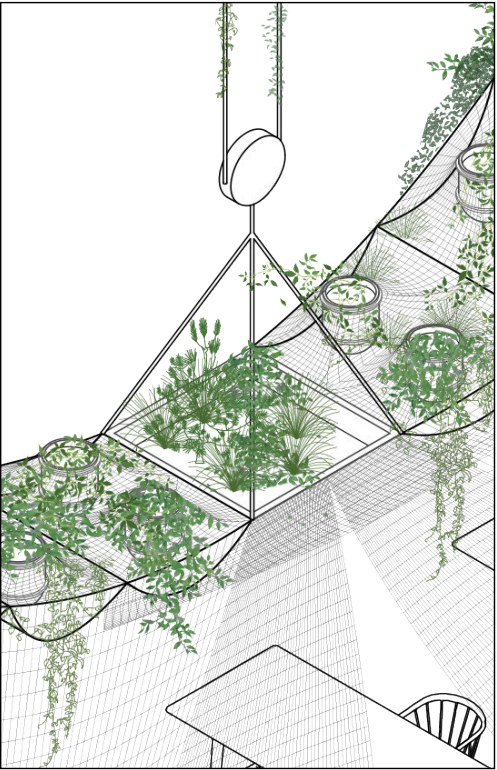
a. perching and nesting on the structure



b. canopy-suspended pots



c. adjustable-height pot modulates canopy form



ABSTRACT

This essay examines the transformation of the concept of the social condenser through a historical comparison between Soviet Constructivism and Stalinism. In early Constructivism, the social condenser was conceived as an experimental architectural device that sought to reorganize everyday life by structuring movement, interaction, and routine. Projects such as workers’ clubs and the Narkomfin building by Moisei Ginzburg aimed to produce new socialist relations through spatial and behavioral engineering.

Under Stalinism, this logic shifts from the design of individual behavior to the concentration of collective activity. As analyzed by Michał Murawski, the Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw operates as a “Supreme Building” that consolidates diverse programs within a single monumental form, functioning as a social and spatial focal point at the scale of the city. Rather than abandoning the Constructivist concept, Stalinist architecture intensifies and expands it. The multi-functional logic of earlier social condensers is preserved, but amplified through scale, centralization, and symbolic clarity, transforming the architectural device from a system that engineers everyday life into one that organizes and concentrates society as a whole.

CONSTRUCTIVISM AND THE PRODUCTION OF COLLECTIVE LIFE

Constructivist architecture can be understood as emerging from a post-revolutionary context in which the legal, spatial, and economic structures of everyday life were being dismantled and reorganized. Manfredo Tafuri’s account of the early Soviet avant-garde emphasizes this shift from autonomous artistic language toward the construction of reality itself. Constructivism moves “to architecture in the broadest sense of the word” and subordinates art to society through functional organization, economy, and constructiveness. This means that housing was no longer simply a private domestic matter, but became part of a broader project of reorganizing social life and production. In this sense, the “openness” of the post-revolutionary moment does not mean freedom in an abstract sense, but the instability produced by the active dismantling and reconstruction of the legal, spatial, and economic structures that had previously organized everyday life.

Within this context, architecture could not remain a question of style or formal expression alone. Tafuri argues that architectural history must be read in relation to intellectual labor and to the development of modes and relations of production. Architecture therefore becomes meaningful as a practice that reacts to and participates in larger transformations of labor, production, and social organization. This is where Ginzburg’s Style and Epoch becomes important. His rejection of “style” can be read as a rejection of architecture as mere appearance. Instead, architecture has to respond to the new epoch by organizing the material conditions of modern life.

From this, the logic of the social condenser becomes clearer. Constructivist architecture does not simply “control behavior” for its own sake. Rather, because the new socialist society required new collective relations, architecture had to create spatial conditions through which those relations could be practiced. Tafuri’s discussion of Constructivism supports this reading: constructivism is described as grounded in collectivity, the subordination of art to society, functional organization, economy, and constructiveness. Thus, circulation, communal programs, shared kitchens, corridors, and collective facilities are architectural mechanisms for making new forms of everyday life possible.

So for Narkomfin, the point is not simply that architecture “makes people behave.” A stronger argument is that because post-revolutionary social relations were being reconstructed, architecture became a tool for producing collective habits. Behavior is the medium through which social relations are reorganized. The social condenser works by designing repeated encounters, shared routines, and collective programs so that socialist life is repetitively practiced spatially.

FROM PRODUCTION TO REPRODUCTION: THE RECONFIGURATION OF THE SOCIAL CONDENSER

The transformation from Constructivist to Stalinist architecture does not mark the disappearance of the social condenser, but its reconfiguration. In both cases, architecture operates as a device for organizing social relations. However, while Constructivism emerges in a context in which such relations are not yet stabilized and must therefore be experimentally produced, Stalinism assumes these relations to be already defined and seeks instead to stabilize and monumentalize them.

Architecture thus shifts from a tool of production to one of reproduction. Social relations are no longer generated through experimental spatial arrangements, but continuously reinforced through repetition and accumulation. The Palace of Culture and Science in Warsaw exemplifies this shift, where the accumulation of programs replaces the dispersion of functions, and the social condenser operates not by producing relations, but by consolidating them.

This transformation can be more precisely understood through Manfredo Tafuri’s reading of the avant-garde, which provides a theoretical framework for explaining why the social condenser is realized differently across the Constructivist and Stalinist periods. Tafuri’s reading of the avant-garde helps clarify why the social condensers should not be understood simply as different building types or as a collection of communal programs.

For Tafuri, the early Soviet avant-garde emerges from a crisis in which artistic language is no longer able to remain autonomous from historical reali-

In Constructivism, behavior becomes the medium through which social relations are reorganized.

Architecture thus shifts from a tool for producing new social relations to one for reproducing relations presumed to be already achieved.

From Production to Legibility: The Social Condenser as a Device for Reconfiguring Social Relations

The Social Condenser from Constructivism to Stalinism

Course	Architecture and Socialism
Type	Writing
Instructor	Reinhold Martin
Work	Individual
Date	Apr. - May. 2026

Key Concepts: Social Condenser, Retroactive fulfillment, Constructivism, Stalinism,

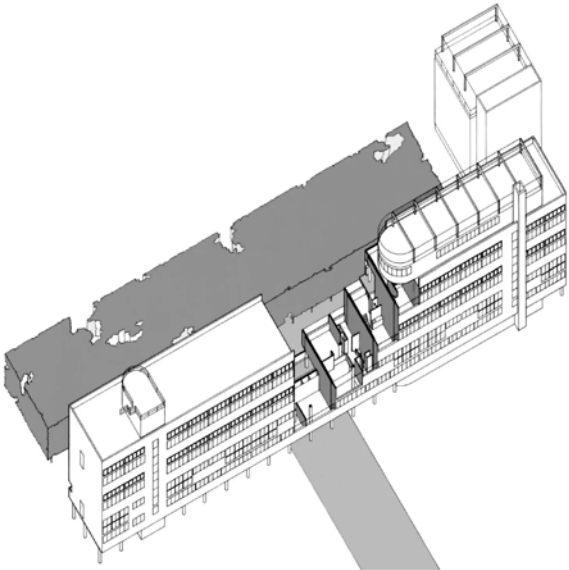


Figure1. Axonometric Drawing of The Narkomfin Building

ty. He describes the avant-garde as operating on the “boundary line separating the avant-garde itself from the reality principle,” where the problem is the relation between artistic practice and social reality. This is why, in the early 1920s, the avant-garde attempts to transform the “bridge” between a devastated language and reality into a “door,” opening artistic practice toward institutional and social organization. In this sense, Constructivism does not simply represent a new society, but it attempts to become one of the mechanisms through which that society can be produced.

This is crucial for understanding the Constructivist’s social condenser. In their context, architecture is an operative device rather than an image or representation of collectivism. Tafuri frames the problem as one of organization: whether the intelligentsia would remain merely a “fellow traveler” of political organization or become an alternative form of organization itself. In other words, this marks a shift in which architecture is no longer conceived as a cultural practice that merely reflects or accompanies political transformation, but as an active organizational instrument that participates directly in the structuring of social relations. He then contrasts humanitarian attempts to unify creative activity with the alliance between formalism and Constructivism, which presented itself as the “homology of the October Revolution.” The social condenser belongs to this second logic. It is not a cultural symbol added to socialism from the outside, but an architectural attempt to participate in the construction of socialist social relations.

From this perspective, the Constructivist social condenser works through production. Its purpose is not simply to gather people, nor merely to control behavior, but to produce new collective habits through space. Communal kitchens, shared circulation, collective facilities, clubs, and workers’ housing are meaningful because they translate the revolutionary project into everyday practice. They turn architecture into a “door”: a passage from formal experiment into the organization of life. The social condenser is therefore experimental because the social relations it seeks to produce are themselves still unstable. The building must test, induce, and rehearse new forms of collectivity. The shift to Stalinist architecture can then be understood as a transformation of this same organizational ambition. Tafuri shows that Constructivism already contains a desire to organize, which means not destroying old forms, but converting artistic and architectural practice into a system capable of structuring social life. But under Stalinism, this desire no longer operates as open-ended experiment. The social relations that Constructivism attempted to produce are now treated by the state as already achieved. As a result, the function of the social condenser changes. It no longer opens a “door” toward the experimental production of new relations, but instead, it stabilizes and monumentalizes relations that are claimed to already exist.

This is why the Stalinist social condenser should not be understood as

the disappearance of Constructivist logic, but as its reconfiguration. The organizational ambition remains, but its mode changes from production to consolidation. In Constructivism, architectural organization is directed toward the formation of new social habits. In Stalinism, architectural organization is directed toward the repeated confirmation of a unified socialist order. The social condenser becomes less a laboratory of everyday life and more a monumental apparatus for making social relations visible, collective, and seemingly self-evident.

Tafuri’s discussion of Soviet urbanism also helps explain why this shift takes the form of programmatic accumulation. In his account of the Narva district in Leningrad, public buildings, workers’ housing, schools, factory-kitchens, stores, and houses of culture are not isolated objects. They are arranged along urban axes and linked through a concentration of functions. Tafuri describes this as an urban structure in which “public edifices” define the pivotal components of the complex, while the axis becomes an infrastructure that unites urban components with a “high density of functions.”

This logic can be extended to the Stalinist case. In the Warsaw Palace, the accumulation of programs does not merely provide amenities. It concentrates culture, education, assembly, leisure, and political ritual within a single monumental center. If the Constructivist social condenser disperses functions through everyday circulation in order to produce new habits, the Stalinist social condenser accumulates functions in order to repeatedly stage the collective identity of the socialist state. Therefore, read through Tafuri’s urban logic, the same shift becomes legible. The social condenser transforms from experimental production to monumental reproduction.

This transformation also marks a shift in scale and experience. What appears in the Soviet context as a distributed urban logic is reconfigured in the Stalinist case as a centralized and vertical concentration within a single monumental structure. As a result, architecture no longer operates through the gradual formation of everyday collective life, but through its repeated staging and reinforcement.

In this sense, the transformation from Constructivism to Stalinism can be understood as a change in the political operation of architecture. While Constructivism uses architecture to produce social relations that are not yet fully formed, Stalinism uses it to consolidate relations that are assumed to already exist. The social condenser therefore does not disappear, but is reconfigured from an experimental device that induces new forms of behavior to a monumental apparatus that gathers, repeats, and confirms a collective order.

The social condenser becomes...
monumental apparatus
for making social relations visible, collective,
and seemingly self-evident.



Figure2. *Palace of Culture and Science*

VISIBILITY PRODUCES HISTORICAL LEGITIMACY

The previous section argued that the transformation of the social condenser from Constructivism to Stalinism can be understood operationally as a shift from the experimental production of social relations toward their spatial reproduction and stabilization. However, this transition can also be understood at another level: not simply as a transformation in how architecture organizes social relations, but in how architecture organizes the historical perception of those relations. The distinction is therefore between two different ways architecture structures historical intelligibility. If Constructivist architecture operated within an unresolved revolutionary present whose social relations still required experimental production, Stalinist architecture increasingly reorganized those relations as historically coherent and materially stabilized through repetition, monumentality, and centralized collective experience. In this sense, architecture does not only organizing social relations spatially, but organizing how those relations are historically experienced and understood.

The social condenser...
is reconfigured from an
experimental device
that induces new forms
of behavior to a monu-
mental apparatus that
gathers, repeats, and
confirms a collective
order.

Therefore, the operational transformation can be understood as a change in how architecture organizes the historical perception of socialist relations. This shift in emphasis is crucial for understanding why Stalinist architecture cannot be reduced to a stylistic rejection of the avant-garde. As Tafuri argues, “the manipulation of forms always has an objective beyond the forms themselves,” meaning that architectural form participates in broader historical and ideological structures rather than functioning autonomously. From this perspective, Stalinist monumentality did not simply replace Constructivist experimentation with symbolic representation. It produced a different historical experience of socialist relations. Relations that had previously appeared experimental, contingent, and unresolved were increasingly encountered as fixed, continuous, and materially present through monumental form, centralized institutions, and repeated collective rituals.

Murawski’s analysis of the Palace Complex is useful here because it shows how programmatic accumulation could produce a historical image of socialism as already realized. The congress halls, theaters, educational institutions, exhibitions, offices, festivals, and everyday public activities did not merely expand the building’s functions. They repeatedly presented socialist life as centralized, collective, and materially present. The Palace therefore transformed architectural accumulation into a form of historical confirmation. What had previously been projected as an experimental socialist future now appeared as an existing social reality.

RETROACTIVE FULFILLMENT: STALINISM AND THE HISTORICAL REFRAMING OF THE SOCIAL CONDENSER

The transformation from Constructivism to Stalinism can be understood as more than a historical shift in architectural form or political ideology. It also retrospectively reorganizes the meaning of the Constructivist project itself. Following Tafuri, architectural meaning should be treated as something produced through broader systems of intellectual labor, social production, and institutional organization. From this perspective, Stalinist architecture constructs the conditions under which Constructivist social relations appear coherent, historically fulfilled, and socially validated.

This framework clarifies the Constructivist social condenser, but it also complicates how its later transformation should be read. Constructivism can be understood as an attempt to make architecture operative within a historical condition in which new socialist relations were not yet stabilized. Its task was not simply to represent collectivism, but to produce the spatial conditions through which collective life could be practiced.

Yet precisely because these relations were still experimental, their coherence cannot be assumed in advance. The Constructivist social condenser was a project of projection. It proposed social relations that had to be practiced before they could be fully established. This means that its appar-

ent success cannot be measured only within the Constructivist moment itself. It depends on whether later historical and architectural systems make those relations appear stable, repeatable, and socially real.

The shift to Stalinist architecture should therefore be understood not only as a change in architectural operation, but as a retrospective reframing of Constructivism. Stalinism treats the social relations that Constructivism attempted to produce as already established, redirecting architecture toward their stabilization, repetition, and visibility. In doing so, it makes the earlier Constructivist ambition appear historically fulfilled.

This is the crucial point. Stalinist architecture does not simply come after Constructivism as a later phase in a linear development. It reorganizes the meaning of Constructivism from the position of an assumed completion. What had been experimental in the Constructivist social condenser is recoded as the beginning of a social order that Stalinism now monumentalizes. The accumulation of program, the concentration of cultural and political functions, and the repetition of collective experience make socialist relations visible as already coherent. In this way, Stalinist architecture provides Constructivism with an alibi. It makes the experimental production of social relations appear retrospectively validated by their later monumental consolidation.

Katerina Clark’s *The Soviet Novel: History as Ritual* helps explain the temporal logic of this shift. Clark shows that Stalinist culture does not present history as an open-ended development, but as a ritualized narrative moving toward already determined fulfillment. The relevance to architecture is that Stalinist buildings can similarly transform unresolved social processes into visible signs of completion. The Palace does not simply gather programs, but it stages socialist collectivity as if it were already historically achieved. Repetition matters here because this ritual converts process into certainty. By returning to the same monumental center for theater, meetings, exhibitions, education, and collective events, users repeatedly encounter socialism as a completed social order.

Boris Groys’ *The Total Art of Stalinism* strengthens this argument by reframing the relationship between Stalinism and the avant-garde. Rather than interpreting Stalinism as a simple rejection of the avant-garde, Groys argues that Stalinism absorbs, centralizes, and reorganizes the avant-garde project under the authority of the state. For Groys, the historical avant-garde was never concerned solely with artistic form. Its ambition was totalizing. The avant-garde sought to reconstruct life itself through aesthetic organization. As Groys notes, avant-garde artists believed they “must create an entirely new world” and aspired to exercise “absolute power over the world.” Productivist theorists such as Boris Arvatov extended this ambition further, arguing that art should “organize the life of society down to the smallest everyday details.” In this sense, the avant-garde already contained

In this sense, architecture does not only organize social relations spatially, but also organizes how those relations are historically experienced and understood.

Stalinist architecture does not simply come after Constructivism as a later phase in a linear development. It reorganizes the meaning of Constructivism from the position of an assumed completion.

the desire to dissolve the boundary between art and life and to reorganize the total social field.

Groys’ crucial intervention is to argue that Stalinism transfers this ambition from experimental artistic production to centralized political power. He writes that the avant-garde ultimately recognized “the party as the only force capable of implementing its projects,” and therefore “surrenders the project to the real political power.” Stalinism thus appropriates the avant-garde task of constructing a unified reality and reorganizes it through state control. What changes is not the desire to organize life, but the mechanism through which that organization operates. Experimental artistic invention is replaced by centralized orchestration.

Applied to architecture, this interpretation fundamentally changes how Stalinist monumentality should be understood. Monumental architecture is not simply a conservative return to historical style after the radical formal experimentation of Constructivism. Rather, it represents the state-managed continuation of the avant-garde ambition to construct collective life spatially. The social condenser therefore does not disappear under Stalinism. Its logic survives, but its agency changes. Under Constructivism, the social condenser functions experimentally: architecture attempts to generate new collective relations through circulation, communal facilities, and the reorganization of everyday routines. Under Stalinism, these same ambitions are absorbed into a centralized ideological apparatus. The accumulation of program, monumental concentration of functions, and repeated staging of collective activity transform the social condenser from an experimental architectural device into a state-directed mechanism for organizing and reproducing socialist collectivity.



Figure3. Outdoor concert in Warsaw’s Plac Defilad(Parade Square)

This interpretation is especially important because it challenges the assumption that Stalinist architecture merely follows Constructivism chronologically. Through Groys’ framework, Stalinism can instead be understood as retroactively reorganizing the meaning of the avant-garde itself. The apparent coherence and unity of socialist collective life are not inherited directly from Constructivist experimentation, but are produced afterward through monumental repetition, ideological centralization, and the continuous spatial staging of collective identity. Stalinist architecture therefore functions not as proof that Constructivist experiments had already succeeded, but as the system that makes those experiments appear historically fulfilled.

CONCLUSION

Together, Tafuri, Clark, and Groys allow the transformation from Constructivism to Stalinism to be read as a shift in the historical operation of architecture itself. Tafuri explains why architecture must be analyzed as an operation within social production. Clark explains how Stalinist culture turns historical process into ritualized completion. Groys explains how Stalinism absorbs the avant-garde project and reorganizes it as a total system. Through these three frameworks, the Stalinist social condenser can be understood as retroactive: it does not simply follow Constructivism, but reorganizes its experimental aims into a visible, repeatable, and seemingly completed social order.

This is why Stalinist architecture should not be read as proof that Constructivist experiments had already succeeded. Rather, it creates the spatial and symbolic conditions under which their social relations appear coherent and historically validated. Through monumental form, programmatic accumulation, controlled movement, and repeated collective experience, architecture filters social reality. It determines which relations become visible, which are collectively experienced, and which remain latent or suppressed.

The power of architecture, then, lies in its capacity to organize visibility across time. Constructivism uses architecture to produce relations that are still unfinished. Stalinism uses architecture to make such relations appear already complete. In this sense, Stalinist architecture operates retroactively: it does not truly complete the Constructivist project, but stabilizes and legitimizes it by rendering its desired social relations visible, repeatable, and self-evident.

Stalinism treats the social relations that Constructivism attempted to produce as already established, redirecting architecture toward their stabilization, repetition, and visibility. In doing so, it makes the earlier Constructivist ambition appear historically fulfilled.



Figure4. Swimming pool in the Palace of Culture and Science

Through these three frameworks, the Stalinist social condenser can be understood as retroactive: it does not simply follow Constructivism, but reorganizes its experimental aims into a visible, repeatable, and seemingly completed social order.

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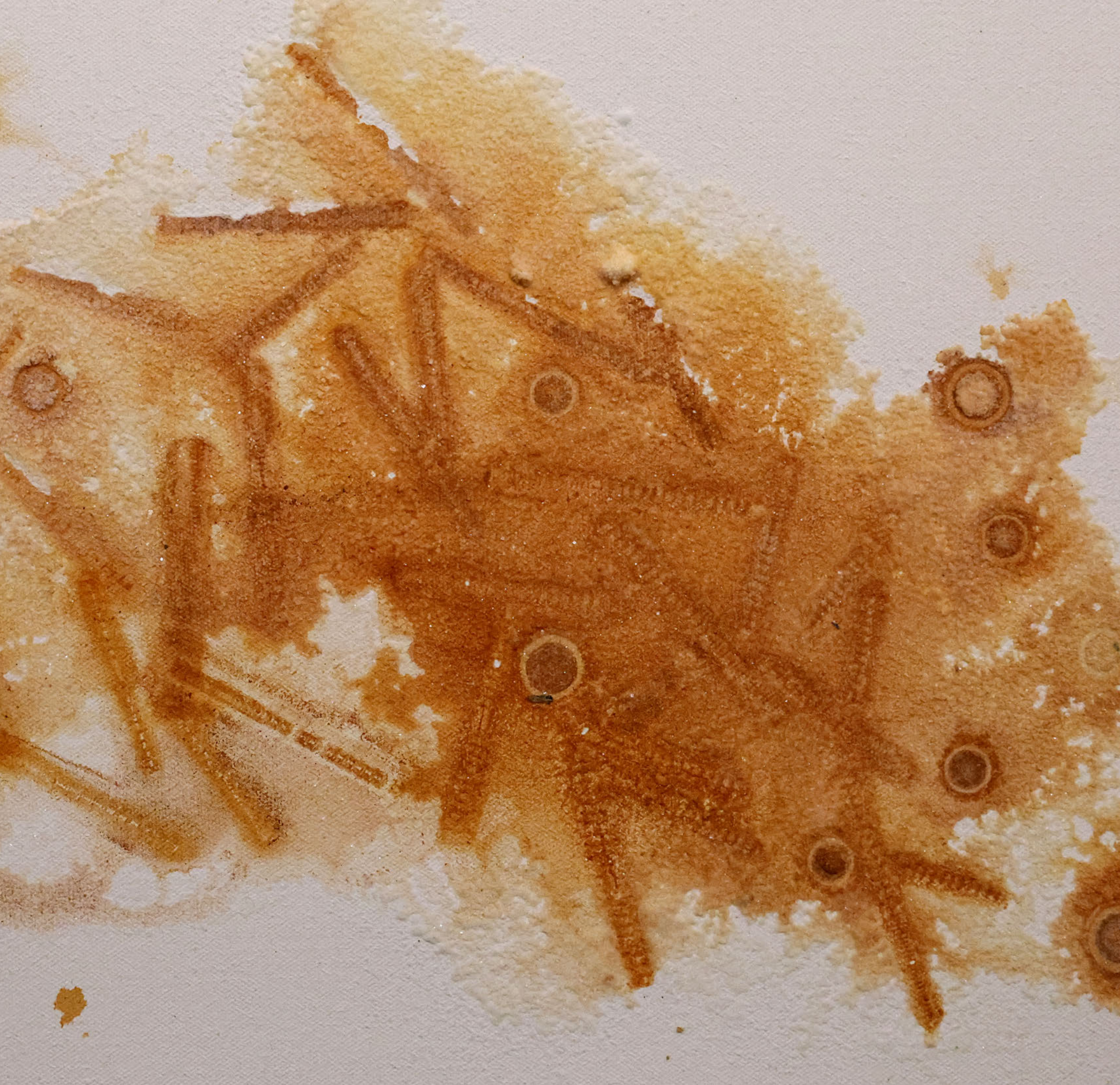
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Rust River Record

Course	Metabolic Materialities: Between the Animate and the Inanimate
Type	Research, Artwork
Work	Individual
Year	Jan - May 26.

This work frames corrosion as a record of extraction and pollution cycles. Rust traces accumulate as the material residue of these processes, shaped through the interaction of animate and inanimate actors. The temporal inscription of material flows and their entangled agencies are emerged on the surface.

Plain steel is first activated with vinegar to initiate corrosion, and salt is applied to accelerate oxidation. This work allows them to manifest through material transformation. Corrosion becomes a medium through which the histories of extraction, circulation, and decay are registered. The resulting surface holds these traces as both evidence and accumulation, where each mark indexes a broader network of forces. In this way, rust operates as an active process that records the ongoing exchanges between matter, environment, and time.

Extraction Cycle of Iron Ore and the Consequences



