PLEASE RESPECT [THE BOUNDARY]

Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

PREFACE

The act of drawing is to delineate. Making a mark with a pen or pencil always creates a boundary. In retrospect, my work at GSAPP has recurrently addressed the notion of boundaries - be they physical, ethereal, static, or transient - challenging the rigid edges immune to change.

Negotiating these boundaries is the way forward for creating architecture with agency. The essence of this exploration lies in the acknowledgment that in any context, multiple realities coexist, shaped by various actors. Consequently, the demarcation of boundaries becomes inherently subjective, posing the question: who holds the authority to define the "true" boundary? Hence, the title of this portfolio, 'Please Respect the Boundary,' emerges as a supplication. It represents an initial foray into the subject, guiding me towards designing spaces not as singular entities, but as repositories of multiple personalities, aptly termed 'Spatial Alter Egos.' These spaces possess

agency beyond mere accommodation; they serve as catalysts for alliances and foster environments conducive to coexistence.

Yet, this portfolio remains a work in flux, open to new negotiations as they arise. Each project demands new ideas to be layered and arguments to be refined, as I continue to build a practice that represents all the value systems that are important to me.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep gratitude towards Columbia GSAPP for providing the incredible opportunity and resources that made these projects possible. I am forever indebted to my professors who tirelessly guided me, my collaborators who worked alongside me, and everyone who supported me throughout this transformative year.
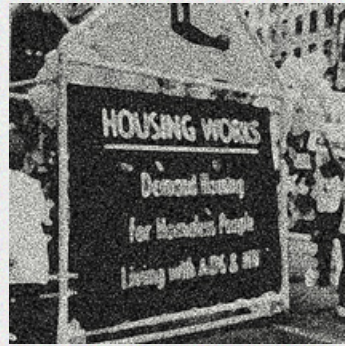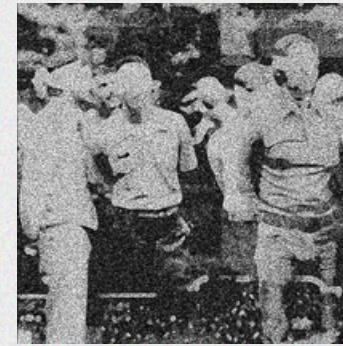
a balancing act
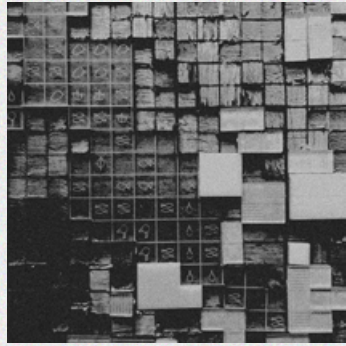
slow transformation

a living archive of practice

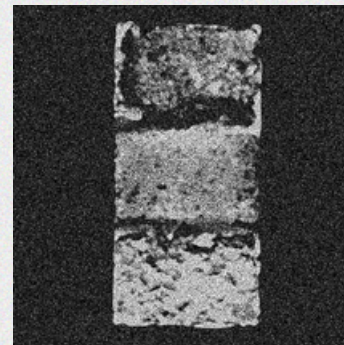shaping the figure and the ground : housing works
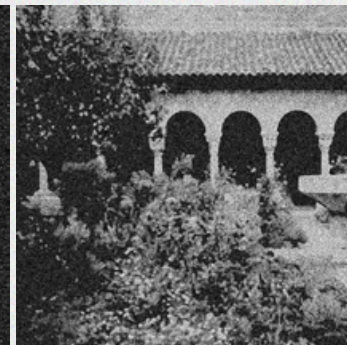
pawns of Iran

queer time

innocuous tints

specular surfaces

Hadass and Vaishnavi's accountability index

A BALANCING ACT

Today, the Delta is in a precarious situation. As host to myriad human and non-human creatures, Delta systems are among the most unique ecosystems on Earth. In the Central Valley of California, the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta is a system that continues to exist despite human colonization of the region. The systematic encroachment of land started with the levee constructions of the 1800s and disrupted delicate relationships within the Delta, modifying existing relationships and ecotones thanks to the Central Valley Project. While California has made concerted efforts to address the situation—including a proposal for coequal goals—the

ecology of the Delta continues to decline. A long list of conservation strategies, such as the Bay-Delta Plan and the Delta Reform Act, along with specialized agencies for each sector, give us glimpses into California's complicated relationships with its ecosystems. What does the future hold for the Delta?

This study examines the boundaries - the ecotones and ecolines - and the modified tensions between biophysical entities and human interventions. The evolution of these boundaries is a response from the ecosystem, which is a reaction to human infrastructure and, by extension, all of

its legislations. The repeated failure of California's desperate efforts demonstrates a lack of recognition for and empathy toward non-human actors. A Balancing Act attempts to unpack how these critical ecosystems have and will continue to alter themselves to persist through time. Recognizing the increasingly important role of atmospheric rivers, it promotes inclusive game play, giving agency to unlikely stakeholders to forge new ecotones through legislative negotiations. It aims to start a conversation to imagine a coequal future for the Delta and all its inhabitants. Perhaps it is time the human agenda is altered to fit into the Delta's.

**Legislating Nature**

Mentors / Elise Hunchuck, Marco Ferrari

Teaching Associate / Ridhi Chopra

Arnold Slough, Image by California Department of Water Resources

In the context of the Delta, the project questions the definition of co-equality.

The Delta will continue to be terraformed moving forward. In order to do that, we have to create new boundaries of and with the ecology establishing new eco-tones.
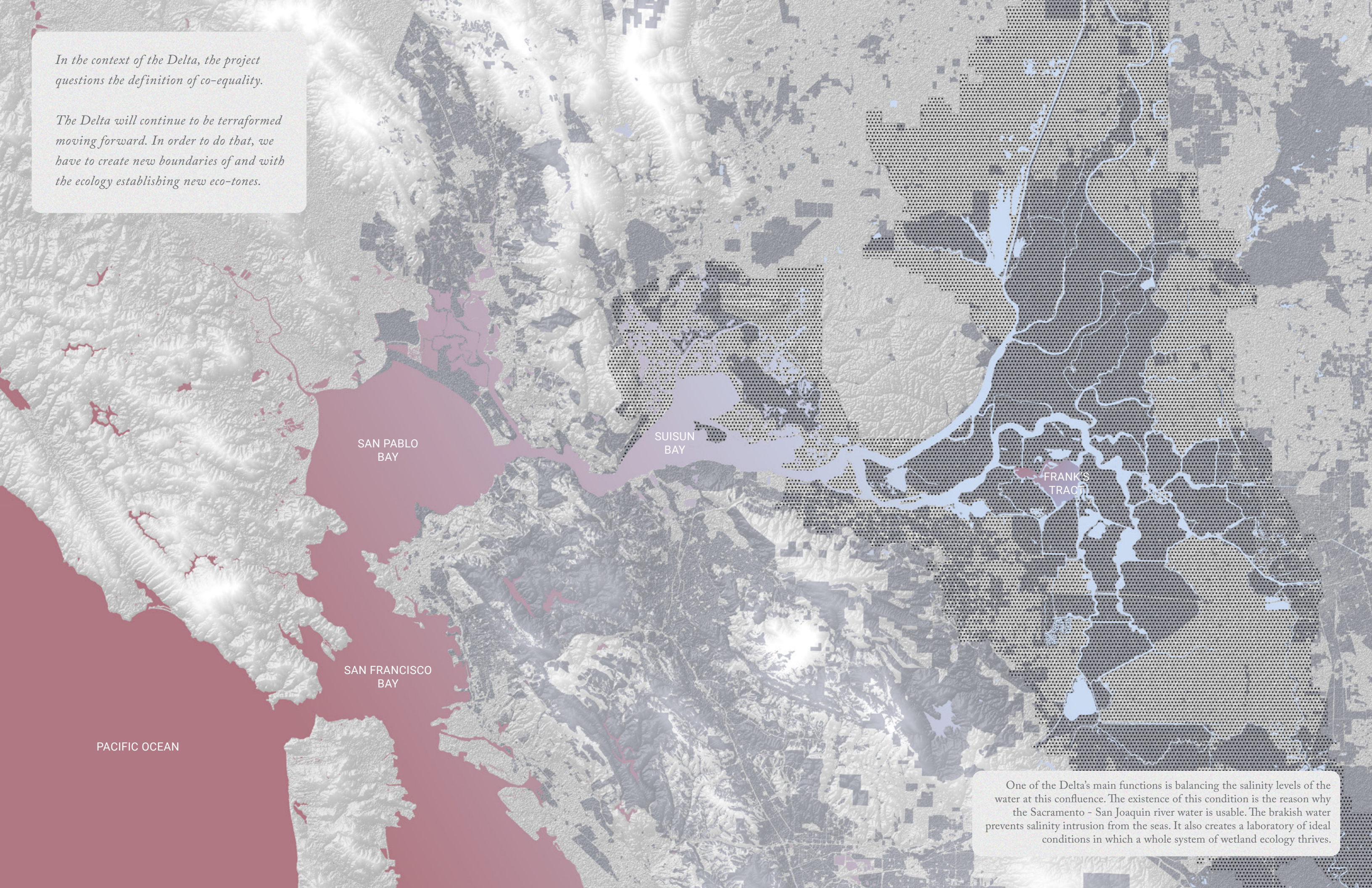
SAN PABLO
BAY

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FRANK'S
TRACT

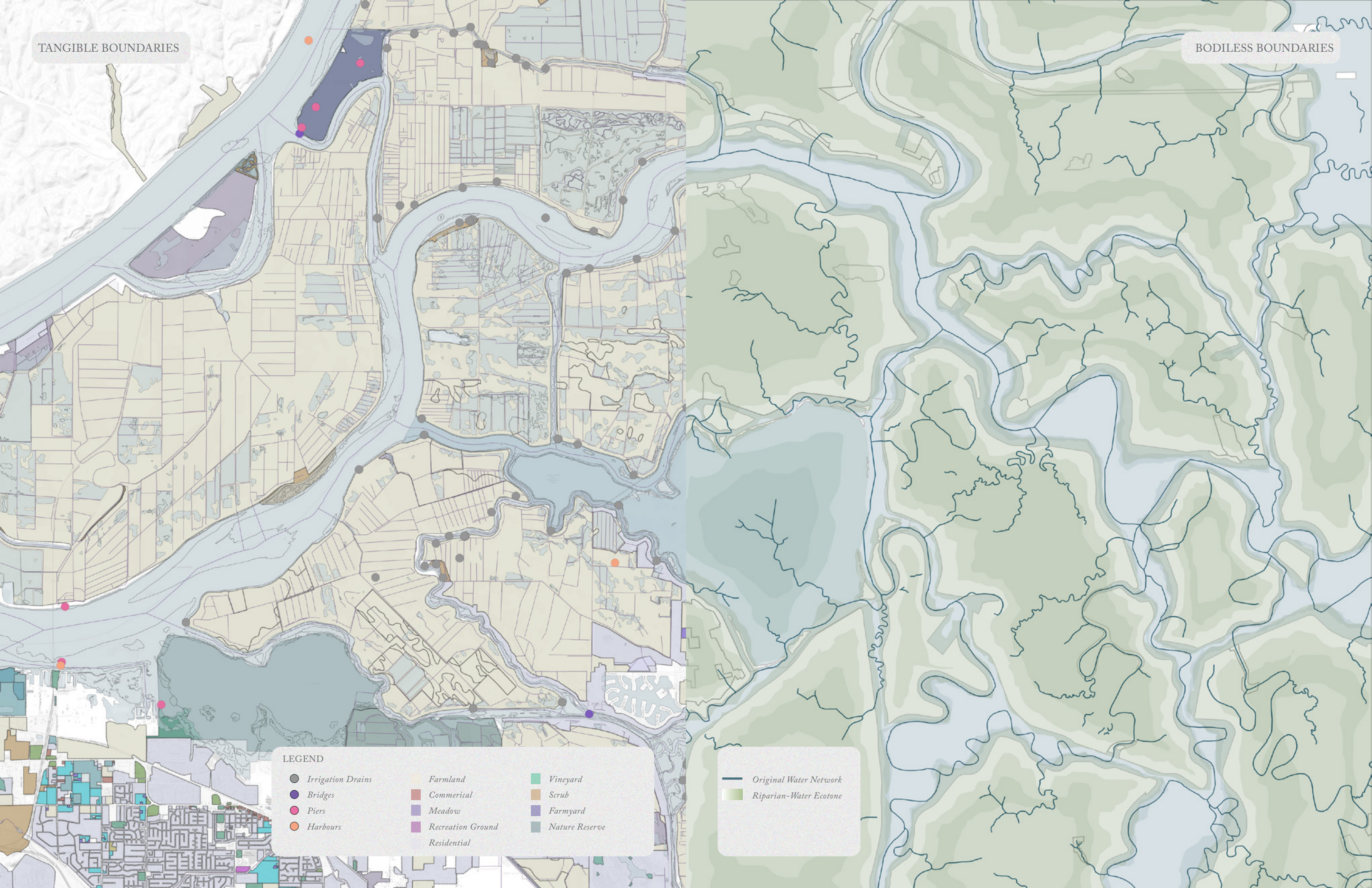SAN FRANCISCO
BAY

PACIFIC OCEAN

One of the Delta's main functions is balancing the salinity levels of the water at this confluence. The existence of this condition is the reason why the Sacramento - San Joaquin river water is usable. The brakish water prevents salinity intrusion from the seas. It also creates a laboratory of ideal conditions in which a whole system of wetland ecology thrives.

LEGEND

- Irrigation Drains
- Bridges
- Piers
- Harbours

Farmland
Commerical
Meadow
Recreation Ground
Residential

Vineyard
Scrub
Farmyard
Nature Reserve

— Original Water Network
  Riparian-Water Ecotone

As we have cut up the landscape and altered its natural routes,

We have eliminated the inherence of the delta, its ability to exist in gradients.

In a non-traditional sense, if we observe blue infrastructure, we can observe repressions that have been imposed on naturally dendritic systems. Similarly, a closer examination of green infrastructure reveals that the mosaic of architectural terraforming will undo itself into a contrasting wetland of randomness.

It appears as though nature is trying to undo all human impositions to restore balance.
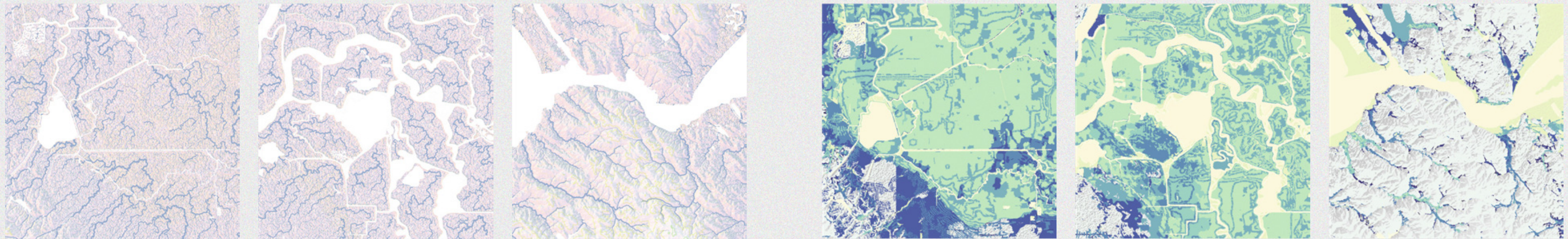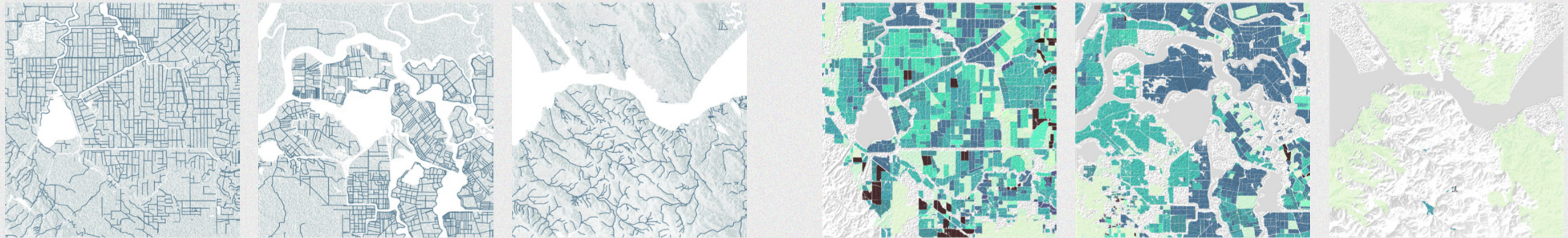
BLUE NETWORKS

GREEN MOSAICS

The legislation that is trying to undo these impositions talks about co-equality, but the most important question to address is :

CO-EQUALITY FROM WHOSE PERSPECTIVE?

The rooms where the legislations are designed seem to be isolated from its context, which is the primary reason the playing field is skewed - creating a divide between the humans and the non-humans.

WATER CODE
DIVISION 35. SACRAMENTO-SAN JOAQUIN DELTA REFORM ACT OF 2009 [85000 - 85350]
(Division 35 added by Stats.2009, 7th Ex. Sess., Ch. 5, Sec. 39.)

PART 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS [85000 - 85067]
(Part 1 added by Stats. 2009, 7th Ex. Sess., Ch. 5, Sec. 39.)

CHAPTER 2. Delta Policy [85020 - 85023]
(Chapter 2 added by Stats. 2009, 7th Ex. Sess., Ch. 5, Sec. 39.)

The policy of the State of California is to achieve the following objectives that the Legislature declares are inherent in the coequal goals for management of the Delta:

(a) Manage the Delta's water and environmental resources and the water resources of the state over the long term.
(b) Protect and enhance the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural values of the California Delta as an evolving place.
(c) Restore the Delta ecosystem, including its fisheries and wildlife, as the heart of a healthy estuary and wetland ecosystem.
(d) Promote statewide water conservation, water use efficiency, and sustainable water use.
(e) Improve water quality to protect human health and the environment consistent with achieving water quality objectives in the Delta.
(f) Improve the water conveyance system and expand statewide water storage.
(g) Reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and investments in flood protection.
(h) Establish a new governance structure with the authority, responsibility, accountability, scientific support, and adequate and secure funding to achieve these objectives.
(Added by Stats. 2009, 7th Ex. Sess., Ch. 5, Sec. 39. (SB 1 7x) Effective February 3, 2010.)

CO - EQUALITY IS HAVING A SEAT AT THE TABLE

DELTA PROTECTION ACT cards — Row 1

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(a) Manage the Delta's water and environmental resources and the water resources of the state over the long term.
ALL PLAYERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO CAMP ANYWHERE ON THE BOARD AS THEY WISH

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(b) Protect and enhance the unique cultural, recreational, and agricultural values of the California Delta as an evolving place.
EACH PLAYER ADDS 10 CONCRETE BLOCKS

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(c) Restore the California Delta ecosystem, including its fisheries and wildlife, as the heart of a healthy estuary and wetland ecosystem.
ADD 25 NON-NATIVE SPECIES TOTALLY

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(d) Promote statewide water conservation, water use efficiency, and sustainable water use.
ADD 10 RENEWABLE ENERGY BLOCKS TOTALLY

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(a.1) Manage the California Delta's water while allowing the environmental resources to exist without physical obstructions, through bi-annual reviews.
COLLECTIVELY REMOVE 2 INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCKS FROM THE BOARD EVERY CYCLE (CONSENSUS)

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(b.1) Enhance the unique cultural and recreational values of the California Delta through limited physical interaction between the ecosystem and the humans. (Supply vs Demand)
BUILD A COBBLE BLOCK BARRIER NEAR YOUR CAMPSITE AROUND ANY SPECIES GROUP.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(c.1) Allow the wetlands and ecology time to rejuvenate, reorient and restore health without excessive 'palliative care'(re-wilding operation).
ADD 3 ECOLOGY BLOCKS AROUND ANY WATER BODY EVERY CYCLE TO BUILD A GREEN LAYER.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(d.1) Enforce statewide water reservation for various purposes and eliminate vanity uses.
EACH PLAYER DONATES 1 INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCKS OR 1 NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE BLOCK EVERY CYCLE.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(a.2) Manage human expectations for the availability of California Delta's water and environmental resources. If the periodic review shows decline in the Delta's health, then eliminate one human infrastructure.
REORGANISE CAMPS BASED ON ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW EVERY 3 CYCLES.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(b.2) Enhance the unique cultural and recreational values of the California Delta through non-destructive sports or activities that do not cause changes to the structure of the ecosystem.
ELIMINATE INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCKS IN 1 TILE RADIUS OF WATER SYSTEMS.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(c.2) Retract the scale of re- bio-surveillance operations and simulate natural conditions again in critical zones to amplify rewilding.
REMOVE 2 NATIVE SPECIES FROM THE BOARD EVERY CYCLE (CONSENSUS).

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(d.2) Promote statewide water conservation and sustainable water use by creating critical level awareness of the Delta complexities.
REMOVE 1 NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY BLOCK FROM THE BOARD EVERY CYCLE.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT cards — Row 2

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(e) Improve water quality to protect human health and the environment, consistent with achieving water quality objectives in the Delta.
ADD 15 WATER ENERGY + 10 INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCKS COLLECTIVELY.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(f) Improve the water conveyance system and expand statewide water storage.
ADD 5 NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY AND 5 RENEWABLE ENERGY BLOCKS TOTALLY.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(g) Reduce risks to people, property, and state interests in the Delta by effective emergency preparedness, appropriate land uses, and investments in flood protection.
ADD 10 CONCRETE INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCKS

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — Delta Policy: 85020-85023
(h) Establish a new governance structure with the authority, responsibility, accountability, scientific support, and adequate and secure funding to achieve these objectives.
ADD 7 INFRASTRUCTURE AND 8 ENERGY BLOCKS

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(e.1) Primarily restore water quality to protect fish and fauna health consistent with achieving water quality objectives for human interventions.
REMOVE 2 NON-RENEWABLE ENERGY OR INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCK FROM THE BOARD EVERY CYCLE (CONSENSUS).

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(f.1) Rework water conveyance systems in accordance with historical and projected natural water patterns to replenish natural water storage systems.
CREATE ECOLOGY BLOCK CHAINS BY ADDING 3 BLOCKS EVERY ROUND (CONSENSUS).

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(g.1) Reduce risk to the wetlands, people and property in the Delta by creating appropriate 'non-land use' and investments in flood compatible measures.
DONATE 1 NON-RENEWABLE OR INFRASTRUCTURE BLOCK EVERY CYCLE.

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Non-Human Policy: 85020-85023
(h.1) Establish a new governance structure with more executional authority given to scientific communities and indigenous communities to implement actions in favour of environmental protection.
BUILD A INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY CHAIN OF ONLY NATIVE WATER BLOCKS (CONSENSUS).

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(e.2) Continually eliminate/diminish projects and products that contribute to water quality decline in order to achieve water quality objectives in the Delta.
ALL WATER PROJECTS PAY A PENALTY OF 1 ELEVATION LEVEL EVERY ROUND

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(f.2) Remodel the water conveyance systems to unobstruct natural water flow and expand individual level water storage initiatives. (promoting rain water harvesting)
EVERY PLAYER CREATES 2 COBBLE AND ECOLOGY BLOCK MATRICES (9X9 GRID)

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(g.2) Reduce risk to the wetlands, people and property in the Delta by creating hybrid ecotones to accommodate natural elements and effective emergency preparedness through appropriate non-invasive construction methods.
CREATE 3 COMBINATION MATRICES NEAR ANY WATER EDGE (9X9).

DELTA PROTECTION ACT — The Better Human Policy: 85020-85023
(h.2) Establish a new governance structure that secures enough funding to achieve California Delta reformation objectives and create an alternate economic system to decrease human dependency on the Delta.
CREATE ECOLOGY AND INFRASTRUCTURE CAMPS AWAY FROM THE WATER EDGE.

Description
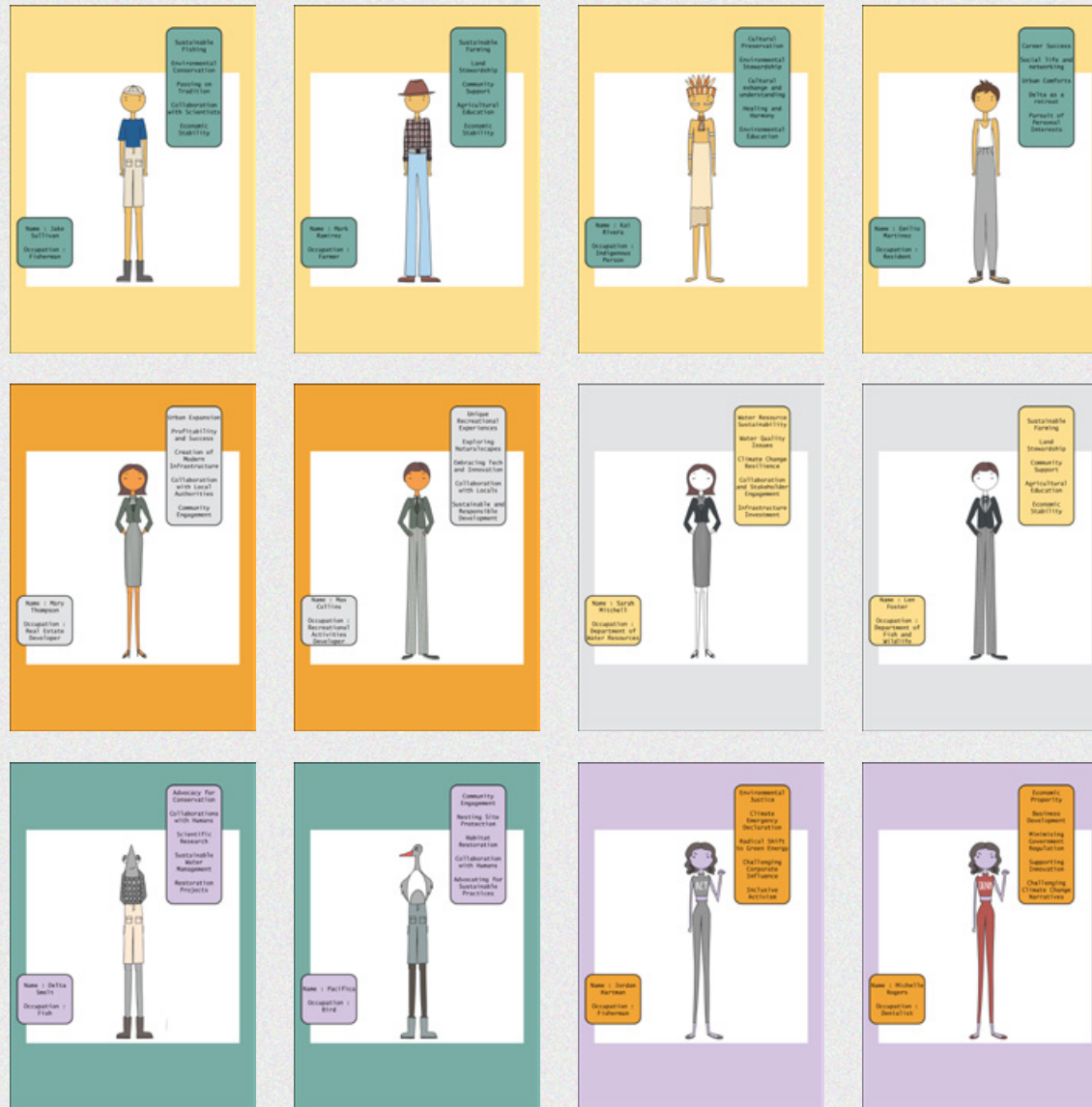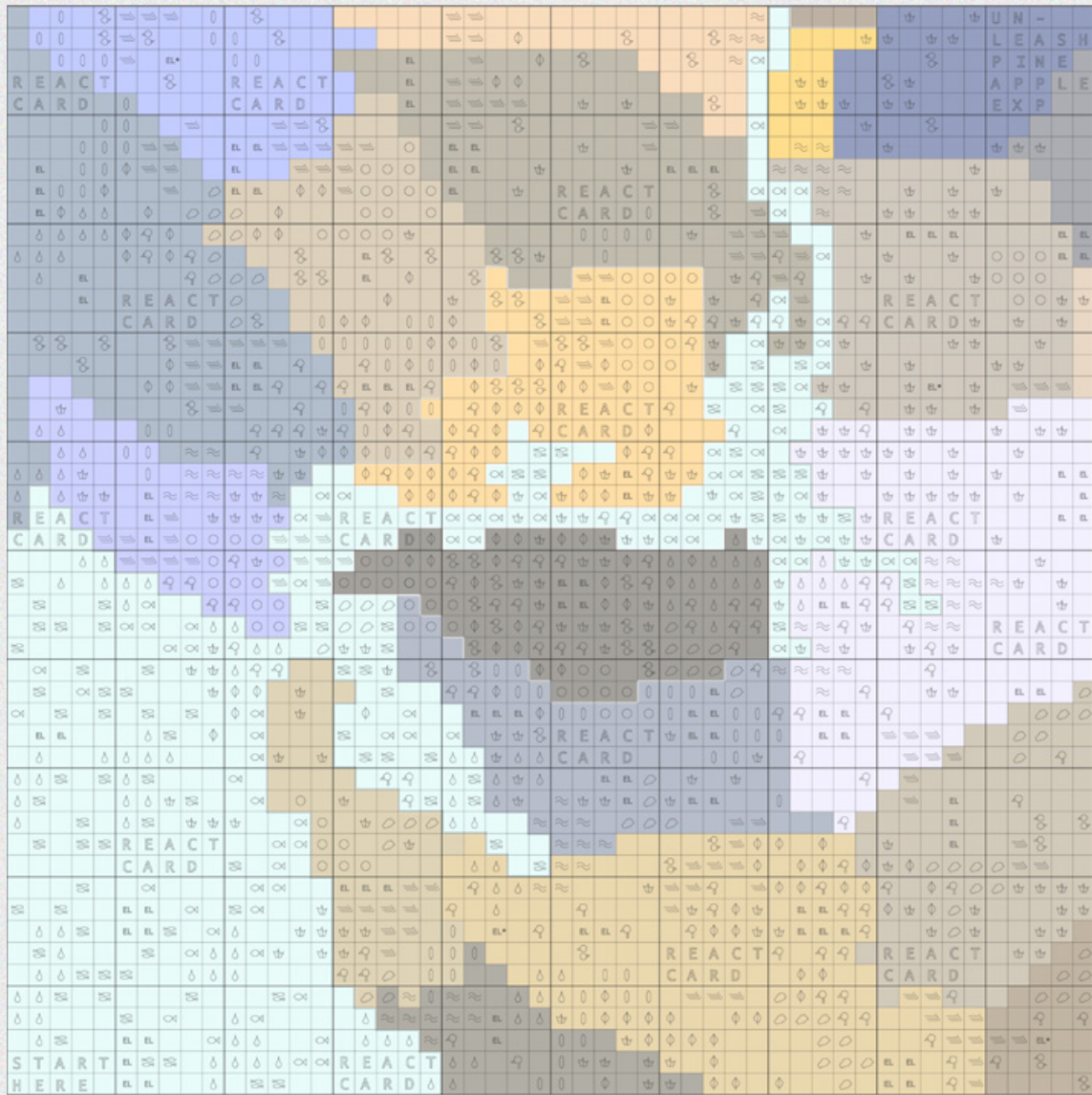
Based on the critique, the modifications of the Delta Reform Act of 2009 legislation comes in 2 parts :

Part A is a revision to the act from the human perspective but through a more eco-sensitive approach. It talks about **managing human expectations, regulating the statewide conservation efforts and reworking water conveyance systems.**

Part B is a revision to the legislation from the non-human perspective. It suggests **a more assertive code from that allows for wetland recovery, improving fish and fauna health, and redesigning appropriate 'non-land use'.**

The culmination of these changes is a (prototype) game.

Set in the California Delta, the **game gives agency to various stakeholders to negotiate and create hybrid ecotones** - which are new gradients that need to be forged in order for us to save the Delta.

The game is set in the near future. It reads : *The next pineapple express is coming. So do what you have to do to save yourself and the Delta*

The players each work with a character that defines the values that they will work with. They are all given a goal card that they need to achieve and reach the end point in order to trigger the 'Pineapple Express' and win the game.

The players will all draw out imposition cards that create frameworks inside the game. These imposition cards are the reworked legislations within which the players have to execute activities through negotiations.

Goal cards : These cards determine how requirements for the players. They have to set up camps and to do that you have to get an odd majority - another negotiation condition.

Through the game, the players can play as different actors, like legislators, activists, denialists, fish, residents, indigenous people and **form coalitions to achieve their goals.**

Imagining new ecotones with midjourney AI and Photoshop

CO-EQUALITY IS NEGOTIATING THE BOUNDARIES - FOR THE NEW ECOTONE

A Utopian ecotone speculates
'What if there was a giant magnet that lifted buildings
off the ground when the floods came? '

Ultimately, the game stands to forge new kinds of trans-species alliances by negotiating boundaries between the human and non-human actors. Looking at co-equality through a new perspective

Game cards : Voting cards, (Re) Action cards, Imposition cards, Goal cards
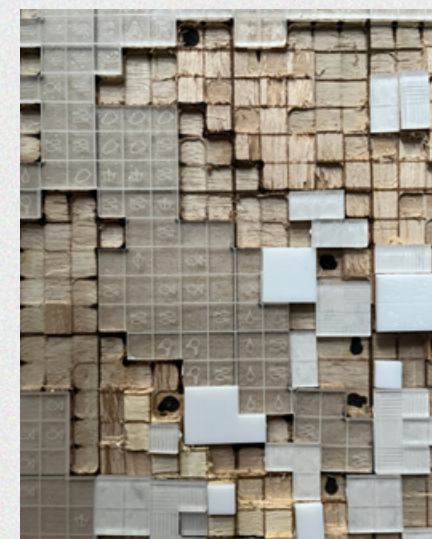
Physical game board : Site on voxel grid divided by the counties of California around the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta

SHAPING THE FIGURE AND THE GROUND : HOUSING WORKS

Transscalarities Workshop

Mentors / Bart-Jan Polman, Beril Sarisakal Erkent
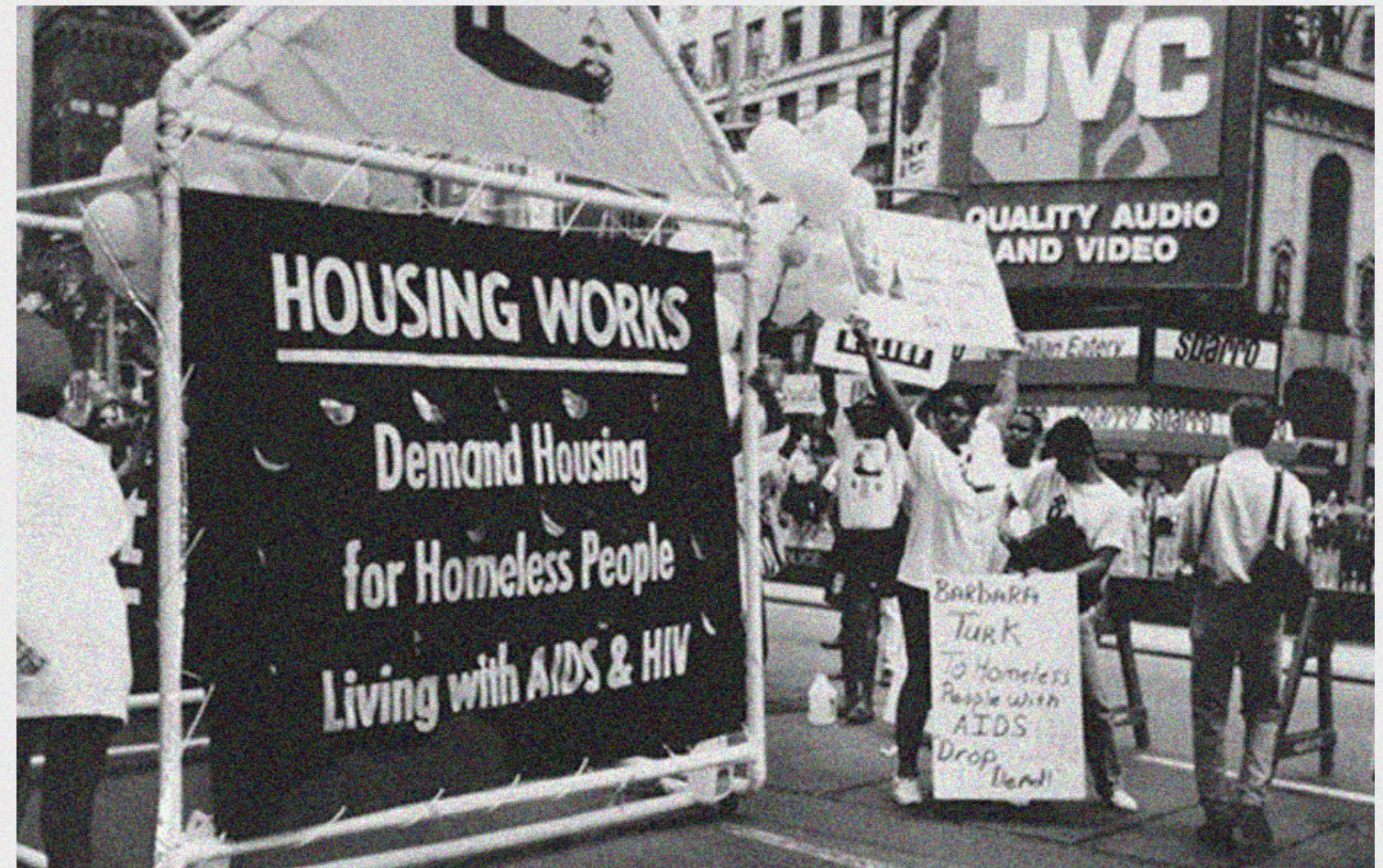
HOUSING WORKS IS TRYING TO UNDO A SOCIALLY TERRAFORMED LANDSCAPE WHICH CURRENTLY FITS THE PREFERENCES OF THE 'CENTRE'

Photograph from the Housing Works Archives

What is a house? A house is a personal space, protection, and a respite. Yet, it cannot singularly circumscribe everything else that humans need to survive. Housing Works is a non-governmental organisation that recognizes a house as the foundational necessity for human survival, with its slogan "Housing is Healthcare". Human welfare and human wellness, however, are two distinct concepts. Housing Works presents a model for architecture that goes beyond formal and technical elements. By re-configuring non-physical entities, such as mental well-being and job stability, they provide a spatial solution to pressing social problems. Such a paradigm shift not only shapes the urban physical 'ground' but also empowers individuals ('figure') to become the 'sound' humans who can reestablish a normal life.

Housing Works is a group that originated from ACT UP. Instead of seeking a single solution to the city's housing crisis, they focused their resources on rehabilitating a small group of 'high-risk people' (mostly people of colour) suffering from HIV/AIDS and homelessness. What they did differently was not just provide shelter. They advocated for better legislation,

fought for fair treatment, organised rallies, and spread awareness. They were trying to rehabilitate not only the people but also the conditions of the society, where providing welfare for a homeless person actually creates wellness for them. Awan, Schneider and Till talk about an accepted 'centre' which shapes social terrains. In reference to that, the work done by Housing Works is significant as they are trying to undo a socially terraformed landscape which currently fits the preferences of that 'centre'. The architectural intervention that added the most value to their enterprise was their scattered housing facilities. Rather than creating isolated housing projects, they rented or leased apartment buildings in regular neighbourhoods, giving the 'sick' a chance at a normal life. This proposal was obviously met with opposition from 'other' residents in the neighbourhood. For instance, In 1993, the Community 2 board in Greenwich Village expressed deep concerns when Housing Works announced their transitional housing facility in their neighbourhood. Nevertheless, Housing Works has aggressively campaigned for and managed impressive interventions like the Keith D. Cylar house, which sits on East

9th Street, a mixed but still predominantly white neighbourhood.

Housing Works also raised the stakes for the people they were helping. They developed a system that integrated their clients and provided them with work opportunities through ventures all over the city. It included thrift stores, bookstores, cafes, healthcare centres, workshops, and more, giving them a chance to live with dignity. Without such opportunities, as the 'broken window theory' suggests, there is always a high probability for the houses to fall back into disrepair and for their residents to relapse into harmful behaviours, with no means of sustaining their new and dignified lives.

When Housing Works claimed that "Housing is Healthcare", they recognized the power of architecture to rehabilitate stigmatised groups by providing them with housing. Housing Works acts as a spatial agent, negotiating existing social conditions to create meaningful change. They are not simply a reactionary group, but rather a carefully curated response to the issue of HIV/AIDS and homelessness.

SLOW TRANSFORMATION

The question of two kinds of states coexisting is a political one that is laced with intricacies of the social. An important aspect of that is people's notions associated with ideas of progress and regress. The world does not have a uniform distribution of natural resources or wealth. Given this context, every urban environment must be prepared to embrace a new kind of future, one that may appear futuristic or more vernacular.

So how do we metamorphose the fabric of lived environments through selective processing? The current size of the built environment has a significant impact on the climate crisis, making it imperative to contribute to its improvement. We can use these buildings as vessels to visibly represent change, which are crucial for shifting societal perspectives on future environments and aiding carbon sequestration. This project will advocate for transforming the ideas associated with the image of cities while imagining new (or rather rediscovering older) possibilities for future social living. Slow transformation looks at activating a static boundary, that is the exterior facade of old buildings to allow for change in response to the carbon crisis. An important investigation that seeks to multiply small efforts through scaling and community action in 2041.

Through designing the narrative, the project seeks to envision a realistic future even if it sounds unachievable today.

Reset
Climate Change, Material Ecosystems, and Artificial Intelligence

Mentor / David Benjamin

Teaching Associate / Maclane Raegan

Advance Studio V / Fall 2023

Manhattan Bridge, 20 October 2023

In the winter of 2041, the United Nations passed a reformative but anticapitalist resolution to divide the world into two types of states. The two states would drastically alter the urban landscape of the cities in the years to come. State A zones would be radically vernacularised returning to older forms and techniques of communal living whereas state B would become a high tech haven hurtling into the future with automation and science.

Who are the "Slow Transformation Corps"?

The UN EcoSoC teamed up with a small non-profit organization called the "Slow Transformation Corps" to immediately start the process of creating State A.

Back in 2014 the corps found a new material called Olivine. They realized its potential and started developing building materials out of it. Their first project with olivine based paints was launched in 2023.

Situated transformations and their future with creating biosynthetic building materials that are carbon negative.
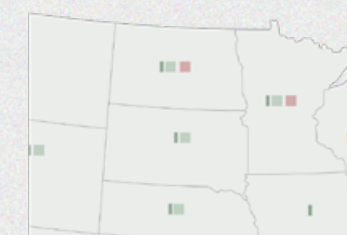
3 MIN READ

Political questions addressing 'Two States' concept - What are the immediate pitfalls of changing global economies drastically?
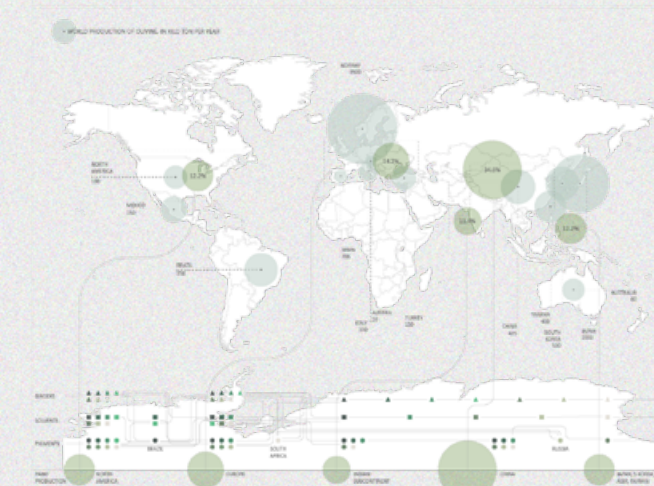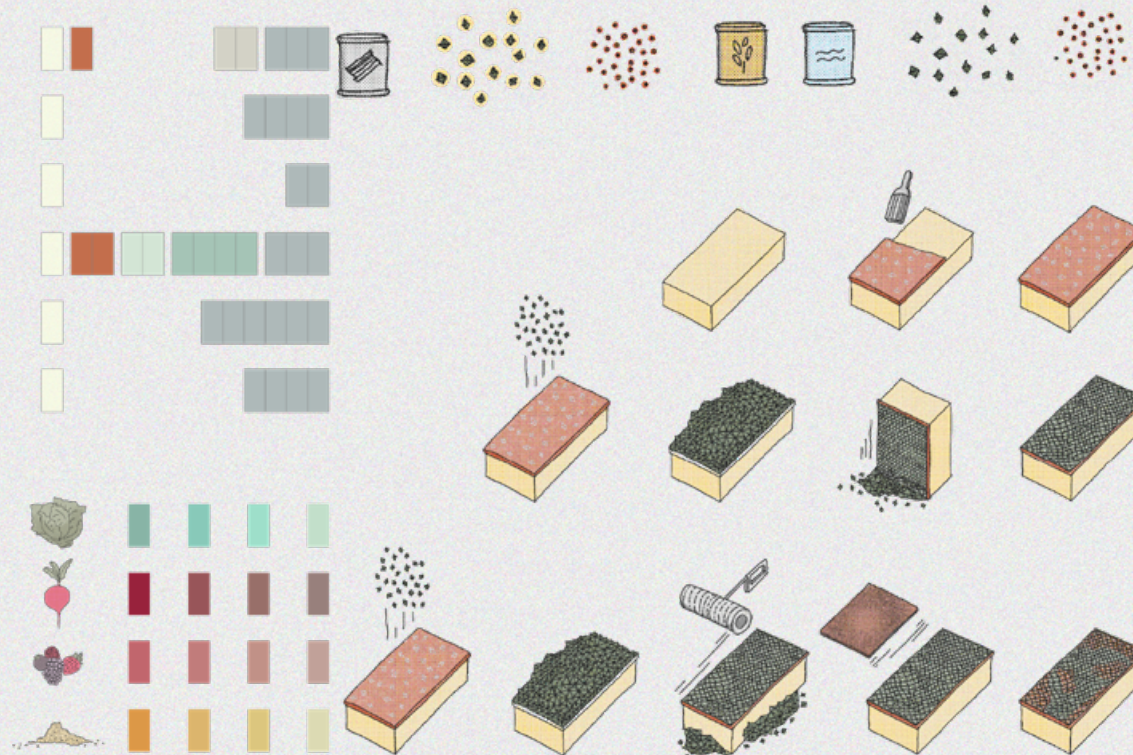
Olivine and Paint Economies

Sourcing paints and paint components from around the globe.

3 MIN READ

Image of the city - The iconic view of the Manhattan Bridge from Washington Street in Dumbo

An unchanged view of places shows the resilience of memory associated with onjects, that cannot be easily modified.
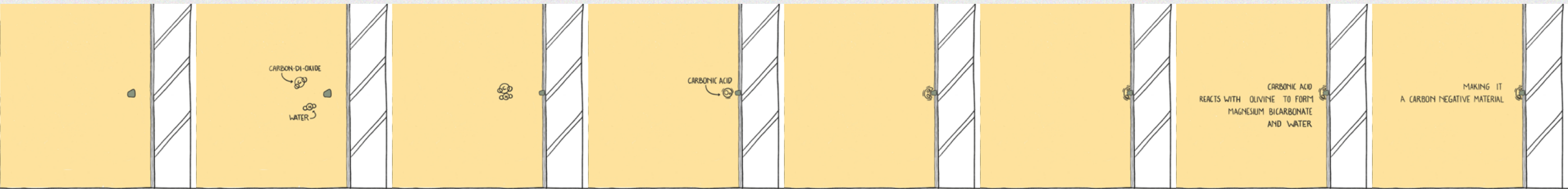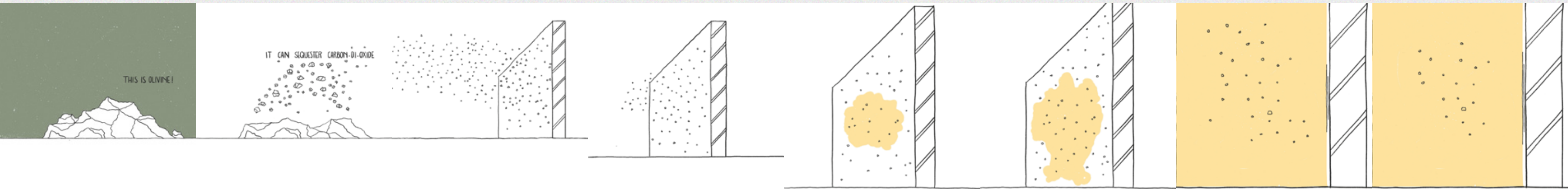
3 MIN READ

Mycelium and other carbon negative material testing labs across New York City mapped.

3 MIN READ

Olivine and paint economies - Is it possible to create bioregional economies in 2041?

3 MIN READ

Olivine : The new green gold. Everything you need to know about them.

Olivine had the ability to sequester Carbon. It did so by reacting with the carbon dioxide and water in the air to form an inert sand. It can sequester up to 1.25 tonnes of CO2 per 1 tonne of material. Breaking it up into sand particles and mixing it with paint would multiply its ability to sequester carbon.

THIS IS OLIVINE!

IT CAN SEQUESTER CARBON-DI-OXIDE

CARBON-DI-OXIDE
WATER
CARBONIC ACID
CARBONIC ACID
REACTS WITH OLIVINE TO FORM MAGNESIUM BICARBONATE AND WATER
MAKING IT A CARBON NEGATIVE MATERIAL

When they started, they thought about the world as it was and how images of the built environment transcend ages. It is not an easy feat to get communities to accept change. Hence, they coined the term 'Situated Transformations'. The idea was to transform images associated with urban cities in a gradual manner almost surgically allowing the new world to become intrinsic to people without shocking them. And hence they formed the "Slow Transformation Corps".

They imagined a world with a new skin, where every living building could contribute to the climate crisis at hand. The cities are so dense that we have an abundance of resource to propagate this change without starting from scratch. The new skin of carbon sequestering paint made out of fugitive pigments and olivine would also making visible the realities of climate change.

Illustration by Hermann Bollmann (1963)

The New York Times

Sunday, November 19, 2041

Today's Paper

Now, it is 2041.

There is simply no time to allow for a 'Slow Transformation'. We have crossed the 2 degree limit set in the Paris agreement. The UN EcoSoC suggested that they blow up the 'Slow Transformation Corps' initiative multifold. Double down on all efforts.

What is the Olivine Action Initiative about?

The initiative was started to double down on the efforts of the 'Slow Transformation Corps'- an organisation working with building materials made out of Olivine sand since 2023.

Mayor Olivia John unveils plans to construct a headquarters for production of olivine based construction material

3 MIN READ

As an environmental advocate, Macy John, the newly elected mayor of New York City, has volunteered Brooklyn to be the test site for implementing State A.

State A introduces a new set of rules that she has developed through her organization, 'The Olivine Action Initiative', in collaboration with the corps. Starting in February 2042, Brooklyn will have a new credit system that holds each citizen accountable for their environmental responsibilities to the city. This system includes a carbon credit system that aligns with the social credit system, requiring every individual to contribute their efforts to address the crisis at hand.

Who are the Olivine Associates and what do they do?

The Olivine Associates are the supervision team of the 'Olivine Action Initiative'. They are will supervise and assist communities build and maintain their green roofs.

3 MIN READ

Predicting new systems of manipulation - Is there a work around the new initiative for the rich of Dumbo?
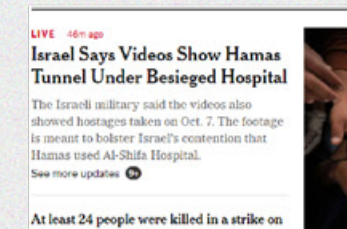
3 MIN READ

The changing 'Image'

A government imposed accountable system to get everyone to do their bit for the climate crisis.

3 MIN READ

LIVE 46m ago

Israel Says Videos Show Hamas Tunnel Under Besieged Hospital

The Israeli military said the videos also showed hostages taken on Oct. 7. The footage is meant to bolster Israel's contention that Hamas used Al-Shifa Hospital.

See more updates ⌄

At least 24 people were killed in a strike on a school in Gaza run by the United Nations

Is it time we truly embraced an egalitarian society? Everyone contributes to the climate crisis.
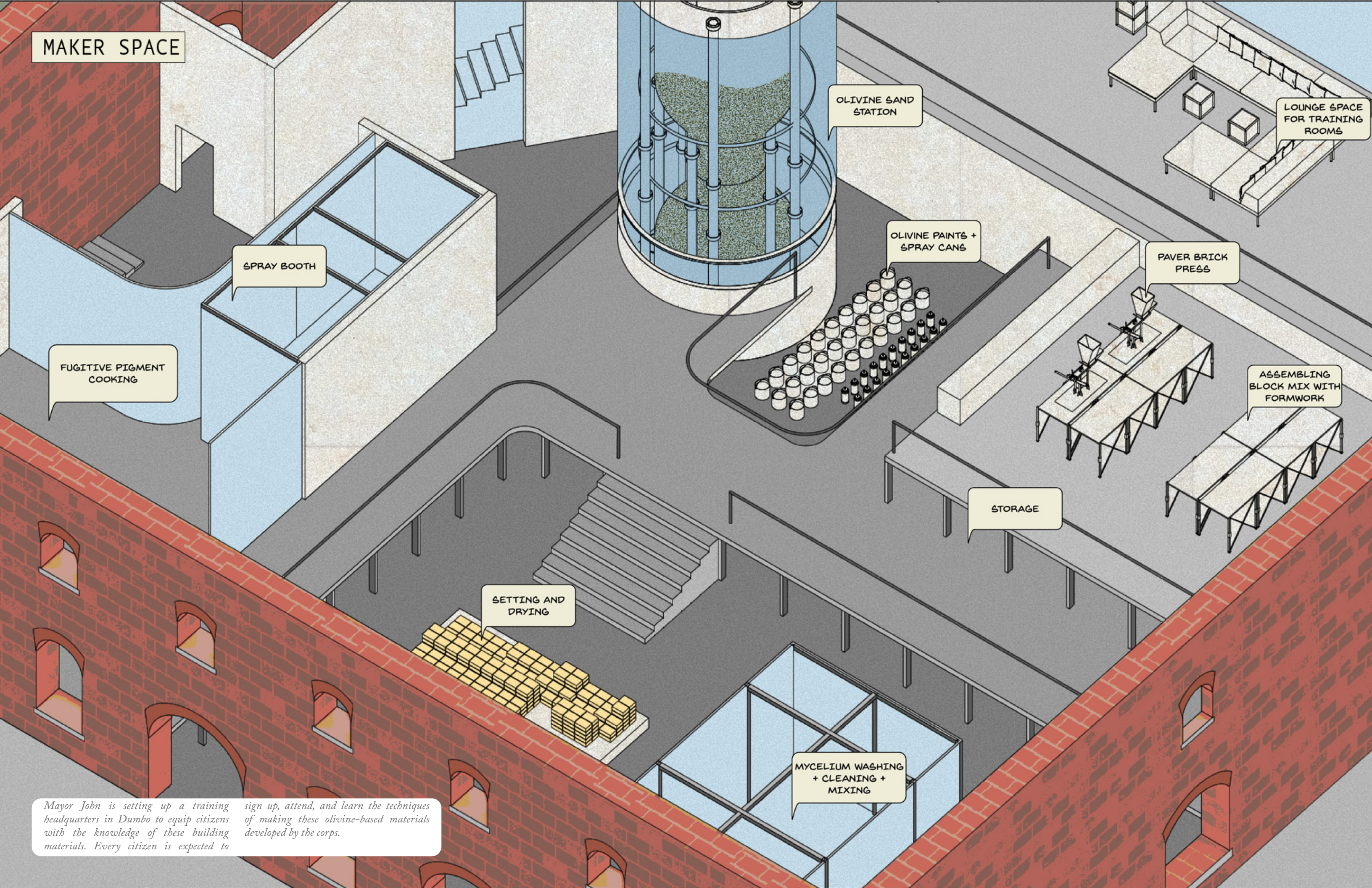
3 MIN READ

WIRE CUTTER

Olivine : The new green gold. Everything you need to know about it.

FROM WIRE CUTTER

MAKER SPACE

OLIVINE SAND STATION

LOUNGE SPACE FOR TRAINING ROOMS

OLIVINE PAINTS + SPRAY CANS

SPRAY BOOTH

PAVER BRICK PRESS

FUGITIVE PIGMENT COOKING

ASSEMBLING BLOCK MIX WITH FORMWORK

STORAGE

SETTING AND DRYING

MYCELIUM WASHING + CLEANING + MIXING

Mayor John is setting up a training headquarters in Dumbo to equip citizens with the knowledge of these building materials. Every citizen is expected to sign up, attend, and learn the techniques of making these olivine-based materials developed by the corps.

TEST COURTYARD

GRAFFITI W/ OLIVINE SPRAY PAINTS
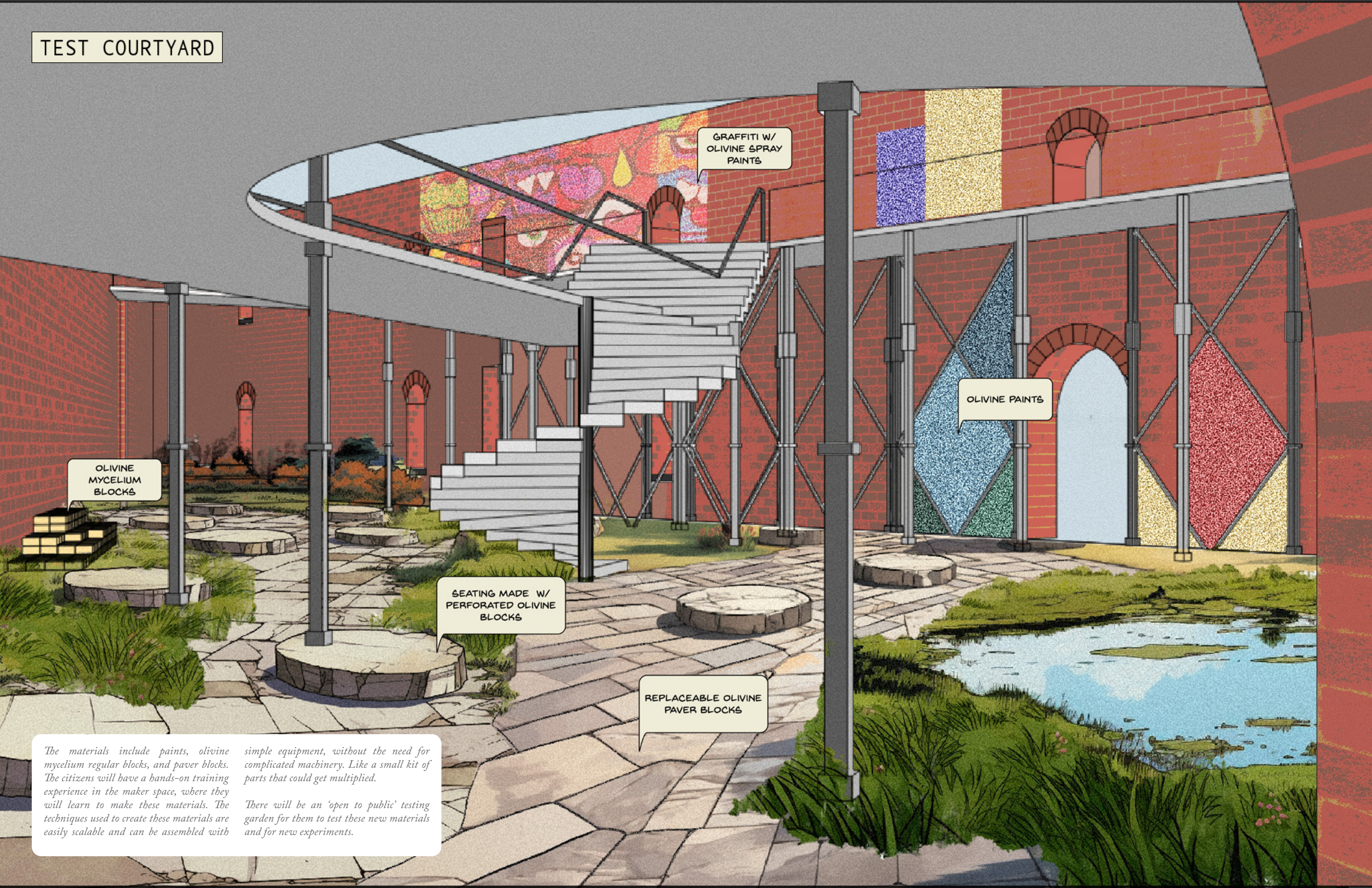
OLIVINE PAINTS

OLIVINE MYCELIUM BLOCKS

SEATING MADE W/ PERFORATED OLIVINE BLOCKS

REPLACEABLE OLIVINE PAVER BLOCKS

The materials include paints, olivine mycelium regular blocks, and paver blocks. The citizens will have a hands-on training experience in the maker space, where they will learn to make these materials. The techniques used to create these materials are easily scalable and can be assembled with simple equipment, without the need for complicated machinery. Like a small kit of parts that could get multiplied.

There will be an 'open to public' testing garden for them to test these new materials and for new experiments.

OLIVINE ACTION INITIATIVE

COMMUNITY GREENING

PAINTING CREW

POST TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES

Every citizen is expected to take on post training responsibility and join either the painting crew or the greening initiative.

The greening initiative, led by the HQ's Olivine Associates, aims to facilitate the construction and maintenance of roof gardens using new olivine-based materials in every building across the city. These roof gardens will require periodical upkeep as the

olivine exhausts its sequestering abilities.

The painting crew will handle the painting and repainting of all buildings across the zone using olivine-based paints. Similar to the roof gardens the buildings will also have to be repainted as the paint pigments fade, olivine turns to sand and indicates the need for a new coat.

The project aims to create a sustainable building model that is community driven enabling a system that is inspired by traditional methods of living in order to create State A.

The project is about maximizing the existing resources and scaling the territory of influence – be it by using the surfaces of existing buildings as the boundary that accommodates

change or olivine in the form of sand that exponentially becomes a cyclic material that continually removes carbon from the atmosphere.

Brooklyn State A becomes a model system that demonstrates that even a big city has the potential to transform into technologically independent green orders combating the carbon crisis.
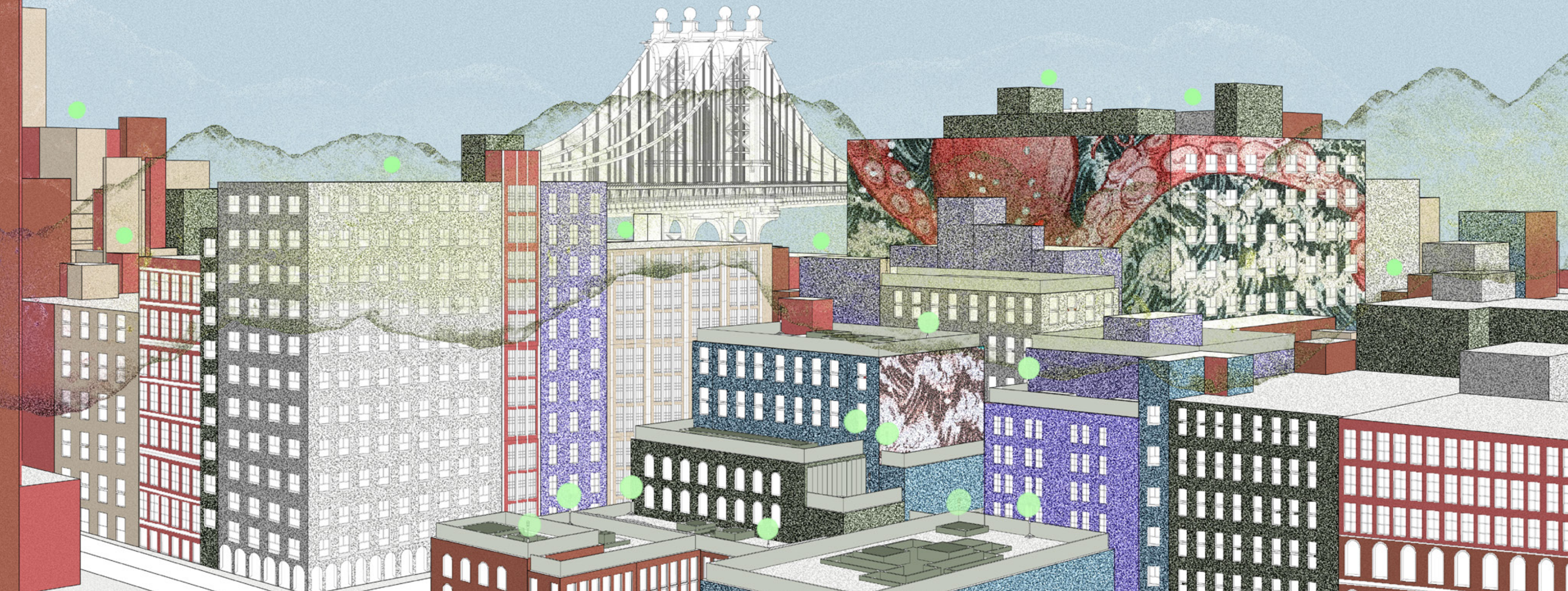
INNOCUOUS TINTS

Peelable Non-Toxic Paints

Home Is Where The Toxics Are

Mentor / Marta Heisel-Wisniewska

Collaborators / Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar, Harshvardhan Jhaveri

As we move into a world that is becoming increasingly environmentally conscious, it is imperative to not only focus on external factors but also turn our attention to the internal elements that pose significant health risks. One such material that often escapes scrutiny, yet is ubiquitous in our daily lives, is paint. Paints, with a history that stretches back to early civilizations, have evolved dramatically over the centuries. Today, they are utilized in a myriad of applications, far beyond what one might typically expect. However, despite their widespread use, paints remain one of the construction materials that can pose severe health hazards.

Traditional paints contain a variety of harmful chemicals and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) that can lead to a range of health issues. Short-term exposure to these substances can cause irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat, as well as headaches, dizziness, and nausea. Long-term exposure, however, poses more serious risks, including respiratory problems, kidney damage, and even developmental issues in newborns.

Given these significant health and environmental concerns, our project aims to revolutionize the paint industry by developing non-toxic paints made from biodegradable substances. We intend to utilize organic pigments and natural oils as the primary components of our paints, ensuring that they are safe for both humans and the environment. A particularly innovative aspect of our project is the inclusion of paper pulp in the formulation of our paints. This addition will enable us to create peelable paints that can be easily removed and decomposed, thus establishing a circular lifecycle for the material.
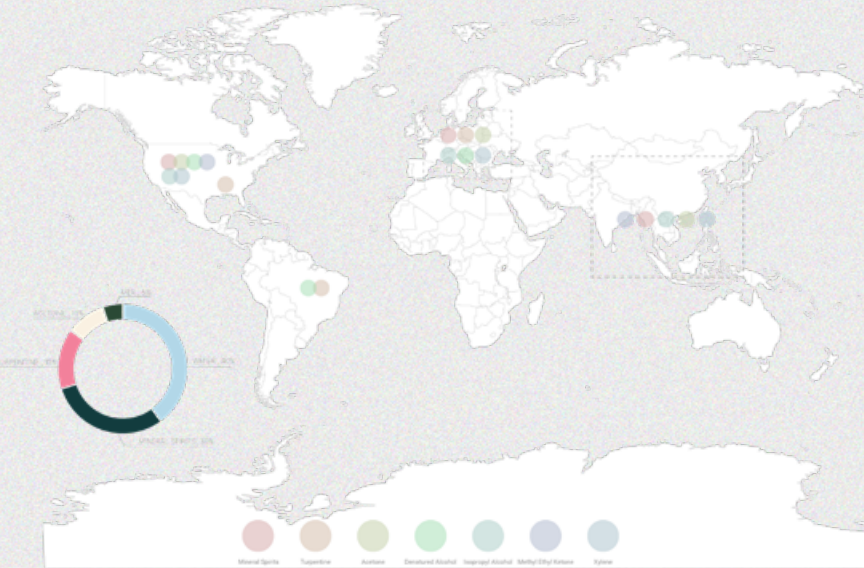

Toxic mine waste harvested to make pigments, image by Ben Seigel (Ohio University)
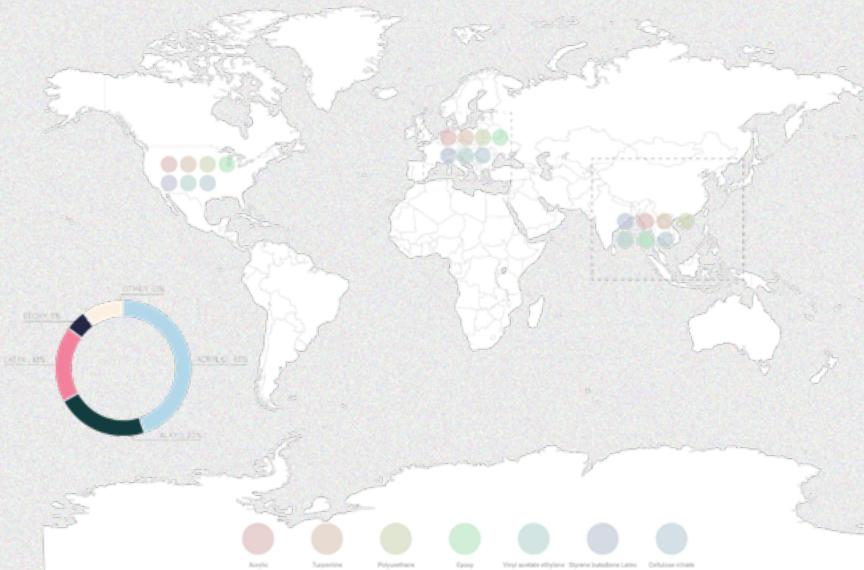
BINDERS PRODUCTION
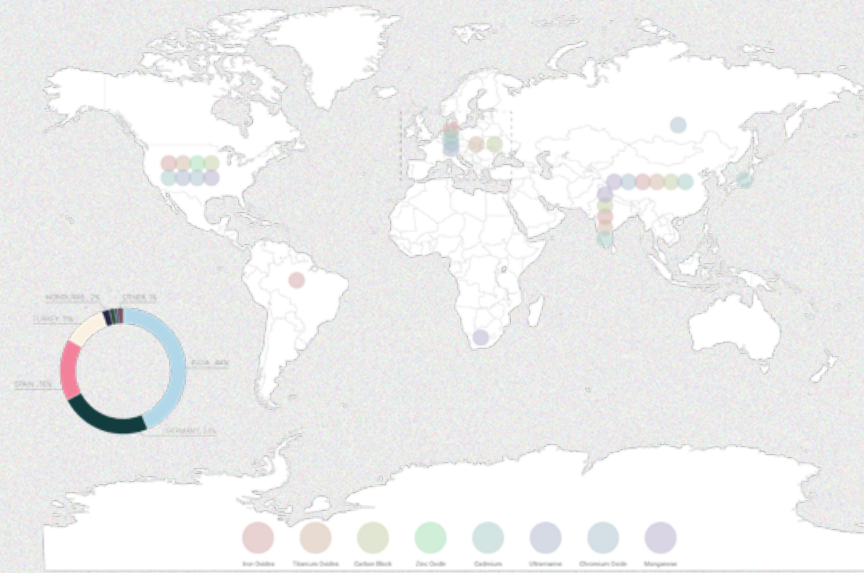
SOLVENTS PRODUCTION

PIGMENTS PRODUCTION

Paint
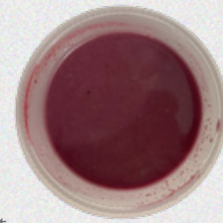
Glue

Paper pulp

Dehydrated pigments
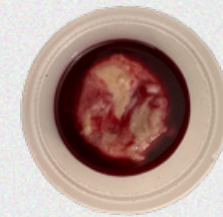
Pigment in powder form

Pigment in liquid form

RECIPES
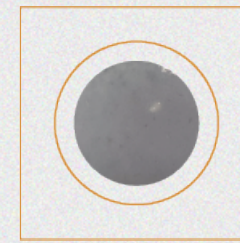
10%	PIGMENT
50%	NATURAL GLUE
30%	GUM ARABIC
10%	WATER
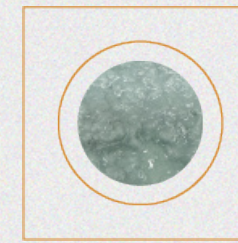
10%	PIGMENT
60%	NATURAL GLUE
30%	WATER
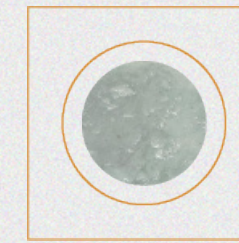
10%	PIGMENT
40%	NATURAL GLUE
40%	PAPER PULP
10%	WATER

10%	PIGMENT
30%	NATURAL GLUE
35%	PAPER PULP
10%	GUM ARABIC
15%	WATER
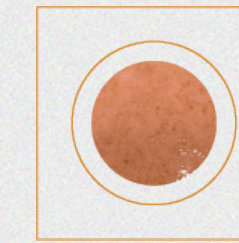
10%	PIGMENT
60%	PAPER PULP
20%	GUM ARABIC
10%	WATER

PAINT SAMPLES ON DIFFERENT BASES

Sample 1 : Concrete   Sample 2 : Limestone   Sample 3 : Brick   Sample 4 : Limestone
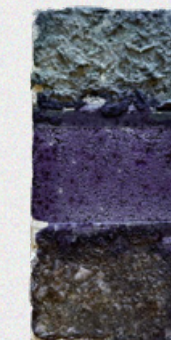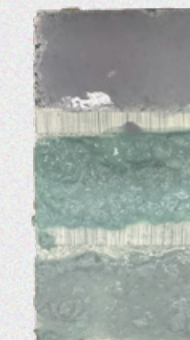
Key ingredients and paint samples after being exposed to the atmosphere

Sugarcane

Harvest sugarcane

Transport

Juice extraction

Sugar

Refining

Centrifuge

Evaporation

Farming wheat

Harvest wheat

Transport the raw material

Wheat is milled

Storage

Wheat is used for various purposes

Bagging

Sieving

Grinding

Cleaning cycles

Landfill

Grow and farm vegetables

Harvest vegetables

Various use of vegetables
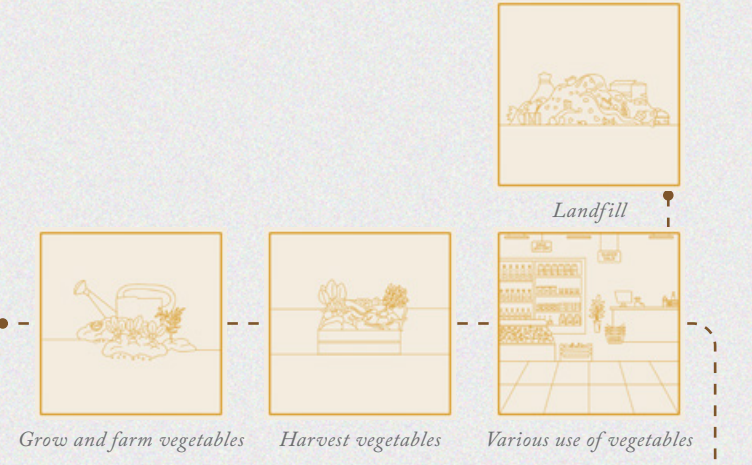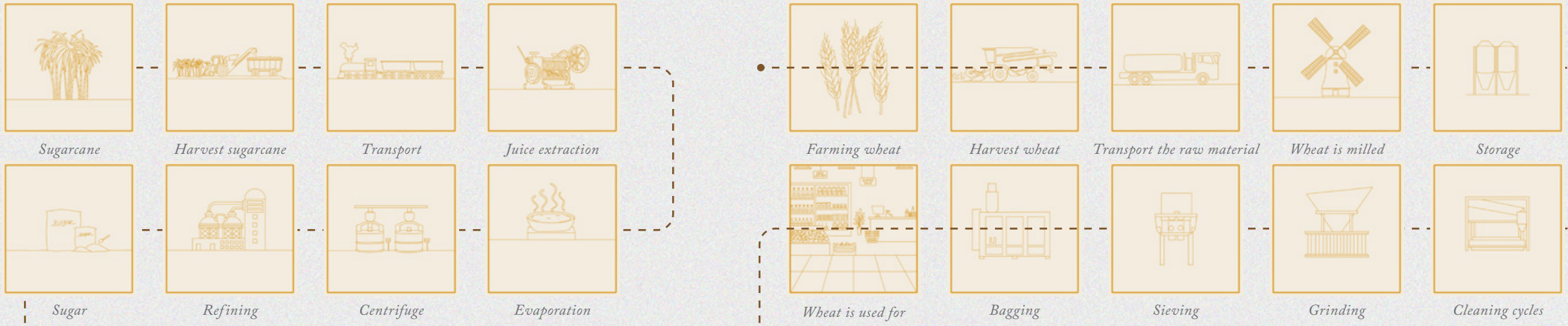
HOW TO MAKE HOME MADE GLUE

Homemade glue

Boil the mixture

Mix well

Sugar, flour, water

HOW TO MAKE PIGMENTS

Blend dehydrated powder

Dehydrate paste in oven

Blend mixture

Boil to extract pigments

Cut vegetables

Store fine powder in jar

Store pigmented water in a jar

HOW TO MAKE PAPER PULP

Paper pulp

De-ink paper pulp

Pulping the paper

Recycle paper

Fugitive pigments, homemade/PVA glue, gum arabic and water

Mix ingredients

clean, prep and prime surface

Apply peelable paints to surface

Compost

Extract residue pigments

Mix paint scraps in water

Scrape paint of walls

Bleach, clean, whiten pulp

Dry and flatten pulp

Roll, cut, package paper

Various use of paper

Landfill

Break into small chips, chemical treatment of wood

Chipping and debarking

Cut wood into logs

Rubber trees in plantation

SPECULAR SURFACES

Every surface serves as a stage for activity, with its ability to reflect movement inherent to its material nature. As time elapses, these surfaces become transient entities, not recording but accommodating the passage of events as if on a canvas. Meanwhile, the eye acts as a parallel observer, tracking this movement.

"Specular Surfaces" is a visual series delving into the layers of information that traverse various boundaries. It examines how these boundaries host and interact with people, objects, light, and motion, effectively creating spatial depth through their planar nature. Compositionally, the series explores the organization of these elements in relation to one another.

The object itself is never directly captured; rather, it's mediated through the boundary. The image always hosts two subjects, the primary subject which is the boundary and the secondary subject which is the object captured within its limits. The boundary, though integral, isn't the primary layer in our perception of the image. The structure follows as : light emitted or reflected by the object is captured by the secondary boundary (the glass, bubbles or the windows), that traverses through the camera, then the eye and is then processed by the mind. A superimposition of the subject-object over and over again.

Architectural Photography
From Models To The Built World

Mentor / Michael Vahrenwald

Visual Tech Elective / Fall 2023

foreground background, 28 September 2023

CANON 600D
EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II

ISO 400 28mm F/8 1/13 Sec
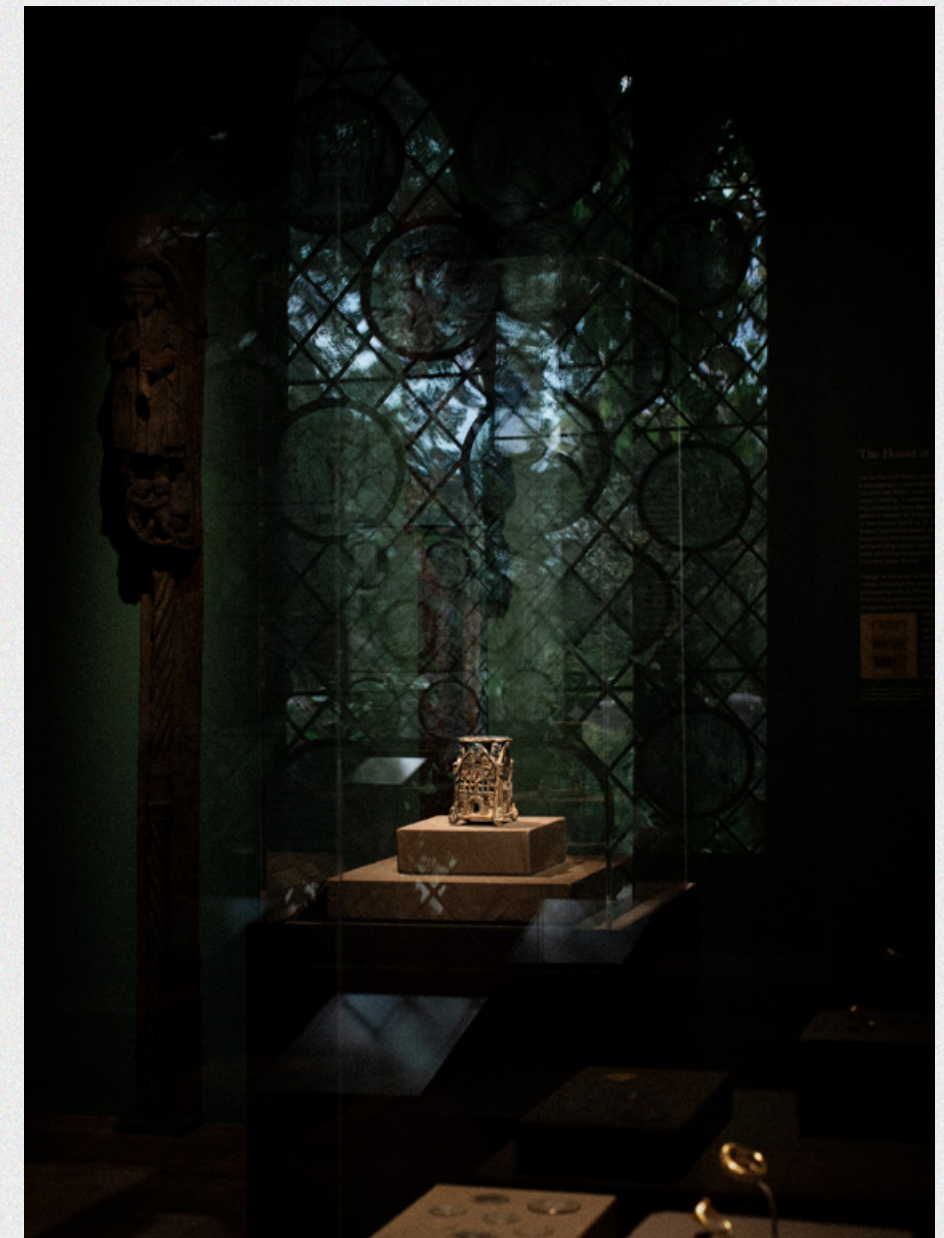
CANON 600D
EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II

ISO 400 36mm F/8 1/10 Sec

CANON 600D
EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II

ISO 200 23mm F/8 2/5 Sec

CANON 600D
EF-S18-55mm f/3.5-5.6 IS II

ISO 400 36mm F/8 1/8 Sec

CANON 600D
EF-S55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS II

ISO 200 55mm F/4 1/160 Sec

CANON 600D
EF-S55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS II

ISO 200 123mm F/5 1/60 Sec

CANON 600D
EF-S55-250mm f/4-5.6 IS II

ISO 200 146mm F/5 1/80 Sec

CANON 600D
EF-S55-250mm f/4-5.6
IS II

ISO 200 55mm F/4 1/160
Sec

PAWNS OF IRAN

The Iranian Revolution, shifting political landscapes and a hostage crisis

The Arab City in Film
*Constructing Urban Imaginaries*

Mentor / Yasser Elsheshtawy

Collaborators / Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar, Ahamed Abrar, Stuti Murarka

Abstract

This analysis delves into the film "Argo," directed by Ben Affleck, and its portrayal of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the subsequent hostage crisis. It explores the historical background, highlighting the complex political landscape and interventions by Western powers in Iran. The film's architectural relevance is discussed, emphasizing the use of Hollywood and Istanbul locations to recreate the historical landscapes of Tehran.

The text examines binaries in architecture, revealing contrasting perspectives such as safety/vulnerability, isolation/connection, permanence/impermanence, protection/captivation, and seeing/being seen. It also addresses the suppressed orientalist history, discussing the dichotomy between "us" and "them" and how the film conveniently omits facts to align with and protect Western ideologies. Furthermore, the analysis examines the militarization and digitization of urbanism, drawing parallels to real-world practices. It explores the concept of deception in architecture, considering how it mirrors strategies used by military forces. The narrative concludes by analyzing spatial alter egos and notions of uncertainty, using concepts like heterotopias and terrain vagues to understand spaces in flux during a crisis.
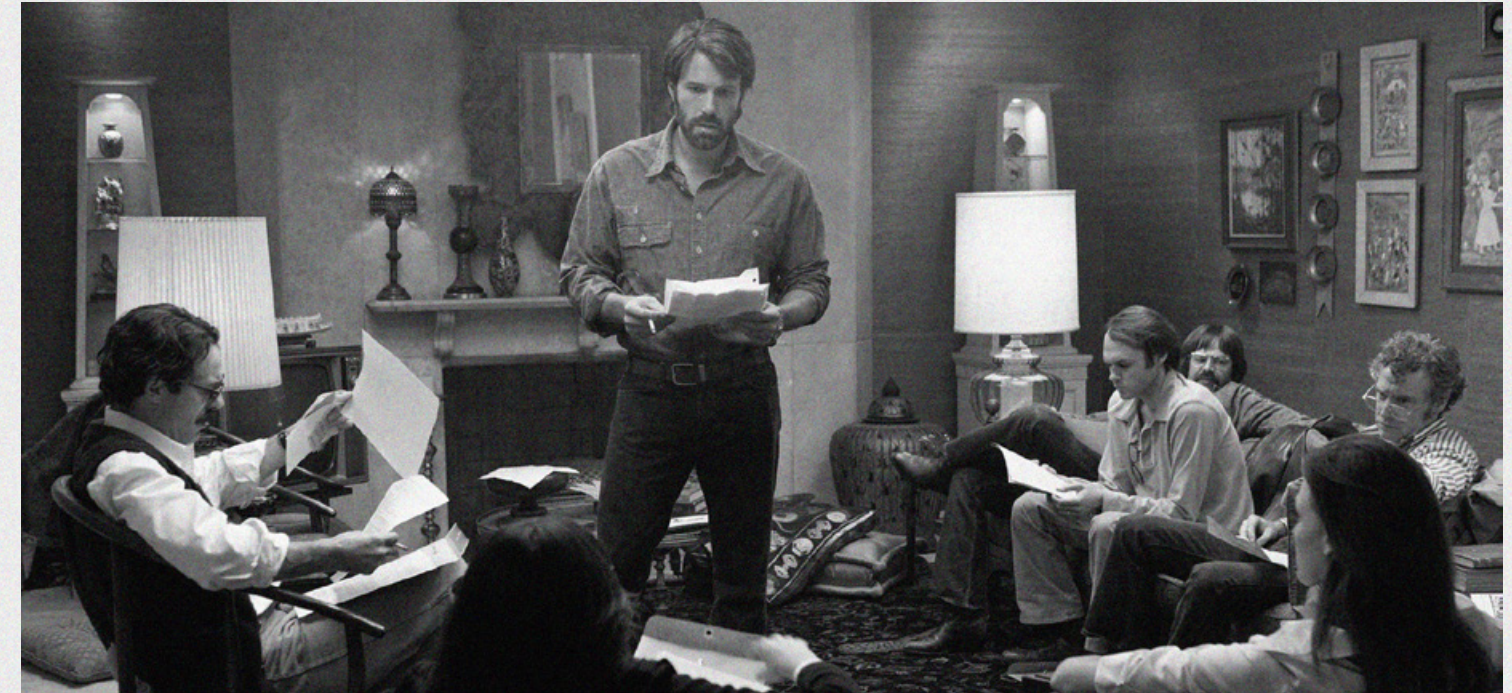
Scene from 'Argo' by Ben Affleck, Image by IMDB

Film History and Introduction

An American historical thriller shot in 2012, Ben Affleck's "Argo" is a story based on real-life events that occurred during the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The narrative describes a successful exfiltration mission conducted by the United States Central Intelligence Agency to bring six American diplomats out of Iran after the storming of the U.S. Embassy by a mob of students. This led to the hostage crisis of 1979. "Argo" was the name of the fake science fiction movie that the CIA fabricated, under the pretext of which they exited the country as Canadian filmmakers.
A deep dive into the historical context of Iran shows the complicated web of interventions by Britain and the United States in the politics of Iran that caused this social unrest. In reference to the chronology in figure 3, there is a rational

and justifiable Iranian perspective that is not detailed in the film, painting a biased picture of history. When Britain and the United States orchestrated the coup that removed Iran's democratically elected leader, Mohammed Mossadegh, they plunged the entire country into an endless cycle of turmoil. Throughout the reign of Reza Shah Pahlavi and later Ayatollah Khomeini, the country has experienced various forms of decline - food shortages, housing crises, human rights crises, women's rights issues, and more.
Although the movie discusses the revolution from an American perspective, it avoids using Orientalist symbols to portray Iran. For instance, the director portrays the militia and officials of the paramilitary regime as intelligent, skeptical, and organized individuals who can challenge

the institution. Throughout the film, there is a pervasive sense of failure that arises from
a pervasive sense of failure that arises from depicting a formidable opponent.
As the 1979 revolution left a divided and hostile relationship between America and Iran, most of the film was shot in Hollywood and Istanbul, recreating 1970s Iran. The director portrays the scenes as accurately as its history, only tweaking the story a little for entertainment purposes. While avoiding representational evidence of orientalism in terms of color, clothing, etc., a closer look at the story of "Argo" - the fictional movie within the movie itself - was a critique of this ideology. They drew from these images to create the fake movie in order to justify their plot and purpose of visit.

HETEROTOPIA OF DEVIATION

First Principle / Those in which individuals whose behavior is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed

HETEROTOPIA THROUGH SUBVERSION

Third Principle / Capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible

(From left to right) Image 1 : Public executions in Tehran during the revolution, image by reddit, Image 2-3 : screenshots from 'Argo', movie-screencaps.com

Forms of "loose space", terrain vagues provide potential outlets for unexpected or spontaneous encounters, and alternative activities outside our increasingly commodified, controlled, and privatised "open" spaces

SPACES OF CONFRONTATION

Shifting borders between sovereign and foreign land puts the compound wall and the gate in a space of irresolution

Which is in contradiction to its characteristic as a permanent object
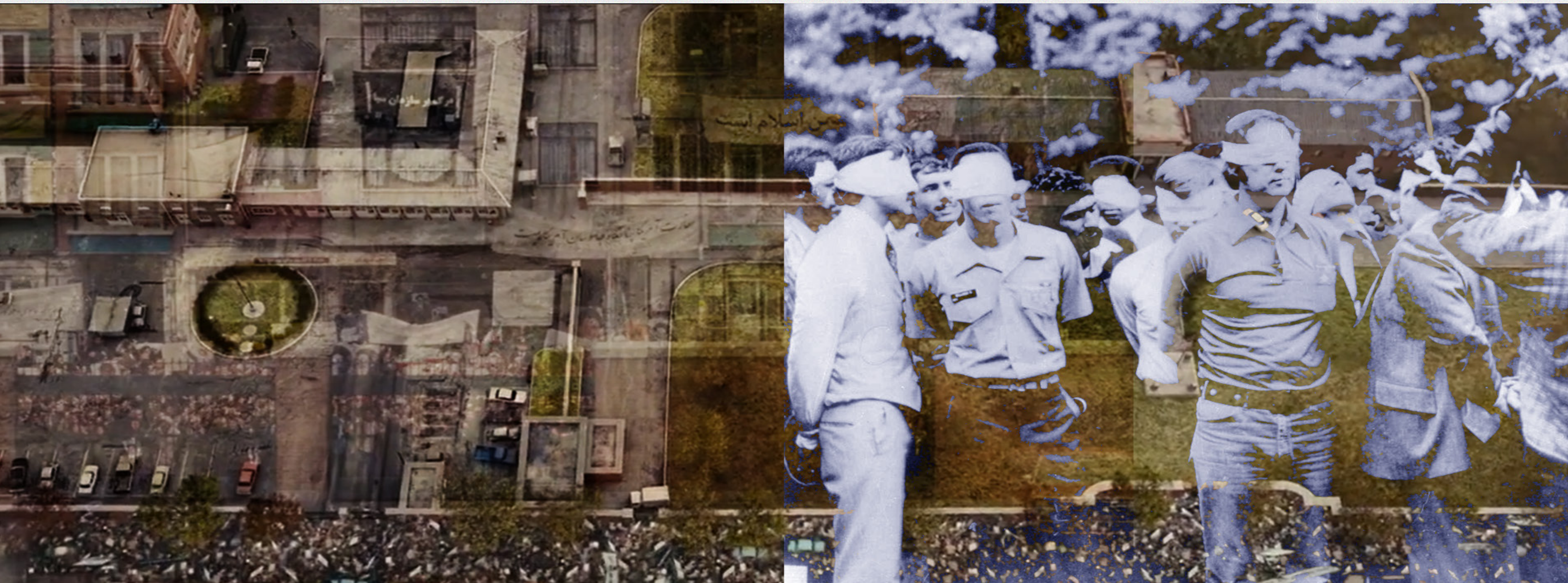
IMMORTALISING HISTORICAL TENSIONS

Counter spaces as containers of shared history, constantly attempts to recall and construct the past

Image 1-4 (top left to right) : screenshots from 'Argo', movie-screencaps.com

Image 5-8 (Bottom left to right) : Interior shots from abandoned US Embassy in Tehran in Iran, Image by Times of Israel, pbs.org, aa.com.tr

At various points within the film, we notice spaces transcending their assigned functionality to assist or oppose the characters and the story. The transforming urban spaces, which act simultaneously as counter sites and defined sites, indicate Iran's constant state of uncertainty. This theme is the central idea of "Argo," representing the sequence of events that occurred during the mission. These can be perceived as terrain vagues and heterotopias, some of which exist within each other.

Concepts such as heterotopias and terrain vagues are important bodies of knowledge as they allow us to understand how spaces and places may react to possible situations,

creating spatial alter egos. These could be relevant realizations that could be used to predict the outcomes of similar contexts dealing with crises. Throughout the film, we see the various characters moving through these key decision states. These states are likely to deviate from the norm and assume different forms, courtesy of the responding characters. In simple words, a border or an edge that is transient and in flux. An instance of this would be the time spent by the diplomats in the Canadian ambassador's house. Once the decision to seek refuge at the ambassador's residence was made by the diplomats, the residence entered a state of uncertainty because it is now a

"heterotopia of crisis" against Iran's rules to shelter enemies of the state. However, the decision of the Canadian ambassador itself to allow the diplomats to enter his home was the moment that transformed it into a "heterotopia of deviation". Such areas with ambiguity open up gray zones for negotiations and subsequently create safe havens in compromised situations, such as this revolution.

The existence of such zones is also temperamental to the anomalies. In the sense that even permanent objects with strong foundations become irresolute in the regions of conflict.

Towards the end of the film, we see the Iranian militia breaking down the gate of the Canadian ambassador's residence and entering the premises despite it being restricted diplomatic land. Similarly, the very first moment this hostage crisis started, it was marked by the storming of the U.S. embassy in Tehran by an angry mob of students. In this case, the gate and the compound wall of the embassy become objects of uncertainty. Despite the embassy land belonging to a foreign country, at the moment it was stormed, the land becomes contested and the building is a space of confrontation. In this sense, it is a terrain vague.

Years after the revolution, the embassy still stands, but now it has taken on the form of a monument, one that has been immortalized by the aggressor. Although abandoned, the building serves as a symbol of what the revolution represented for Iran - a victory against the West. The embassy is adorned with anti-US slogans and houses parts of a downed helicopter from a failed rescue mission by the US government. While the embassy itself is not accessible to the public, a part of the building that serves as a museum opens symbolically every year on the anniversary of the revolution. It can be described as a "terrain vague" that lives despite being dead.

These alter egos are indicators of just how much destructive potential lies dormant in any space, as seen in the films creating imagery of the Islamic Middle East. Some are based on true events and some are exaggerated; unfortunately, most heterotopias carry negative connotations. It follows the inherent uncertainty, which is a deciding factor that will always favor one against the other. It will be interesting to study the possibilities of neutral heterotopias and how one could steer them towards a favorable outcome.

A LIVING ARCHIVE OF PRACTICE

The concept of a "first death" correlates with the physical passing of an individual, while the "second death" responds to an individual being forgotten. Processes of memorialization play a crucial role in reinforcing the history and impact of those who have passed. In Western cultures, memorialization often involves idolization through objects and visuals, commonly seen in museums, galleries, cemeteries, and personal spaces. In contrast, non-Western societies rely more on informal methods including storytelling, oral traditions, and non-material commemoration practices. In the context of New York City, a lack of alternative methods of memorialization coupled with violent histories has led to the displacement and erasure of communities.

Our project proposes memorialization as a practice that facilitates the transmission of history and memories through interpersonal connections rather than institutional frameworks. By leveraging sensory experiences, particularly the evocative power of smell, our memorial-archive serves as a catalyst for sharing stories and quotidian traditions within familial and communal settings, notably around a kitchen table. Through the act of cooking, narratives and methods are passed down from one generation to the next, establishing a continuum of knowledge and tradition. The indispensability of this project lies in its ability to create communal place attachments through ritualistic activities of cooking and gathering. The

shared space fosters a culture of continual archiving, contributing to the preservation of histories within the fabric of New York City. Our intervention is a physical memorial-archive space that sits in and under the now-decommissioned reservoir. It serves as both a tribute to the past and a catalyst for future engagement. By prioritizing storytelling, shared experiences, and communal culinary practices, our project endeavors to democratize the sharing of histories, shifting the narrative away from institutional control and towards the agency of the people.

Impermanent Archives
Liminality, Entropy, Indispensability

Mentor / Karla Rothstein

Teaching Associate / Javier Flores

Collaborators / Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar, Meghan Jones

Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Reservoir, 14 April 2024

I am a shadow, obscure but universal
I am infinite yet tethered
I make you as you make me

I am memory
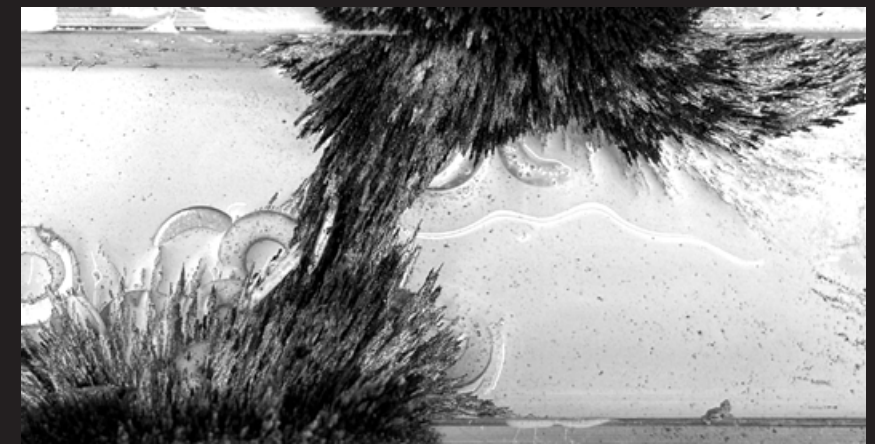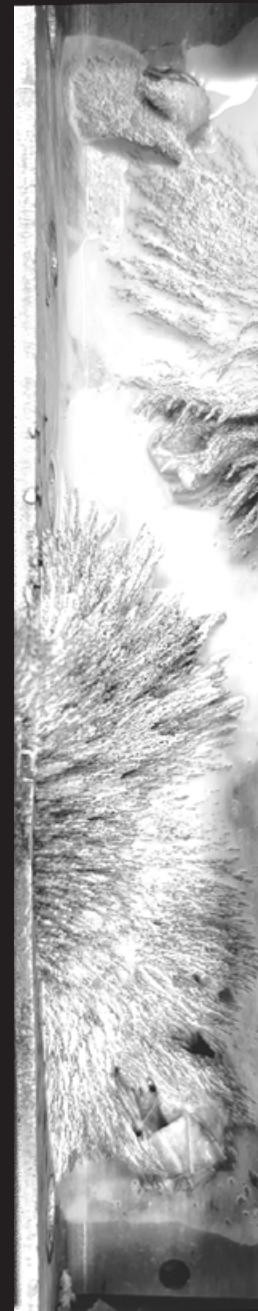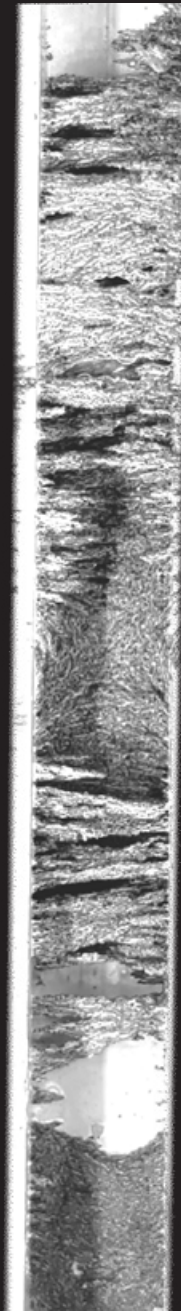
There exists a threshold which we can cross
to remember a memory

Based on its potency, memories can be accessible
to one or more people.

Depending on the medium, memory can sustain for a long time or a
short time.
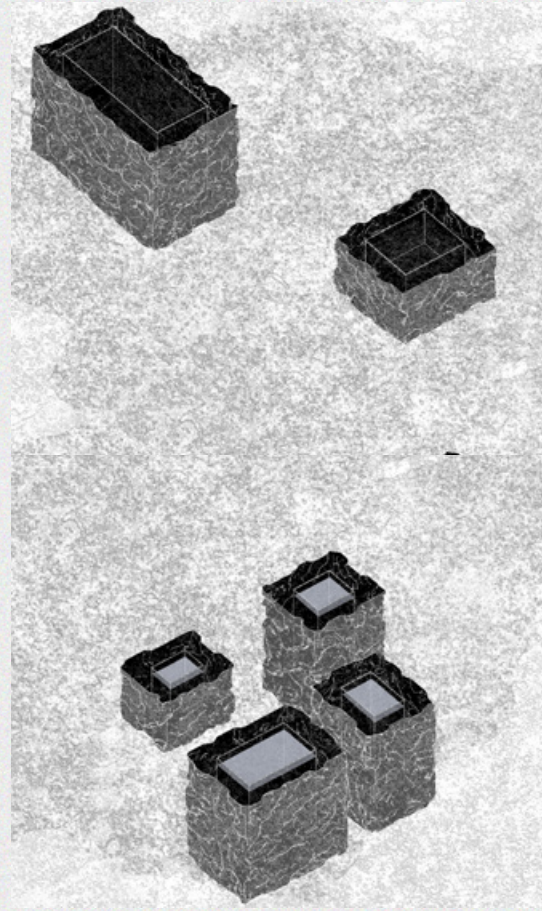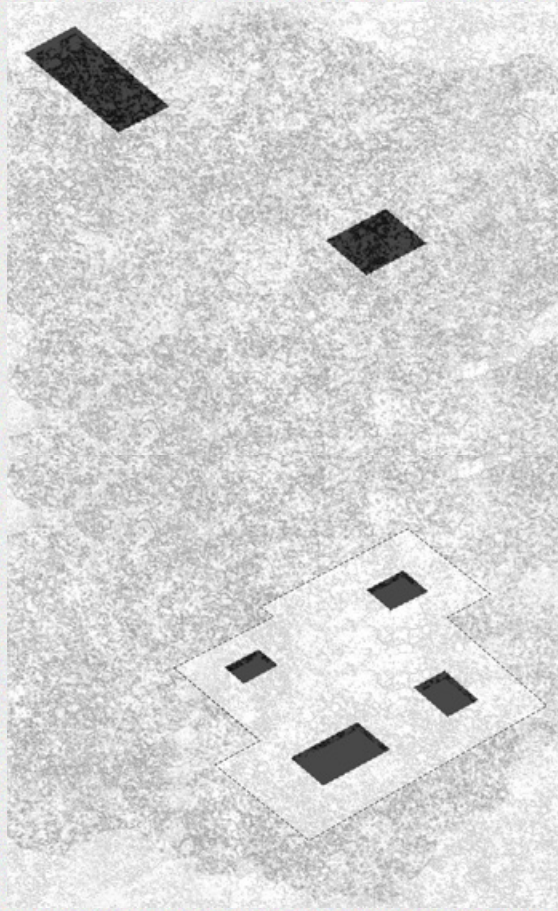
If the death of a body is the *first* death

Being forgotten is the *second and final* death
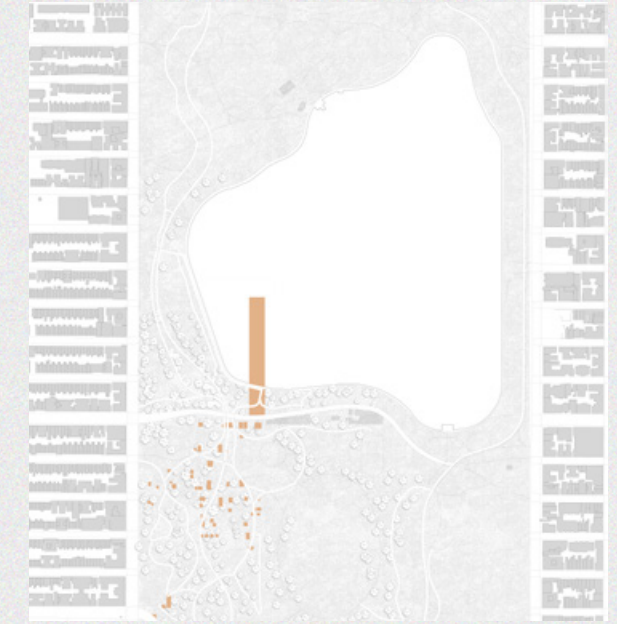
A twin memorial of practice dedicated to the continual
Archiving of people, place, and tradition.
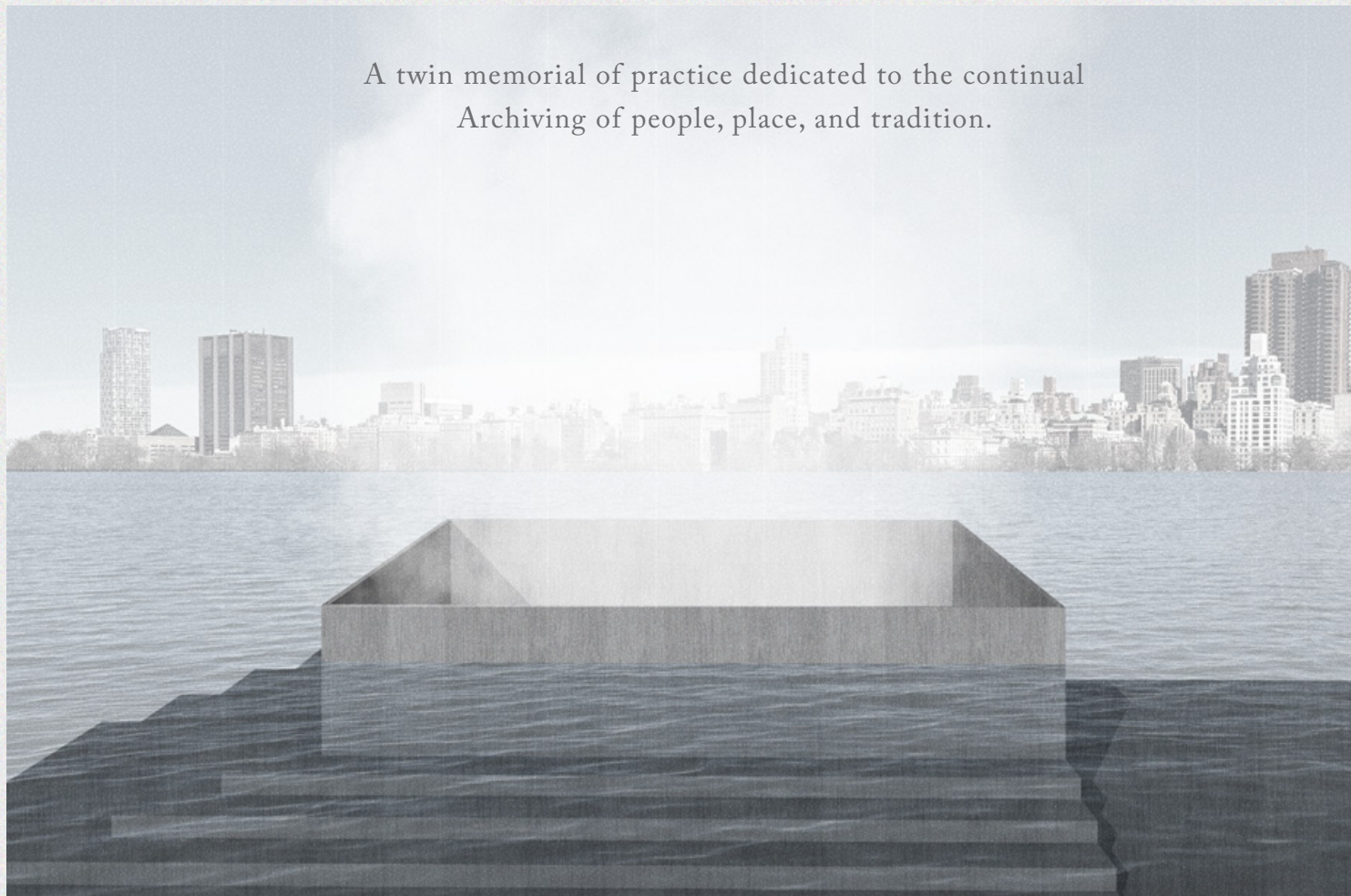
A minimal yet sensorial intervention in
the excavated foundations of Seneca village

WHAT IS AN ARCHIVE REALLY?

It's a repository of memories, of actions, of **habits,** of a way of living.
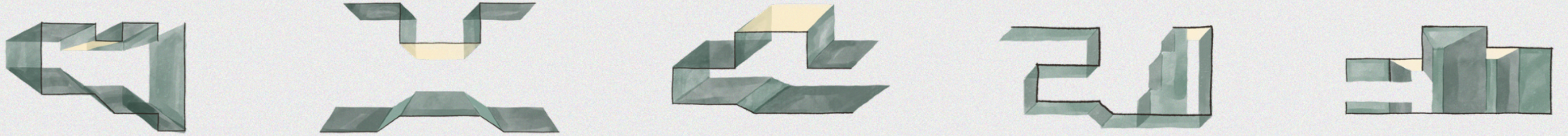
Scales of intimacy
Dining and kitchen spaces as feelings

Conceptual section showing the dining spaces to create various scales of intimacy
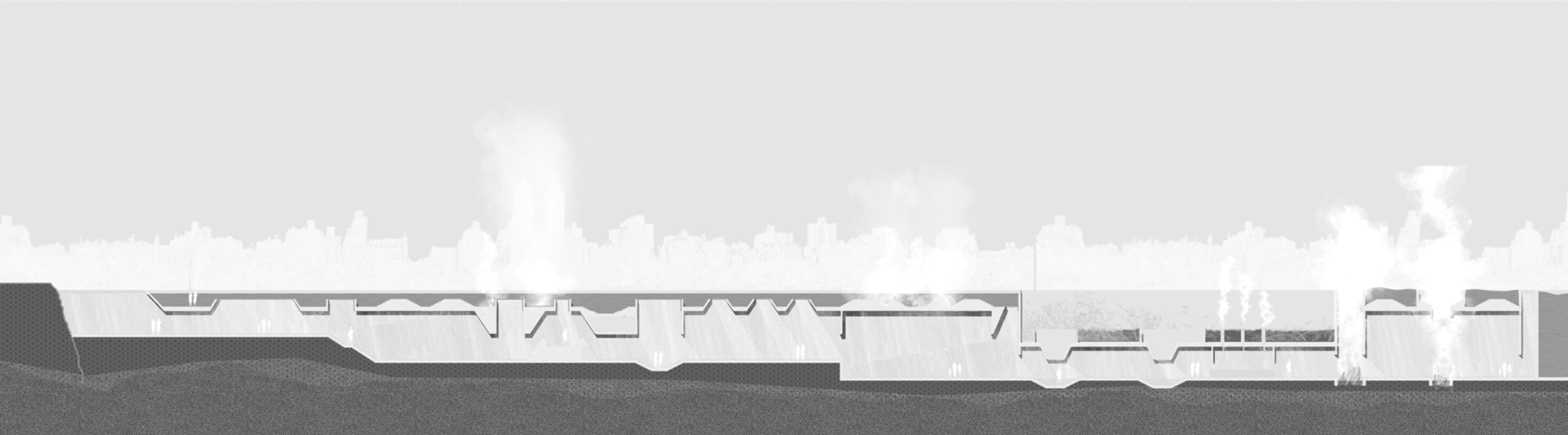
The event space above which forms the roof of the kitchens is a boundary in flux. It stays submerged through the year, hiding the kitchens underneath only hinting at the existence of the kitchens underneath through the voids visible above. Every year annually, the water from the terrace is drained, revealing the civic space which is a sequence of coffers arrayed to an undulation that translates the park landscape. The larger depression and elevation are the gathering spaces where as the rest of the space becomes a platform for other temporary food structures to be set up for the annual event.

Sectional perspective through the outdoor dining space with fugitive lookouts from the event space above
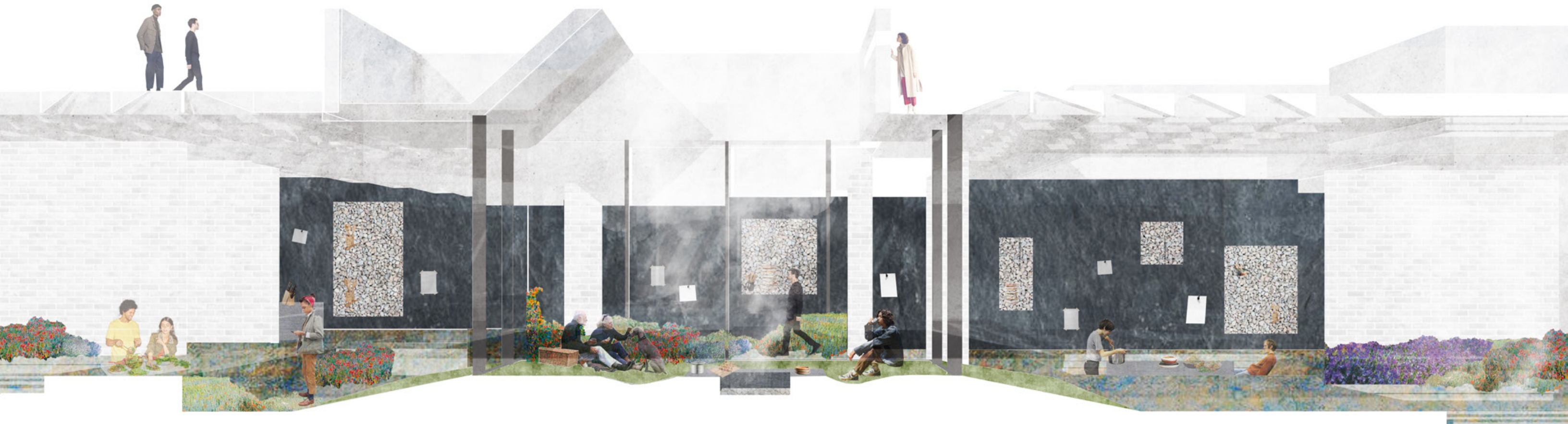
View of the indoor dining spaces with the communal cooking hearth

The spices garden green houses adjacent to the dining space

HADASS AND VAISHNAVI'S ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX

Stemming from readings and discussions in class, this project is born from a need for self reflection. Throughout the semester Hadass and I have been thinking about places of conflicts and how it is necessary to have positionality, never neutrality. Drawing from that value system, we created this website as an archive that records our intentions as we step out of academia. A register of questions that will help us stay grounded in all the critical thinking and reflections that have been developed in school. A tool that we can actively use to hold ourselves accountable to the

negotiations we will be expected to make in the real world. Currently the accountability index has a record of projects that were developed at GSAPP. The questions being raised are very simple yet imperative to answer. Academia is a bubble that protects us from the real world. While one is aware of the all the influencing factors, there isn't a real life implication in the simulation.

Throughout the semester, our readings have equipped us with both measurable and ideological tools to challenge the status quo. In each instance, these tools

were supported by a strong foundation of belief systems. The Accountability Index, therefore, is an introspective system designed to continually check and balance our actions and decisions.

This project is presented as a self-referential project that demonstrates the use of the practice through the presentation of the practice itself.

Immeasurable Sites

Mentor / Emanuel Admassu

Collaborators / Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar, Hadass Rozental

self, Shedding : Photograph, Color Manipulation

Hadass and Vaishnavi's Accountability Index

↙ 1 backlink

The index with projects Hadass and Vaishnavi worked on during their time at from Columbia GSAPP 2023-24

Non-Allies Room

⌄ 1 more property

💬 Add a comment...

THE POINT OF THIS ROOM IS TO REMAIN EMPTY

Somewhere near Derthba, Ireland

▦ Table

But if you still wish to be here, tell us why?

Allies Room

⌄ 1 more property

💬 Add a comment...

CONSTRUCTIVE IDEAS

Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam

▦ Table   New ⌄

New perspectives

⌄ ▦ No Project Title   2   ··· +

As Name	↗ Project Title	≣ Questions & Comments

Will anyone join us?

+ New

📓 ☰ ⟨ ⟩ + ▥ Hadass and Vaishnavi's ... / Index   Edited 1d ago   Share 🕐 ☆ ··· ─ ▢ ✕

This page is live on vaishnavic.notion.site.   🌐 View site   ⚙ Site settings

Index

🖼 Gallery   ▦ Table   +   🔽 ⇅ 🔍 ···   **New** ⌄

🧊 A Living Archive of Practice
January 17, 2024
December 15, 2023
January 22, 2024
April 26, 2024
April 26, 2024
👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar
`Archiving` `Impermanence` `Civic Sacred Spaces`

📖 Hadass and Vaishnavi's Accountability Index
Thoughts
📄 Breakdown of questions
Presentation :
☐ We have to design the private rooms
✏ Accountability Index
January 17, 2024
December 15, 2023
April 5, 2024
April 17, 2024
April 16, 2024
👤 Hadass Rozental 👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar
`Archiving` `Indexing` `Accountability Index` `Mea`

📺 rAADio Season 04
September 7, 2023
July 6, 2023
September 30, 2023
May 15, 2023
👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar 👤 Hadass Rozental
`Conversations` `Collaboration`

🌀 Design Is Ceremony
January 17, 2024
January 22, 2024
January 22, 2024
April 25, 2024
👤 Hadass Rozental
`Indigenous` `Epistemologies` `Sh`

📝 Slow Transformation
September 8, 2023
August 15, 2023
September 11, 2023
December 13, 2023
December 13, 2023
👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

This is a collaborative space : choose your direction

🪑 Stuffed Air
September 8, 2023
September 22, 2023
September 11, 2023
December 12, 2023
December 12, 2023
👤 Hadass Rozental
`Air` `Socio-Politics` `Subversion` `Institutions`

🪶 A Balancing Act
June 1, 2023
May 15, 2023
June 1, 2023
August 2, 2023
👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

This is a collaborative space : choose your direction

🔷 JSAPP
JSAPP is a demographic based club for Jewish Students to be able to connect and have a space of our own. Our mission statement: JSAPP seeks to create a connected and prosperous Jewish Community within the GSAPP student body. JSAPP will be a means of a represented collective for the minority of Jewish Students at Columbia GSAPP. We seek to further Jewish design excellence within the
January 31, 2024
December 13, 2023
February 9, 2024
👤 Hadass Rozental
`Collaboration` `Identity` `Community`

🏛 Keeping Up With the Klassics
June 1, 2023
June 8, 2023
June 1, 2023
August 2, 2023
August 2, 2023
👤 Hadass Rozental
`Institutions` `Measurable` `Subversion` `Economi`

☑ Apply for the position
☑ Apply for a new I-20
☑ Apply for an OPT
☐ Apply for jobs (?)
This is a collaborative space : choose your direction
🧳 AAD Summer Studio Mentorship
February 29, 2024
May 29, 2024
August 31, 2024
👤 Hadass Rozental 👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

+ New

🖼 Gallery view

Rooms

🔒 Hadass's Living Room

🔒 Vaishnavi's Living Room

📓 Allies Room

📕 Non-Allies Room

////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////
////////////////////////////////

+ New

🔒 Guest Room

Opportunities for collaboration within this closed project. Self introspection does not negate feedback and helpful criticism which we expect to intentionally accept.

Accountability Index

Property	Value
A.00.Working Title	Empty
A.01.Who is worki...	👤 Hadass Rozental 👤 Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar
A.02.1.Commissio...	January 17, 2024
A.02.2.Inception D...	December 15, 2023
A.02.3.Start Date	April 5, 2024
A.02.4.Due Date	April 17, 2024
A.02.5.Completion...	April 16, 2024
A.03.Keywords AI	Archiving Indexing Accountability Index Measurable
B.01.What is the p...	Hadass and Vaishnavi trying to figure out what their new practice will look like. What are the different ways we can stay true to our beliefs as we step into the practical world which is polar opposite of the academic bubble
B.02.What is expec...	Develop a set of ideas into a draft working model
B.03.What is the e...	The impact is determined by the decision to take a project forward after assessing the answers from the questionnaire, the need at the time
B.04.What knowle...	A framework for having an ethical practice
B.05.Who needs th...	Hadass and Vaishnavi
B.06.Who will profi...	Hadass and Vaishnavi, a possible third party
B.07.Who will ben...	Hadass and Vaishnavi
B.08. Who will con...	Hadass and Vaishnavi, a possible third party

Property	Value
C.01.Who is the co...	Emanuel Admassu
C.02.Who funds it?	N/A
C.03.Why me?	Self preservation in the capitalist world
C.03.1.How did th...	Through the seminar in spring semester
C.04.Why now?	Final submission requirement for the semester
C.05.Who else is c...	N/A
C.06.What is the c...	N/A
D.01.What will I ga...	A methodology for practice that we can use for the rest of our lives
D.02.What will it c...	Time
D.03.Is this project...	Yes
D.04.Does it align ...	Yes
D.04.1.How far am...	N/A
D.04.2.How far am...	If necessary for improvement, as long as it does not undercut all the existing value systems
D.04.3.Why am I ...	Nothing yet
D.05.What will I lo...	Nothing that comes to mind
D.06.How will I ch...	Will either be validated for the project to become a scaffold for the rest of our careers or force us to think of alternate approaches

+ Add a property

⌄ Hide 1 property

👤 Add a comment...

B.01.WHAT IS THE PROJECT ABOUT?

B.02.WHAT IS EXPECTED OF ME?

B.03.WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE PROJECT?

B.04.WHAT KNOWLEDGE WILL BE PRODUCED?

B.05.WHO NEEDS THIS PROJECT?

B.06.WHO WILL PROFIT FROM THIS PROJECT?

B.07.WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM THIS PROJECT?

B.08.WHO WILL CONTINUE TO BENEFIT FROM THIS PROJECT IN ITS LIFETIME?

C.01.WHO IS THE COMMISSIONER?

C.02.WHO FUNDS IT?

C.03.WHY ME?

C.03.1.HOW DID THEY LEARN ABOUT ME?

C.04.WHY NOW?

C.05.WHO ELSE IS COMMISSIONED?

C.06.WHAT IS THE COMPENSATION?

D.01.WHAT WILL I GAIN?

D.02.WHAT WILL IT COST?

D.03.IS THIS PROJECT A VALUABLE ADDITION WORTHY OF TIME, MONEY AND ENERGY?

D.04.DOES IT ALIGN WITH MY VALUE SYSTEMS?

D.04.1.HOW FAR AM I EXPECTED TO DEVIATE FROM IT?

D.04.2.HOW FAR AM I WILLING TO DEVIATE FROM IT?

D.04.3.WHY AM I MAKING THIS EXCEPTION?

D.05.WHAT WILL I LOSE?

D.06.HOW WILL I CHANGE?

A.00.WORKING TITLE

A.01.WHO IS WORKING ON IT?

A.02.1.COMMISSION DATE

A.02.2.INCEPTION DATE

A.02.3.START DATE

A.02.4.DUE DATE

A.02.5.COMPLETION DATE

A.03.KEYWORDS

Thoughts

📄 Breakdown of questions

Presentation :

- [ ] We have to design the private rooms
- [ ] Gather stuff to put on the table - set up studios - physical living room
- [ ] Fill in text data for the projects
- [ ] Set up 2 living rooms - digital draft
- [ ] Presentation sequence

Presentation Pointers/Sequence

@Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

- Hello we are Vaishnavi and Hadass and this our practice which is in the form of a work in progress website
- Throughout the semester we've been literally talking, discussing and asking ourselves and each other questions. It took us a while, but we have finally come to the realization that this actually our practice.
- This being the accountability index - as we're calling it right now
- Why this title : we think that this project is more inward and centered to us. So we're situating ourselves in the future, where we'll be expected to make decisions responding to very real and practical concerns. So this index is supposed to help us ground ourselves and make us question our choices at the very beginning. It is a record of our past choices in a way that allows some reciprocity with collaborators, commissioners, viewers, users and so on.

WHERE DOES THE INDEX COME FROM ?

- ○ Maria Eichhorn
  - working within and critiquing institutions
    - Thinking about the limitations of that
    - Bringing the freedoms of an art practice to an architectural practice
- ○ FormaFantasma
  - archiving as both part of the actual work + what remains after the physical installation is done
    - Also touches on the skepticism around the finalization of a work + completion date. When are things finalized? Archive is almost be definition meant to remain open for new entries

WHY DO WE INDEX?

- The index is a **measurable way for us track and reflect** - during the process of the project and after. It will also help asses prospect projects in the future by asking - having measured this, do we want to take that commission?

@Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar

HOW WE INDEX?

- ○ When we began designing this Index - we realized that we didn't necessarily have a single format of representation that would drive the archive. It was supposed to be an archive of anything and everything that we consider as a project. So eventually we landed on a questionnaire that we would fill in, print it out and hang it on our wall so that becomes a reminder for what the project really is about.
- ○ What are the questions?
- ¶ Accountability Index
  - ○ The second segment of questions is about the project...
  - ○ The third segment is about the commissioner and the commissionee. Which is out relationship with the project
  - ○ The fourth segment is about questioning our value systems and speculating about whether we'll be expected to deviate from it and if yes how much are we willing to move away from it
  - ○ Why are they so simple : *It is our way of breaking down and dealing with the larger complex questions that we think about deeply in now, in school and academia. But there is a good chance we forget to ask these questions when we're caught up in our day jobs - within which our practice will exist.*

WHAT ARE FILTERS?

- ○ Its about being straightforward - a filter is a derivative of being an index - it allows us to have specific views, read patterns of the choices we've made
- ○ we were also thinking about having "fixed" filters?
  - what would they be?
    - would they be automated? Meaning, do we have a set of rules that we could say would always apply? Like a certain threshold of how we measure a project that is always true

WHAT ARE THE ROOMS?

- ○ What are the two kinds of rooms
  - Private vs. public
  - private: a space for each of us to keep our personal thought, ideas, etc.
    - is not visible to anyone but us

@Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar and @Hadass Rozental

- Talk about the set up of objects - the physical space
  - ○ The physical format of our living room - typical our work desk in the studio
    - @Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar : For me personally, having a visual cues or reminders of what is important to me is incredibly important
      - What physical object do I want to have in my living room - the first draft is a photograph rolodex (think about this @Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar)
  - ○ @Hadass Rozental We recognize that these objects necessarily have some value in a project - whether that's a draft, a documentation, a task or a break
- Even in this process we ended up spatializing our practice on a digital platform - the way we imagine this space to function, the way our thoughts are organized and so on.
  - Mind palace - how do we access this plethora of information we have inside our heads

@Hadass Rozental

- Going back to the public room,
- This is the collaborative space within our practice, which we divided into the allies and non-allies.
  - ○ We know that they fit here, but not sure how they would evolve and who enters them
  - ○ We know why we need these rooms
  - ○ How (and if?) does a non-ally end up in a room?
  - ○ We invite people to contribute
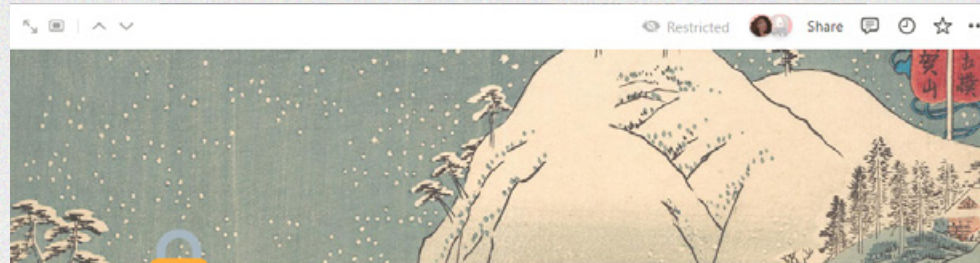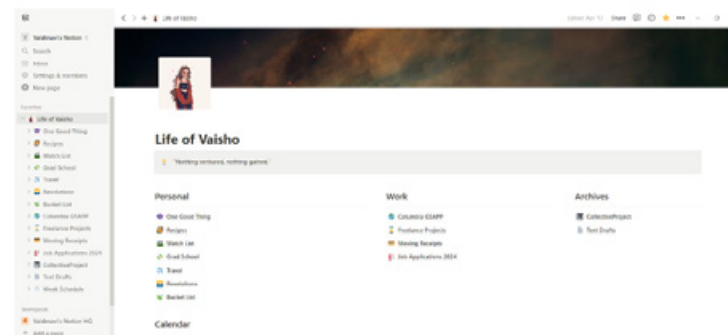
An image of Vaishnavi's physical living room with Hadass in it while working on the 'Accountability Index' project
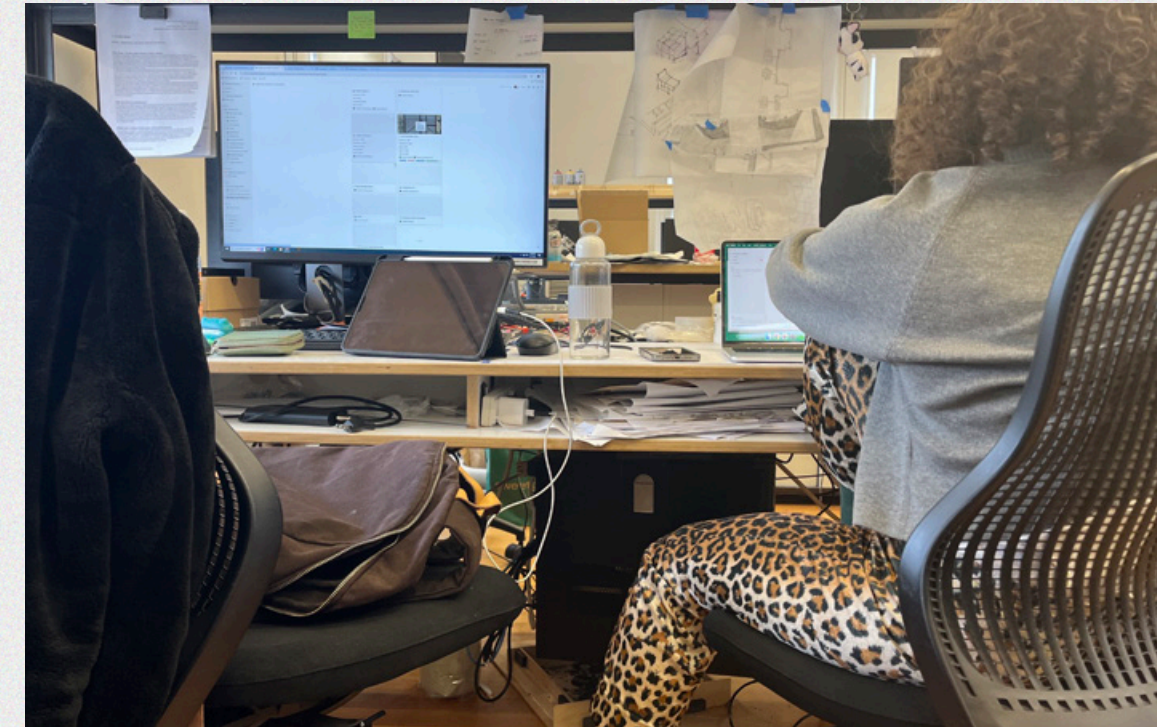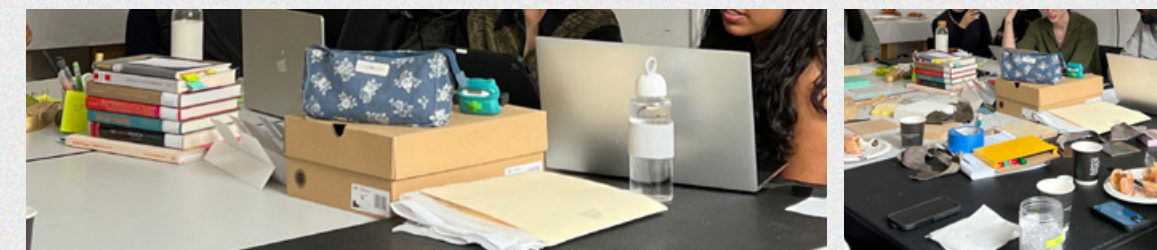
Hadass and Vaishnavi's physical living rooms recreated for the Immeasurable sites final presentation

QUEER TIME

Episode 3 : Main Course from the Legendary Avery Cafe

rAADio Season 4

Mentor / Xiaoxi Chen, Max Lauter

Collaborators / Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar, **Hadass Rozental**, Ammar Hussain Rassai,
Preethi Ganesh, Harshini Ashok, Manfei Shi

If we study Stephen Graham's "Cities under Siege", he talks about the "militarization of urbanism" as an attempt by Western governments to rapidly expand their economies through the technophilia of precision security technology. These proprietary systems, often controlled by corporations like Raytheon Technologies, operate with minimal
in how architecture reinforces power dynamics. It is interesting to note that Modern buildings often mimic traditional elements, like stone walls, which turn out to be mere cladding. This serves as a semiotic tool of control, masking the true nature of the underlying infrastructure. This tactic mirrors the strategies employed by military forces when planning the recapturing or destruction of cities, as exemplified by the US military exercise in Dugway Proving grounds, Utah.

[Informal conversation with a lot of background noise – like a scratch recording]

HR : So we can start off with the reading from Emanuel's class. The Miriam Abraham Hillawi reading where she says "We begin, as all stories do, with land."

VC : Yeah and discuss how humans have always had an inherent connection to land, and say that it is the source of life. So no matter which community we belong to we all feel strongly towards land.

HR : The time component in this is the most interesting bit - how we all have these histories that's true and real for different people but why do we always have to pick one history?

VC : Exactly, the fact is that histories and time aren't binary, it's not black and white. So if we know that Time has been used as a measure of control and subjugation, what if we attempt to break down the institutional structures that guide such thinking, especially in areas of conflict, and start referring to time as queer?
I think we should clarify here what Queer means - a trait that allows time to exist on multiple axes and to uphold several identities at once.

HR : Yes, and where multiplicities surround a singular piece of land - that's where it often becomes complicated (a pause) and, well, ugly. So let's circle our conversation around that.

[Transition sound]

HR : I'm Hadass Rozental

VC : and I'm Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar and in this episode of rAADio we're thinking about 'WHAT IF TIME WAS QUEER'

rAADio Episode Opening

[Intro sound]

rAADio is an investigation by Advanced Architectural design students in the Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation at Columbia University.
As a cohort from a plurality of diverse backgrounds, we aim to observe the many polycentric entanglements of architecture. We explore the questions of how we expand the traditional role and associations of architecture between assemblages, interrelationships, bodies, and technologies; beyond simple scalar translations.

[Transition sound]

Part 1.1 - The Ayodhya Conflict

VC : So this conversation really just started out by talking about places and times of conflict. When we have so much about this particular topic in the news, we wanted to think more deeply and definitely more sensitively about why these conversations spiral into the extremities forcing people to choose sides.

HR : Exactly I often feel that for the sake of having a conversation, situations are flattened instead of simplified. Sometimes it happens from an honest attempt to create more accessible conversation, but the result is usually a superficial rendering of the complexities that for the most part happen when multiple realities are layered on top of each other.

VC : So let's break down what we actually mean when we say, quote-unquote multiple realities. With this episode we are trying to understand the unconscious biases that influence most of our perspectives and how we could create conversations that could lead to more accountably inclusive discourses for territories of conflict.

HR : Okay, so let's use a specific case study, that is closer to home for you Vaish - The Ayodhya Conflict. For those of you unfamiliar with it, this is a case that went on for 140 odd years from its legal inception in court in 1885. It is a contested holy site for two religious groups in India - Hindus and Muslims. At the time the suit was filed, on-site was a mosque, Babri Masjid, that had been constructed during the Mughal rule in India in the 1500s. The argument for the case was that historically, or mythologically, however you wish to say it, Ayodhya is the birthplace of Lord Ram, a god to millions of Hindus who believe that the site of the mosque rightfully belongs to them and must have a temple.

[Transition sound]

Part 1.2 - The prompt

VC : As we found ourselves discussing this case, we thought we could use it to deconstruct ideologies inherent to socially charged situations. We used a slightly different format where we posed this topic to three different people and we gave them each this excerpt and a question, which read as :

"One of the most controversially debated cases in India was the Babri Masjid - Ram Mandir Dispute or Ayodhya Dispute, which was finally "resolved" by a supreme court ruling in 2019. Fueled by communal tensions that have compounded over the last 200 years, the state of the existing relationship between the Hindus and the Muslims in India today

[Transition sound]

Part 2.1 - M's response

HR : So let's start with the first response from a 26 year old Indian Christian respondent, whom for the sake of this conversation we will refer to as M.M starts off by saying:

is a portal to its future and the legitimacy of democracy.
On the event of the inauguration of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, what image does that portal create for you? How do you feel about the entire situation?"
Hadass and I started to think about this issue as a possible topic for the podcast a few days before the inauguration of the temple. And by the time we sent the prompt out, in India, the temple was being inaugurated and celebrated by the prime minister just ahead of his re-election campaign.
Our respondents were a mix of people old and young, familiar and unfamiliar with the case.

"As a neutral Indian who belongs to neither the Hindu nor the Muslim community, I am pro the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya."

I would argue that this is our first point of critique. You hear this a lot usually amongst the younger generations, where they identify as "neutral" but simply by saying that he is for the construction of the temple, he has aligned or even rationalized the situation in whatever arbitrary way that works with his belief system. I think it's important that people carefully use their words with more intention to say what they believe without having the fear of being ostracized for having an opinion.

VC : I agree with you, even while thinking about this topic I remember how we debated which word to use instead of neutral. Because that's exactly what we're trying to do here, start discourses about how not to be neutral but rather aware. In a way which says "yes this is my history but there is also another person for whom the opposite may be true and that is his history". This is however, easier said than done and we do not want to come off as naive and ignorant trying to say that you should be open minded because there are also so many facts and numbers that speak to violence that are happening as we speak.

HR : Absolutely, and this is probably a good spot to state the importance of being critical about the sources we draw information from. Especially in this era when we consume so much of our data from social media and sometimes forget that it is designed to do the exact opposite - it amplifies our own voice, often at the expense of hearing others.
But coming back to our first response, M says that despite belonging to the Abrahamic religions, he feels that the construction of the temple was the right decision, because he views and I quote:

"churches, mosques and synagogues as spaces of congregation where the site does not hold as much importance except on the rare occasions where it was testimony to miracles or divine intervention.

On the other hand, Hindu temples are more often than not built on sites that hold significant importance to the faith as whole. All major temples are built on sites/ locations that have some historical context with regards to the epics and other religions scriptures."

While there is definitely truth to that statement, at least one that I personally resonate with, it comes from a place of objectivity that removes all emotional and sacral associations (or religious sentiment) that people feel with this case. Especially when it manifests itself into a physical form that is visible to the human eye, that is a grand temple in this case.

VC : M goes on to say that he, however, does not support the way the whole situation was publicized and he is absolutely right here. The spectacle of the whole event, the celebration of it, was a very concrete and real way of the government reinforcing the idea that 'A' group of people have won the fight and the other hasn't. It was memorialized as a victory that instead of finding a common ground for the conflict, sealed its fate forever, complicating the already complex relationship between the two communities that exists.

HR : He ends on this almost dismal note where he is saying [quote]:

"Should a similar issue arise in the future, I strongly doubt there will be an amicable solution. It was an opportunity for all sections to show camaraderie and respect for each other , the rift only seems to widen and it is a tragedy that the country couldn't come together for an event that holds such importance to such a large majority."

It brings us back to the first point about neutrality which in a way can be synonymized as a lack of interest, indifference and maybe even a nihilistic attitude that seems to be festering across the world. The idea of what is the point, which is definitely an issue. But even stopping to think about this crisis is a step towards addressing the problem.

VC : Agreed. M is a friend of mine and I tried to start this conversation on my group chat of people who are close to me and I have known for years, but there was so much resistance to voicing their opinion while my entire social media was flooded with images of the new temple for the two-three days around its inauguration. People chose to use the platform and method of posting stories to in a way show their alliances. In the digital age that we are currently living in there is so much misinformation and superficial content out there that leaves critical data out of the system that it creates divides. In the sea of orange posts.

HR : For our listeners who aren't familiar, orange is the color of the Hindu flag

VC : [so among all these orange posts] there were a few voices opposing and challenging the status quo but the numbers were so poor that the effort almost felt insignificant.

Part 2.2 - D's response

VC : Let's look at another perspective here. Sadly our respondent pool was restricted to the male gender and that might itself be something we should have addressed to create a more equitable representation of voices, but due to logistical constraints, this is the data we're working with.

HR: Well, we surely do claim that patriarchy doomed us…

VC : Oh yeah, definitely agree on that. I remember that conversation we had with your building superintendent. That was an interesting perspective, not so unique to how the majority of the country thinks. Do you want to summarize your conversation with him?

HR : Yeah, this was a particularly interesting conversation for me. Just the sheer excitement about the whole topic was fascinating to watch. Or hear if I'm being more precise.

For D this whole story was about the historical fact - he emphasized that there was an entire investigation and a historical research of the site and its surroundings which concluded that the Hindu history of the place was prior to Muslim one. Then he specifically mentioned the Muslim judge (1 out of 5) in the supreme court bench that unanimously ruled in favor of the Hindus, as a sort or re-affirmation of that chronology by an Islamic representative, in a way that, according to D, sheds an objective light on the supreme court rule. Simply put - If even the Muslim guy approved it, it must be right.

VC : This whole experience, the way you just described, is so familiar to me. I've heard this in so many different versions back home. I would say there is a fundamental compartmentalization of religion versus rationality that we all make in our minds. Whether you're progressive or conservative. And that might be where we begin to have a conversation. It's which half we let dominate.

Part 2.3 - A's response

HR : I just want to use this quote from another one of our respondents. A is a 23 year old American, providing us with an "outside" opinion of the case. And he goes:

"The inauguration of the new Ram temple in Ayodhya made me feel like spiritual and physical intentions lack its original monumentality. The original monument presented the labor intensive detail which embodied belief. The alternative photos found online presents the same temple as it's digitally rendered and built using larger modern cranes.

What's the monument around it? Is the temple not just an installment of lazy power. A temple in the carcass of a site. I challenge the temple to be part of current times, to be monumental within limited technology and to present its relevance counter to advance. Spirituality as alternative empowerment within the age of the techno-socialites. Less formally, a temple to the current age of religion could single handedly be absent from strategies of belief."

HR : What I find interesting about A's response is that he is actually offering us an architectural framework for this dispute. Which nicely fits the fact that he is a fellow architecture grad student. Now, I really don't want to sound naive, but I do think it would make an interesting experiment to provide architecture students with a brief for an alternative temple or worship space that would answer everybody's needs. Of course we are aware of the fact that just like most of what's happening in the world there are major forces in play here besides the actual physicality of Babri Masjid, that probably benefit from that polarization in one way or the other.

HR : So the point of that proposed experiment is not to conveniently ignore these complexities, but rather to use architecture as a tool that starts to mitigate between all these ends.

VC : Can I just add here, being an architecture student myself and I've thought about what the ideal proposal would look like and in this context I keep circling back to haptic non-specific space that can be meditative and reflective to different communities. Something that is guided by the landscape and natural elements as opposed to hard edges and enclosures.

HR : A also touches on the idea of being of time here. In challenging the temple to "be part of current times", what A is really saying is that we have to, first and foremost, rethink what it means to worship in our times. The masjid was built 500 years ago, to accommodate the religious needs and the power structure of that time. The same was done for the worship site before that. Religious practices and power structures have evolved since then. Time has changed, for better or worse, and space must reflect that. There is a contemporary aspect to this matter that has been entirely left out of the current, newly inaugurated temple.

Part 3 - Bias/Conclusion

HR : Taking this whole conversation as a template, the number of tangents that we've digressed into is simply incredible. That process itself kind of reveals the idea of positionality, as Rolando Vazquez would put it, that one must have. A bias that allows you to think about your beliefs and a bias that allows you to contest another person's bias. We talked in length about what religion means to each of us and you mentioned how you find solace in a non-functional temple, where you can actually see a myriad of people come together irrespective of their ethnicity. The possibility of that is based on the fact that being religious is removed from the religion itself.

VC : So coming back to the [non-space] that I mentioned earlier, in such contexts of conflict what would the site itself do?

HR : Well, If I was the place of worship, I would want to be euthanized. Not in a pessimistic, giving up kind of way - but in a constructive sense.

VC : OK, you have to explain what you mean by that!

HR : The Hebrew term for euthanization is דסח תתמה (HAMATAT CHESSED). It could be translated as either "death by mercy" or "death by grace" and could be passive or active. I personally think of it as a beautiful thing (or concept?) - a person taking control of their own life, even at the very end.
Now when our site is euthanized, it liberates itself from its religious constraints to a point where it is both no-man's land and all-man's land.

VC : I have to admit that sounds like poetic justice to me, what if the site or building went 'I QUIT!' It sounds freeing and like there is a chance at a new life where you archive the multiple histories for new ones to exist over them. To move on.

rAADio Closing Credits

[Transition sound]

This episode was produced by the 2024 rAADio editorial team, a collective of Advanced Architectural Design students at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. Thanks to Dean Andres Jaque and AAD assistant director Xiaoxi Chen for their guidance. Also a big shout out to our director and producer Max Lauter and Alana DeVito for their support.

[Closing sound]

PLEASE RESPECT [THE BOUNDARY]

Vaishnavi Chandra Kumar