PRACTICE

Julia Vais

Contents

Columbia University GSAPP
Master of Architecture
Portfolio
2021-2024

Pastoral Militarism

Sentinel Landscapes in the Hudson Valley

Description

Nineteenth century Hudson River School landscape painters such as Thomas Cole and Frederick Edwin Church explored the wilderness of the Hudson Valley Highlands, depicting heroic, idealized scenery as a resource of spiritual renewal and expression of national identity. As the Hudson River School is considered the first distinctly American school of painting, our research surfaced the entanglements of nationalism and naturalism projected across the Hudson Valley.

West Point Military Academy has amassed 16,000 acres of land since its founding in 1802. The Department of Defense maintains a buffer zone around the campus, shielding the academy from development that is incompatible with the military's mission. In addition, Storm King State Park and Black Rock Forest to the north, and Bear Mountain and Harriman State Park to the south perform as sentinel landscapes for the academy, acting as both mirror and mirage of military power and projection. State and national parks have always had strong ties to the military. Many of the park's first rangers were members of the U.S. Calvary and their leadership structures continue to bear resemblance today.

Through a convergence of military strategy and conservation, land, water, and air are simultaneously protected and controlled for environmental and tactical purposes. Dense forests and steep terrain mask training grounds, tank operation fields, artillery and grenade ranges. Airspace is restricted by a designated no fly zone due to the hazard posed by high-altitude weapons testing.

This bucolic DoD-maintained landscape disguises militant control of the environment and violent reshaping of the terrain for army training and weapons testing. One of the most severe cases, and the site of our intervention, is Crow's Nest Mountain on the northern edge of the United States Military Academy just south of Storm King State Park. Aptly named from the nautical term for a lookout platform fixed near the top of a mast, Crow's Nest served as a primary target for weapons testing. In the 19th century, West Point was the principal testing ground for mounted guns and artillery. Crow's Nest was barraged by West Point grenades, rifle artillery, cannons, and anti-tank rockets. Between 1820-1870, West Point Foundry in Cold Springs fired artillery across the Hudson River at targets on Crow's Nest. As a result, a wide array of unexploded ordinances, chemical residues and shrapnel are located at Crow's Nest, creating hostile and disruptive environments for human and non-human inhabitants.

Sequence Advanced IV

Critic Nahyun Hwang

Studio Sanctuaries

Collaborators Maria Berger

Fig. 1
Hudson River Scene by John Frederick Kensett.

Fig. 2
Postcard of West Point Military Academy.

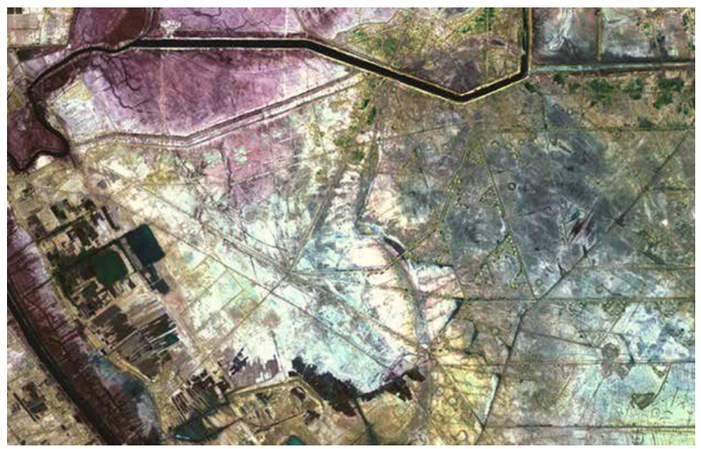


Fig. 3
Military-grade satellite imagery.

#1

#2

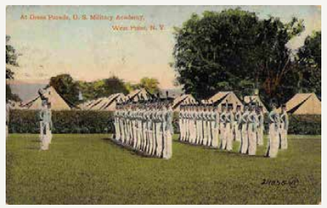
#3

#4

#5


#6


#7



#8

#9

#10

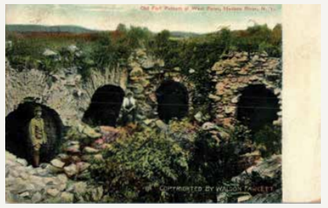
#11

#12

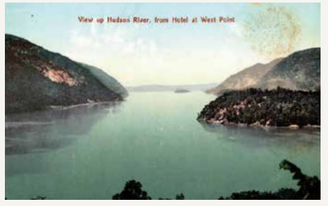
#13

#14

#15



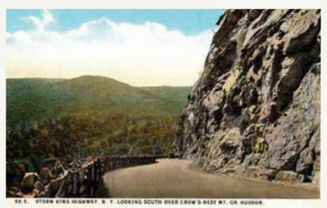
#16



#17

#18

#19



#20

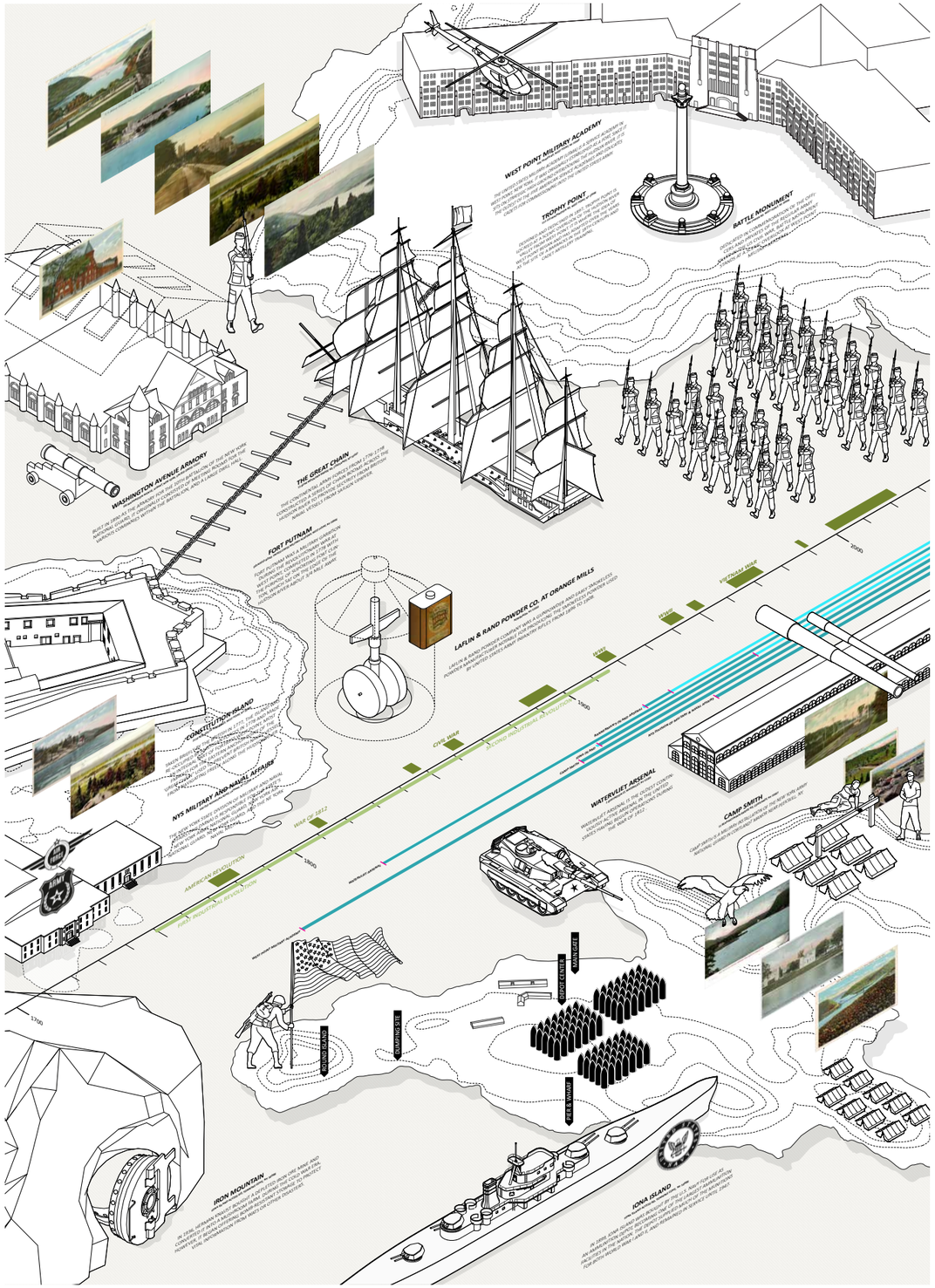
#21

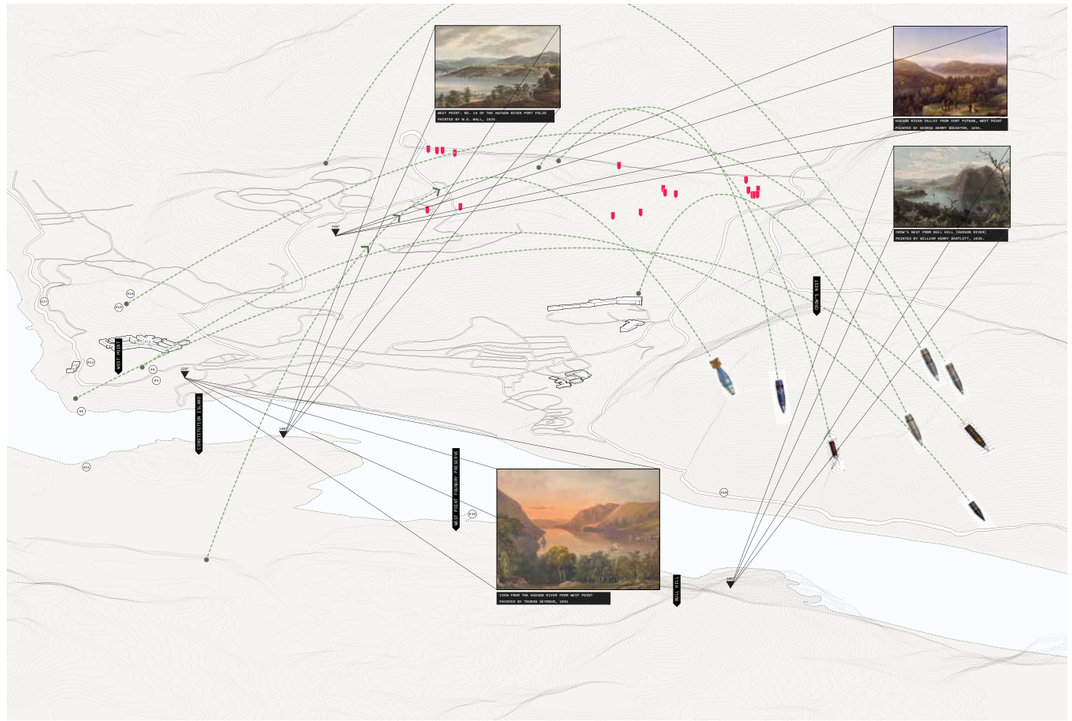
#22

#23

#24

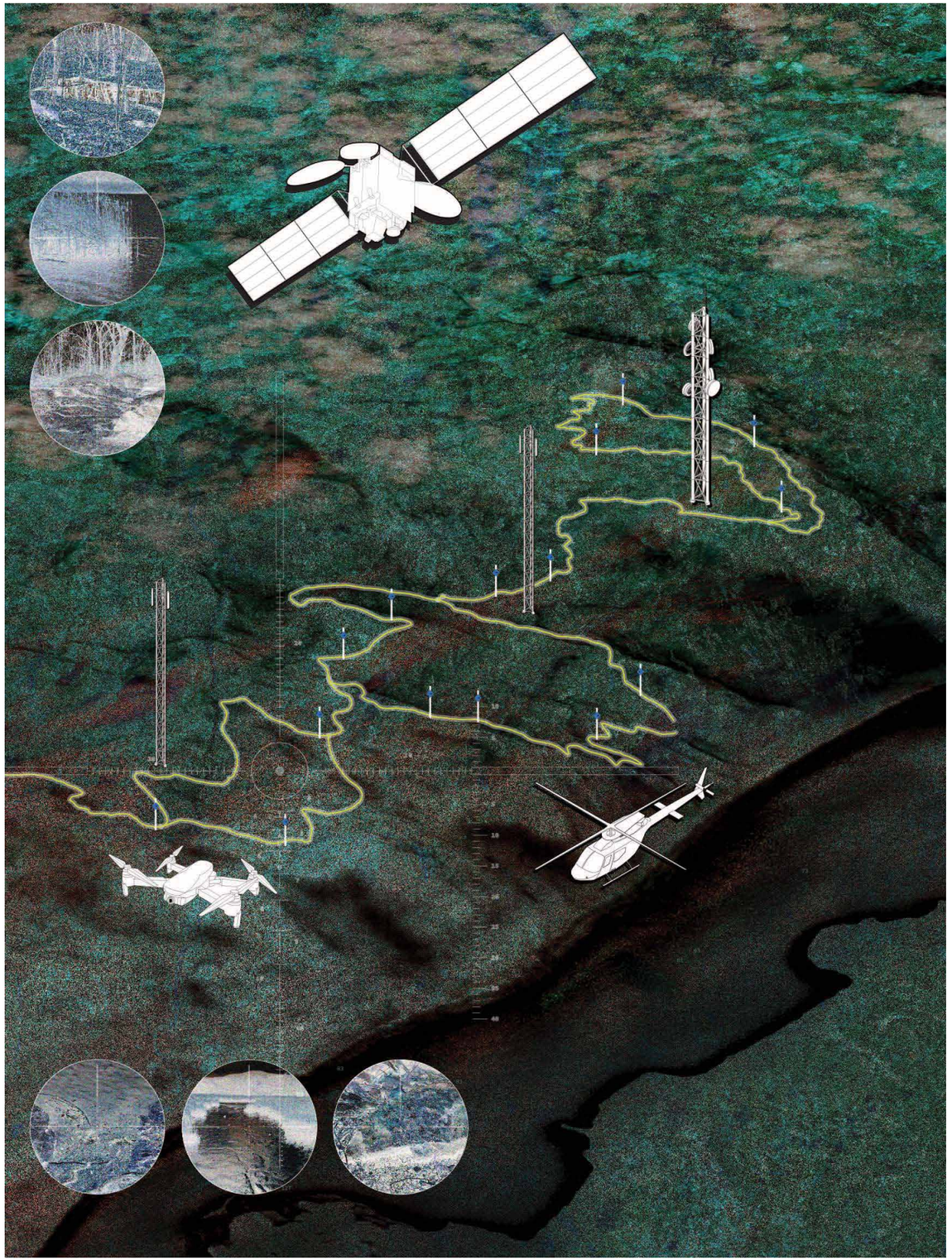
West Point Military Academy recurrently appears in Hudson River School paintings, standing sentinel amid a panorama of mountains. Several printing companies in the United States published postcards depicting pastoral scenes of upstate New York, celebrating, in hand painted pastels, West Point's militaristic and operational transformations of the land. These postcards are prime examples of militarism being pastoralized, rendered virtually indistinguishable from the wilderness itself.

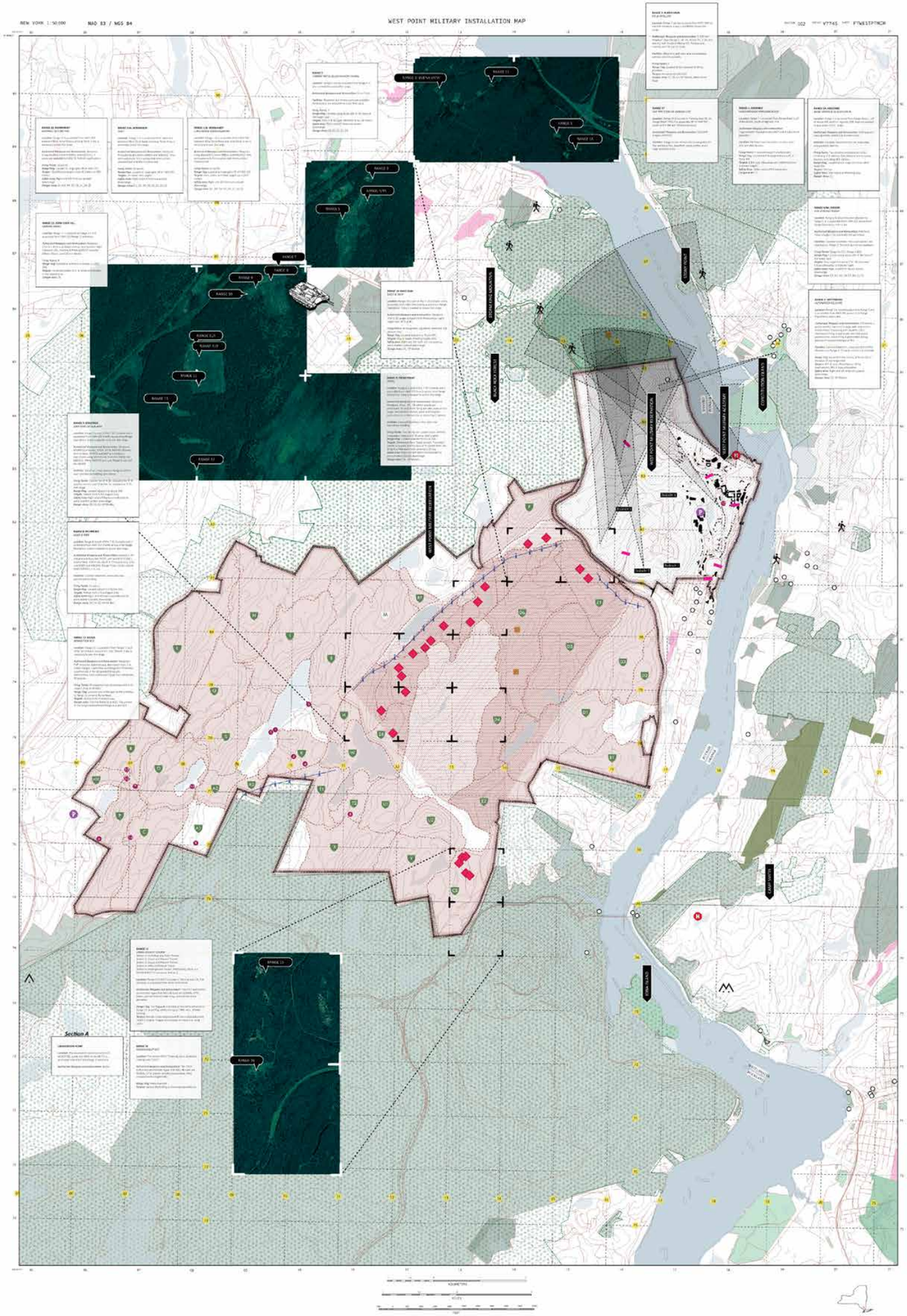




Despite the bucolic depiction of Hudson Valley as a peaceful countryside, there is a long legacy of military history and landscape intervention. Considered to be an important strategic location due to its elevated position and ability to control navigation along the Hudson River, early attempts to fortify the Hudson River Valley focused on Constitution Island and Fortress West Point followed by the occupation of other fortifications, armories, arsenals, batteries and redoubts distributed along the river.

To meet the demands of the emerging technological intricacies of warfare, a more formal system of military training led to the establishment of the West Point Military Academy. The infrastructure constructed for the new military academy allowed for silent impacts on the land, including the erection of barriers which disrupt wildlife corridors. For example, a fence encircles the perimeter of West Point, cutting this land off from state parks directly to the north and south. Species such as fish and game are artificially stocked for recreational fishing and hunting, and soil, plant, and wildlife are violently disrupted by weapons testing. The DoD developed the Military Munitions Response Program in 2001 to address munitions-related concerns, including explosive safety, environmental, and health hazards from releases of unexploded ordnance, discarded military munitions, and munitions constituents found at formerly used defense sites.




WEST POINT MILITARY INSTALLATION MAP
NAD 83 / NYS E4
RANGE 11
RANGE 3
RANGE 18
RANGE 7
RANGE 17A
RANGE 5
RANGE 8
RANGE 9
RANGE 39
RANGE 17
RANGE 11
RANGE 13
RANGE 12
CONSTITUTION MAGAZINE
WEST POINT MILITARY RESERVATION
CONSTITUTION MAGAZINE
WEST POINT MILITARY RESERVATION
CONSTITUTION MAGAZINE
WEST POINT MILITARY RESERVATION
CONSTITUTION MAGAZINE
WEST POINT MILITARY RESERVATION
RANGE 10
Section A
RANGE 18

STORM KING STATE PARK

CROW'S NEST

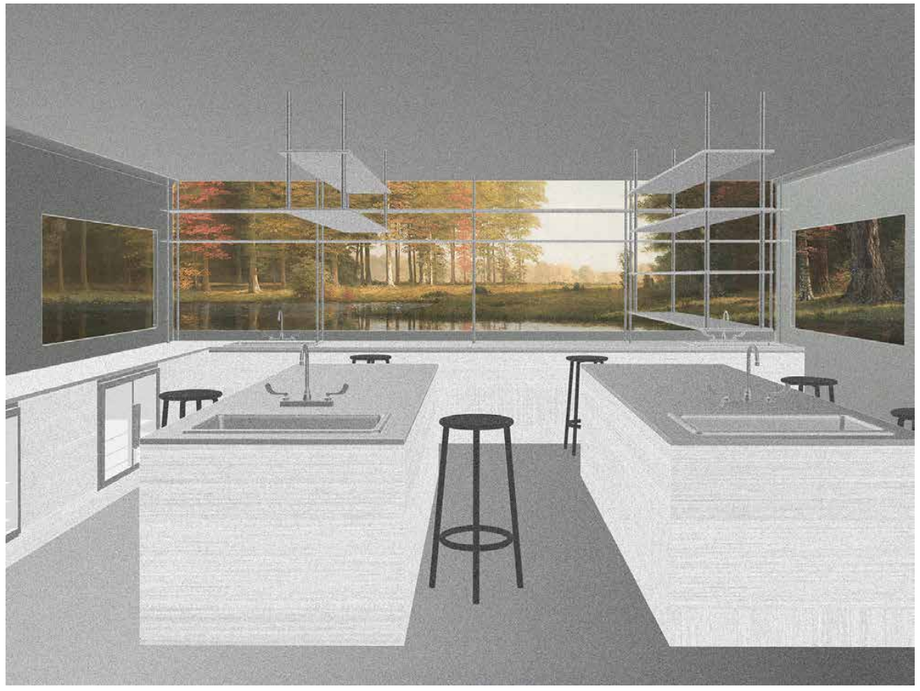
ATTENTION
YOU ARE NOW ENTERING DANGER ZONE

CROW'S NEST IMPACT AREA CHUA
0.52 MEC/ACRE

UXO/MPPEH: 68 ITEMS	MD: 2,310 ITEMS
[1] FUZE BOOSTER [1] 155 MM MK 1, HE [1] 4.7 INCH PROJECTILE, HE [1] 6 INCH COMMON, HE [7] 75 MM M48, HE [43] 75 MM MK 1, SHRAPNEL [1] M4 FUZE BOOSTER, HE [1] M3 PD FUZE, HE [1] PARROTT BASE FUZE [2] PTTF M1907	[9] 4.7 INCH PROJECTILE SHRAPNEL [1] 4.6 INCH SHRAPNEL PUSHER PLATE [5] 5 INCH PROJECTILE BASE PLATE, HE [2] 8 INCH BOLT [1] 8 INCH PROJECTILE BUTLER BOLT [5] 8 INCH PROJECTILE HE BASE PLATE [7] 75 MM M1907 FUZE PARTS [221] 75 MM MK 1 SHRAPNEL [1] 105 MM ROTATING BAND [1] 155 MM BASE PLATE [86] FUZE M1907 [1] M3 PD FUZE [5] PTTF M1907 [3] PTTF [3] FUZE COMPONENT [1] UNKNOWN 7 INCH PROJECTILE [6] UNKNOWN HE [2,000] FRAGMENT

West Point campus offers insight into the heavily regulated spatial politics of military land and landscape, and codependence of nature and nation. While the notion of a military “footprint” describes the physical extents of a base, it assumes enclosure and overlooks the potential of seeing the field of influence and projections of an operational environment and logistical landscape beyond the hardlined border of the base.

Our intervention frames Crow’s Nest as a “post-military” terrain. Our aim is to reincorporate this landscape into Storm King State Park to the north, connecting to existing recreational hiking trails. Scientific outposts scattered along the trail host research into the military ecology relationship, the history of Crow’s Nest impact zone and take readings that contribute to the study of current remediation efforts, with space for archives of West Point’s historic munitions. Employing military vernacular in the form of berms, trenches and camouflage netting, our outposts operate with a degree of stealthiness - blurring the boundaries between interior and exterior. From afar, they are completely hidden, shaped to blend in with the outlines of the landscape, allowing visitors to engage unknowingly.



Brasília: The Planned and The Peripheral

Essay

Introduction

This paper traces the conception and construction of Brasília between 1956-1961 and investigates the capital as an expression of Brazil's modernization, development, and national identity under the Presidency of Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira. Focusing on the realization of Brasília in the context of Brazil's "developmental decade," I will discuss how the state took significant political and economic responsibility for the modernization of the country, yet failed to transform prevailing socio-spatial inequalities. Ideologically aligned with Modernist urban planning doctrine, the founders of Brasília framed the new federal capital as a public works project capable of setting the entire country on a course of sustained development, economic growth, and social integration. In practice, exclusionary policies towards the migrant workers, arguably the city's inaugural citizens, reinforced the social stratifications in Brazilian society and manifested the very problems the project was designed to avoid. A significant body of research critiquing the enduring social and economic externalities of Brasília exists. Drawing on scholarship in sociology, anthropology, and architectural theory, this paper examines the spatial and social impact of the Plano Piloto and how the very process of its execution negated the egalitarian rhetoric of the city's founders and revealed the flawed underpinnings of modernist urban planning principles.

Kubitschek and the Dawn of a New Brazil

Brazil's first Constitution of the Republic, drafted in 1891, stipulated that the federal capital move from Rio de Janeiro in southeastern Brazil to a more centralized location (Kelly 73). The planning and transfer of new political centers is not without precedent in Brazil. The capital of Minas Gerais was moved from Ouro Preto to Belo Horizonte in 1896 and Góis did the same in 1935 when Goiânia superseded Goiás Velho as the state capital (Fernandes 1). Moving Brazil's federal capital to the unsettled interior had long been associated with, variously, frontier ideology and a religious prophecy of the Catholic Saint Dom Bosco, producing a religious-historical sense of predestiny (Fernandes 154). In the 1950s, the Brasília project became not only politically acceptable but economically sustainable and technically feasible. While preparations for the capital began during Getulio Vargas' return to power from 1951-1954, Brasília, in its current form, became a cornerstone of the developmentalist policies of President Juscelino Kubitschek de Oliveira (Fernandes 133).

In 1956, Kubitschek assumed the presidency and quickly undertook the project of building a new Brazilian capital, promising "fifty years in five" – fifty years of progress and prosperity in the five years of his presidential term from 1956-1961 (Ioris 262). Kubitschek's economic development plan, called the Target Program, addressed thirty-one development objectives related to energy, transportation, food, education, industry, and the construction of Brasília (Holston 84). The new capital was conceived in concert with the administration's economic and social policies as a utopian project that would stimulate the economy of Brazil's interior and forge a path to national industrialization, integration, and social transformation (see fig. 1, Fernandes 83). Kubitschek framed the new capital city as a physical embodiment of his developmentalist policies. Through press interviews, radio and television broadcasts, President Kubitschek harnessed powerful rhetoric and the myth of the frontier to inspire nationalist commitment to the project:

> **"It is a monotonous refrain to say that we need to occupy our country, own the land, march westward, turn our backs to the sea, and not remain eternally with our eyes fixed on the waters as if we were thinking of leaving... The founding of Brasília is a political act whose scope cannot be ignored by anyone. It is the march towards the interior in its fullness. It is the complete possession of the land. We shall erect in the heart of our country a radiating center of life and success."**

Brasília was designed as a unifying symbol of cultural nationalism that would distance the country from its colonial past and mark the dawn of a new age in Brazilian history. But beyond just a symbol, the construction of Brasília was intended to act as a social engine that could transform Brazilian society (Holston 3). The modernist underpinnings of this strategy, imbuing design with agency for social transformation and equating architecture with civil commitment, will be discussed further in the following section. A close reading of the founder's intentions as communicated through speeches, radio broadcasts, and public statements reveal a divide between highly unifying language and the scope of the project. Despite Kubitschek's egalitarian rhetoric, Brasília was in actuality an elitist, classist federal capital built exclusively for politicians, bureaucrats, and civil servants. The city was built explicitly to accommodate the political class, to the exclusion of all others. The extent to which the government enforced that exclusivity is one of the major failures of Brasília as a utopian project.

Modernism and the State

Drawing on the writing of Frampton and Heynen, Jones argues that architecture is increasingly acknowledged as a carrier of social meaning and "a way that societies come to understand themselves culturally" (Jones 301). Jones further discusses that a "defining characteristic of modernity is the centrality of the nation-state" and that the state used high culture such as architecture" to impose an authoritative definition of the nation - to define the cultural identity of 'their' community" (Jones 302). This was true in Brazil, as policies during the Vargas dictatorship (1930-1945), such as the prohibition of foreign architects from practicing in the country, aimed to foster nationalism and cultural independence (Fernandes 39). These policies gave rise to a

Course Questions in Architectural History II

Professor Ateya Khorakiwala

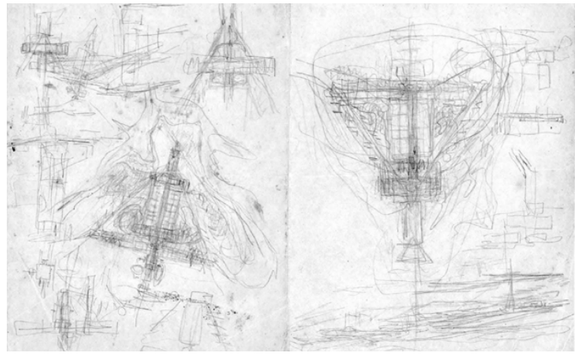


Fig. 1

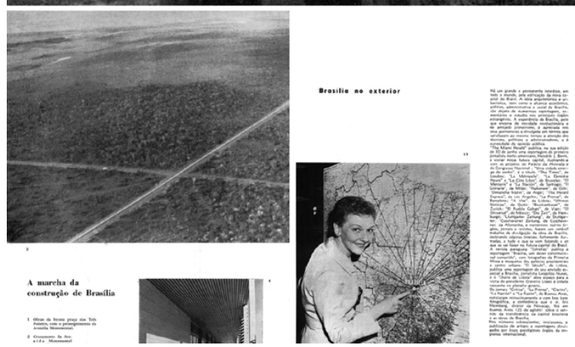


Fig. 2

Fig. 1
Studies by Lúcio Costa for the Plano Piloto.

Fig. 2
Pages from *Revista Brasília* magazine.

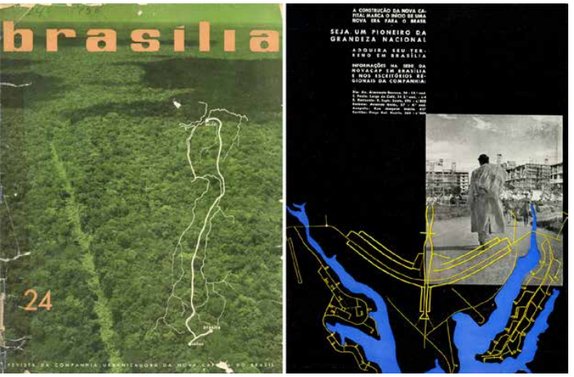


Fig. 3

Fig. 4

talented group of Brazilian architects who, by the 1950s, had cemented the position of Brazilian modernist architecture as a source of national pride and cultural cohesion. Among those architects were Oscar Niemeyer and Lúcio Costa, two prominent CIAM members responsible for Brasília's design. The ideology and aesthetics of Brazilian Modernism aligned with Kubitschek's developmentalist policies and demiurgic ambitions:

"I have long been aware that modern architecture in Brazil is more than a mere aesthetic trend, and above all more than the projection into our culture of a universal movement. It has in fact put at our service the means with which to find the best possible solution of our city planning and housing problems...It is, furthermore, a strong affirmation of expression of our culture, perhaps the most original and precise expression of the creative intelligence of modern Brazil."

Kubitschek utilized architecture, specifically Brazilian Modernism, to "codify the nation under conditions of modernity" (Jones 302-303). The movement's universalism, lack of historical ornament, and deterritorialization offered the Brazilian President a powerful metaphor for the country's split with the past (Jones 308). By representing materially the abstract political aims of the Kubitschek administration, the Modernist model city offered a negation of Brazil's colonial past, a rejection of the chaotic urban form of its major cities, and an embrace of rationality and the future. Gouveia discusses the triumph of Brazilian Modernism as a utopian-nationalist proposition (Gouveia 14). It was precisely the potential of Modernism to emancipate Brazil from cultural dependence, democratize society, and define a new cultural and national identity that catalyzed Kubitschek to initiate the Brasília project. The resonance of these ideas at this point in Brazilian history explains how the aesthetics of Modernism became both message and messenger.

One of the more radical aspects of Kubitschek's plan was the conceptualization of the Brasília project as both the cause and effect of development processes in the country. Holston describes how this idea is based on Modernist theory, which inverts the typical relationship between cities and society (Holston 77). Historically, cities were understood to be products of society, essentially passive forms taking shape according to their inhabitants. Modernism, advanced in particular by the writings of Le Corbusier, posited that society could in fact be transformed, shaped, and even controlled by design. Holston also describes a second development inversion, which "projected the first into the future" (77). Brasília's planners believed that constructing a model city would "propel society into a planned future, causing it to skip predicted and undesired stages in its historical development" (Holston 78). As Brazil turned away from its colonial past, modernism offered a powerful mechanism to launch directly into an imagined future. These theories became central to the Brasília experiment as both a sociopolitical and architectural experiment.

The Competition

In 1956, Kubitschek created the government corporation Companhia Urbanizadora da Nova Capital do Brasil (known as NOVACAP) to oversee the building and administration of the city during construction (Holston 202). Kubitschek selected Oscar Niemeyer as principal architect of the capital and director of the Department of Architecture of NOVACAP. In September of 1956, NOVACAP announced the design competition for the master plan of Brasília, open exclusively to Brazilian architects, engineers, and urbanists (Fernandes 58). Among twenty-six entries, Lúcio Costa's Plano Piloto was selected. The capital presented an unprecedented opportunity for Lúcio Costa and Oscar Niemeyer to experiment with CIAM spatial organization and synthesize the city's transport systems, housing, government buildings, and commercial centers into a unified urban machine (Evenson 119).

The Periphery

The physical centering of Brazil's capital to the country's remote interior involved the recruitment of nearly 30,00 workers from across the country (Epstein 69). Every step of the construction process was publicized, broadcast, and disseminated to great fanfare throughout the country (see fig. 2-4, Epstein 62). On the ground, preoccupied by tight construction deadlines and adherence to the highly rational Plano Piloto, the government failed to plan for the integration of these Brasília's workers into the new society. Almost immediately, the realities of urban life in Brasília began to emulate the trends of the country at large. Brasília became a caricature of the social inequalities endemic in Brazilian cities. The tremendous migrant labor force, housing supply, infrastructure, and resources required to support the construction of Brasília was never designed or reconciled within the city limits.

Attracted by high wages and the spirit of the frontier, skilled and unskilled workers arrived from all over Brazil. As Brazilian workers poured into the city, it became clear that NOVACAP was severely unprepared to house and administer the growing planned and unplanned metropolis. Costa's master plan resulted in four divisions of settlement within the federal capital: the Pilot Plan, construction camps, satellite cities, and squatter settlements (Epstein 10). Any deviation from the Pilot Plan was considered a threat to the integrity of the utopian experiment (Fernandes 230). The demolition, disbandment, and rezoning of satellite settlements resulted in the physical exclusion of Brasília's construction workers from the city they built, stratifying the city along class lines. Further, the lack of social policies aimed at integrating workers into the spatial and social fabric of the city was antithetical to the utopian principles espoused by Kubitschek's government and hardlined by the master planners. While the government promised social integration and an orderly utopian society in contrast to other Brazilian cities, the unity provided by the plan was ultimately antiseptic, artificial, and over-constrained.

Epstein, David G. Plan and Reality: A Study of Planned and Spontaneous Urban Development. University of California Press, 1973.

Fernandes, Inês Palma. Building Brasília: Modern Architecture and National Identity in Brazil. Princeton University, 2003.

Gouveia, Saulo. The Triumph of Brazilian Modernism: The Metanarrative of Emancipation and Counter-Narratives. University of North Carolina Press, 2013.

Holston, James. The Modernist City: An Anthropological Critique of Brasília. University of Chicago Press, 2000.

Ioris, Rafael R. & Ioris, Antonio A. R. "The Brazilian Developmentalist State in Historical Perspective: Revisiting the 1950s in Light of Today's Challenges." Journal of Iberian and Latin American Research, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 133-148. https://doi.org/10.1080/13260219.2013.806016.

Jones, Paul. "Architecturing Modern Nations: Architecture and the State." Handbook of Historical Sociology, Sage Publications, London, 2000.

Kelly, Jared. "The City Sprouted: The Rise of Brasília." Consilience, no. 22, 2020, pp. 73–85, https://www.jstor.org/stable/26924964.

Fig. 3
Back and front cover of *Revista Brasília* No. 25 and No. 29 published in 1958.

Fig. 4
Advertisement for the inauguration of Brasília by Esso Oil Company.

283 Studios

Re-Thinking Artist Housing in the Bronx

Description

Housing creates the city. Our project tests architecture's ability to act as a culture producer and record keeper. Architecture is understood as a frame for the development of specific social attitudes, relational norms, and cultural production on a site-specific basis. How can architecture act as a frame for impromptu meetings that produce permanent monuments and cultural shifts? If public space is not a pre-constituted entity, how can it emerge through a practice by users? Through organization, circulation, partitions, entries, overlaps, double dips, and open ends, this project rearticulates attitudes towards cultural and artistic production alongside living.

Our building mediates the collision of working with living, taking a specific interest in artist housing as a historic typology in New York. Our design facilitates a nurturing environment for emerging artists, small businesses, and grassroots organizations by offering low-cost or subsidized studios, office, space and public services to Bronx residents.

The misrepresentation of the Bronx stems from an outbreak of fires that ravaged the borough in the 1970s, leaving much of it in rubble and many homeless. But, in that mess, kids found a way to achieve some measure of normalcy, remaking the landscape through hip-hop. Through graffiti and dance, these young innovators revealed how one can use abandoned and disintegrating urbanscapes as a backdrop for political and cultural revolutions.

From the mid 70's through the late 90's, one hip-hop innovator after another found a receptive audience for their work in this historic Bronx neighborhood, whose capacity for nurturing musical talent miraculously survived the often tragic economic and cultural upheavals that accompanied hip-hop's emergence as the voice of inner-city youth. These impromptu and often pervasive gatherings prompted us to consider and envision a space that fosters community and facilitates as a culture producer.

Sequence Core III

Critic Chris Leong

Studio Overlaps, Double-Dips, & Open-Ends

Collaborators Maria Berger

POLITICIZING

CURATING

EXHIBITING

FILMING

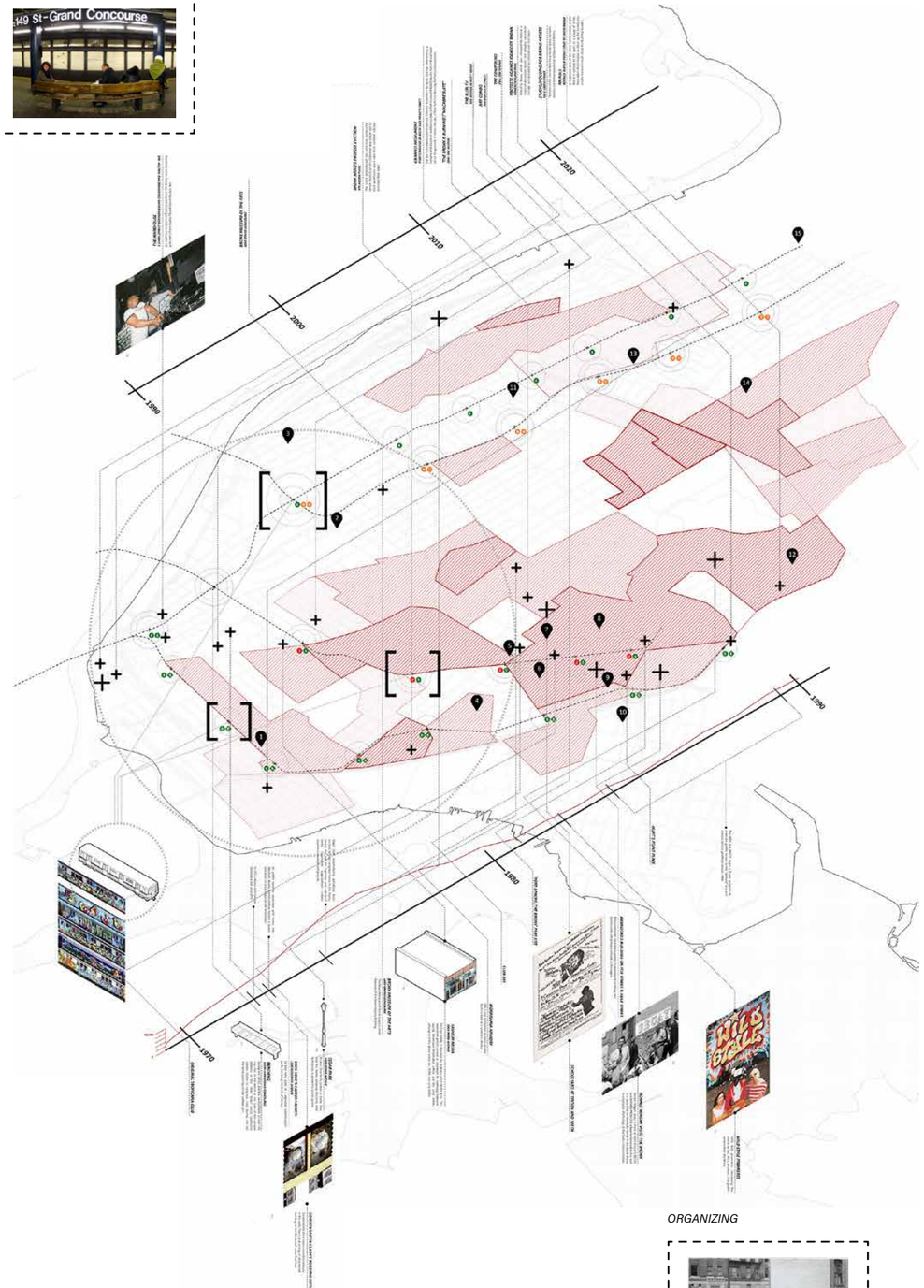
GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATION THAT USED MUSIC, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY TO REVITALIZE THE BRONX

1 Fordham Bedford
2 Northwest Bronx Community and Clergy Coalition
3 University Heights Housing Program
4 Mt. Hope
5 Peoples Development Corporation
6 South Bronx People for Change
7 Casita Maria
8 United Bronx Parents (UBP)
9 SEBCO
10 Mid-Bronx Desperados
11 Bronx Shepherds
12 Bronx 2000
13 Inner City Press
14 The Point Community Development Corporation
15 Bronx Frontier Community Organization

PERCENT HOUSING UNITS LOST TO FIRES (1970-1980)

0 - 20% | 21 - 40% | 41 - 60% | 61 - 100%

BENCHING



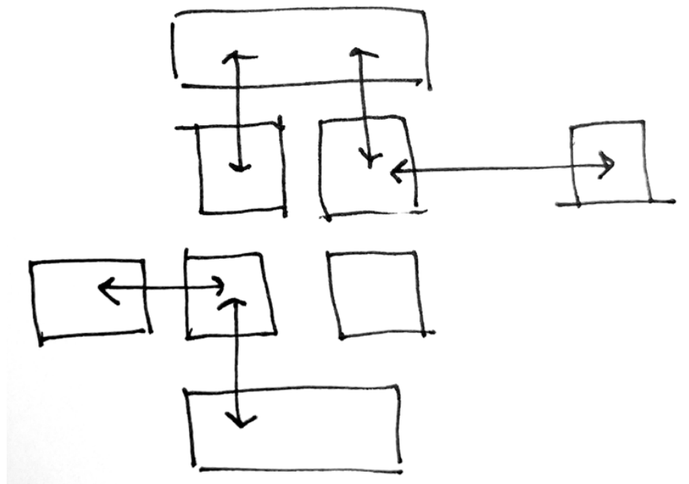
ORGANIZING

PARTYING

WRITING

EXPOSING

BURNING



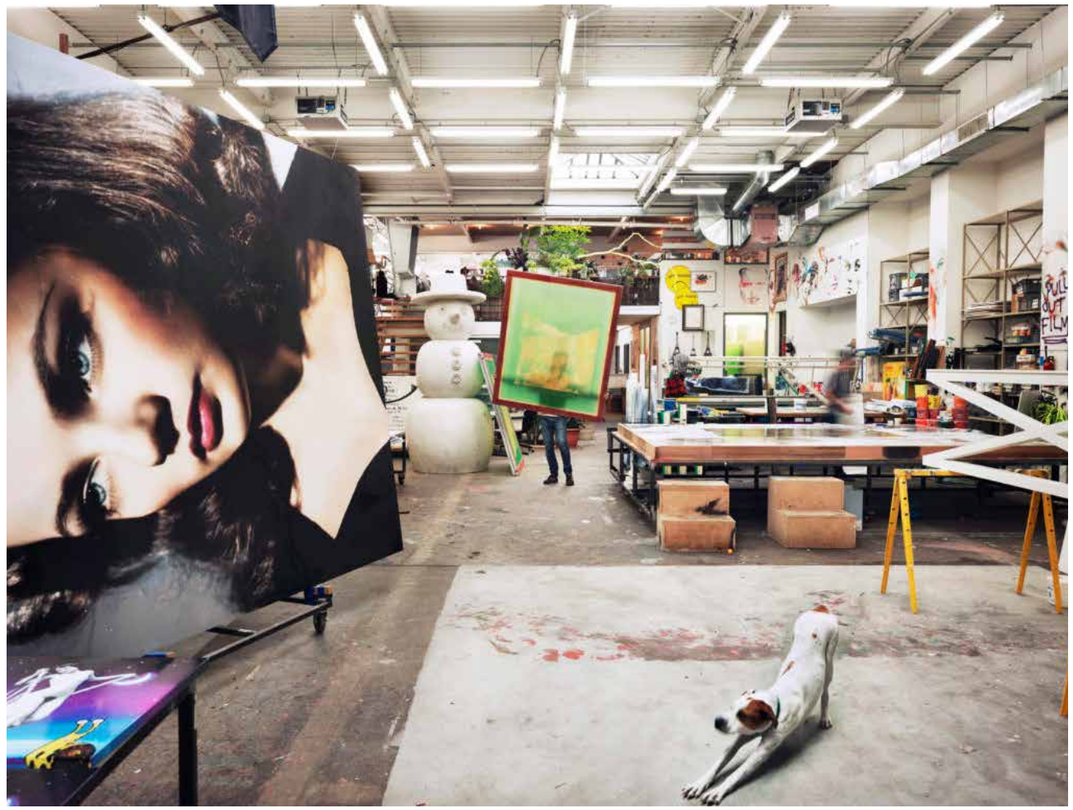


Fig. 1

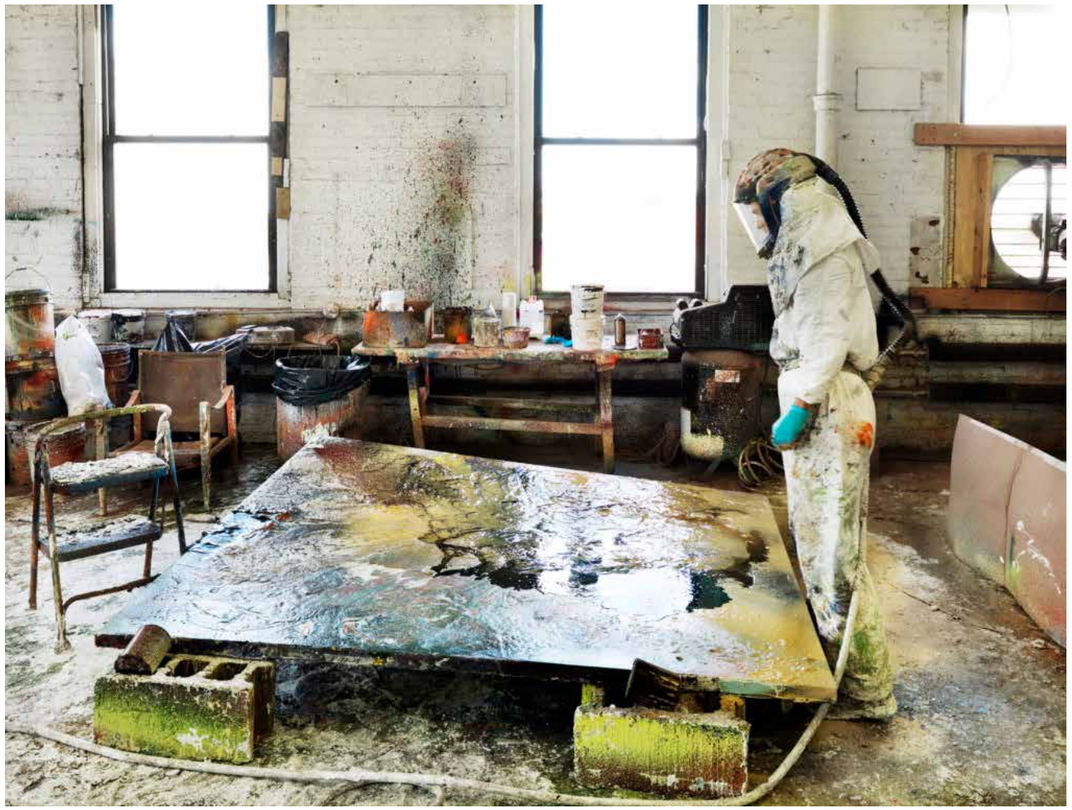


Fig. 2

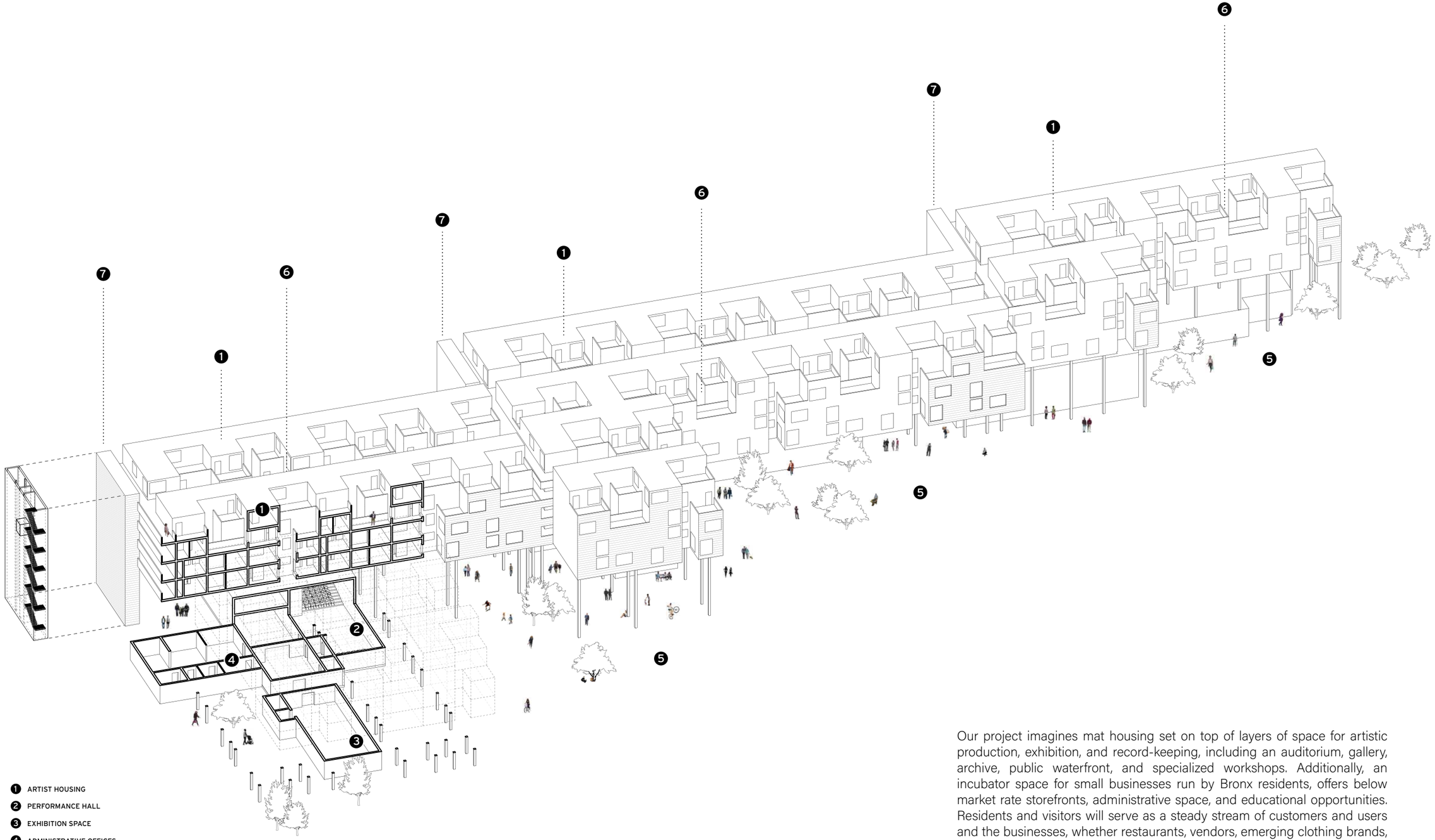
New York City is home to a vast workforce of cultural producers that contribute to the urban fabric of the city. Their diverse creative practices and the spaces in which they create are often veiled and shrouded in mythic lore. To understand the requirements necessary for fostering creative spaces and break the enigma, we studied the studio environments of several NYC artists - from the late Joyce Pensato's sprawling, funky, paint-stained enclave, to painter Ryan Sullivan's splattered studio which has restricted him to wear a hazmat suit when he works. Many artists underlined the importance of stimulating spaces - an ingredient that is essential for creativity and innovation to flourish.

Fig. 1
Urs Fischer
Swiss visual artist

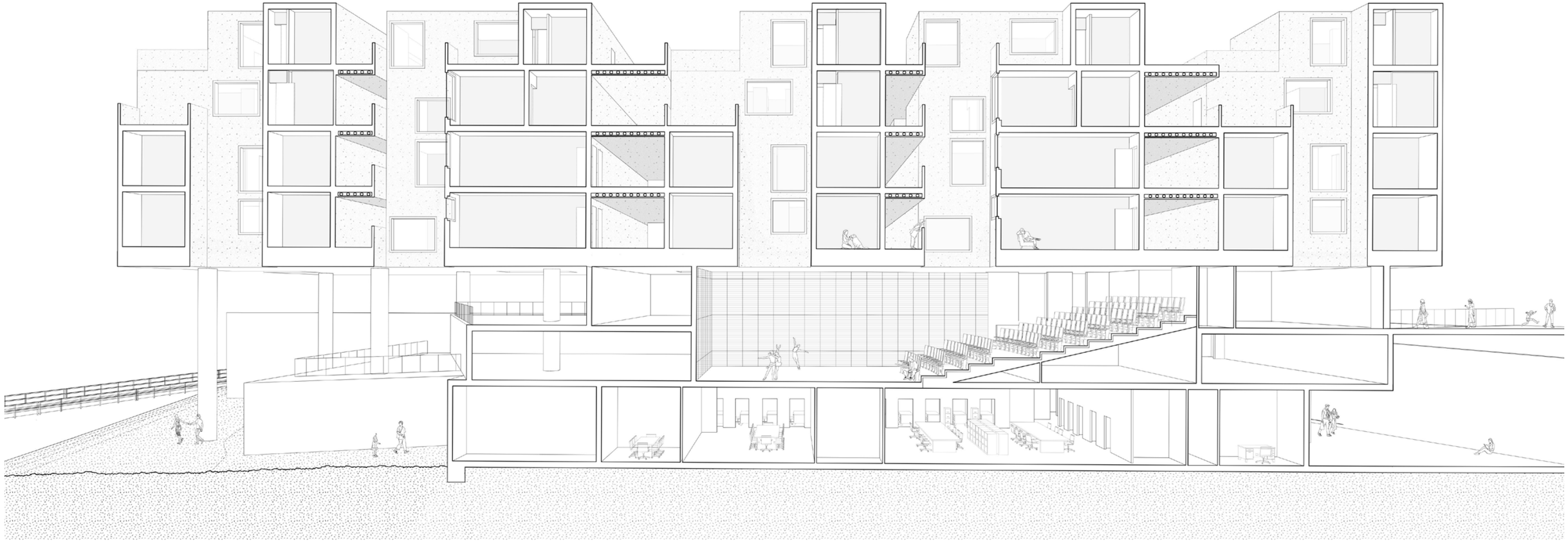
Since moving into his Brooklyn studio, Fischer has outfitted it as a home and studio, putting in skylights and a combination kitchen and office space, up a flight of wide stairs from the ground-floor studio.

Fig. 2
Ryan Sullivan
American painter

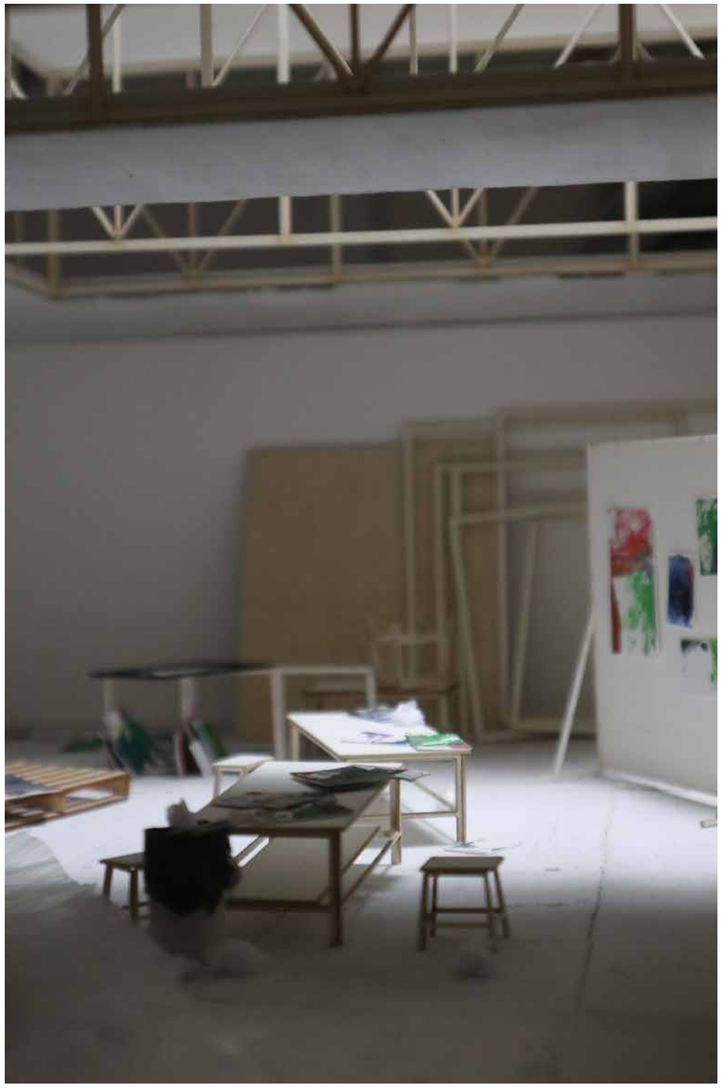
Ryan Sullivan wears a full hazmat suit to blast pigmented materials onto a canvas in his industrial studio-lab.



Our project imagines mat housing set on top of layers of space for artistic production, exhibition, and record-keeping, including an auditorium, gallery, archive, public waterfront, and specialized workshops. Additionally, an incubator space for small businesses run by Bronx residents, offers below market rate storefronts, administrative space, and educational opportunities. Residents and visitors will serve as a steady stream of customers and users and the businesses, whether restaurants, vendors, emerging clothing brands, or barber shops will also serve as community gathering spaces. The design aims to promote the shaping of communities both inside the building and within the local area, through public programming spaces and 'incubator' operations.



Our 'incubator' breathes sectionally wherein our housing is elevated, interlocked then stepped through a modular formula while maintaining efficiency. Slices are taken from the building on an E/W orientation to promote ventilation and allow daylighting to filter each unit. These subtracted spaces are intended for circulation to individual units.



A1

A2
A3

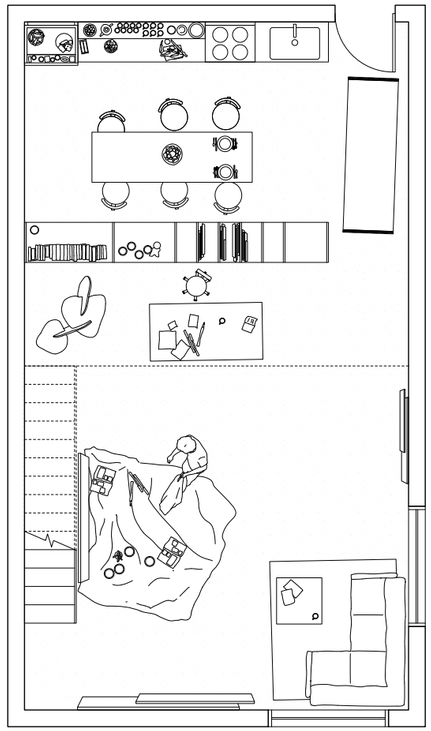
C1
B1
C1

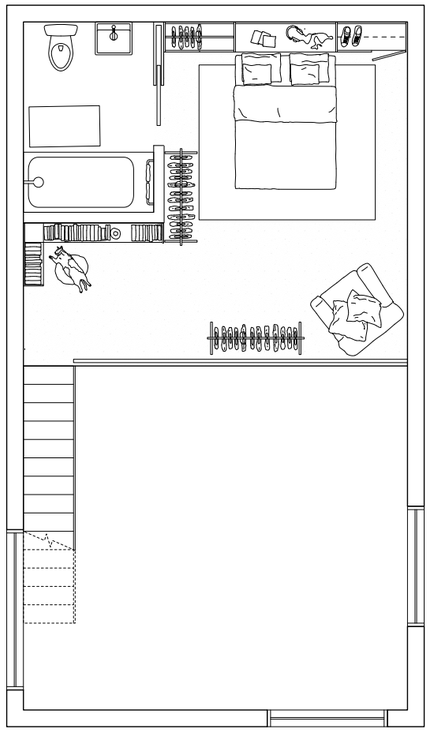
A4

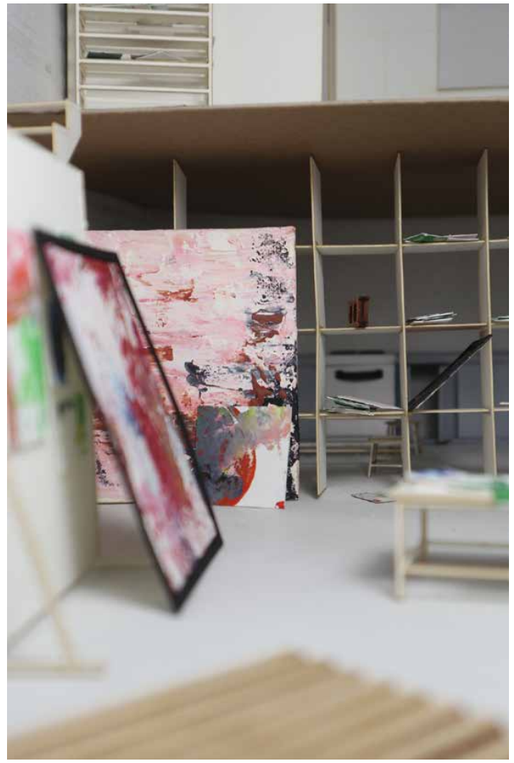
B2
B3

A5

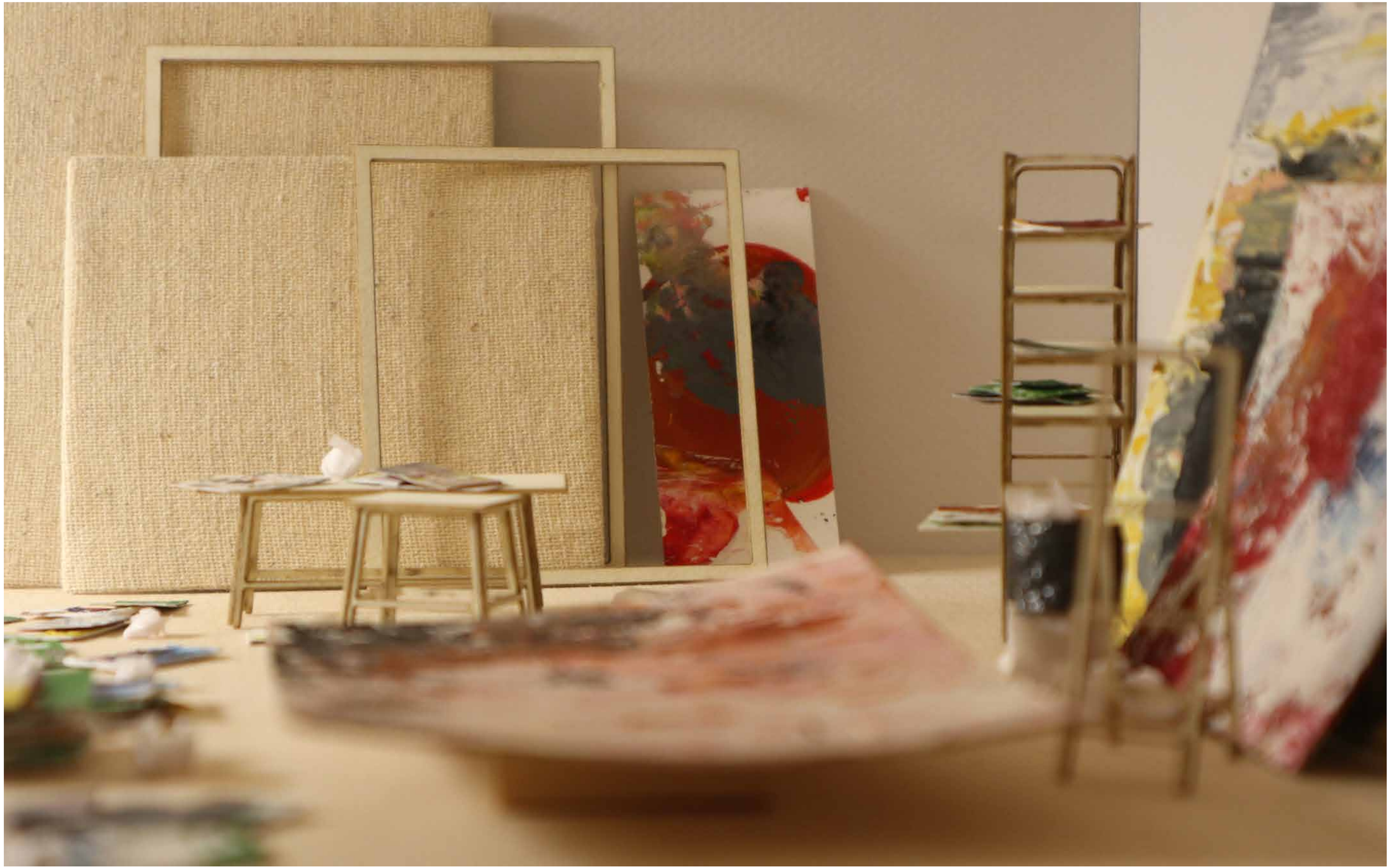
A5
B1

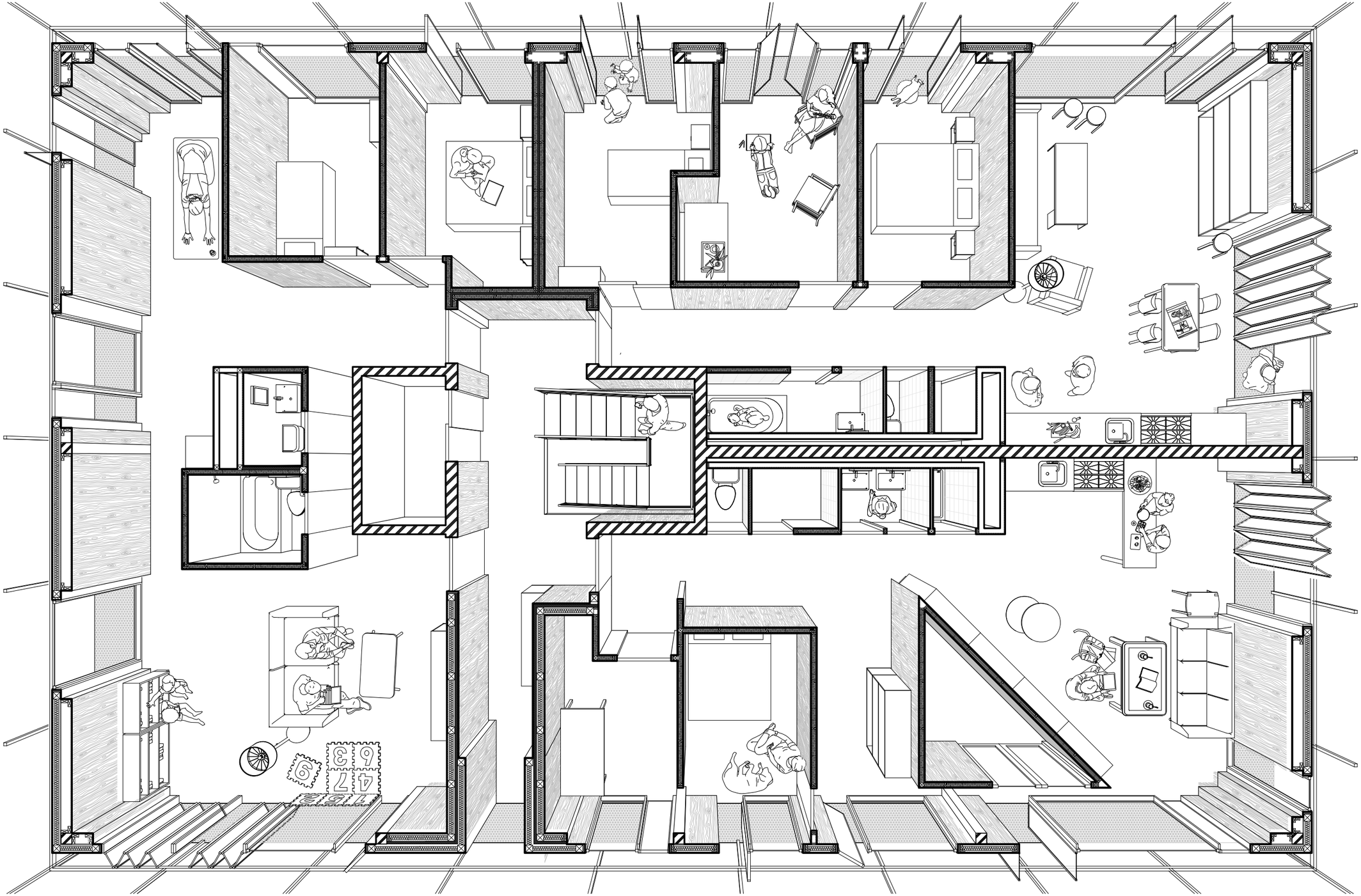






Our housing consists of 283 typical units (all with optionality for integrated live-work space), 19 of which serve as specialized units for artists in residence. The design aims to promote the shaping of communities both inside the building and within the local area, through public programming spaces and 'incubator' operations.





Baugruppen R50 precedent study completed in collaboration with Maria Berger, Jean Tzeng, and Joyce Wang.

Vecindades in Mexico City

Essay

La vecindad, loosely translated as a tenement, is a colonial building type traditionally built or adapted to house the urban working class. The word 'vecindad' in Spanish means both, 'neighborhood' and 'close,' but, despite the genial undertones, it has come to symbolize the country's colonial past. After the Conquest of Mexico in 1521, the Spanish built large family homes in the Andalusian style in Mexico City's historic center. Influenced by Roman atrium and Islamic architecture, these Andalusian homes were typically two to five stories high, on narrow lots, with rooms facing inward to a central courtyard. This spatial arrangement has similarities to Spanish corrales, a collective housing typology characterized by several stories of dwellings surrounding a central courtyard with sanitary facilities. The first usage of the corral in Spain was for temporary lodging and commercial exchange, though later it was utilized for residential housing. While various adaptations of corrales exist in Latin American cities, such as the conventillos of Buenos Aires or cuartería in Havana, the term vecindad is specific to Mexico. In Mexico City, the vecindad carries traces of influence from indigenous domestic architecture of the Teotihuacan and Aztec civilizations. Notably, the arrangement of residential buildings around patios in the city of Teotihuacan and evidence of collective dwellings for living and working in the Aztec capital Tenochtitlan.

While these grandiose structures were originally designed to accommodate European aristocracy, their subdivision and modification in the generations since tell a story about Mexico City's development into a metropolis and the country's economic and political shifts. At the turn of the 20th century, industrialization and the collapse of the country's agrarian economy led many Mexicans to the capital seeking work. The wealthy soon abandoned their colonial mansions in the historic downtown and moved to the urban periphery. Due to the immense need for affordable housing, these residences were converted to vecindades for the working class, with shared sanitation and laundry facilities and households occupying a single room.

At the same time that these aristocratic homes were being parceled, purpose-built vecindades were also constructed to meet the demand for housing. Vecindades matched the demand for low-income housing in a city undergoing rapid urbanization, population growth, and industrialization. This typology comprised the largest housing stock in the center of the city and by 1910 housed between 80,000-100,000 people. By 1920, Mexico City had over 110 vecindades housing nearly 25% of the population. By the 1930s, functionalist architects like Juan Legarreta and Juan O'Gorman developed alternative models of social housing outside the city center. Vecindades remained a cultural touchstone throughout the 1940s-60s, appearing in films like *The Children of Sanchez* and Luis Bunuel's *Los Olvidados*. But these buildings fell into disrepair and obsolescence in the second half of the 20th century, especially after the 1985 earthquake caused significant damage to Mexico City's historic center.

Course (Re)Inventing Living: Modern Experiments in Latin American Housing

Professor Luis E. Carranza

Collaborator Maria Berger

Fig. 1-24
View of the vecindad in stills from *The Children of Sanchez.*

Mexico City's vecindades can be divided into two major categories: 1) subdivided colonial mansions and 2) purpose-built vecindades. Both share a set of a formal characteristics which distinguish the vecindad housing typology:

ENTRANCE (*ZAGUÁN*)

Also known as the zaguán, the entryway is typically long and narrow leading directly to the central patio. The zaguán mediates the relationship between public and semi-public and guides the transition from street to patio. During the day, the vecindad entrance is commonly left open to allow vendors and tradespeople in from the street. At night, however, the entrance is closed for privacy. Due to its compressed nature, and with only two minor apertures to allow light in, the entrance sequence can be quite dark, mysterious, and often dramatic at times.

PRIVATE DWELLINGS

Private domestic dwellings are arranged on the perimeter of the central patio. These spaces are normally only allocated for eating, resting, and sleeping due to their spatial restrictions. Their entrances are "everything: family room, boudoir, dining room" (*I Speak of the City*, 67).

THE PATIO

Commonly referred to as the 'spine,' the patio of the vecindad, is a central communal space in which all the energy converges. The patio, a fundamental element of the vecindad, functions as the central axis upon which the dwelling units are oriented. Due to the restrictive composition of the units, the patio becomes an extension of the home where residents forge a sense of community and solidarity. It's where residents share the burden of household chores such as cooking and laundry. It's where they gather, gossip, connect, celebrate, and exist as vecinos. Therein, the "passing views of the vecindades' patios and their life became an essential part of the city's imaginario." (*I Speak of the City*, 65)

ACCESORIAS

Accesorias, the Spanish word for 'attachment,' is the adopted name for the street-facing, commercial spaces within the vecindad, typically consisting of stores and workshops. Although accesorias generally only appear in vecindades in downtown Mexico City due to their position within the urban fabric of the city, they universally function as the transitory area between the private dwellings and the urban and commercial activity. Oftentimes, it is families within the vecindad who own and run these storefronts.

Fig. 1

Fig. 2

Fig. 3

Fig. 4

Fig. 5

Fig. 1
DR Instituto Nacional de Antropologia. *Ninos en la entrada de una vecindad*. Mexico City, 1912.

Fig. 2
Hugo Brehme. *Escalinata y patio de una vecindad*. Mexico City, 1920.

Fig. 3
Hugo Brehme. *Una vecindad*. Mexico City, 1920.

Fig. 4
Hugo Brehme. Las accesorias. Mexico City, 1920.

Fig. 5
Hugo Brehme. *Las accesorias*. Mexico City, 1920.

COLUMBIA GSAPP
FALL 2010

Reinventing *Vecindades* in Mexico City

JULIA VIAS & MAIRA BERZE P

01 *Origins*

02 *Characteristics*

03 *Reinventing Vecindades*

To study the vecindades within Metropolitan Area Mexico visualized the historical context of housing stock in the twentieth century for the Mexican working class. These attributes and perceptions shaped the housing typology early-on in models.

Introduction

"Spatially, vecindades followed global trends: they were mostly large colonial buildings at the center of the city that, with both the gradual move of elites toward suburbs and the growing internal migration to Mexico City, became a collection of crowded tenements. Over the turn of the century, there was a rush of refurnishing old colonial buildings in order to turn into clusters of one-room apartments." (Castro, 2011 City: Mexico City at the Turn of the Twentieth Century, 2011

Mexico City's vecindades can be divided into two major categories: 1) subdivided colonial mansions, and 2) purpose-built vecindades. Both share a set of a formal characteristics which distinguish the vecindad housing typology.

ENTRANCE (ZAGUÁN)

Also known as the zaguán, the entrance is typically long and narrow, leading directly to the central patio. The zaguán mediates the transition between public and semi-public and guides the transition from street to patio. During the day the vecindad is open to the public, with the zaguán wide, vendors and tradespeople in from the street. At night, however, the entrance is closed for privacy. Due to its compressed nature, and with little room for apartments to open onto the street, residents use the zaguán as a quiet place to socialize, and often decorate at times.

As shown in the beginning of the film, The Children of Sanchez, protagonist Jesus Sanchez Lopez is first introduced through the entryway after a hard day's work. The insufficient lighting helps guide the elderly man to his familiar exit on the ground, seen while children and other residents continue by converse and play into the night. (Figure 02)

ACCESORIAS

WORKERS' HOUSING
Ciro Pimentel
1964
20 units

TEN Arquitectos reinterpreted spatial conditions of traditional vecindad in this housing project in the working class neighborhood Colonia Centro of Mexico City. Its plan, a central patio running along the primary axis, directs the site. This outdoor space is mainly a circulation space, but also creates a smaller, and more fun, community gathering. 55 square meter dwelling units, have the central spine of the patio. Each of the 20 units has a small or private entrance patio space. Two-level maisonettes, with the second floor master, providing a modest, secondary income to resident families. The steps are located a half level above the patio, facing inwards to the communal space.

LA RIBERA HOUSING
Frida Escobedo
2013
10 units

On a typical deep and narrow lot in the Santa Maria La Ribera neighborhood, Escobedo's effort to reinterpret the 19th century housing vecindad to experiment with the vecindad model. The project reads as one half of a vecindad with eight units arranged in two rows of four units each, separated along the length of the site. Like the vecindad, living spaces within a unit are stacked vertically as opposed to spreading out horizontally. Each unit has three levels and a private rooftop terrace. The ground floor contains the living area and kitchen with a private courtyard leading to bedrooms above. Unlike the vecindades, Soler & Mauri have added large windows to allow an abundance of light into the units.

MAS TIRRENO 86
Frida Escobedo
2010
20 units

Mas Tirreno 86 consists of an interlocking multi-story public housing project in the Roma Norte neighborhood of Mexico City. The project is a dwelling unit composed of two-level units, organized by the vecindad, a common courtyard/circulation typology of Mexico City. Similar to the vecindad, the project is organized around a central courtyard, with all apartment units accessed from the courtyard. Dwelling units are accessed from the ground floor courtyard, and upon moving one vertical level, the courtyard becomes a walkway for residents above. A shared duct leads to the additional floor units above the units, and to ground floor units that open to private terraces that open to the courtyard. The project is unified by a common façade, articulated by operable, fabric-clad, concrete decks. The decks, which serve as balconies, are softened by operable fabric screens, forming a solid fabric façade, which changes according to a system of schedules.

Afterimage:Afterlife

Deaccession at the British Museum

Description

As of April 26th, 2024, there has been a monumental decision to deaccession all artifacts from the British Museum, leaving the institution barren.

Deaccession is the process by which objects that had been formally accepted into a museum's collection are actively removed and disposed of legally and permanently. Under the British Museum's Deaccession Act, the board of trustees is barred from returning any object in the collection unless it is a duplicate, physically damaged, unfit to be retained in the collection and no longer of public interest, or it becomes "useless" for the purposes of the Museum.

Acquisition and preservation are central to the British Museum's mission, simultaneously reinforcing the notion of the national museum as a preeminent collection of global cultural heritage and defining value based on a certain "freezing" of objects in time. We make a case that, on the basis of misinterpretation and damage on the part of the British Museum, all artifacts in the collection should be deaccessioned and resocialized as a step towards restitution. All objects within the British Museum's collection can be deemed "useless" and devalued through a lens of damage. The museum's process of acquisition and preservation divorces objects from their original context and function.

In a letter to the Director of the British Museum, we argue that objects in the collection have their value stripped by the museum – that the Museum's limited interpretation, preservationist interventions, and emphasis on exhibition and display over ritual, use, and ceremony, leave the objects contextless and desocialized. The placement of the Korwar ancestral figure in a vitrine or archive forfeits the cultural and spiritual significance of the object, leaving it valueless. The British Museum has made significant efforts to gather and preserve the remains of the ancestral 'korwar' figures from Doreh Bay. Preservationist techniques prevent physical deterioration of the figure, yet do not honor the cultural and spiritual significance of the people of North-West Papua and their use of this ancestral object to consult recently deceased ancestors. The ancestral 'korwar' figures were meant to be kept in the home, treated with reverence, and bestowed offerings of tobacco and other desirable items. The ancestral figure is squandered in the limited interpretation and lack of regard for its significance in practice for religion and/or reverence. The korwar is one of 8 million objects in the British Museum's collection, only 1% of which are on display to the public. Whether due to exhibition space constraints or the sensitive condition of the artifacts, 7,920,000 are in storage and archival spaces of the museum, devoid of interactions with the public.

Sequence Advanced VI

Critic Emanuel Admassu

Studio Afterimages Vol. 3

Collaborators Rebecca Siqueiros

Sir Mark Jones
Director
British Museum
Great Russell St,
London WC1B 3DG, UK

Re: Spiritual and cultural damage as a path towards deaccession

Dear Mr. Jones,

Significant effort has been made by the British Museum to gather and preserve the remains of Henutmehyt and her funerary objects in order to retain the collection to the greatest extent possible. These efforts are done to prevent physical deterioration of these as an object, and in turn, do not prioritize what the cultural and spiritual significance of Ancient Egyptian practices for the afterlife might have been. Henutmehyt's mummy is not on display, and instead, the exhibition box in which the rest of her funerary objects remain disjointed from the whole. The sarcophagus, both inner, outer, and mummy board, are placid upright instead of as they were found in a horizontal state. The canopic jars are removed from their canopic box, and the content of one of the canopic jars was identified as lung tissue. "The 'Hapy' jar contains a mummified lung that was photographed for the catalog, it was decided not to return this to the jar as it is less damaging to store it separately."[1] Instead, "The mummified lung was stored in a 'really useful box', Plastazote was used to provide a cushioned base. A Plastazote well was made to stop the 2 sections of lung moving within the box." The magic bricks associated with cardinal directions are placed flat within the exhibition box, in a 4x4 grid of one another, with no regard for the spatial placement around the sarcophagus nor the four cardinal directions.

One can make a statement that, through the separation of the mummy from her afterlife objects, the entire reserve of Henutmehyt's funerary objects have "become useless for the purposes of the Museum by reason of damage." The reason of damage is embedded in the ritualistic and spiritual aspect of the collection that has been lost in the incorrect placement and lack of regard for the significance in Ancient Egyptian practices for the afterlife. While the Trustees of the British Museum may have "a strong commitment to the integrity and global public value of the Collection,"[2] the reason of damage inflicted on Henutmehyt and her funerary objects belittles this statement.

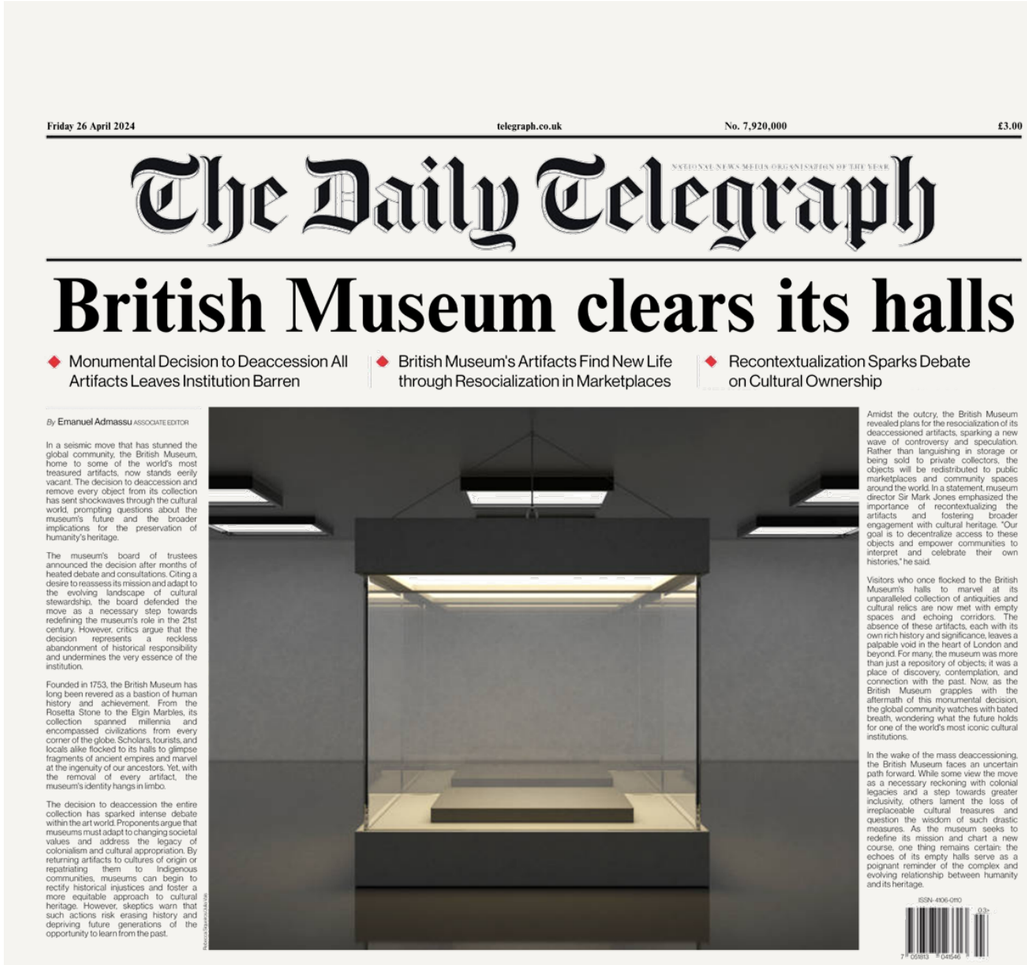
We request, beginning with Henutmehyt and her funerary objects, that the Egyptian collection be deaccessioned from the Collection. In order to reobtain a spiritual and cultural significance, the objects should not be offered to another Museum nor institution, nor should they be disposed of in a way that prevents them from being rediscovered or mistakenly reinterpreted. The objects should be allowed to be reburied, disappear, or destroyed, as per the research and living archive of the object as determined by the Deaccession Machine.

Thank you for your attention, consideration, and time.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Siqueiros & Julia Vais

[1] "British Museum Policy De-Accession of Objects from the Collection." *British Museum*, November 2018.
[2] "British Museum Policy De-Accession of Objects from the Collection." *British Museum*, November 2018.



Friday 26 April 2024 telegraph.co.uk No. 7,920,000 £3.00

The Daily Telegraph

NATIONAL NEWS MEDIA ORGANISATION OF THE YEAR

British Museum clears its halls

- Monumental Decision to Deaccession All Artifacts Leaves Institution Barren
- British Museum's Artifacts Find New Life through Resocialization in Marketplaces
- Recontextualization Sparks Debate on Cultural Ownership

By Emanuel Admassu ASSOCIATE EDITOR

In a seismic move that has stunned the global community, the British Museum, home to some of the world's most treasured artifacts, now stands eerily vacant. The decision to deaccession and remove every object from its collection has sent shockwaves through the cultural world, prompting questions about the museum's future and the broader implications for the preservation of humanity's heritage.

The museum's board of trustees announced the decision after months of heated debate and consultations. Citing a desire to reassess its mission and adapt to the evolving landscape of cultural stewardship, the board defended the move as a necessary step towards redefining the museum's role in the 21st century. However, critics argue that the decision represents a reckless abandonment of historical responsibility and undermines the very essence of the institution.

Founded in 1753, the British Museum has long been revered as a bastion of human history and achievement. From the Rosetta Stone to the Elgin Marbles, its collection spanned millennia and encompassed civilizations from every corner of the globe. Scholars, tourists, and locals alike flocked to its halls to glimpse fragments of ancient empires and marvel at the ingenuity of our ancestors. Yet, with the removal of every artifact, the museum's identity hangs in limbo.

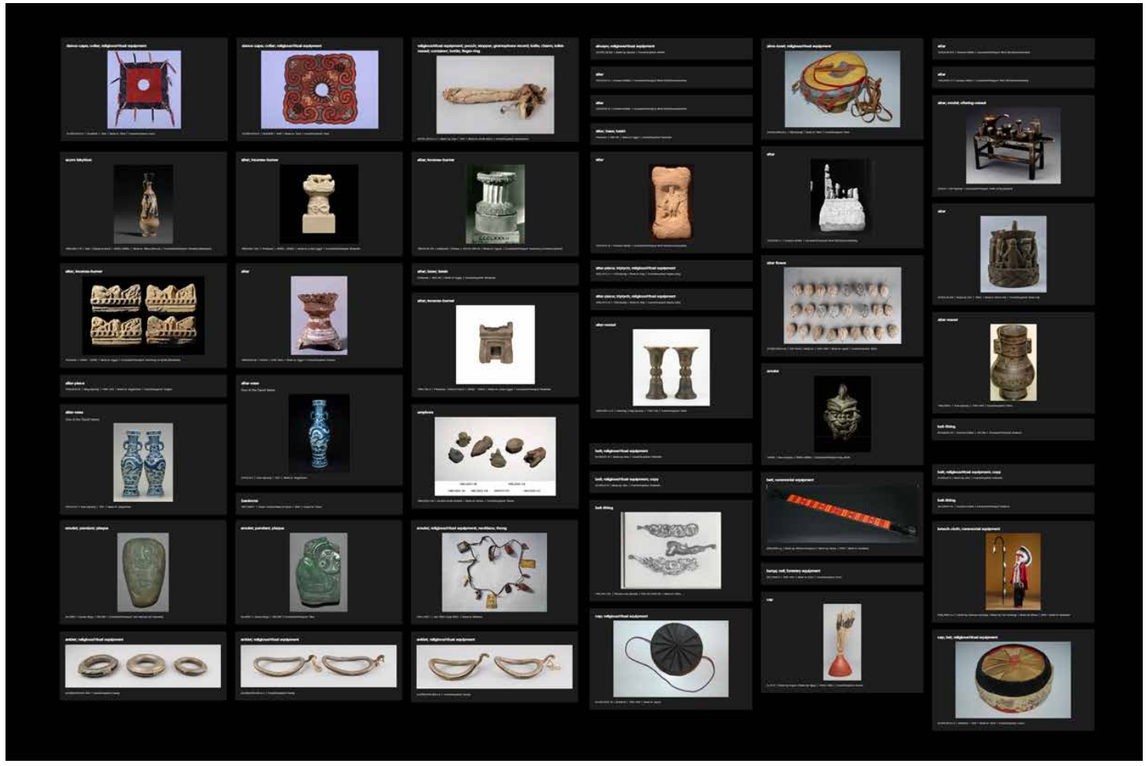
The decision to deaccession the entire collection has sparked intense debate within the art world. Proponents argue that museums must adapt to changing societal values and address the legacy of colonialism and cultural appropriation. By returning artifacts to cultures of origin or repatriating them to Indigenous communities, museums can begin to rectify historical injustices and foster a more equitable approach to cultural heritage. However, skeptics warn that such actions risk erasing history and depriving future generations of the opportunity to learn from the past.

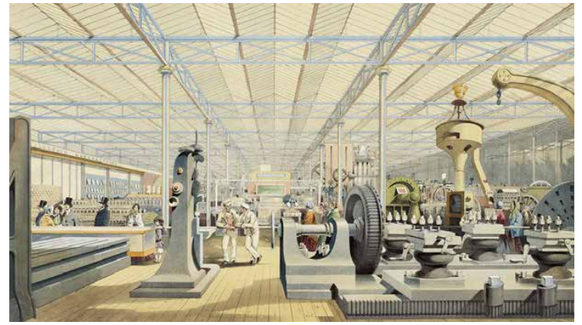
Amidst the outcry, the British Museum revealed plans for the resocialization of its deaccessioned artifacts, sparking a new wave of controversy and speculation. Rather than languishing in storage or being sold to private collectors, the objects will be redistributed to public marketplaces and community spaces around the world. In a statement, museum director Sir Mark Jones emphasized the importance of recontextualizing the artifacts and fostering broader engagement with cultural heritage. "Our goal is to decentralize access to these objects and empower communities to interpret and celebrate their own histories," he said.

Visitors who once flocked to the British Museum's halls to marvel at its unparalleled collection of antiquities and cultural relics are now met with empty spaces and echoing corridors. The absence of these artifacts, each with its own rich history and significance, leaves a palpable void in the heart of London and beyond. For many, the museum was more than just a repository of objects; it was a place of discovery, contemplation, and connection with the past. Now, as the British Museum grapples with the aftermath of this monumental decision, the global community watches with bated breath, wondering what the future holds for one of the world's most iconic cultural institutions.

In the wake of the mass deaccessioning, the British Museum faces an uncertain path forward. While some view the move as a necessary reckoning with colonial legacies and a step towards greater inclusivity, others lament the loss of irreplaceable cultural treasures and question the wisdom of such drastic measures. As the museum seeks to redefine its mission and chart a new course, one thing remains certain: the echoes of its empty halls serve as a poignant reminder of the complex and evolving relationship between humanity and its heritage.

ISSN-4106-0110





The model of a centralized museum for all objects of cultural heritage is only one possible example among others. A kind of "home museum" is depicted in this painting by Peter Paul Rubens. Here, antiquities and natural history objects are displayed in a cabinet of curiosities, an encyclopedic collection that emerged in the 16th century. Early museums like the Bullock's Museum in Piccadilly were built by individuals to house their personal collections of antiquities. Many of these personal collections were absorbed by the British Museum and reinterpreted within their halls.

To understand the museum, we also have to understand the Great Exhibition held in the Crystal Palace in 1851. The Great Exhibition aims to bring global objects to reinstate Britain as the center of the world with a display of fine arts and craftsmanship. Unlike the British Museum, which required applications to visit until 1810, the Great Exhibition was affordable to many.

Fig. 1
Objects in the British Museum's collection.

Fig. 2
The Sense of Sight by Peter Paul Rubens

Fig. 3
"Moving Machinery" by Louis Haghe at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

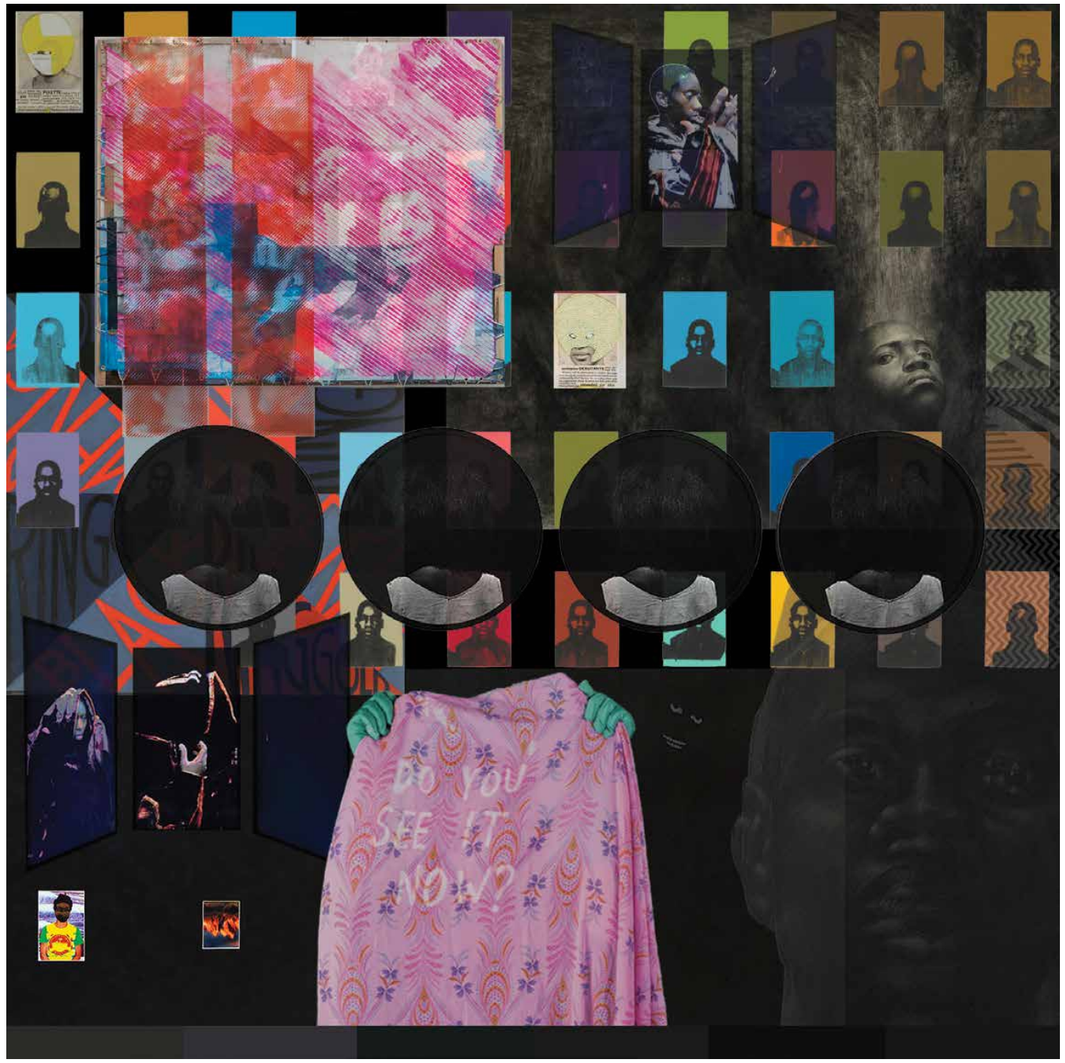
Fig. 4
Bullock's Museum in Piccadilly, London.

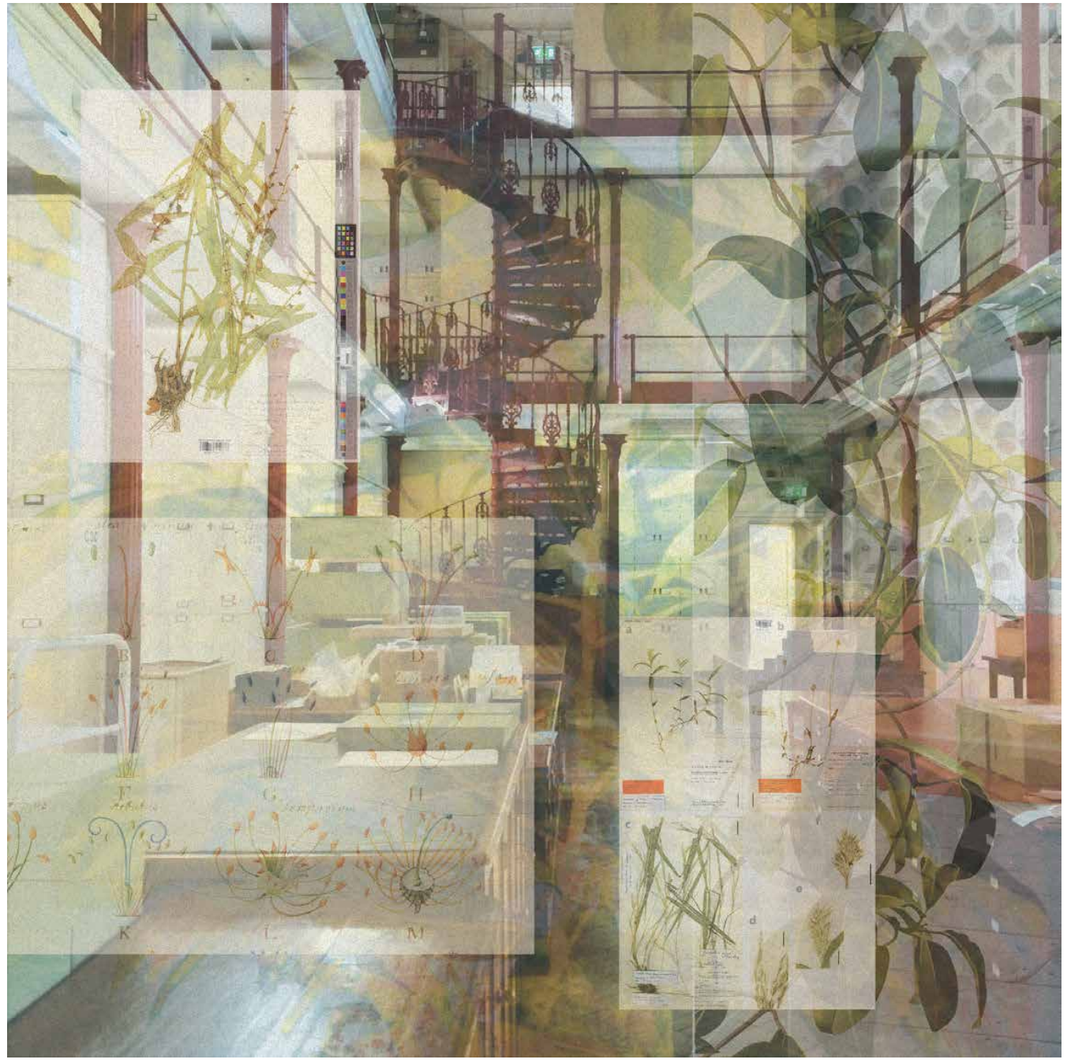
Fig. 5
Engraving of the British Museum's Egyptian Room by Edward Radclyffe.

In the book *The Gloom of the Museum*, John Cotton Dana writes "A great department store is more like a good museum of art than any of the museums we have yet established." By examining the relationship between museums and international trade fairs, we began to think through retail as a lens to think through display, negotiation, gathering and commerce. On the left, display cases house artifacts, retaining them in a state of preservation and ownership. On the right, the austere conditions of the museum are replicated through the notion of display, goods, and transaction, but are discarded to engage in consumption and movement. While the goods and wares are similarly grouped based on size and color, the inclusion of this transactional nature found within a store breaks the barrier of sterilization.

Fig. 1
The British Museum's Upper Egyptian Gallery.

Fig. 2
'Elephant traders' at the Elephant & Castle Shopping Centre in London.





The market manifests itself in various typologies, not only focused on commerce, but also on social and cultural interactions within the marketplace. After an analysis of marketplaces from Accra to Kolkata, we revisited the ancestral korwar figure, focusing on the layers of ritual and culture embedded in its creation and place of origin. The ancestral korwar figure is a cultural object, one that emerged from the rituals associated with its culture.

This cultural aspect is lost in the museum. It is necessary for objects to be recontextualized and allowed to have their cultural, spiritual, and ritualistic value through socialization "The return of objects does not mean restituting them as they once were, but re-investing them with a social function. It's not about a return of the same, but of a "different same".

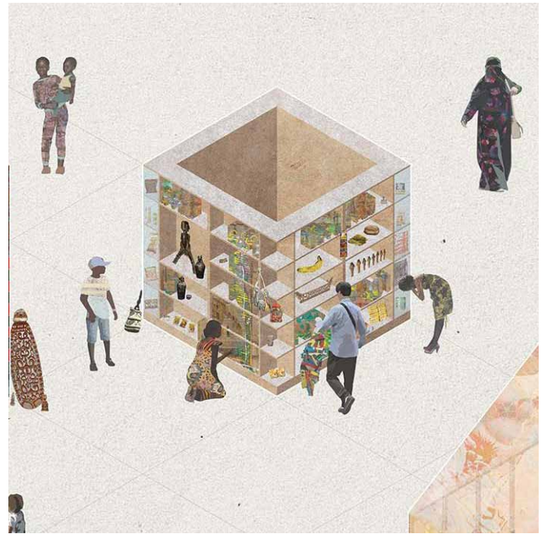
As a first step towards restitution, the market operates as a mechanism to reconstruct memory and ritual. We focused on two sites in London, Elephant & Castle and Brixton Market, with an emphasis on the dialogue between the storefronts and the ephemeral street markets. Both sites extend the market into the street, generating an interplay of goods, movement, textiles, and culture.

Our spatial intervention imagines cultural heritage that is disseminated within a social space, thereby fulfilling different functions on each site, whether pedagogical, memorial, creative, spiritual, or ceremonial. Taking formal cues from the pop-up steel-frame market kiosks and the nearby railway arches, we designed steel frame structures with draping canopies using textiles from the British Museum collection.

This new architecture for restitution is in formal opposition to the monumental museum, instead emphasizing ephemerality and active exchange. The market in this context is an ongoing site of diasporic place making and restitution, aligned with the diasporic place making already at play in Brixton and Elephant & Castle. It's a place of commerce, but also of ritual, exchange, and ceremony, where the future, ownership, interpretation, and value of objects is actively negotiated among those whose cultural heritage they represent.

The return of objects does not mean restituting them as they once were, but re-investing them with a social function. It's not about a return of the same, but of a "different same."Objects passing through the market undergo a process of resocialization, where issues of access and interpretation are reopened to a wider public. Integrated within the existing street markets, our intervention becomes a cumulative resource which activates and engages cultural heritage.

The project interrogates an anthropological connection between socialization and contextualization, between interactions and the cultural significance of exchange in the marketplace. It attempts to define a speculative architectural result in the antithesis of our existing preconceived notions of the museum, interrogating the value in bringing together people and objects as a step towards restitution and reconstructing memory and place.




Ria
Coca-Cola
LA FAMA
Carnicería - Rosticería
073 6657 2148
073 6788 7767
Bom Sem

Blow-Up
Inflatable Infrastructure

Description

When Hurricane Sandy struck New York in October 2012, the ConEd substation on East 13th Street in Alphabet City flooded, causing a transformer explosion that plunged parts of Manhattan into darkness. Outages at two more substations in lower Manhattan led to a days-long blackout affecting hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers below 30th street. This event coined the new neighborhood SoPo, or South of Power.

The intersection of 10th and 30th has changed rapidly architecturally, and economically due to the development of the High Line and Hudson Yards. The High Line was originally a 1.45-mile-long elevated railway line built in the 1930s to lift freight traffic above Manhattan's streets. However, with the decline of rail freight transport, it fell into disuse and was abandoned in the 1980s. In the early 2000s, community activists and local residents formed the Friends of the High Line advocacy group to preserve the structure and transform it into a public park. Their efforts gained momentum, and in 2009, the first section of the High Line opened to the public as a linear park featuring landscaped gardens, walking paths, seating areas, and public art installations. The park's design preserved many of the railway's original features, such as rail tracks and steel beams, while integrating new elements to create a unique urban oasis above the city streets.

Since its opening, the High Line has created a "halo effect" of economic development in the surrounding neighborhoods, prompting the construction of new residential and commercial developments that have caused an enormous surge in the price of real estate. The empty block at 10th and 30th is a vestige of the old neighborhood and has been used as a construction staging site, to pop-up pavilions and community events.

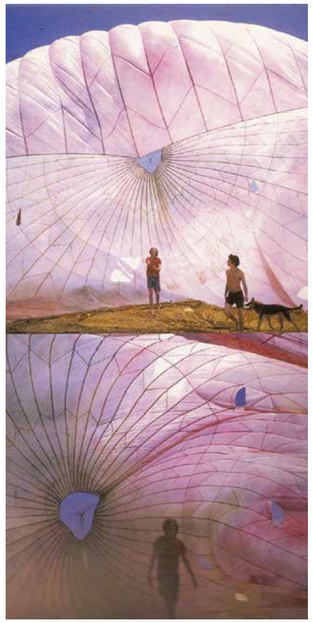
The Shed opened in 2019 as a flexible and adaptable arts center designed to commission, produce, and present a wide range of performing arts, visual arts, and popular culture. The building itself features a distinctive telescoping outer shell on tracks to expand or contract to accommodate different types of events and performances. The 4,040 ton steel structure is clad in ETFE panels and requires the horsepower of a Toyota Prius to deploy.

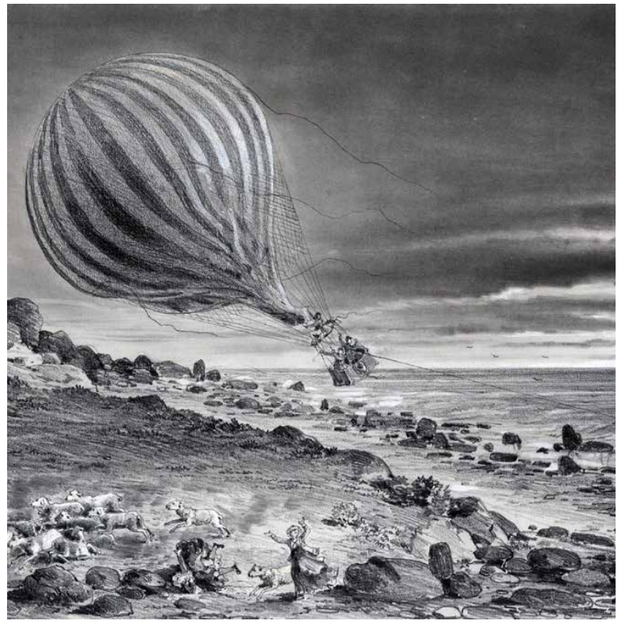
My intervention builds a dialogue between culture and infrastructure, where each is masked as the other. The ETFE panels of The Shed are co-opted in order to deploy a system of blow-up pavilions that can be utilized recreationally as well as infrastructurally during natural disasters. Influenced by inflatable architecture of the avant garde in the 1960s and 1970s, this project explores the potential of inflatable structures as an alternative model for architecture. Lightweight, portable, and temporary, the deployable pavilions can be used as shelters, event spaces, even experimental housing prototypes.

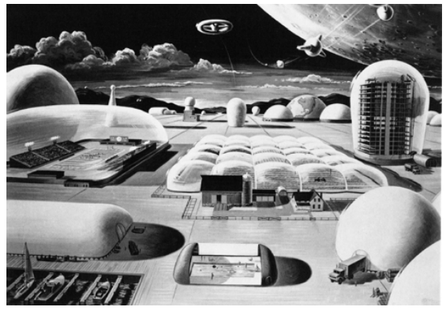
Sequence Core I

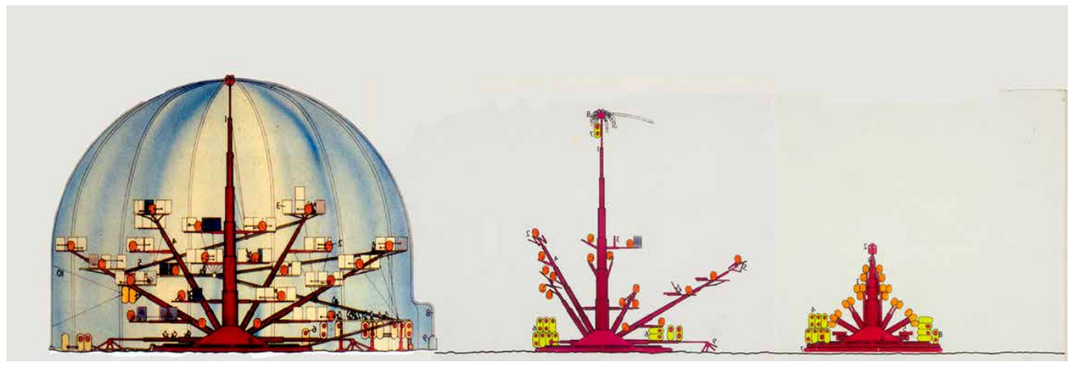
Critic Thomas de Monchaux

Studio Broadway Stories









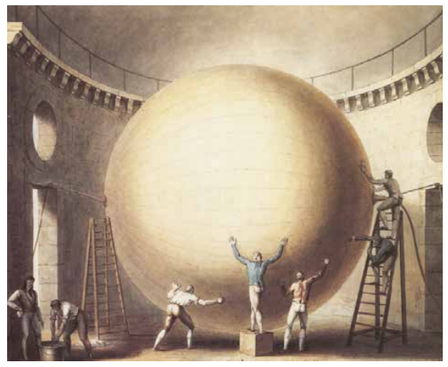


Fig. 1
Structures Gonflables exhibit of 1968.

Fig. 2
Italian design group 'UFO" with an inflatable intervention during Vietnam War protest.

Fig. 3
Ant Farm's "Dream Cloud."

Fig. 4
Neptune making landing on the cliffs of Cape Gris-Nez, France.

Fig. 5
Michelin Man advertisement by Marius Rossillon.

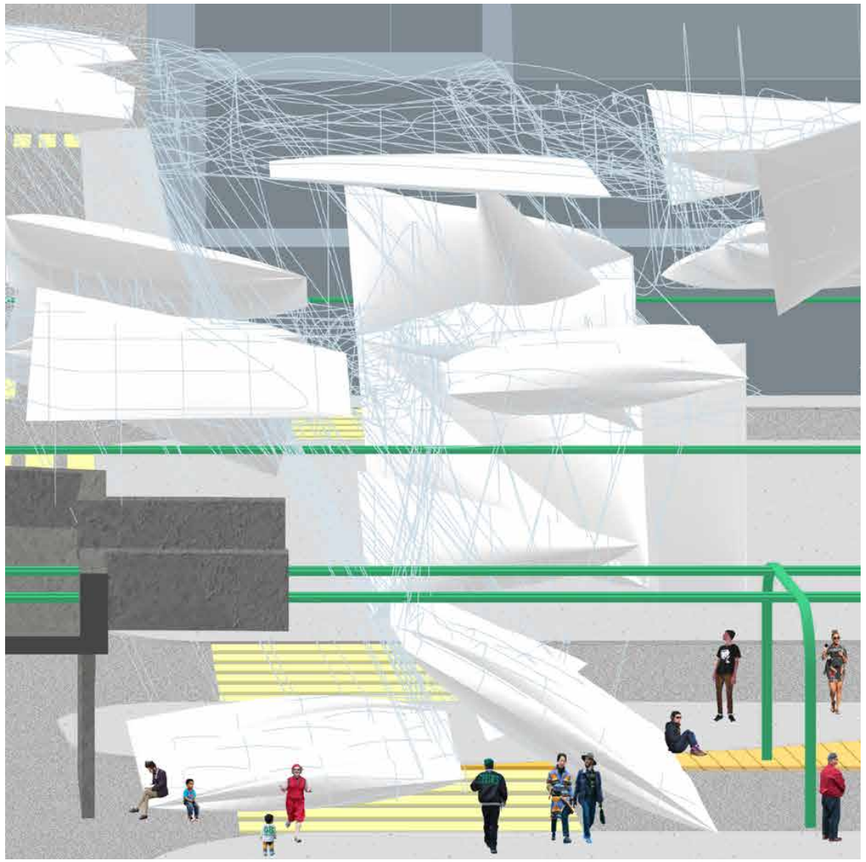
Fig. 6
Artist's impression of a NASA lunar landscape.

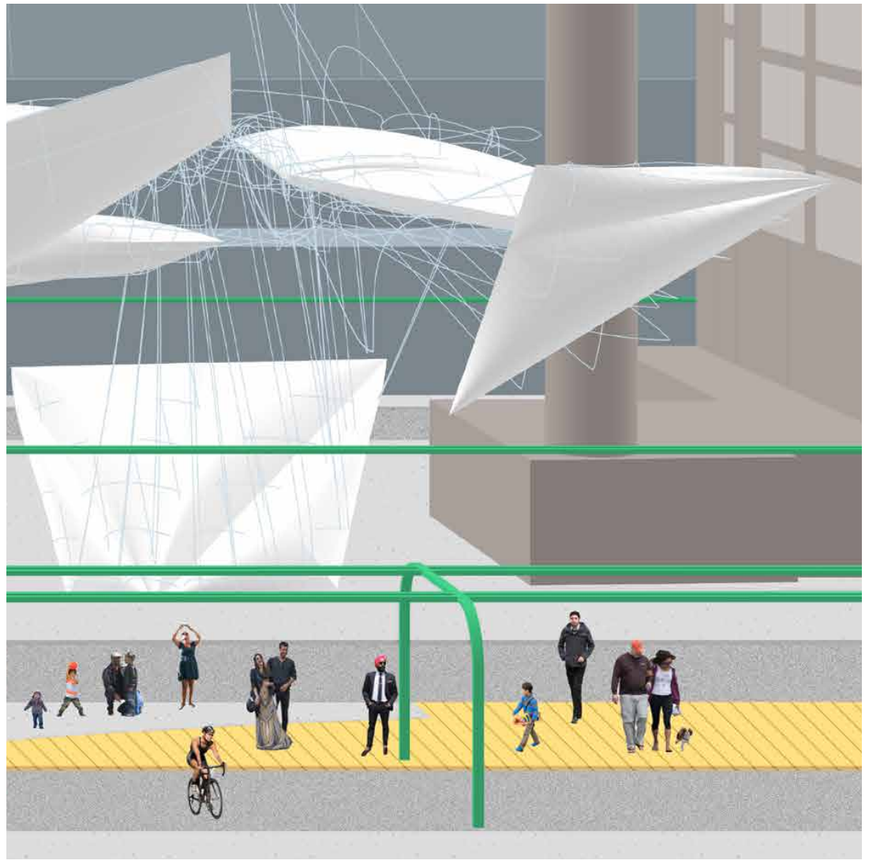
Fig. 7
Haus Rucker Co's Yellow Heart.

Fig. 8
Archigram's Blow-Out Village.

Fig. 9
French military balloon.

Fig. 10
Montgolfier's balloon at Versailles.











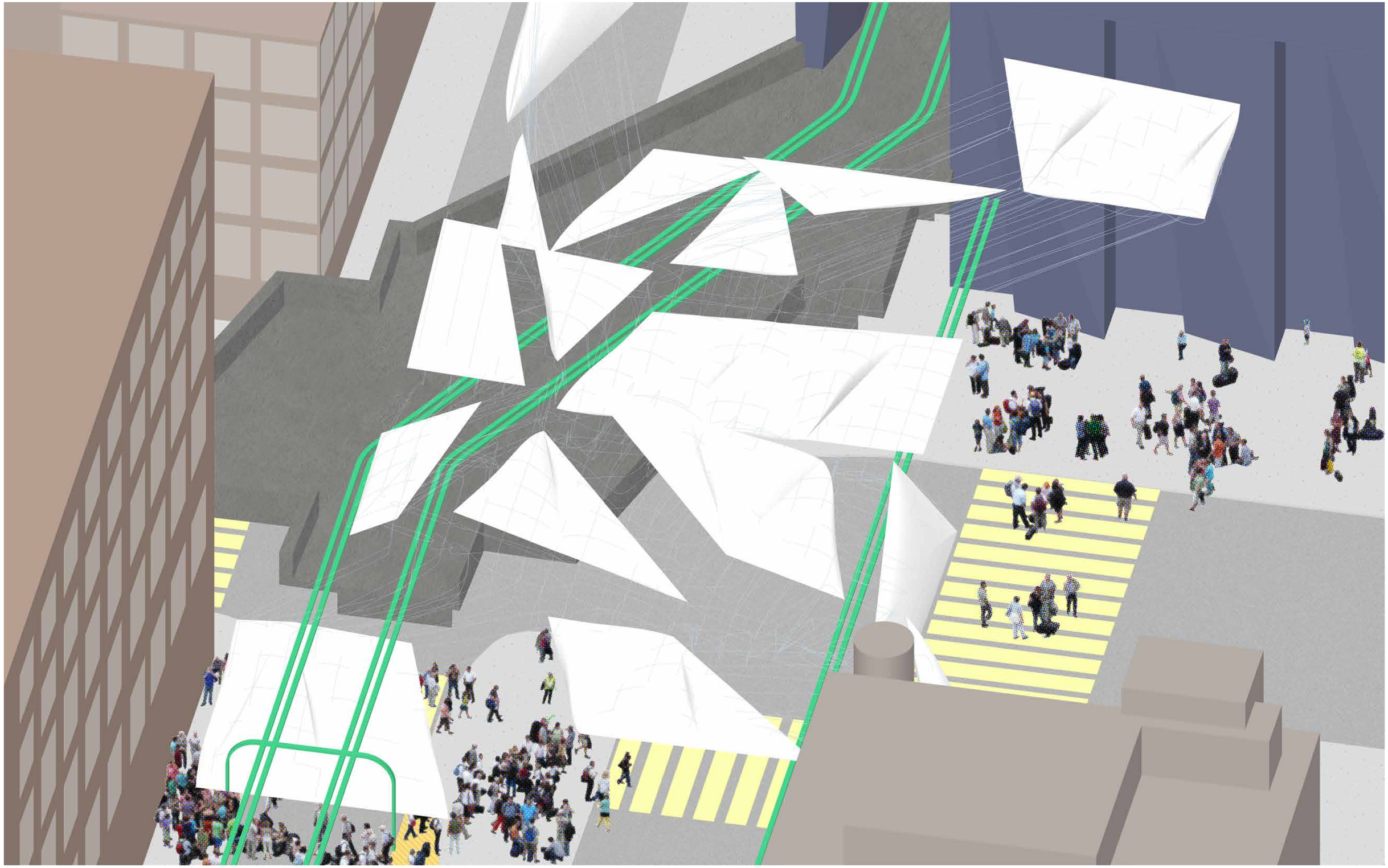


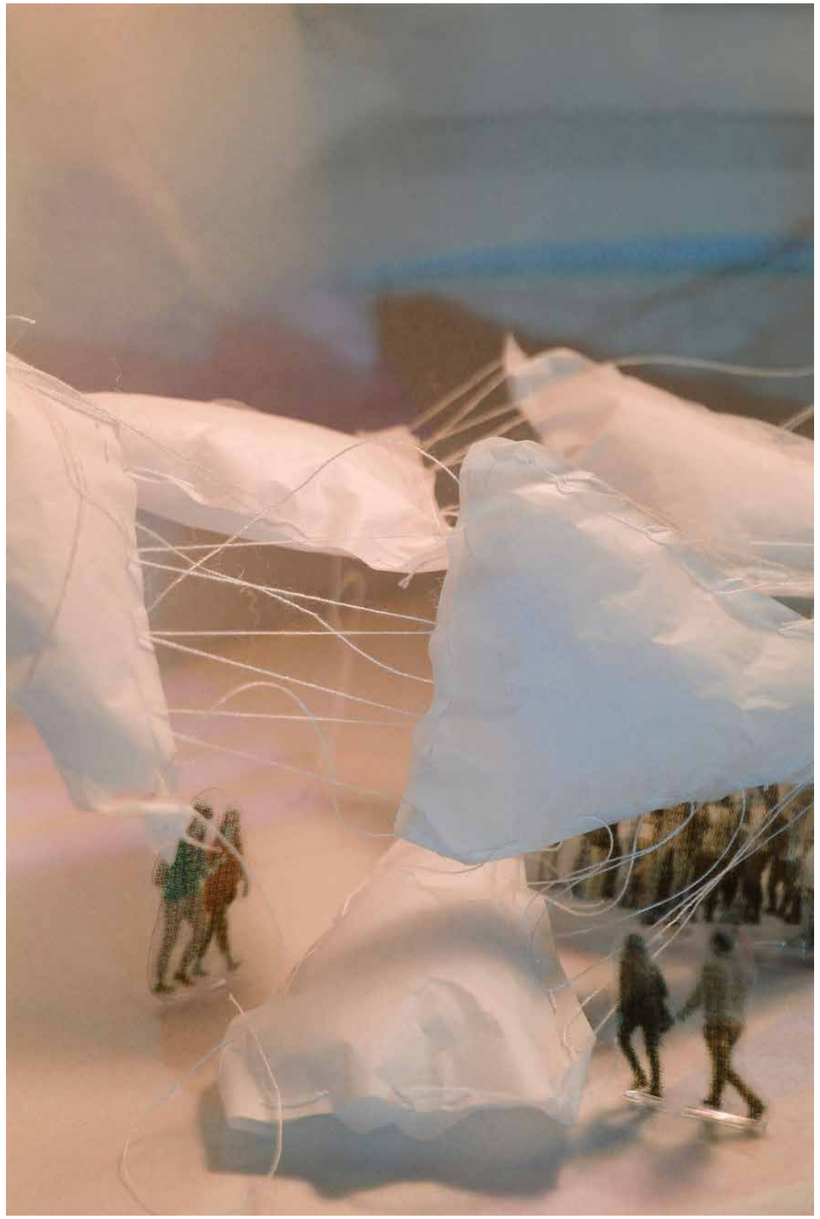


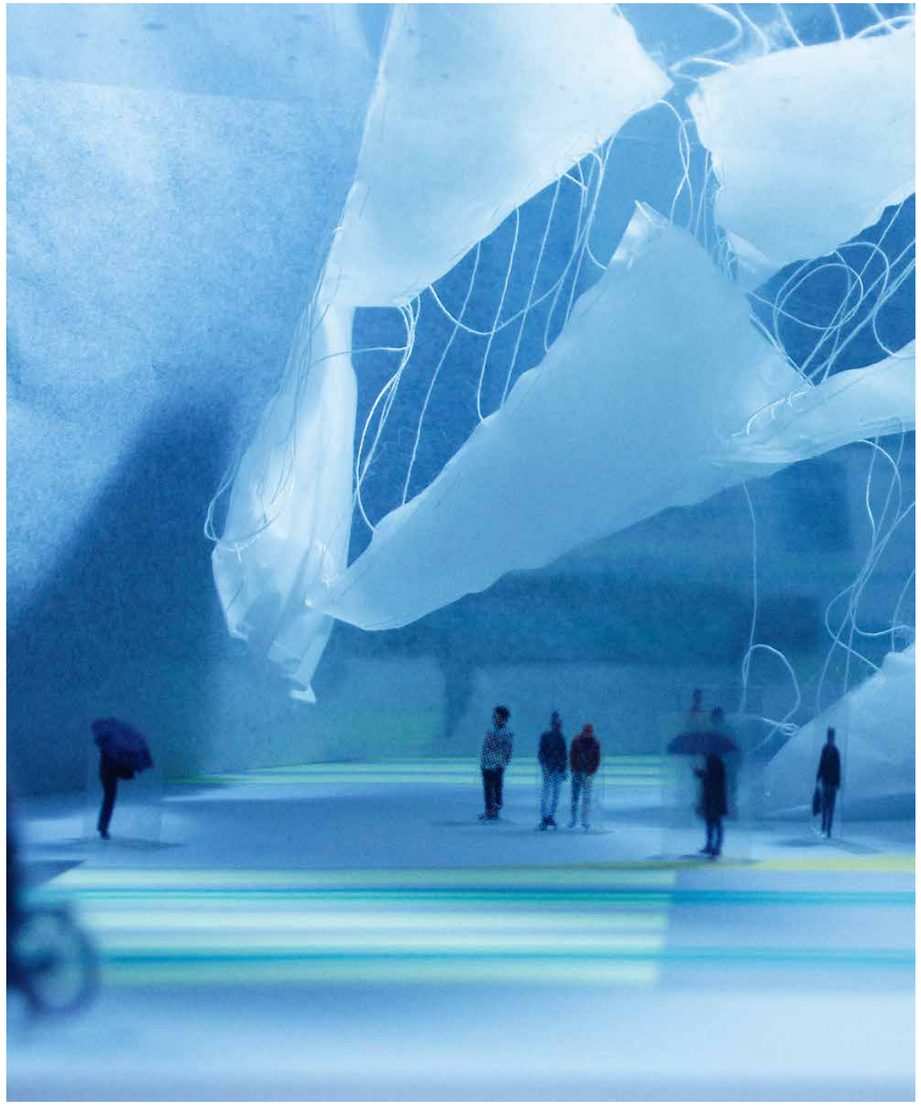










The Mobile City:
Reyner Banham and the Four Ecologies of Los Angeles

Essay

On the front cover of Reyner Banham's first edition 1971 book *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* a sunshine-yellow diving board extends over a smooth cerulean pool punctuated by a wispy splash (see fig. 1). Beyond stand two sentinel palms, a lonely folding chair, and a fleshy, low-slung house with windows that reflect vague, purple volumes. The suggestion of a cityscape perhaps? Visions and depictions of an edenic Los Angeles, like David Hockney's "A Bigger Splash," have been churned out by the Hollywood dream factory since the invention of moving pictures. At the same time, the city cannot escape its reputation as a dystopian sprawl choked by freeways. Whether graceful or grotesque, beautiful or damned, Los Angeles, according to Reyner Banham, has not received the attention it deserves in architectural discourse.

> **"Such a very large body of first-class and highly original architecture cannot be brushed off as an accident, an irrelevance upon the face of an indifferent dystopia. If Los Angeles is one of the world's leading cities in architecture, then it is because it is a sympathetic ecology for architectural design, and it behoves the world's architects to find out why." (Banham 244)**

Out of disdain or lack of critical context, terminology, and classification, Los Angeles in the 1970s was seen by many architectural theorists of culture and taste as a subject unworthy of description. As if mounting a defense, Banham dedicates *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* "To Cedric Price who first called upon me to testify in public on LA". Far from disqualifying it from scholarly and psychoanalysis, Banham argues that the singularity of LA's sprawl and unprecedented "mixture of geography, climate, economics, demography, mechanics and culture" should be studied closely (Banham 24). In the opening pages of *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*, Banham queries: "But while we drive along the freeways that are its crowning glory or prime headache, and con the rear-view mirror for historical illumination, what shall be our route?" (Banham 18) The historical interrogation of such a prototypical and contradictory city as Los Angeles demands a new form of architectural theory, one that departs from the way buildings and cities have traditionally been written. This is what Banham offers in *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. He expertly crafts and assembles a theory of architecture that emulates the very city itself: dispersed, guileless, liberated. Over the course of thirteen chapters, Banham conducts a study of the total environment, of the architecture en masse. In the process, he collects a body of evidence to prove that the City of Angels indeed performs "the functions of a great city" (Banham 23). But as Roger Jellinek asks in his New York Times review of the book titled "In Praise (!) of Los Angeles": Is Reyner Banham simply infatuated with Los Angeles, or does he have a case?

Banham opens the book by sharing "Views of Los Angeles", immediately introducing the city's most polarizing, contentious, and mesmerizing features: the chaos, the cars, the kitsch, but also the sunsets, the mobility, the freedom. The discerning reader can diagnose fairly quickly that *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies* is both testimony and testimonial. Banham conspicuously inserts himself into his account of the city, often writing in first person and sharing personal anecdotes from his long drives across the city. Technically speaking, both testimonies and testimonials express beliefs and observations based on personal experience. But the context of their usage can differ greatly. A testimony is a statement provided under oath in legal proceedings, while a testimonial is typically offered in a promotional setting as a recommendation or endorsement that conveys positive opinions, satisfaction, or approval. There is a sense that Banham is testifying to an unwilling public, of whom he names "the distinguished Italian architect and his wife who, on discovering that I was writing this book doubted that anyone who cared for architecture could lower himself to such a project" (217). To this skeptical audience, Los Angeles reads as a formal testimony that presents compelling evidence that Los Angeles merits critical attention and should be judged outside the narrow bounds of the profession's aesthetic boundaries. As a didactic method, Banham offers a balance of opinions for and against Los Angeles and shares neither "the optimism of those who see Los Angeles as a prototype of all future cities, nor the gloom of those who see it as the harbinger of universal doom" (Banham 24). But his commentary often tips towards qualified reverence. Reyner Banham clearly loves Los Angeles. Read as a testimonial, Los Angeles is persuasive because Banham establishes himself as a credible and authentic guide: "like earlier generations of English intellectuals who taught themselves Italian in order to read Dante in the original, I learned to drive in order to read Los Angeles in the original" (Banham 5). Banham casts himself as an interpreter capable of finding coherence and continuity from the inscrutable disjunction of LA's urban form, finding virtue in that which is disdained by traditional critics. His tone is erudite and polemical, while at the same time leisurely and humorous. He oscillates alternately between dense historical analysis and conversational repartee. Often, Banham poses questions that encourage readers to think critically about their assumptions, to steer them down certain lines of thinking, and consider new possibilities. Ultimately, Banham asks the reader to revise the way in which Los Angeles, and by extension all cities, have traditionally been appraised and assessed.

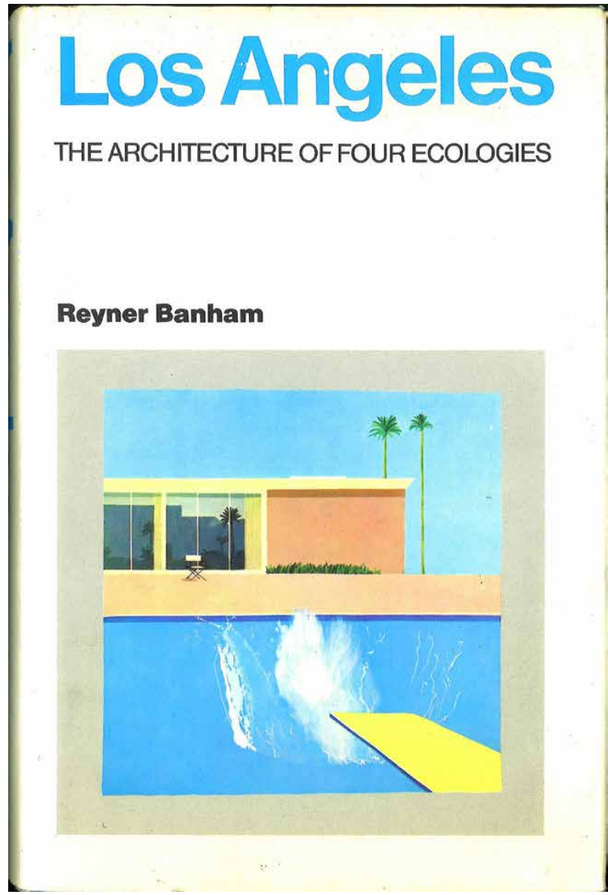


Fig. 1
The cover of *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies.*

Course A History of Architectural History

Professor Mark Wigley

Banham, Reyner. *Los Angeles: The Architecture of Four Ecologies*. Harper and Row Publishers, 1971.

Jellineck, Roger. "In Praise (!) of Los Angeles." The New York Times, July 10 1971, p. 21.

Collecting Landscapes
Research in the High Arctic

Description

Our initial research investigated the depiction of landscape and material culture in Inuit art. To the non-Northern eye, Arctic geography appears as a gradation of whites and grays. But the paintings of Inuit artists Janet Kigusiuq, Ooloosie Saila, and Nick Sikkuark reveal a mode of viewing an arctic landscape saturated in color and suffused with collective memory and generational knowledge. Through visual art, Inuit artists conveyed traditions of oral history, myths and stories, material culture and values, connecting with their own histories and surfacing issues of climatic transformation, colonization, and indigenous self-determination.

Thousands of years of generational knowledge, passed on through storytelling and experiential mentorship, heighten the threshold of detection that allows Inuit communities to live in this inhospitable environment. Ice is simultaneously home, highway, and hazard. The ability to read ice, its change in color, texture, and reflectivity, and its movement and relationship with inclement weather patterns, is an essential skill to survive in the extreme climate of the high Arctic.

The color of ice is also an essential component of climate change research. The albedo of the arctic terrain changes as ice melts and turns from whites to blues. Albedo is the proportion of the incident light that is reflected by a surface. When sea ice melts, it creates pools of water in shades of cerulean and cyan that absorb more UV rays than pure white multi-year ice. This phenomenon, called melt ponds, causes rapid deterioration of sea ice due to the magnifying effect of color and light absorption. Controlling the reflectivity of ice holds the key for slowing sea ice retreat. Research into reflectivity has led organizations like The Arctic Ice Project to study the deployment of silica microbeads at the landscape level to reflect UV rays. If used effectively, UV reflection could slow the retreat of sea ice, preserving vital landscapes for human and non-human Arctic inhabitants.

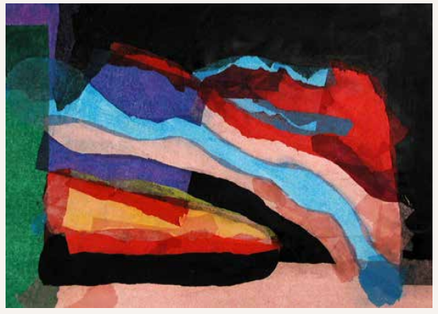
Sequence Advanced V

Critic Leslie Gill & Khoi Nguyen

Studio Are Icebergs Free?

Collaborators Olivia Braun

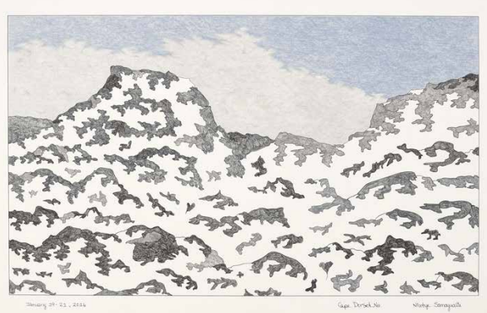
Fig. 1
Melt ponds on sea ice captured by Donald Perovich.



Janet Kigusiuq
Inuit | 1926 - 2005

Arctic Landscape (River)
Tissue paper on acrylic medium

Arctic Landscape
Tissue paper on acrylic medium



Nicotye Samayualie
Inuit | 1983 -

Untitled (wintery landscape)
Colored pencil on paper

"On a Plane" On our way to Cape Dorset coming from Iqaluit
Colored pencil on paper

Nick Sikkuark
Inuit | 1943 - 2013

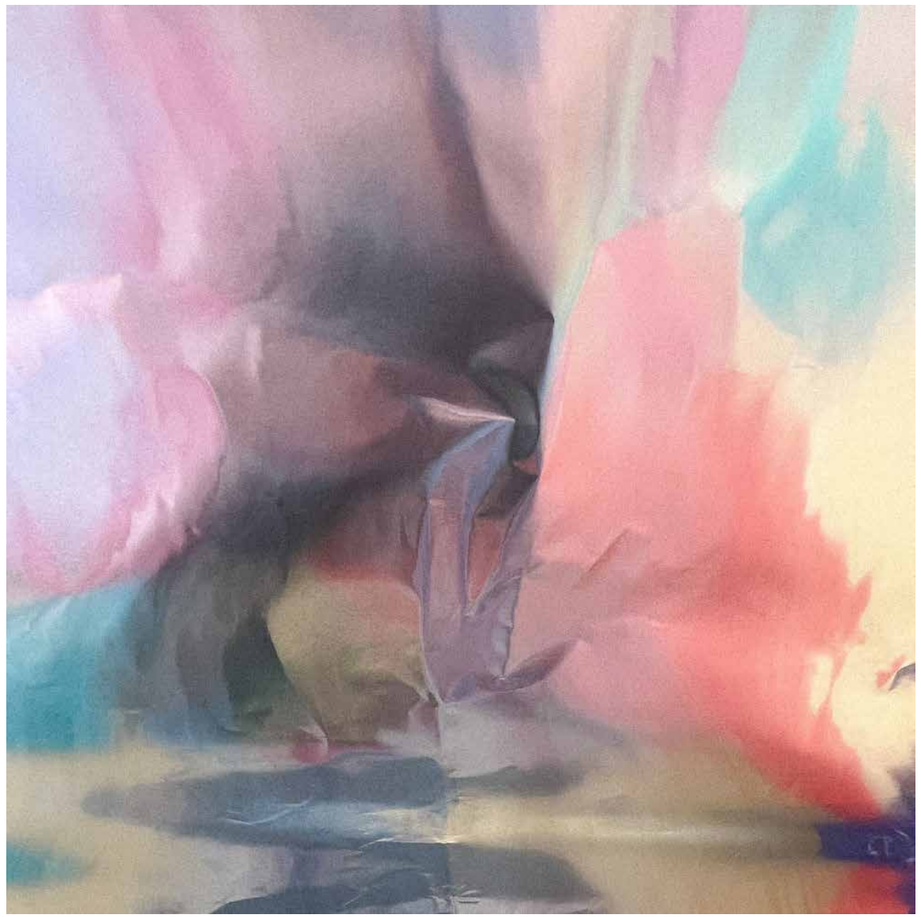
Untitled (shamans over water)
Colored pencil drawing and paper

Untitled (flying shaman, animal spirits and northern lights)
Colored pencil drawing and paper

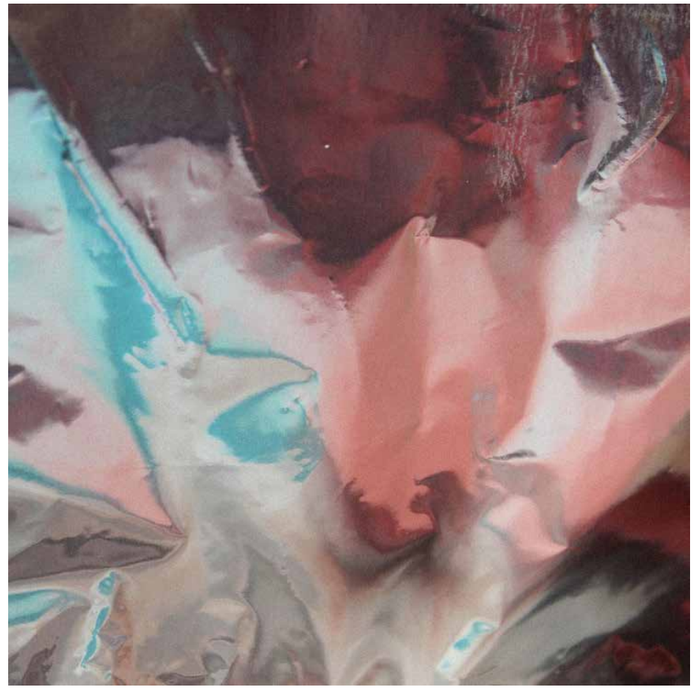
Ooloosie Saila
Inuit | 1926 - 2005

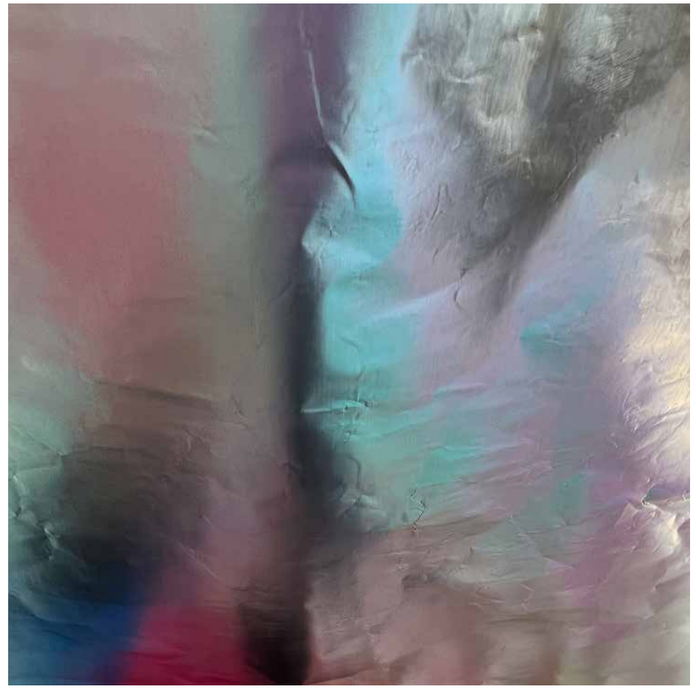
Silakslaq (Beautiful Day)
Colored pencil and ink on paper

Untitled
Colored pencil and ink on paper



We devised a visual tool to experiment with reflectivity and painting with light using tin foil to reflect trace paper painted with india ink. We captured the reflection of india ink collages on this crinkled metallic surface, testing the angular reflection, blending, and interactions of color as a generative design tool. These photographs became negatives for cyanotype prints, which advanced our understanding of transparency, shadow, and exposure.





Ellesmere Island, an extremely remote island the size of Great Britain and the most northerly point of land in Canada, is our chosen site. The island has historically been a key site for the study of climate and atmospheric behavior. In 2018, the Canadian government refused funding for research on Ellesmere Island, jeopardizing the continuity of scientific data collection. Our research uncovered a unique opportunity to build partnerships between indigenous and research communities, linking the knowledge branches of cryospheric science with indigenous art and knowledge, also called IQ or (Inuit Qaujimajatuqangit). Ultimately, knowledge-sharing will lead to a deeper understanding of the interconnectivity of the arctic environment.

There's an impossibility of grasping the vastness and remoteness of the Canadian North. Unlike most regions of the country, mobility infrastructure is only intermittently available and "operates in concert with the environment" (220). Multi-nodal networks and seasonal switches create logistical challenges that fundamentally alter how buildings are designed and conceived. To operate in such a remote site, we needed to develop not only the research outposts but also a gateway building to provide access to such a remote network of northern sites.

To understand remote field conditions of the high arctic, we spoke with Chris Jaffe, a diver and photographer who visits the Arctic every year to document changing landscapes, glaciers, and marine habitat. Jaffe explained that the spatial organization of Arctic tent camps, the norm for remote field work, rely on a hierarchy of warmth, security, and protection. He emphasized the importance of partnering with outfitters with strong relationships to Inuit, as their intuition around the environment, signal to noise ratio, and skill in polar logistics are unequaled.

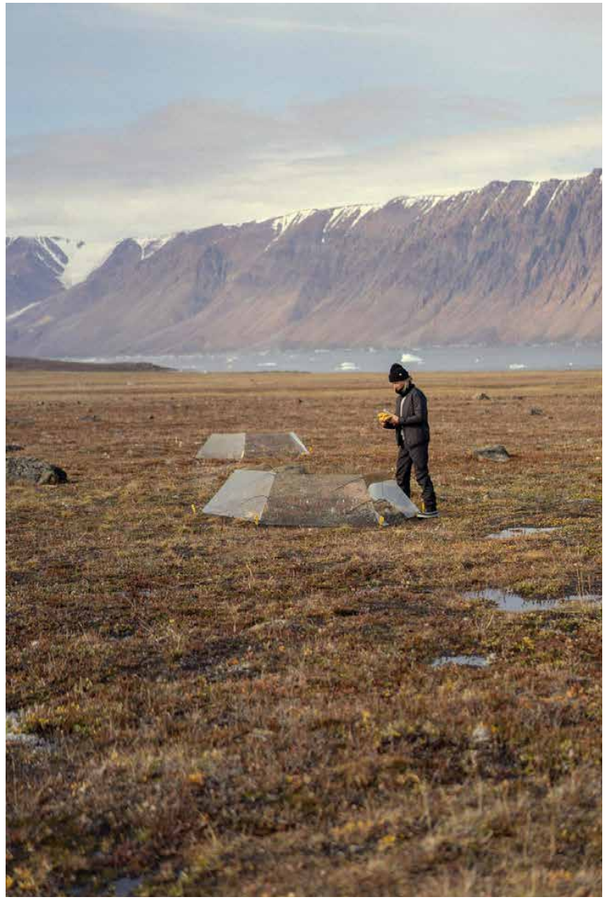


Fig. 2-3

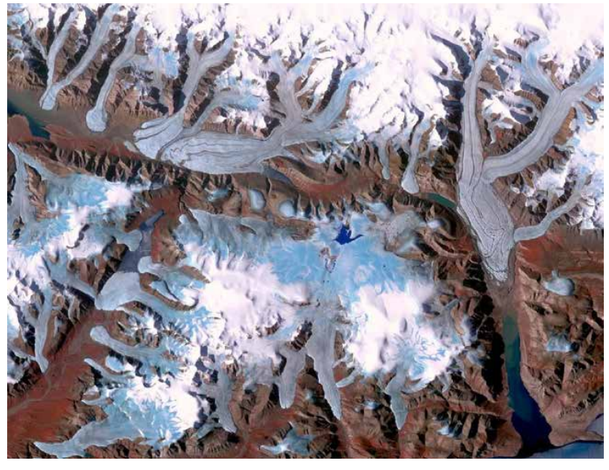


Fig. 1

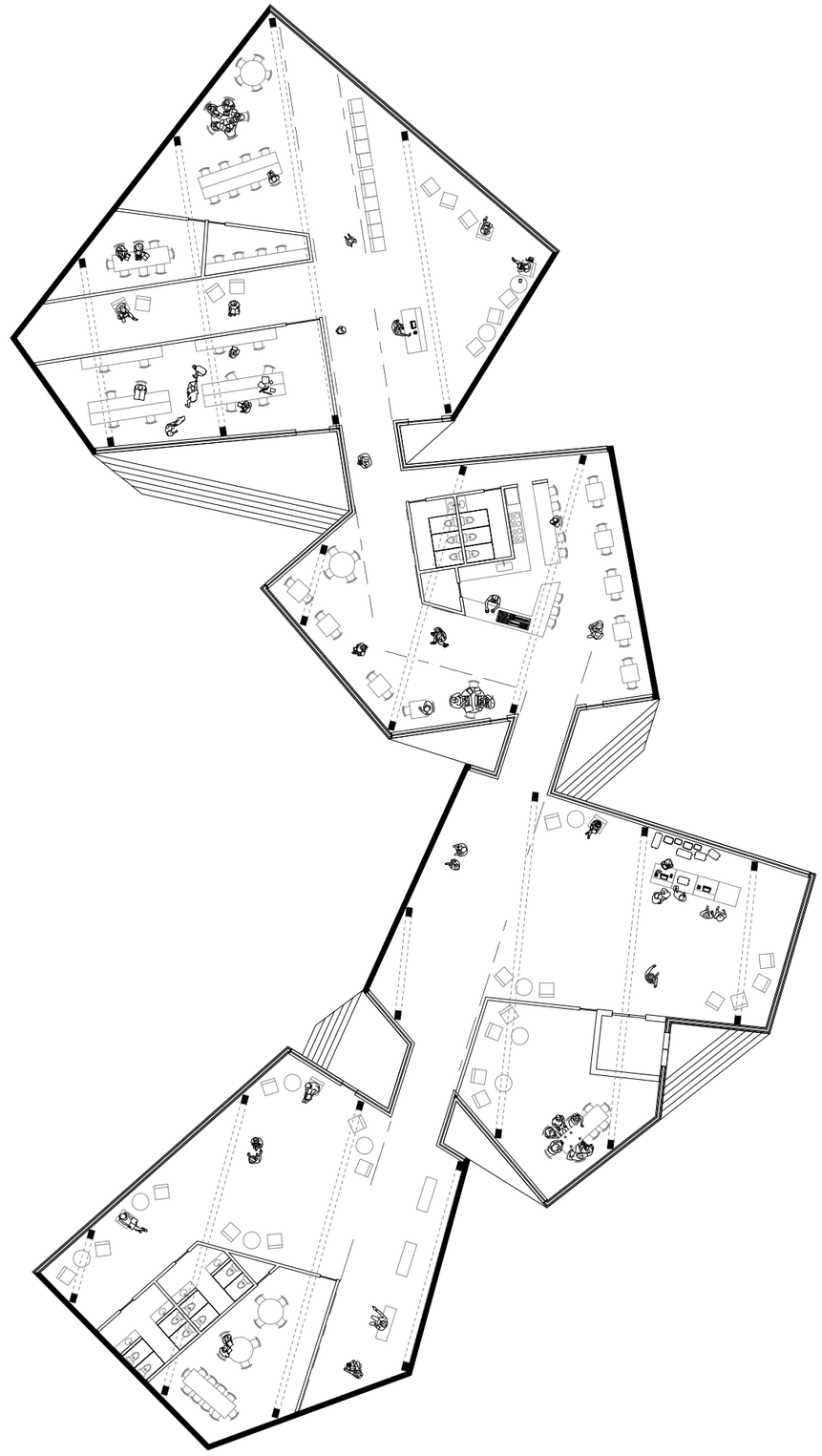
Fig. 1
NASA satellite imagery of Ellesmere Island.

Fig. 2-3
Ellesmere Island captured by Norse Projects.

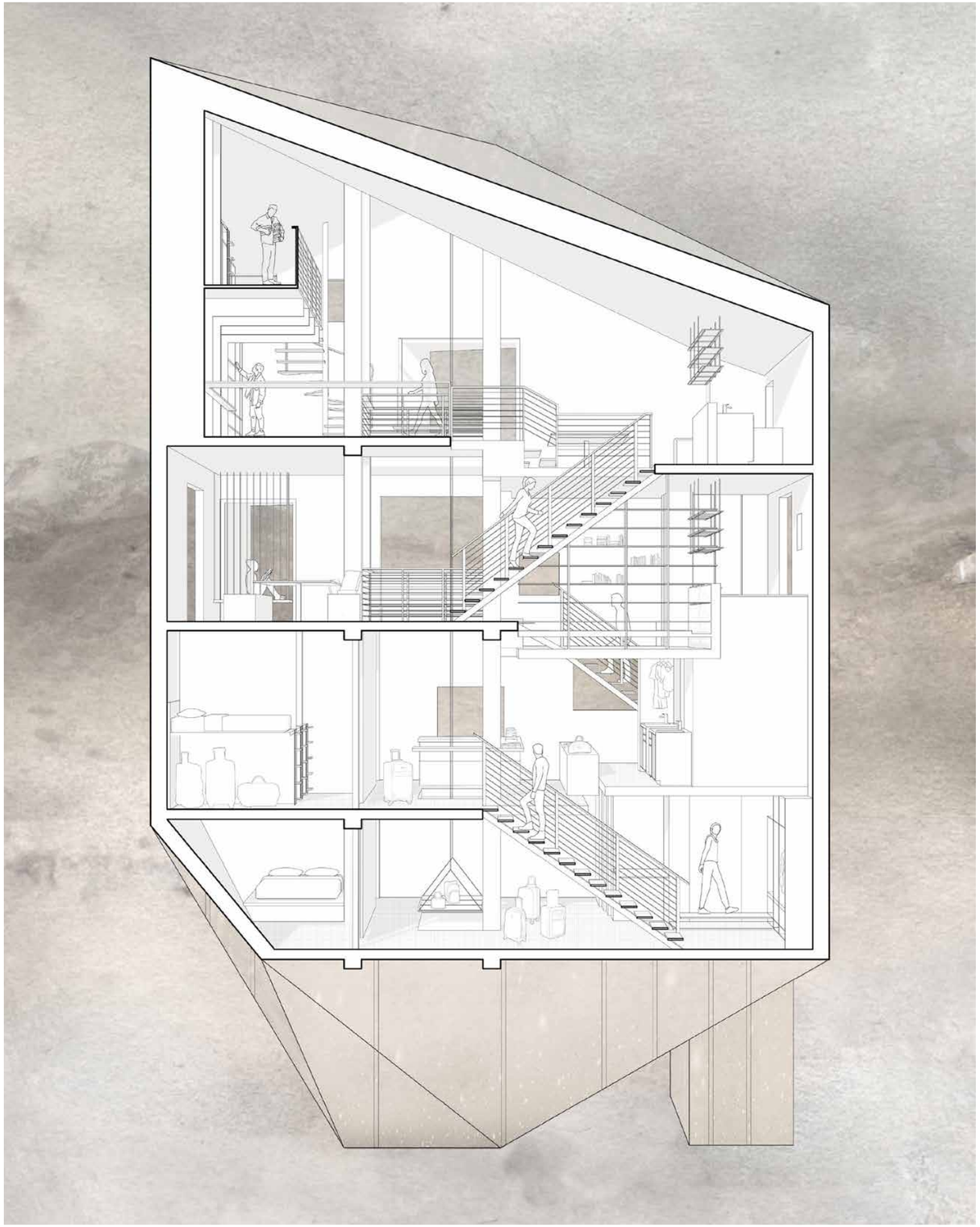
Our project proposes a gateway airport building or airport in Grise Fiord, the main settlement on Ellesmere Island, and a network of research outposts that operate as a co-op, bringing researchers and indigenous artists together under one roof.

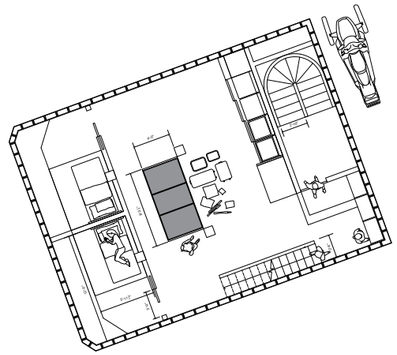
Where roads and highways are nonexistent or inaccessible for most of the year, airports serve as a lifeline. They ensure delivery of essential cargo such as food, medical supplies, and parts for electricity and water systems. Beyond playing simply a logistical role, arctic airports also serve an important social function as well, connecting isolated Inuit communities and offering a gathering place to meet friends and family members in transit.

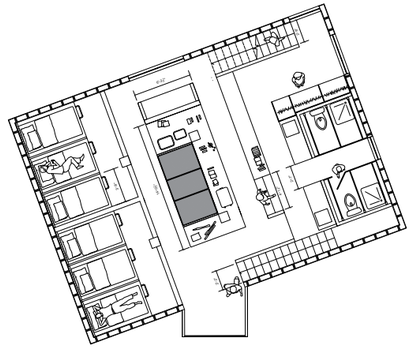
The airport, therefore, serves as a gateway building to our field sites but also a place for connection and community organization. Spaces for research and Inuit cartography, cooking, archiving, and podcast recording are interspersed among typical airport programming. Gallery walls line the main circulation halls, exhibiting work created at the research outposts. Architecturally, the volumes and roofline echo the ice and mountains.

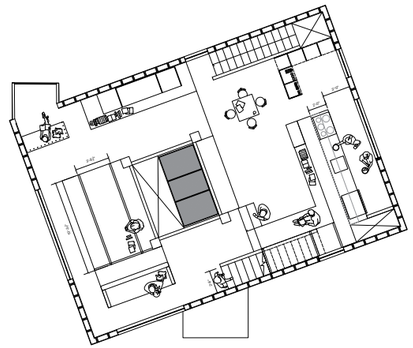


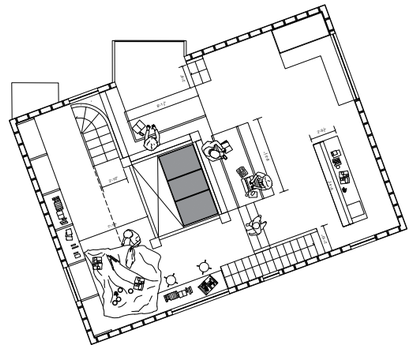
The research outposts are located in Quttinirpaaq National Park, around 350 miles north of Grise Fiord at what are currently seasonal camp sites. These outposts support scientific and artistic methods for monitoring and collecting landscapes, creating an archive for a terrain in constant transition. Architecturally, the outpost is conceived as a vertical camp, employing the spatial organization of deep field tent camps described by Jaffe. Drawing on our research into the unique polar light and visual phenomena, we asked how the architecture could perform as an instrument for registering nuanced changes of the environment. Windows project strategically from the main volume in cardinal directions, serving as a wayfinding device.

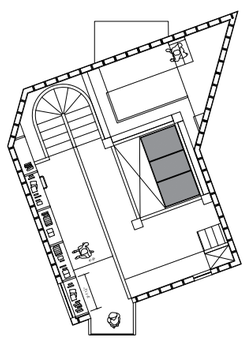












PS1: A School for Re-Wilding

Description

In the midst of a climate crisis, schools have a responsibility to nurture and cultivate a relationship with nature. The School for Re-Wilding is an experiment in urban cohabitation and environmental symbiosis, a socio-ecological experiment and living library of the city's most resilient plants.

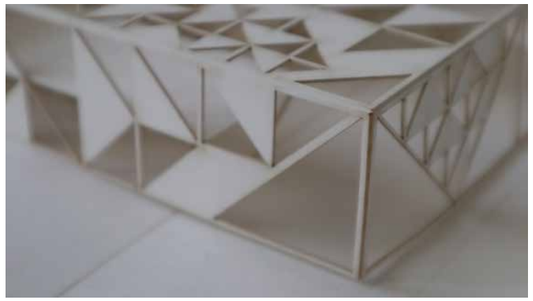
Where there are breaks in human activity, "small nature" abounds on site — from grasses and weeds in sidewalk cracks to lichen and mushrooms on the trees, colors, camouflage, and material wear. These field notes are the basis of a bio-receptive building, one where crevices, dead ends, dead space, and corner conditions become pockets for wild, uncultivated, natural growth.

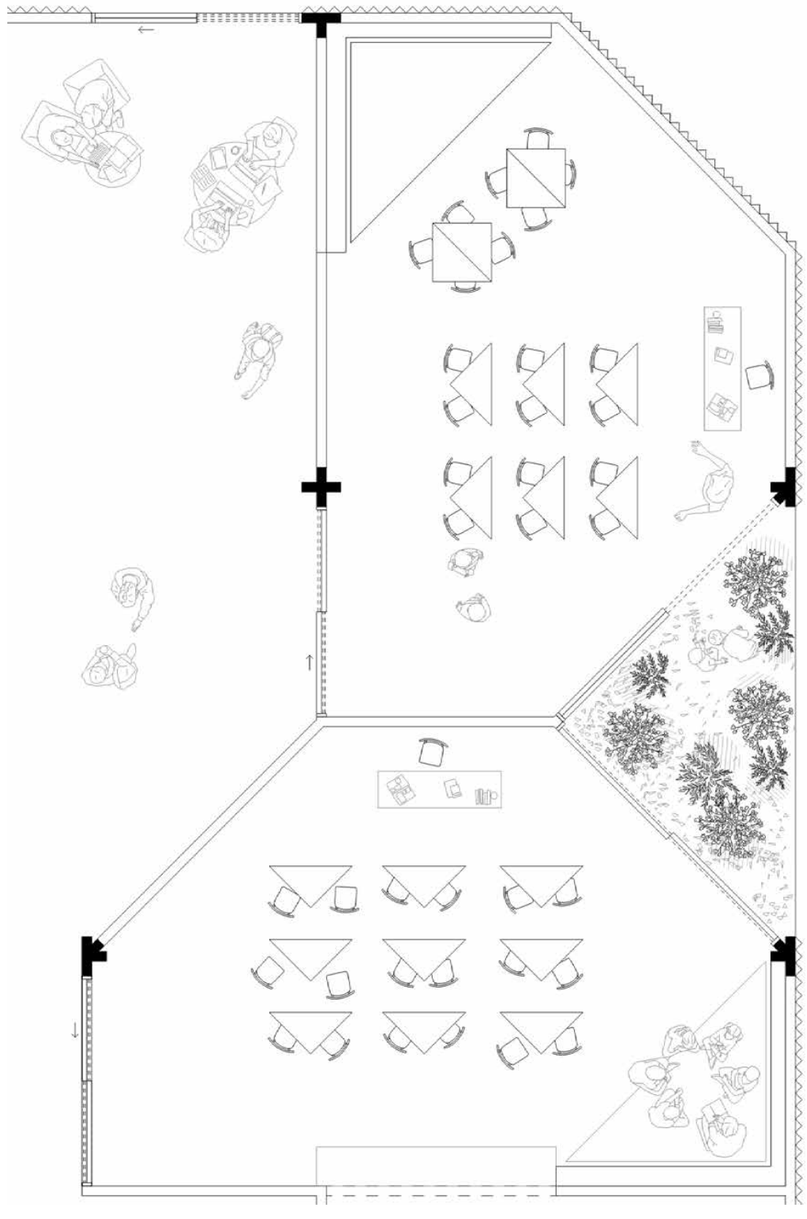
Resting on a minimal footprint, the school encourages play and exchange in the neighboring field for re-wilding, Sara Roosevelt Park, and surrounding neighborhood. The school's facade acts like a comb, catching seeds and nursing plant life within sawtooth cuts. By joining the building intimately to the existing landscape, the school augments natural processes that are already at work. Cruciform timber columns provide a framework for movable partitions that dissolve the boundary between inside and outside, nature and the city. In doing so, the school defines a third space that reframes the nature culture divide and resists the externalization of nature.

Sequence Core II

Critic Miku Dixit

Studio Post-Carbon School





End.