



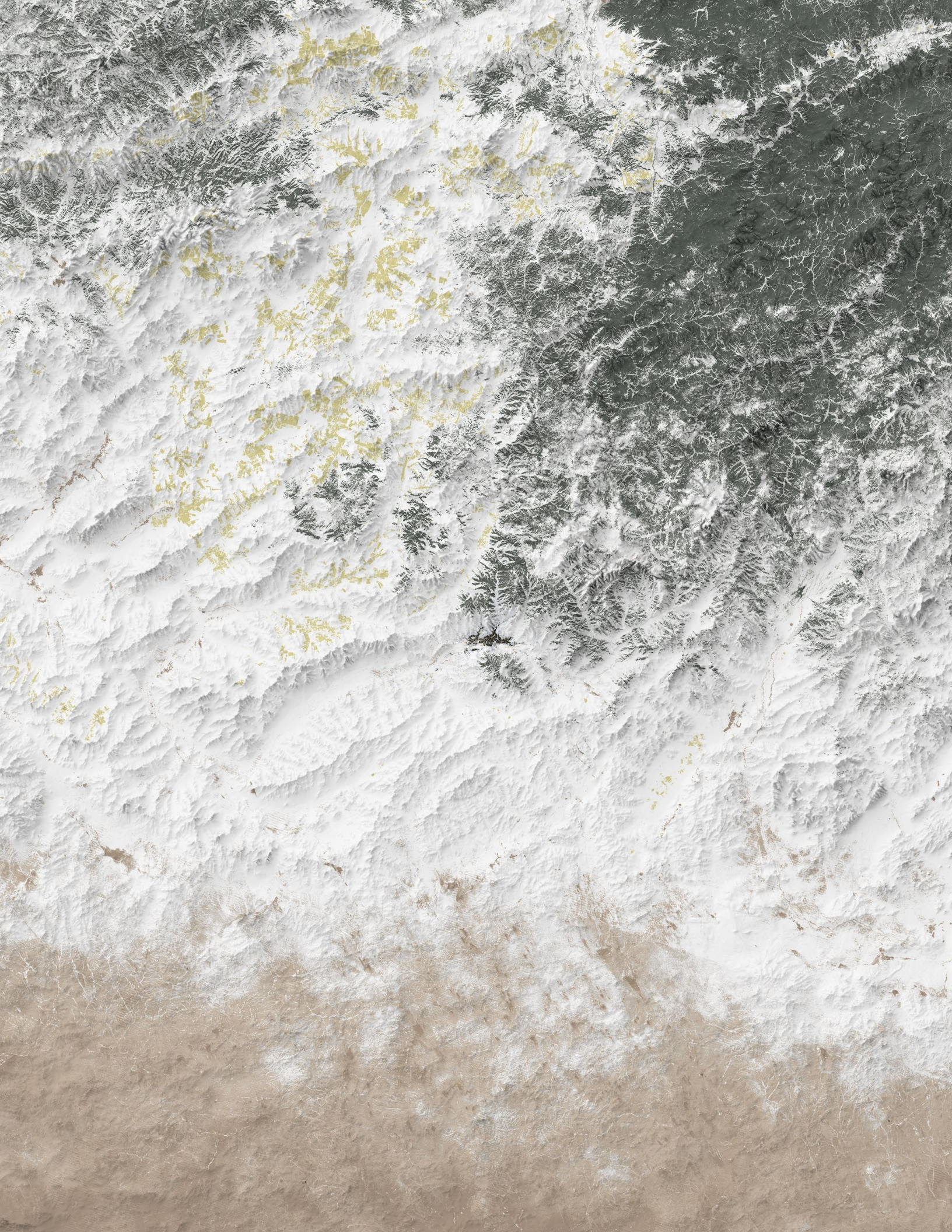
Junhyuk Kim

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<https://www.behance.net/gallery/218988643/Junhyuk-Kim-Architectural-Portfolio>

2024-2025



Studio Projects

01. Pollinized Ministerios

SP 2025_Juan Herreros & Oscar M. Caballero

02. Every Island is a Mountains

SU 2024_Marco Ferrari & Elise Hunchuck

03. Adaptive Islands

FA 2024_Bryony Roberts

Elective Project (Visual Studies & Computation)

01. Re - "Making Studio"

SP 2025_Danil Nagy (Generative Design I)

Theoretical Writings (History & Theory)

01. Le Corbusier's Evolution in Circulation: From Determinacy to Indeterminacy and Its Parallels with Rem Koolhaas

FA 2024_Mary McLeod (Le Corbusier beyond Europe)

02. How the Theory Works: Focusing on "Field Trip: A Memoir," Rem Koolhaas

FA 2024_Mark Wigley (The History of Architectural Theory)

03. Contextualizing a Concept: The Solid / Void Concept from Y2K House to Casa da Música

SP 2025_Bernard Tschumi (The Contemporary: "SCHOOLS?")

04. From Casbah to Viaduct: Le Corbusier's Visual Analysis and the Abstraction of Algiers

SP 2025_Amale Andraos (The Arab City)

Pollinized Ministerios

How should housing for both people and pollinators transform?

Year: Spring 2025, Columbia University **Instructor:** Juan Herreros & Oscar M. Caballero

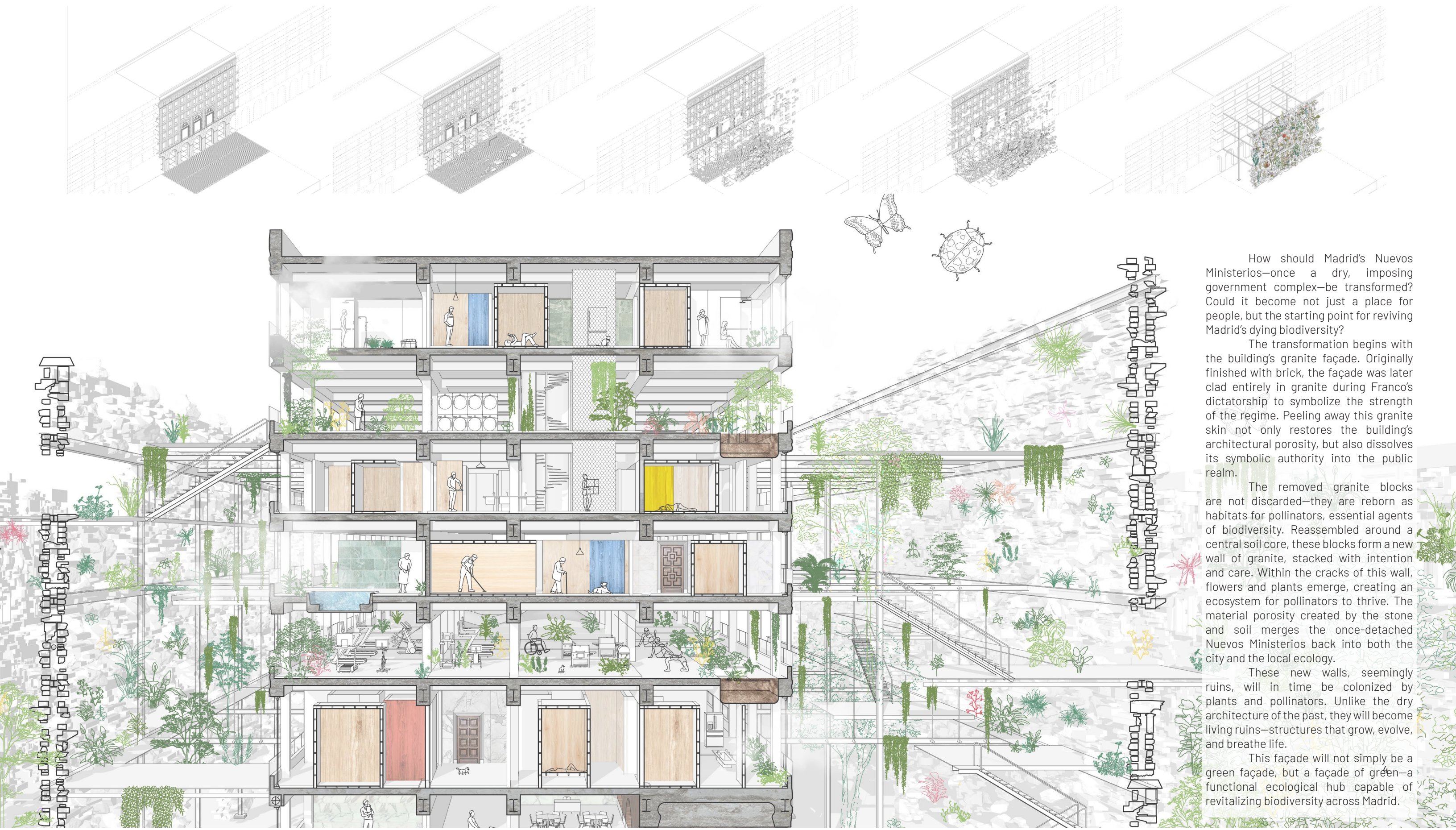
Project Type and Purpose: A collective housing designed to restore Madrid's biodiversity

Project Location: New Ministries, Madrid, Spain

Keywords: Living Ruin, Pollinators, Granite Façade, Collective Housing



Reassembly and greening of the granite façade:
From solid façade to habitat for pollinators



How should Madrid's Nuevos Ministerios—once a dry, imposing government complex—be transformed? Could it become not just a place for people, but the starting point for reviving Madrid's dying biodiversity?

The transformation begins with the building's granite façade. Originally finished with brick, the façade was later clad entirely in granite during Franco's dictatorship to symbolize the strength of the regime. Peeling away this granite skin not only restores the building's architectural porosity, but also dissolves its symbolic authority into the public realm.

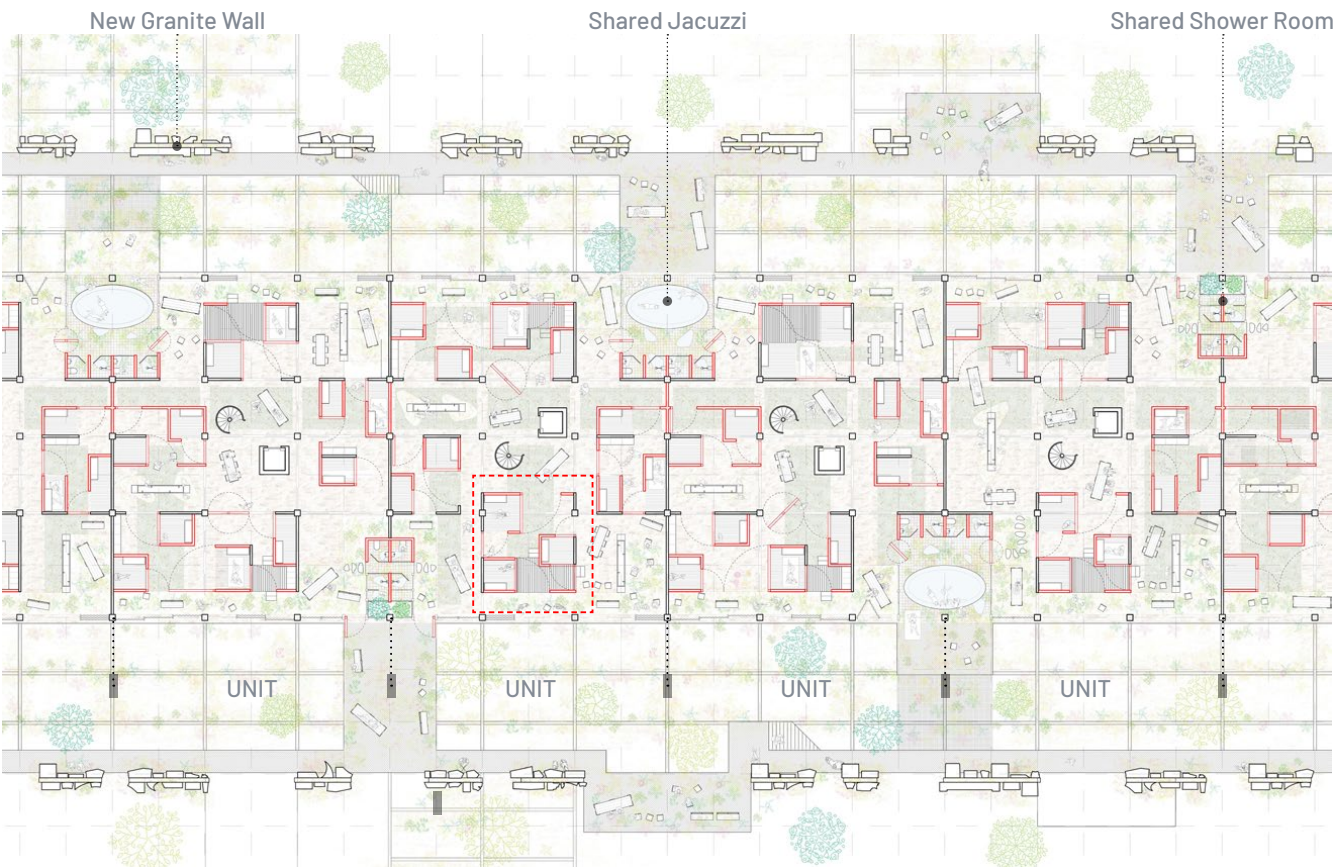
The removed granite blocks are not discarded—they are reborn as habitats for pollinators, essential agents of biodiversity. Reassembled around a central soil core, these blocks form a new wall of granite, stacked with intention and care. Within the cracks of this wall, flowers and plants emerge, creating an ecosystem for pollinators to thrive. The material porosity created by the stone and soil merges the once-detached Nuevos Ministerios back into both the city and the local ecology.

These new walls, seemingly ruins, will in time be colonized by plants and pollinators. Unlike the dry architecture of the past, they will become living ruins—structures that grow, evolve, and breathe life.

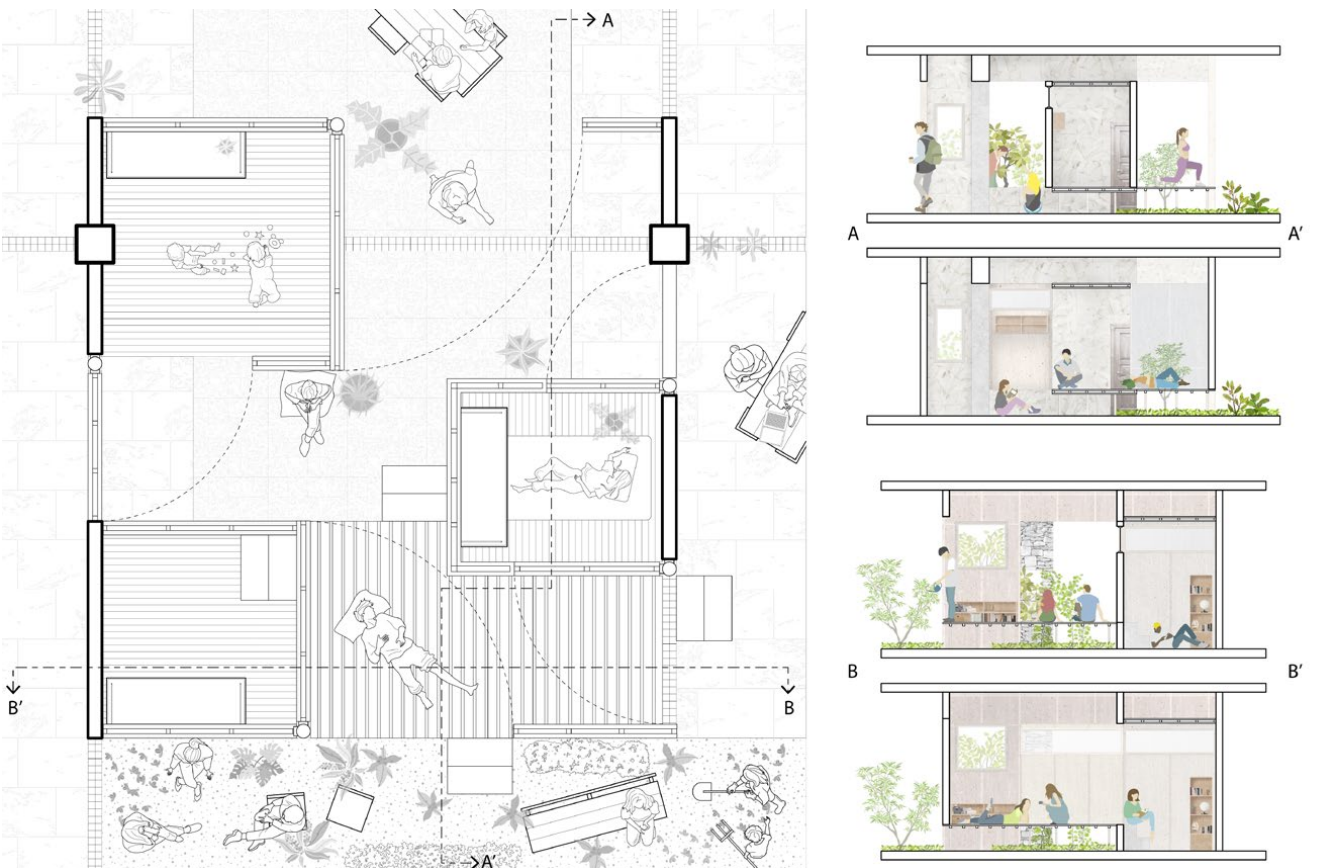
This façade will not simply be a green façade, but a façade of green—a functional ecological hub capable of revitalizing biodiversity across Madrid.



New granite walls dominating the site and the public programs within

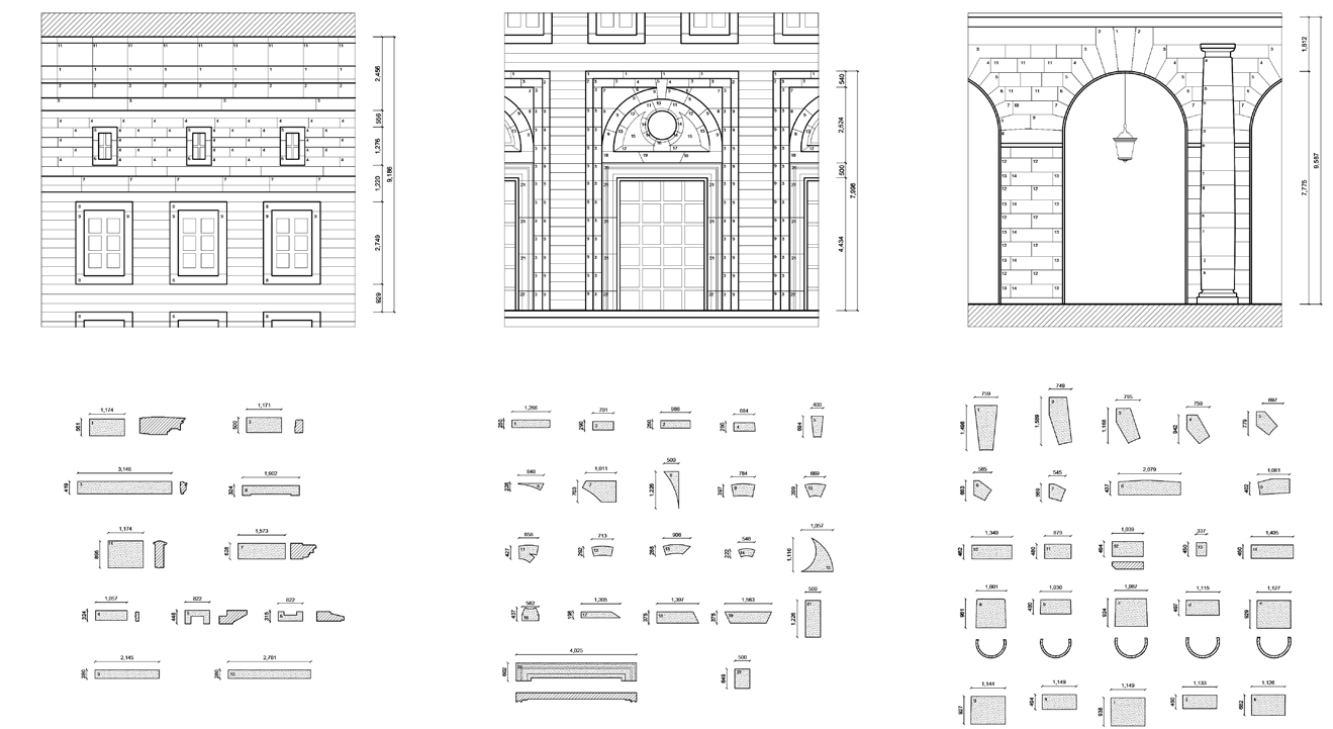


Residential units composed of movable walls and the preservation of marble floors

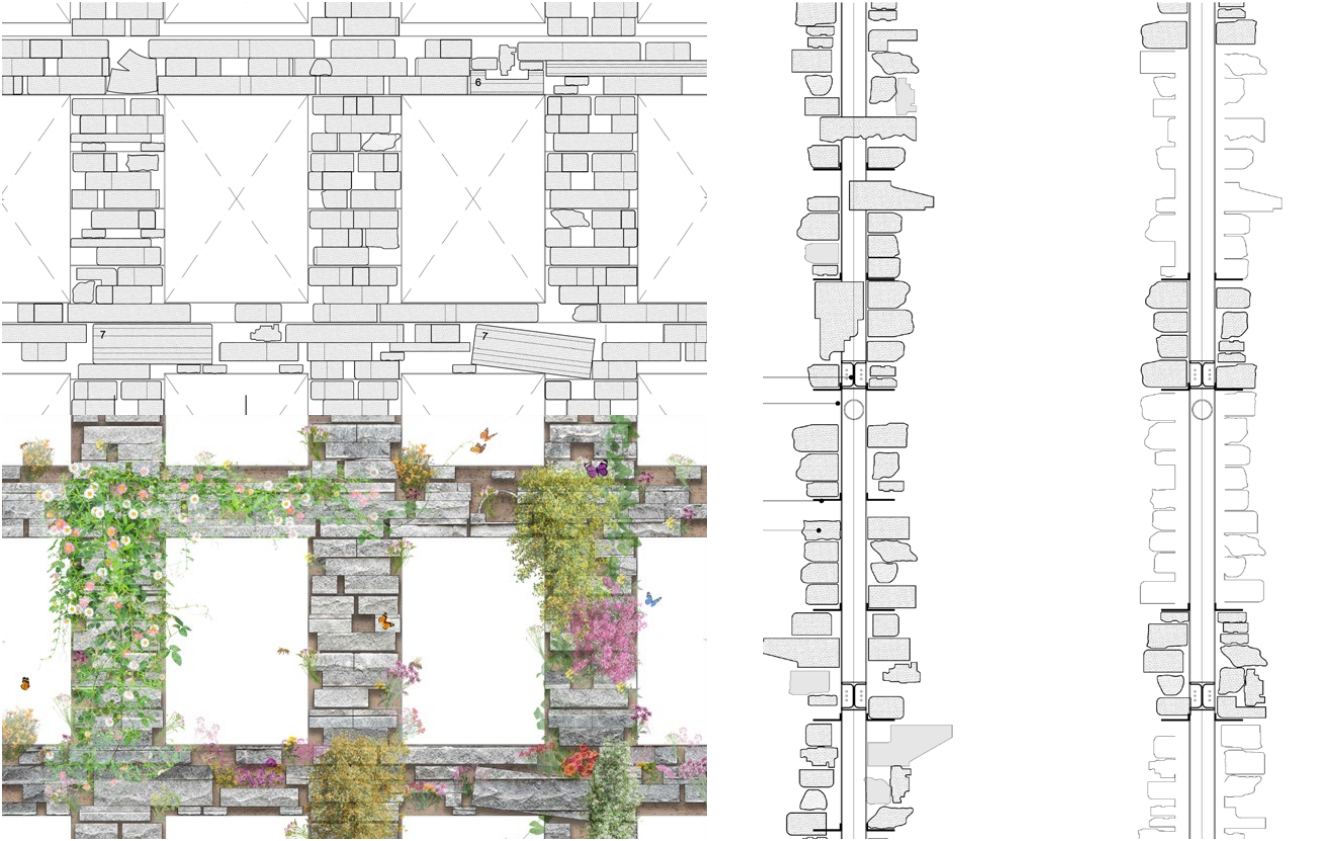


Changing the character of the residence through wall transformation

Granite façade fragment analysis and reassembly:
The foundation of a living ruin



Documentation of the shape and size of the granite fragments in the façade



Details of the new granite wall section, elevation, and its gradual colonization by plants





Experimental planting in the crevices of stone and concrete

Every Island is a Mountain

How has colonial architecture contributed to the acceleration of environmental crises?

Year: Summer 2024, Columbia University **Instructor:** Marco Ferrari & Elise Hunchuck

Project Type and Purpose: A research project on how colonial histories and Western architecture have driven environmental destruction in Mongolia and Tuvalu

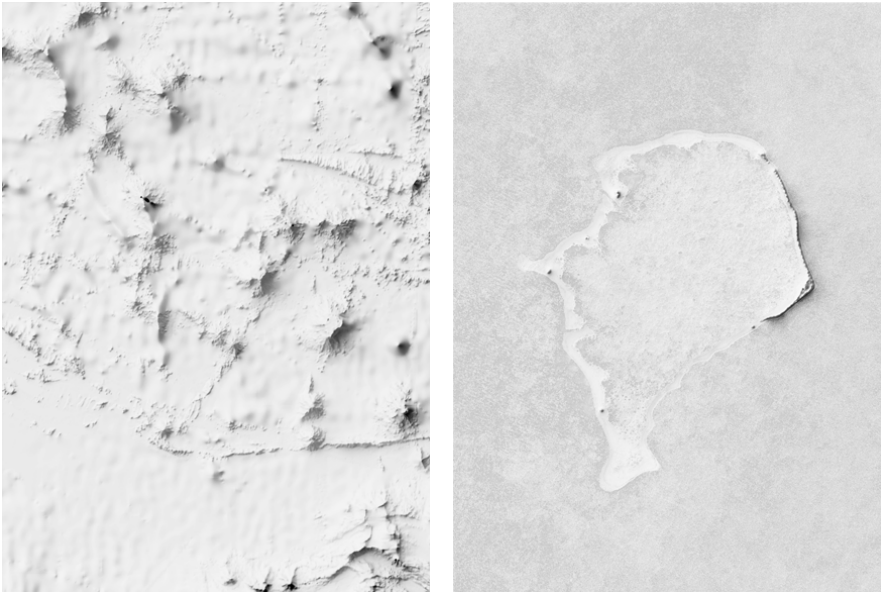
Project Location: Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia / Funafuti, Tuvalu

Keywords: Colonialism, Environmental Destruction, Introduction of Western Architecture

Final Project Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e8Z7DJYRiz0&t=2s>



Tuvalu



Tuvalu's topography at different scales

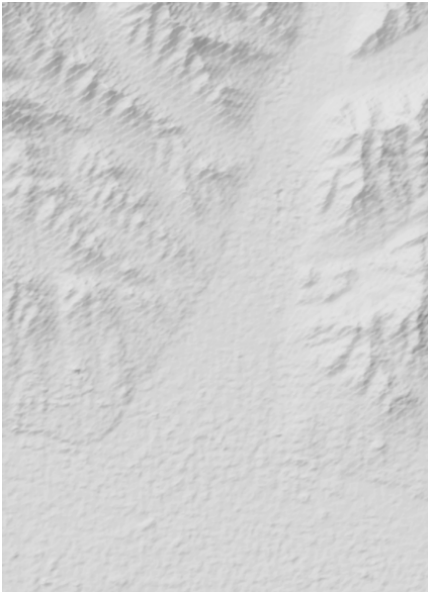
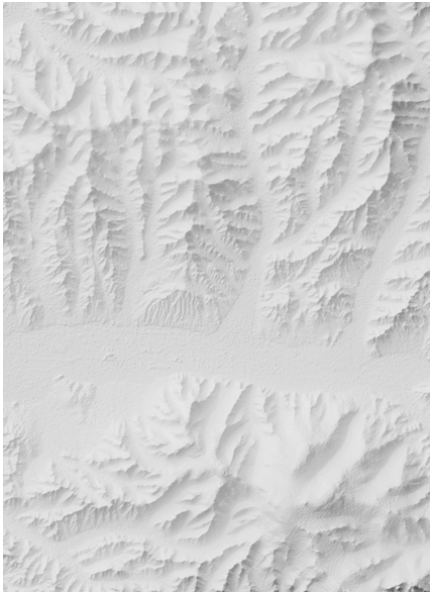
The islands of Tuvalu originally adapted to changing water levels, shifting dynamically and altering their shapes to survive. Following this natural rhythm, the indigenous people of Tuvalu also moved between islands to sustain their way of life. However, in 1916, under British colonial rule, the concept of borders was introduced, and the people of Tuvalu were forced into permanent settlements.

This drastic change in lifestyle led to the establishment of fixed housing and infrastructure, which disrupted the natural mobility of the soil. This process was further accelerated during World War II, when the U.S. military stationed in Tuvalu built numerous military bases. As a result, Tuvalu is now unable to respond to rising water levels caused by global warming, placing the nation in a state of existential crisis.

Map of sea level rise across Tuvalu's islands: darker areas indicate higher rates of sea level rise.



Mongolia

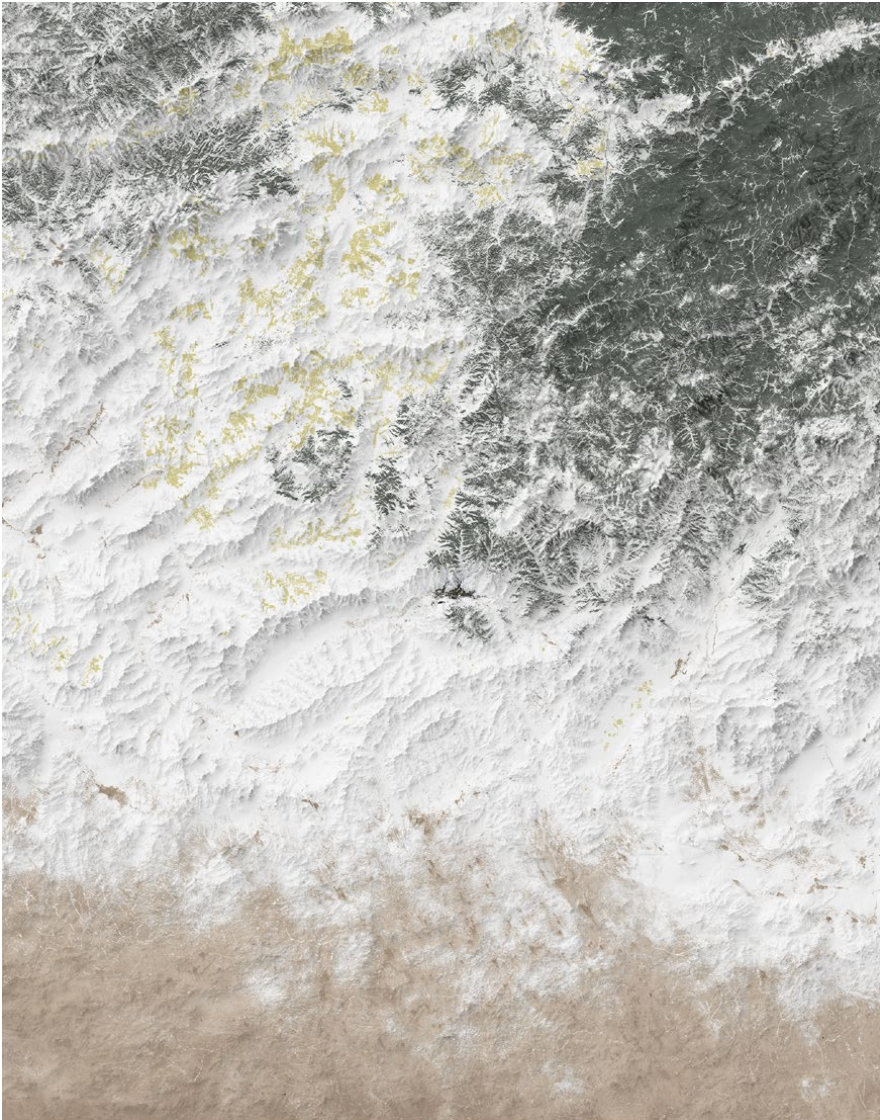


Mongolia's topography at different scales

Mongolia's naturally fragile soil shaped its people's nomadic lifestyle. They lived in portable gers, which allowed them to move freely without harming the land. However, everything changed in 1921 under Soviet colonial rule. To impose collective socialism, the Soviets forced Mongolians into permanent settlements, introduced the concept of urbanization, and confined livestock raising.

To solidify their control, the Soviets rapidly built Western-style structures and infrastructure, such as highways and railroads. These immovable developments prevented Mongolia's fragile soil from recovering, accelerating erosion and leading to landslides, floods, and droughts. The compounding effects of these issues have ultimately resulted in severe desertification across Mongolia.

1.Brown: Expanding desert areas
2.Green: Deforestation areas
3.Yellow: Expanding cropland areas

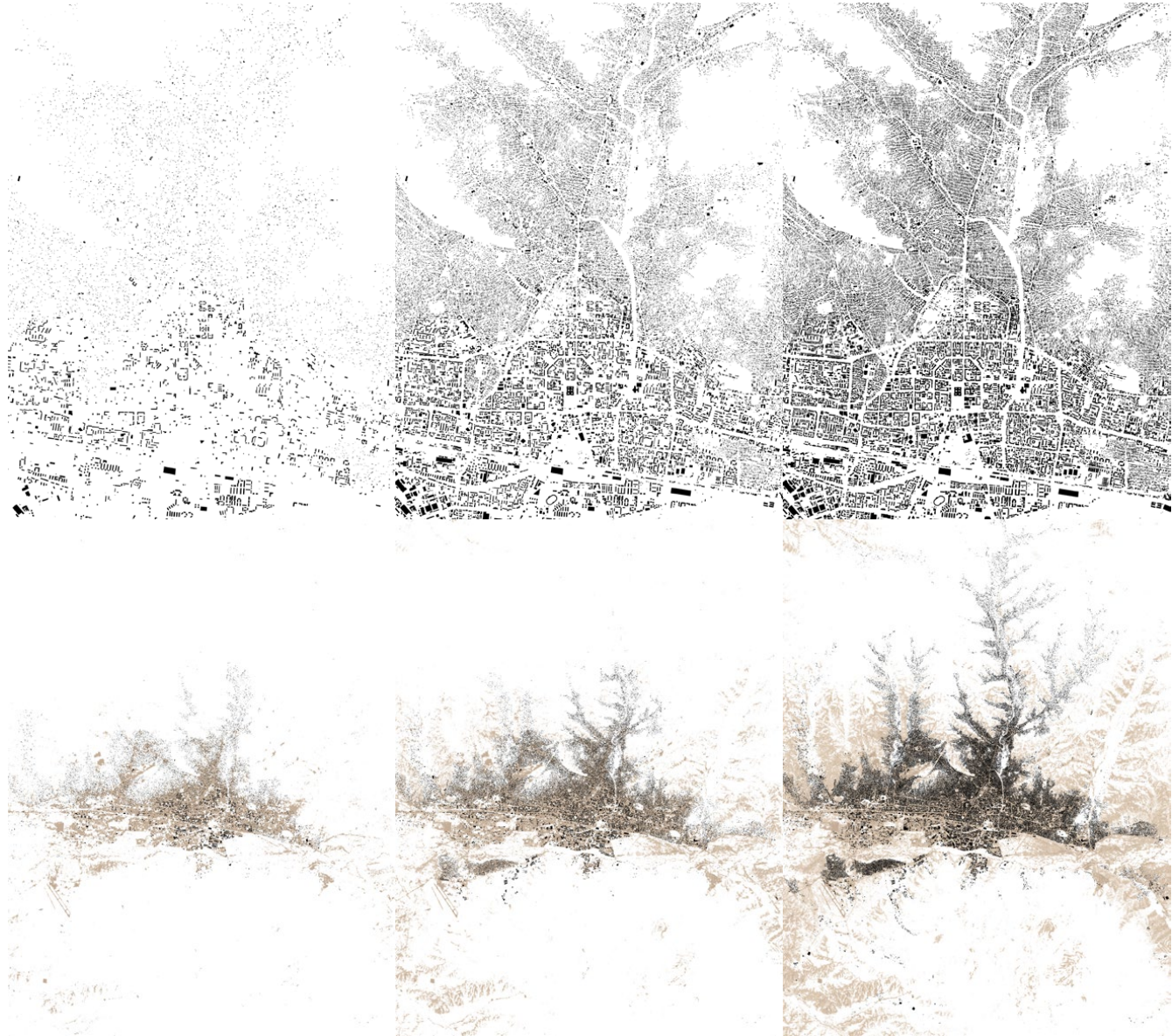


The impact of colonial architecture:
Erosion and submersion within the islands



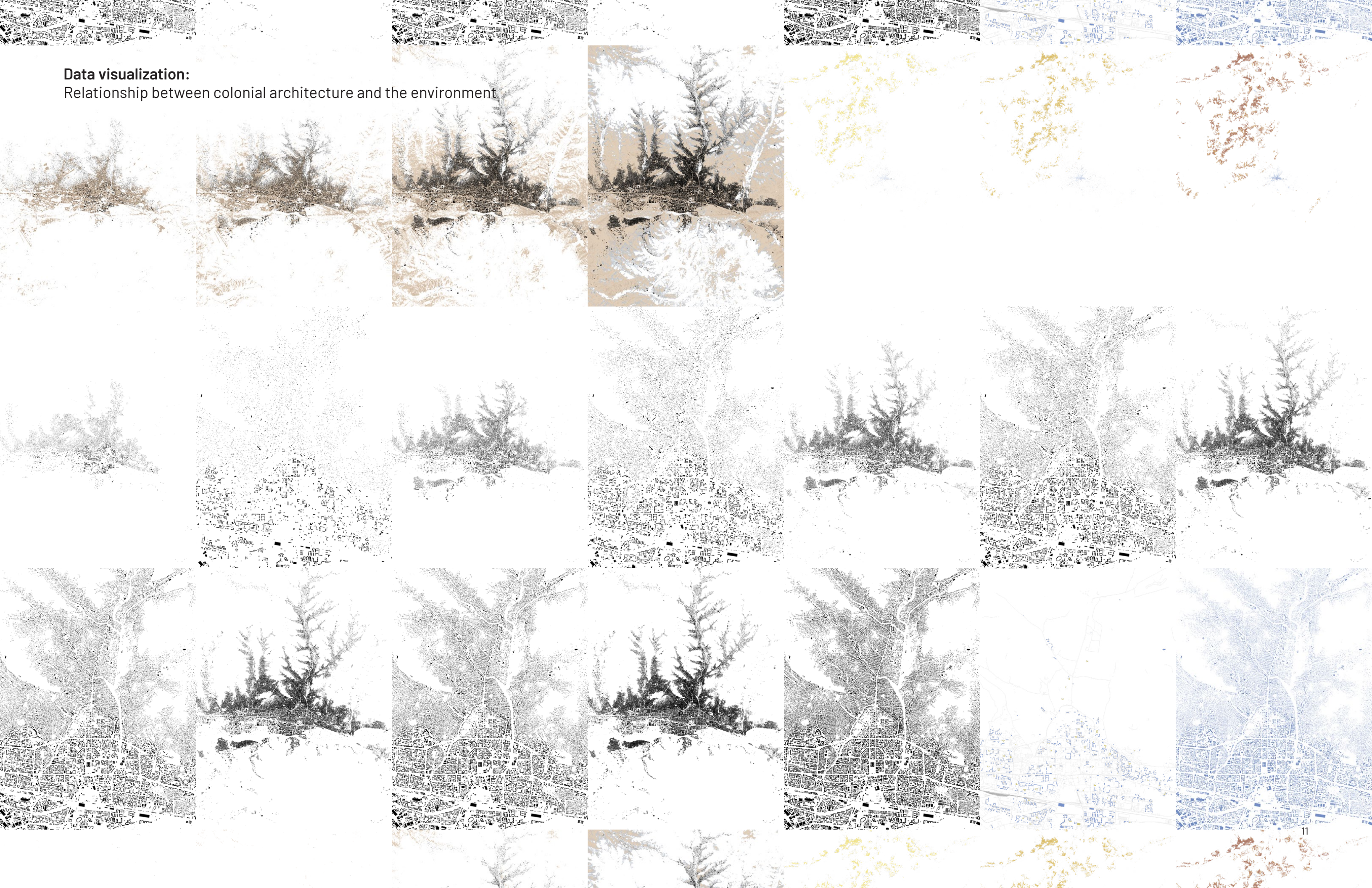
Flood-prone areas caused by modern urbanization, land reclamation, and borrow pits

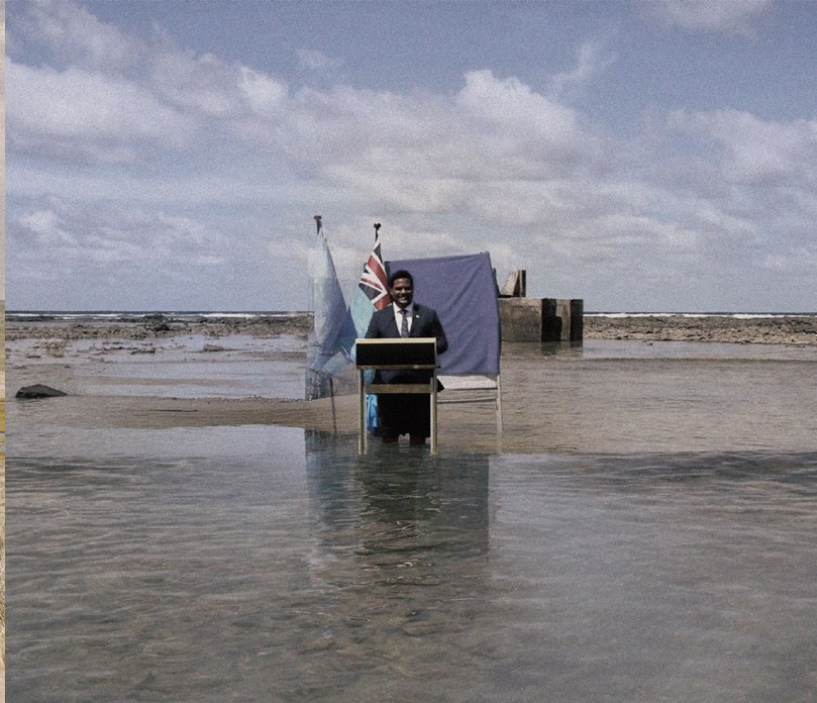
The impact of colonial architecture:
Expansion of desert areas parallel to urban growth



Detailed map of urban expansion at a small scale & corresponding large-scale map of desertification

Data visualization:
Relationship between colonial architecture and the environment





Adaptive Islands

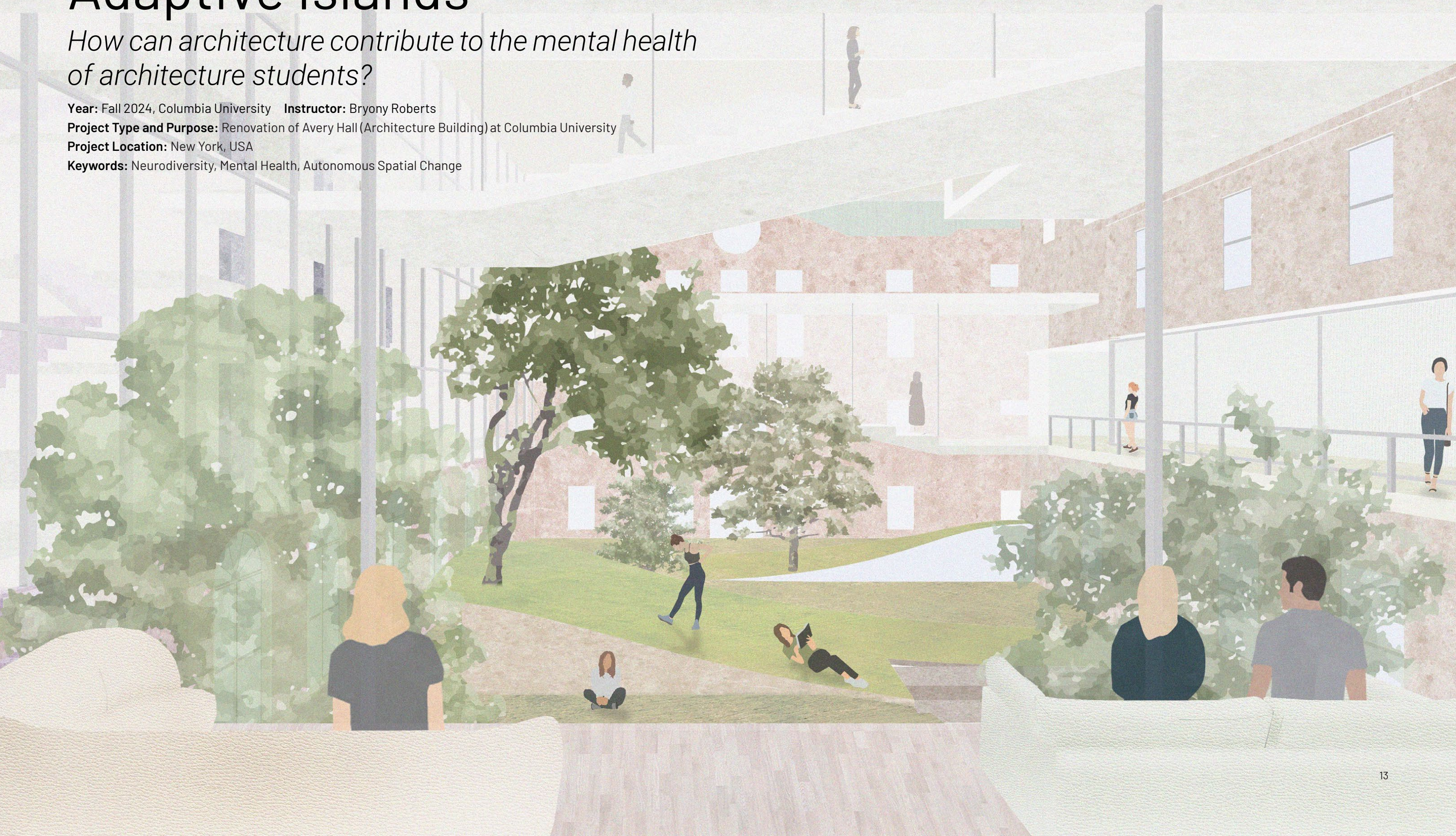
How can architecture contribute to the mental health of architecture students?

Year: Fall 2024, Columbia University **Instructor:** Bryony Roberts

Project Type and Purpose: Renovation of Avery Hall (Architecture Building) at Columbia University

Project Location: New York, USA

Keywords: Neurodiversity, Mental Health, Autonomous Spatial Change



Interior spatial strategy:
 Partition system and integration of nature

Spaces must adapt to the changing functions of the studio. A partition system allows students to adjust spaces autonomously, adding flexibility. The courtyard introduces nature, enhancing both partitioning and students' mental well-being.



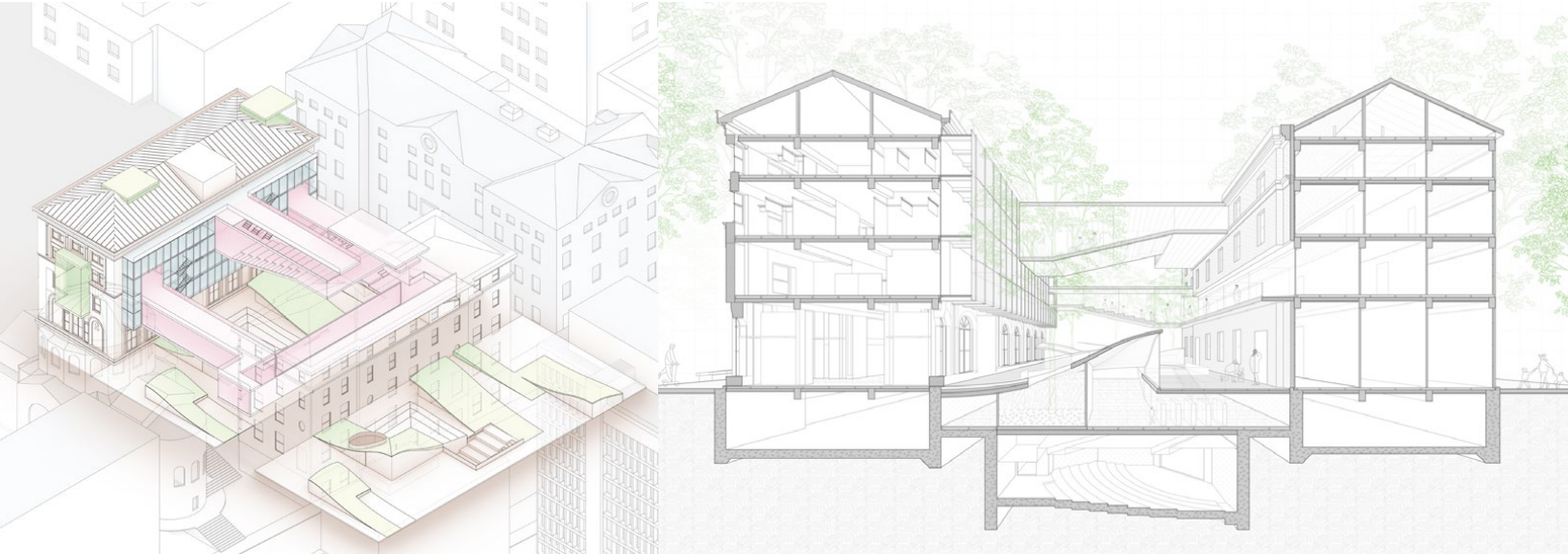
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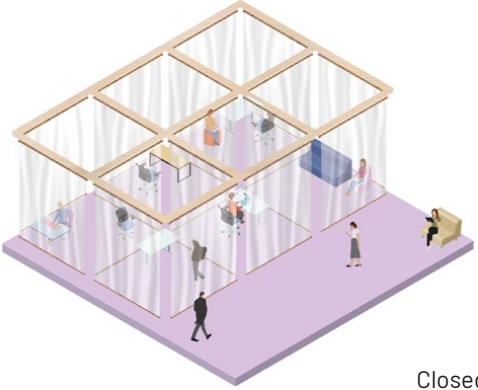
Exterior spatial strategy:
 Extension and courtyard enhancement

To reduce the density of studio space, part of Fayerweather next to Avery is repurposed for the department of architecture. An extension connects the buildings, serving as a classroom by day and a flexible studio by night. The unused courtyard between two buildings is turned into a small park, introducing nature and natural light into the library.

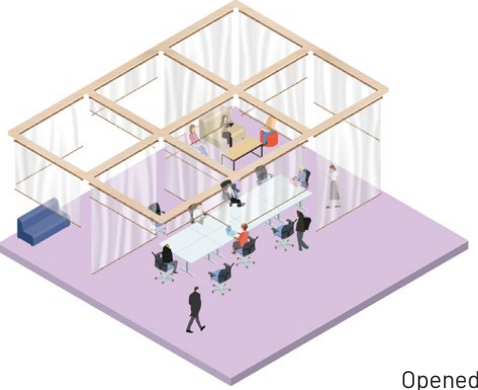


Extensions linking Avery and Fayerweather, actively integrating nature into the courtyard

Vertical Curtain

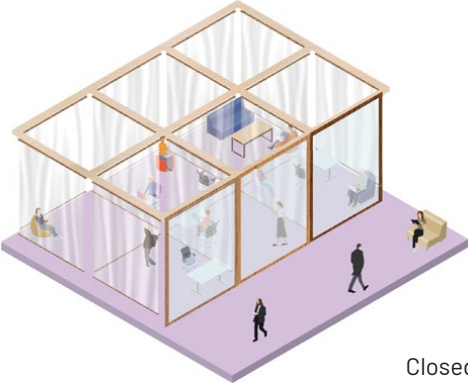


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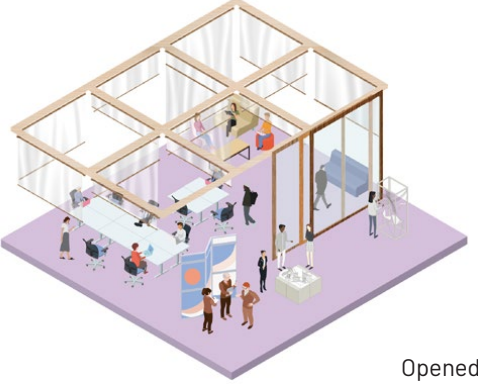


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Horizontal Sliding Door

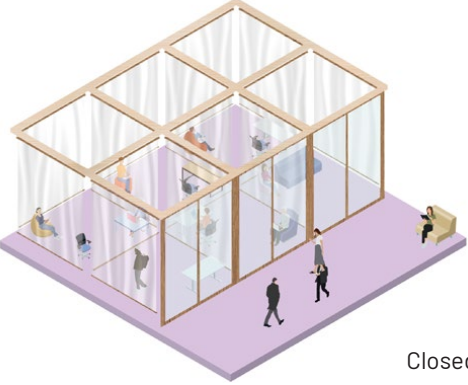


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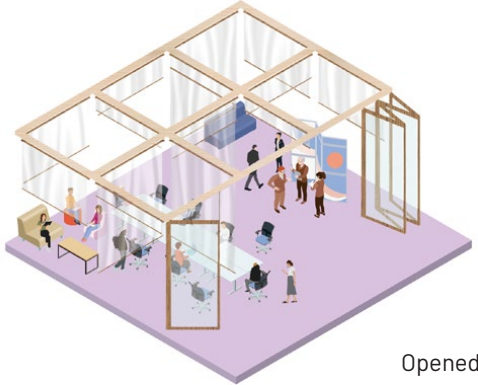


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Horizontal Folding Door



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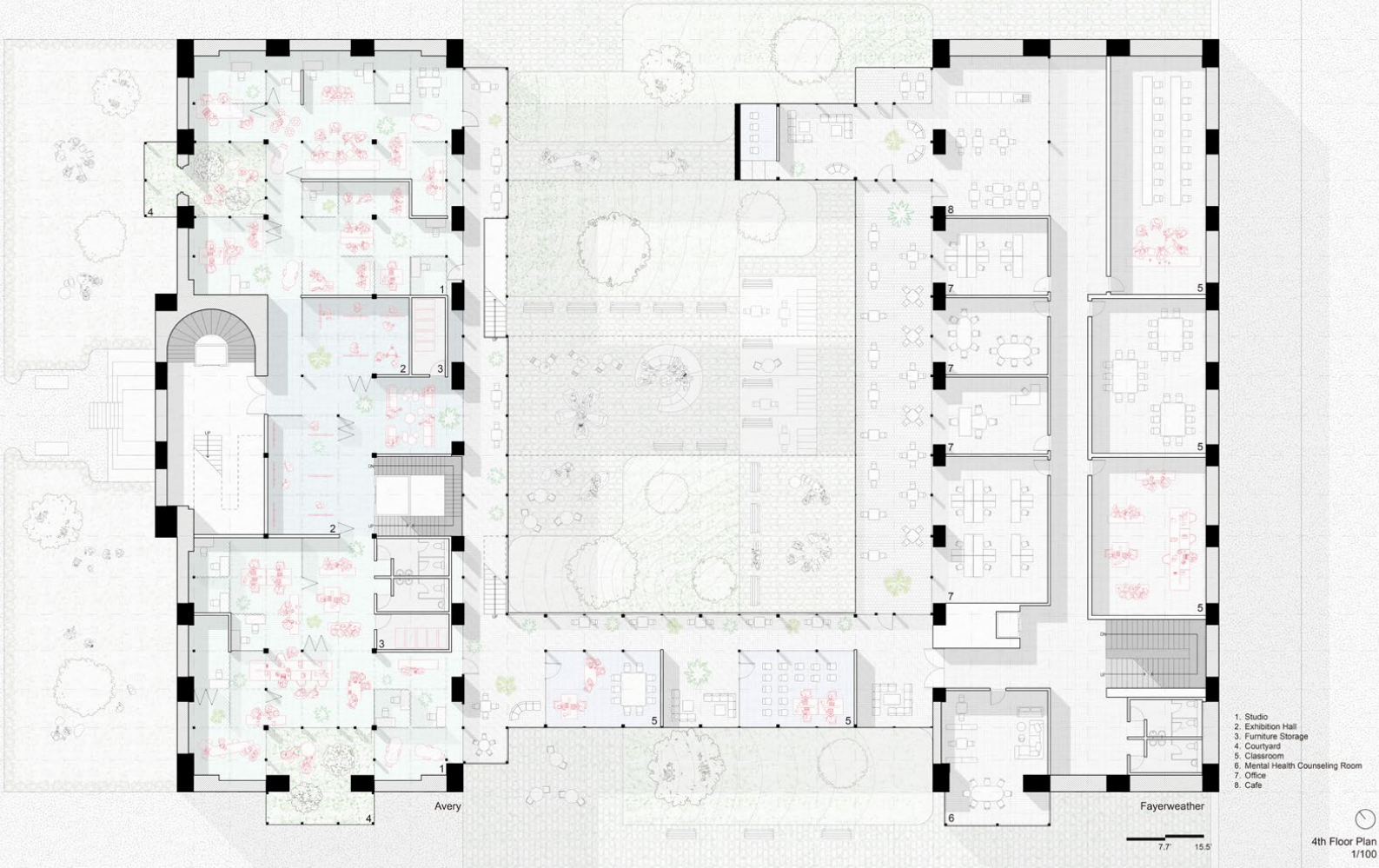
Interior Courtyard



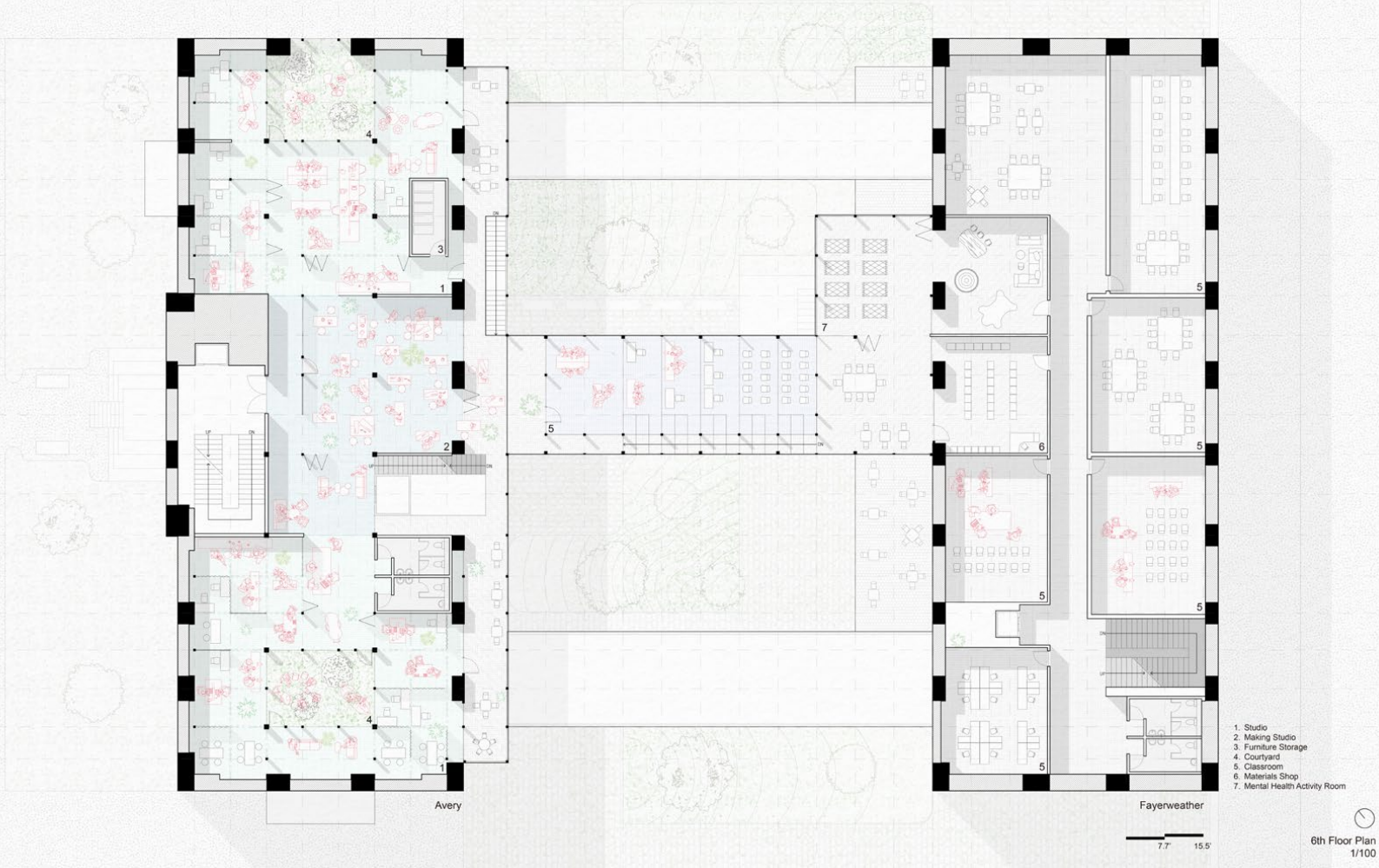
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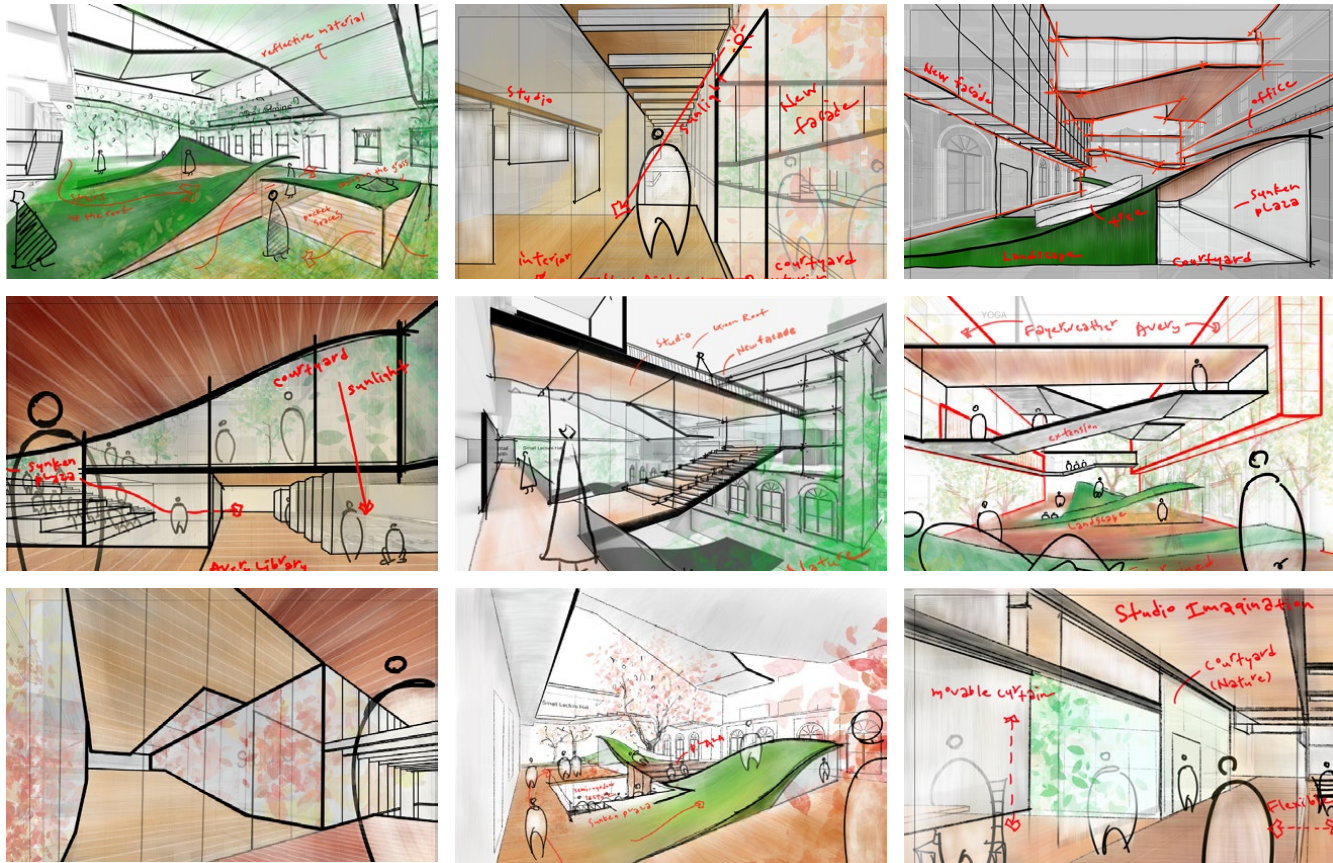
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An interior studio with partitions opened to create a spacious group activity area



A bright and spacious library enabled by the open courtyard



Design development process sketches exploring connections with nature





Re-“Making Studio”

How can we automate the smartest use of space?

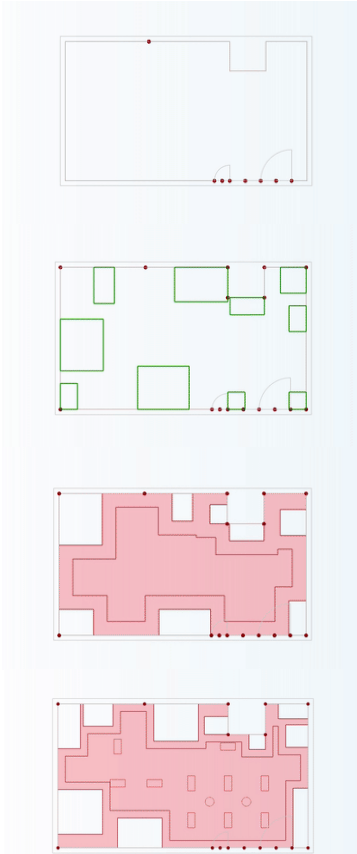
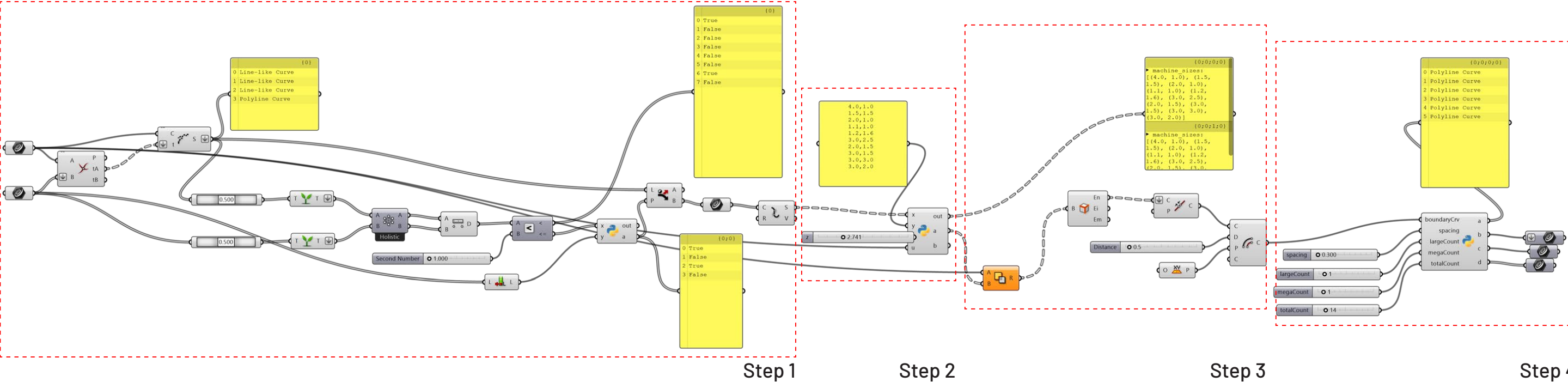
Year: Spring 2025, Columbia University Instructor: Danil Nagy

Course: Generative Design I (Visual Studies & Computation)

Project Type and Purpose: Reorganization of Making Studio Machines and Desks Using Grasshopper and Python

Final Report: <https://medium.com/@yh3788/re-making-studio-d50a47982114>

Machine and desk layout in the making studio:
Development of an automated system using grasshopper and python



Step 1: Define Usable Geometry

Input a closed boundary polyline representing the room.
Draw polylines to indicate doors, columns, and other blocked zones.
Subtract these from the main polyline to create usable wall segments.

Step 2: Place Machines

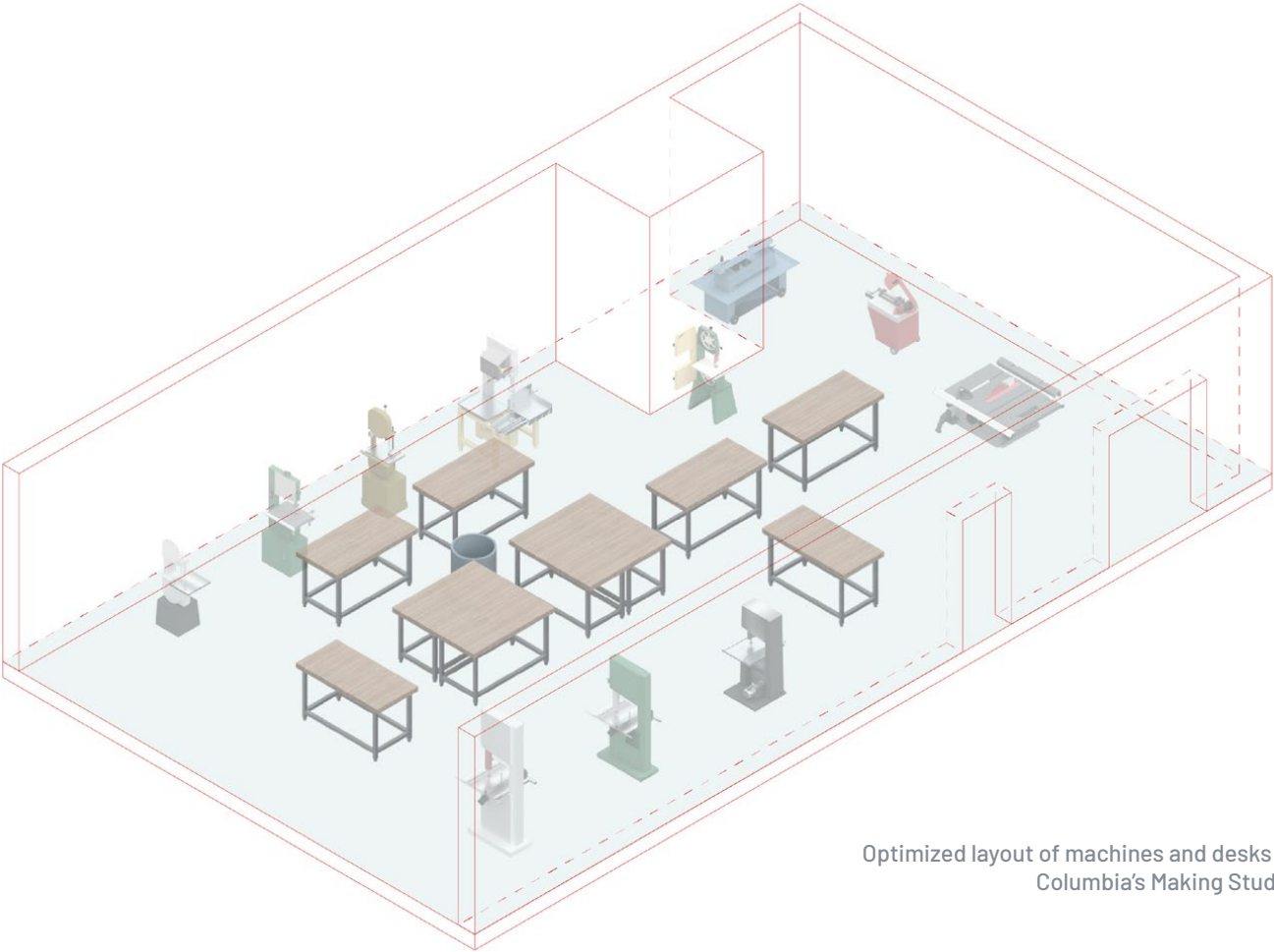
Users input machine width and depth in a panel and set safe distances via a slider.
Machines are then auto-placed along wall segments—spaced by width plus clearance—and oriented to the curve's tangent.

Step 3: Buffer Zones

The system uses user-defined buffer distances to create clearance zones.
The buffer value is controlled by a slider and used to offset the machine footprint.
These zones help ensure safe circulation around machines.

Step 4: Desk Placement

A grid of candidate points is generated in the remaining space.
Desks are placed at valid locations, avoiding buffers and walls.
The system allows clustering desks in groups of 2 (largeCount) or 4 (megaCount), and lets you set the total desk count (totalCount).



Optimized layout of machines and desks in Columbia's Making Studio

Python script for placing machines along the wall based on the input sizes in Step 2

```
import Rhino.Geometry as rg
machine_sizes = [ ]
for item in y:
    try:
        raw_text = item.Value.strip() if hasattr(item, "Value") else str(item).strip()
        for line in raw_text.splitlines():
            parts = line.strip().split(',')
            if len(parts) == 2:
                w = float(parts[0].strip())
                h = float(parts[1].strip())
                machine_sizes.append((max(w, 0.01), max(h, 0.01)))
    except Exception as e:
        print("Parsing error for", item, "❗", e)
print("": machine_sizes:"", machine_sizes)
boundary_center = u.GetBoundingBox(True).Center # u = boundary curve
def is_overlapping(poly, others):
    crv = poly.ToNurbsCurve()
    for other in others:
        res = rg.Intersect.Intersection.CurveCurve(crv, other.ToNurbsCurve(), 0.01, 0.01)
        if res and res.Count > 0:
            return True
    return False
rectangles = [ ]
machine_index = 0
for curve in x:
    if machine_index >= len(machine_sizes): break
    length = curve.GetLength()
    t_step = 1.0
    t = 0.0
    while t < length and machine_index < len(machine_sizes):
        w, h = machine_sizes[machine_index]
        spacing = w + z
        if t + w > length: break
        center_t = t + w/2
        ok, param = curve.LengthParameter(center_t)
        if not ok:
            t += t_step; continue
        pt = curve.PointAt(param)
        tangent = curve.TangentAt(param); tangent.Unitize()
        normal = rg.Vector3d.CrossProduct(tangent, rg.Vector3d.ZAxis); normal.Unitize()
        if u.Contains(pt, rg.Plane.WorldXY, 0.01) != rg.PointContainment.Inside:
            normal = -normal
        start = pt - tangent*(w/2)
        end = pt + tangent*(w/2)
        p1, p2 = start, end
        p3 = end + normal*h
        p4 = start + normal*h
        poly = rg.Polyline([p1, p2, p3, p4, p1])
        poly = rg.PolylineCurve(poly)
        if is_overlapping(poly, rectangles):
            t += t_step; continue
        rectangles.append(poly)
        machine_index += 1
        t += spacing
a = rectangles
```

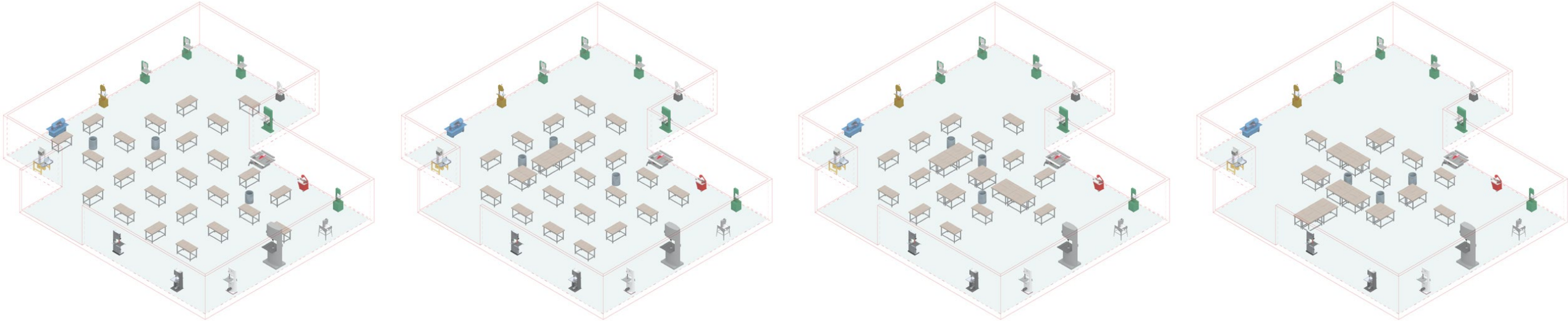
Python script for placing desks within the defined boundary in Step 4

```
import math, random
import Rhino
from Rhino.Geometry import (
    Point3d, Rectangle3d, Plane, Interval,
    Vector3d, AreaMassProperties, Circle
)
from Rhino.Geometry.Intersect import Intersection
def place_desks_and_bins(boundaryCrv, spacing, largeCount, megaCount, totalCount):
    smallW, smallL = 0.5, 1.0
    largeW, largeL = smallW*2, smallL
    megaW, megaL = smallW*2, smallL*2
    ds = math.hypot(smallW, smallL)
    dl = math.hypot(largeW, largeL)
    dm = math.hypot(megaW, megaL)
    step = max(ds, dl, dm) + spacing
    amp = AreaMassProperties.Compute(boundaryCrv)
    if not amp:
        return [ ], [ ], [ ], [ ]
    origin = amp.Centroid
    bbox = boundaryCrv.GetBoundingBox(True)
    mi = math.floor((bbox.Min.X - origin.X)/step)
    ma = math.ceil((bbox.Max.X - origin.X)/step)
    mj = math.floor((bbox.Min.Y - origin.Y)/step)
    mj2 = math.ceil((bbox.Max.Y - origin.Y)/step)
    coords = [(i,j) for i in range(mi, ma+1) for j in range(mj, mj2+1)]
    coords.sort(key=lambda ij: ij[0]**2 + ij[1]**2)
    used = set()
    singles = [ ]
    larges = [ ]
    megas = [ ]
    remL, remM = largeCount, megaCount
    cap = 0
    def inside_strict(rect):
        ts = [ 0.0,0.25,0.5,0.75 ]
        ms = [ 0.125,0.375,0.625,0.875 ]
        for t in ts+ms:
            if boundaryCrv.Contains(rect.PointAt(t)) == Rhino.Geometry.PointContainment.Outside:
                return False
        return not Intersection.CurveCurve(rect, boundaryCrv, 0.001, 0.001)
    for (i,j) in coords:
        if cap >= totalCount:
            break
        if (i,j) in used:
            continue
        P = Point3d(origin.X + i*step,
                    origin.Y + j*step,
                    origin.Z)
        c = boundaryCrv.Contains(P)
        if c not in (Rhino.Geometry.PointContainment.Inside,
                    Rhino.Geometry.PointContainment.Coincident):
            continue
        opts = [ ]
        if remM > 0 and cap+4 <= totalCount:
            opts.append(('mega', 4, megaW, megaL))
        if remL > 0 and cap+2 <= totalCount:
```

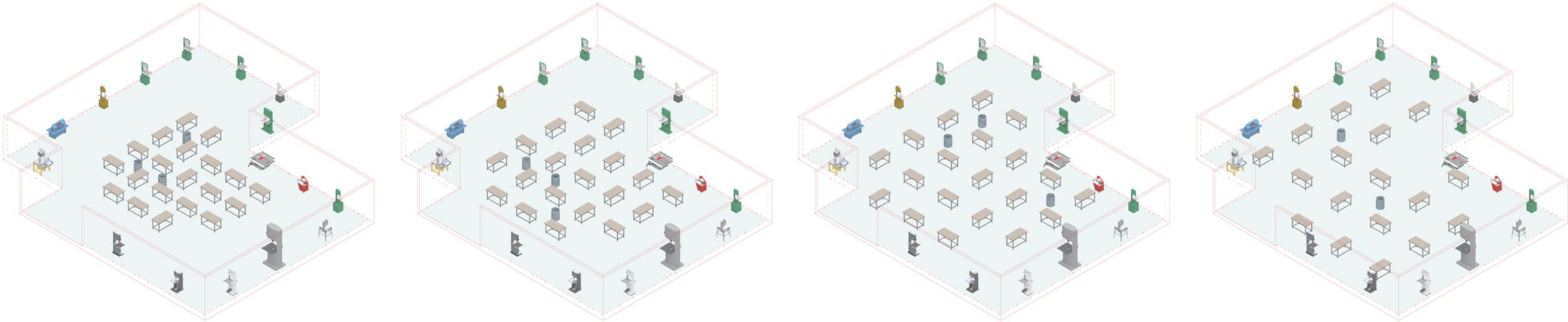
```
            opts.append(('large', 2, largeW, largeL))
        if cap+1 <= totalCount:
            opts.append(('small', 1, smallW, smallL))
        if not opts:
            break
        random.shuffle(opts)
        for typ, val, w0, l0 in opts:
            if random.random() < 0.5:
                w, l = w0, l0
            else:
                w, l = l0, w0
            R = Rectangle3d(
                Plane(P, Vector3d.XAxis, Vector3d.YAxis),
                Interval(-w/2, w/2),
                Interval(-l/2, l/2)
            ).ToNurbsCurve()
            if not inside_strict(R):
                continue
            if typ == 'mega':
                megas.append(R)
                remM -= 1
            elif typ == 'large':
                larges.append(R)
                remL -= 1
            else:
                singles.append(R)
                used.add((i,j))
                cap += val
            break
        holes = [ ]
        for (i,j) in used:
            if ((i+1,j) in used and
                (i,j+1) in used and
                (i+1,j+1) in used):
                holes.append(Point3d(
                    origin.X + (i+0.5)*step,
                    origin.Y + (j+0.5)*step,
                    origin.Z
                ))
        totalDesks = len(singles)*1 + len(larges)*2 + len(megas)*4
        binCount = 0 if totalDesks == 0 else totalDesks//10 + 1
        bins = [ ]
        if holes:
            for c in random.sample(holes, min(binCount, len(holes))):
                bins.append(
                    Circle(Plane(c, Vector3d.XAxis, Vector3d.YAxis), 0.3)
                    .ToNurbsCurve()
                )
        return singles, larges, megas, bins
s, l, m, bins = place_desks_and_bins(
    boundaryCrv, spacing, largeCount, megaCount, totalCount
)
a = s
b = l
c = m
d = bins
```


Universal system:
Applied to the making studio at the University of Buffalo

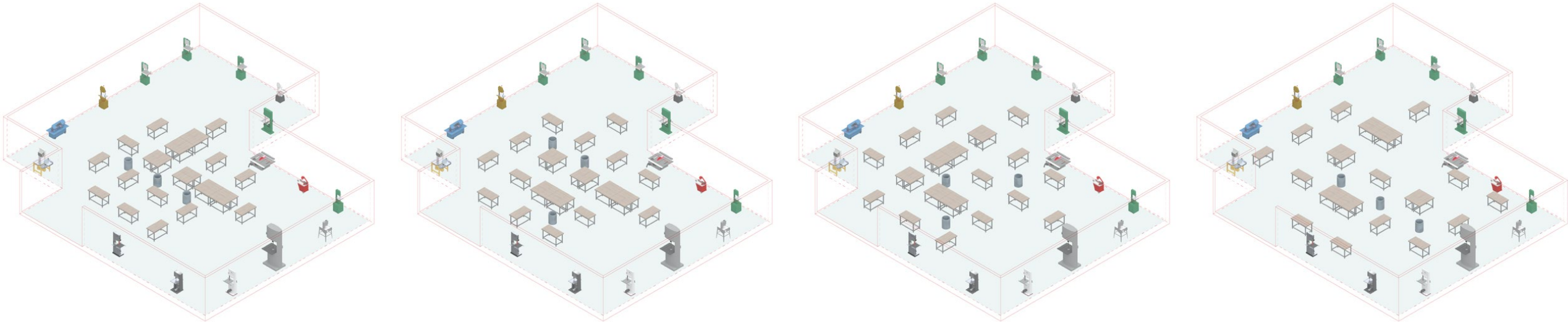
Arrangement based on the
number of desk clusters

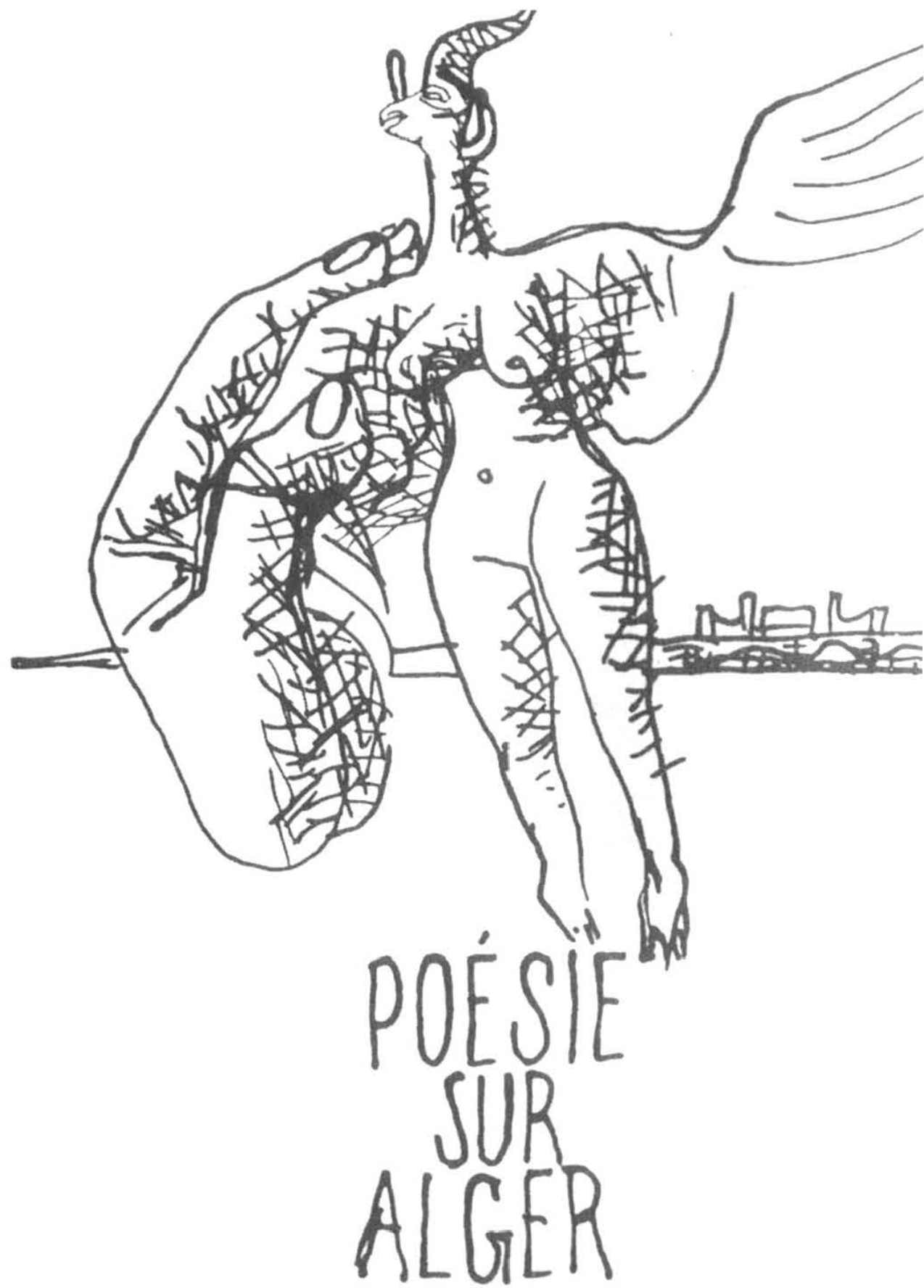


Arrangement based on the
distance between desks



Arrangement based on both
desk spacing and cluster count





Junhyuk Kim

GSAPP | Critical Writings on Architecture

2024-2025

Year: Fall 2024 **Instructor:** Mark Wigley
Course: The History of Architectural Theory
Title: How the Theory Works: Focusing on “Field Trip: A Memoir,” Rem Koolhaas

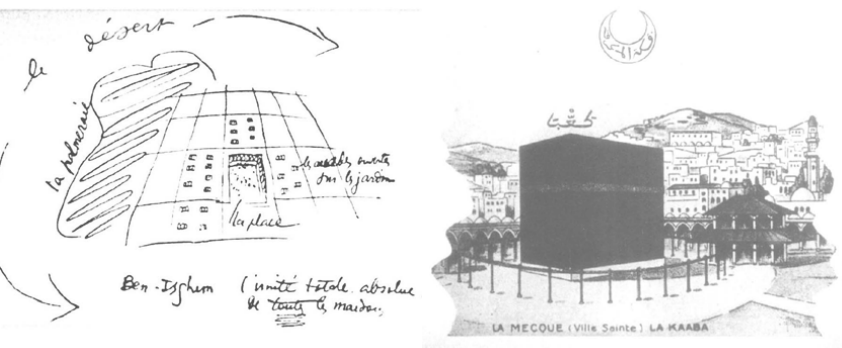
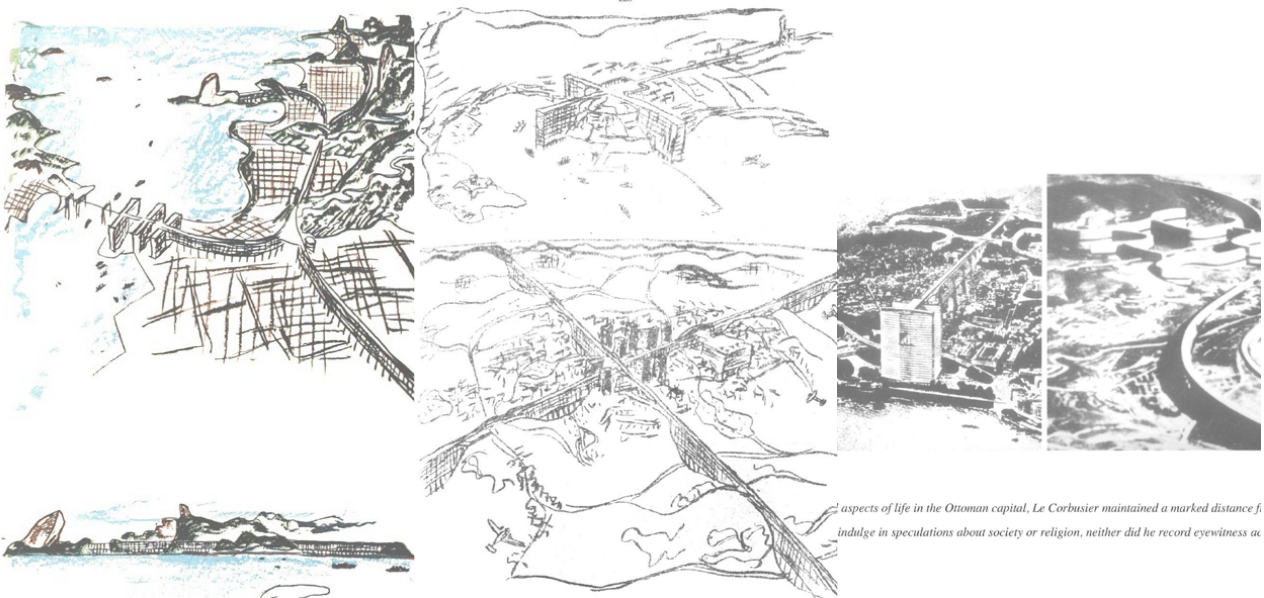
How the Theory Works: Focusing on <i>Field Trip: A Memoir</i>, Rem Koolhaas Junhyuk Kim, Mark Wigley	Summary of <i>Field Trip: A(A) MEMOIR (First and Last...)</i> Koolhaas arrived in Berlin in 1971, ten years after the construction of the Berlin Wall. His initial goal was to document the Berlin Wall as a piece of architecture. While not a conventional, inhabitable structure, the Wall, he presumed, wielded an influence so powerful that it could be recognized as architecture. However, when he encountered the Wall, he discovered that it was not a structure that could be easily categorized as architecture. Instead, it was a simple, majestic divide between North and South—a clear, philosophical demarcation, neat and modern, akin to a Wailing Wall. His focus was on the Wall's form itself, anticipating a structure that would assert its presence unambiguously. He presumed that the Wall's function was to create a void, a space that was not simply empty but a space that was defined by its boundaries. He argued that the void is not simply an empty space but a spatial condition imbued with political decisions and social processes. The void, in this sense, is not a static state but a dynamic process, one that evolves over time and is shaped by the material and social conditions of the city. The void is not a passive space but an active one, one that is constantly being redefined and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. The void is not a void at all, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The void is not a void, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. However, upon arriving in Berlin and seeing the Wall firsthand, his expectations were completely shattered. Rather than imagining the Wall as a structure that would assert its presence unambiguously, he found it to be a simple, majestic divide between North and South—a clear, philosophical demarcation, neat and modern, akin to a Wailing Wall. His focus was on the Wall's form itself, anticipating a structure that would assert its presence unambiguously. He presumed that the Wall's function was to create a void, a space that was not simply empty but a space that was defined by its boundaries. He argued that the void is not simply an empty space but a spatial condition imbued with political decisions and social processes. The void, in this sense, is not a static state but a dynamic process, one that evolves over time and is shaped by the material and social conditions of the city. The void is not a passive space but an active one, one that is constantly being redefined and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. The void is not a void at all, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The void is not a void, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Unlike what he had imagined, the Berlin Wall was not a single structure; it consisted of multiple layers. The first stage of the Wall was not merely a physical barrier of concrete bricks, barbed wire, or soldiers—it was fundamentally a decision. This decision was the primitive foundation and essential premise of the Berlin Wall. Without it, the Wall held no meaning.	meaning. Its essence lay not in its physicality but in the invisible significance imparted by this decision. This decision translated immediately into architectural minimalism: concrete blocks, buildings with windows and doors bricked up, and even trees became imbued with new meaning. Once this decision was applied, these otherwise unremarkable elements instantly began to function as the Berlin Wall. Initially, the Wall was a simple, majestic divide between North and South—a clear, philosophical demarcation, neat and modern, akin to a Wailing Wall. His focus was on the Wall's form itself, anticipating a structure that would assert its presence unambiguously. He presumed that the Wall's function was to create a void, a space that was not simply empty but a space that was defined by its boundaries. He argued that the void is not simply an empty space but a spatial condition imbued with political decisions and social processes. The void, in this sense, is not a static state but a dynamic process, one that evolves over time and is shaped by the material and social conditions of the city. 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It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Here, it was confrontational and consciously symbolic, projecting an uncompromising stance. In contrast, in less significant or forgotten regions, the Wall exhibited different characteristics. Its construction became more relaxed, blending into daily life with a banal appearance. The Wall deliberately ranged from overtly political and symbolic forms to those that seamlessly integrated into everyday contexts. Over time, the Wall generated various adjunct structures and paraphernalia, giving the impression that it was gradually being absorbed into the city.	In West Germany, observation platforms were constructed, allowing tourists to get as close to the Wall as possible. On the East German side, parts of the Wall eroded over time, transforming into tourist attractions that highlighted its temporal nature. Koolhaas described this evolving Berlin Wall as <i>heartbreakingly beautiful</i>. Depending on its urban context, the Wall's meanings, spectacles, interpretations, and realities varied. To Koolhaas, the Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Paradoxically, the division, enclosure (i.e., imprisonment and exclusion) created by the Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. The Persuasive Strategies and Effectiveness of the Memoir The text <i>Field Trip: A Memoir</i> naturally introduces the theory of the void, derived from Koolhaas's experience of the Berlin Wall. The most notable aspect of this text, as indicated by its title, is its form as a memoir. Although it was written in 1993, decades after his visit to the Berlin Wall in 1971, the text recounts his memories of that trip. By combining personal narrative with theoretical insight, this memoir demonstrates how a reflective, first-person format can function as a theoretical text. It goes beyond merely describing an experience, using it as a foundation to redefine the essence of architecture and the possibilities of space.	Such details effectively convey the Wall's complex and paradoxical meanings, allowing readers to vividly imagine the Wall's surroundings and join Koolhaas on his journey. Koolhaas also employs questions to advance his arguments. These questions invite readers to critically reflect on the text rather than passively consume it. For example, when he asks, “<i>Wire not division, enclosure, and exclusion the essential stratagems of any architecture?</i>” he directly references the key elements of division, enclosure, and exclusion as central to the Berlin Wall. By posing such questions, Koolhaas exposes the dramatic shift in his understanding of architecture, challenging the reader to consider whether this new perspective applies universally to architecture itself. Furthermore, the text's philosophical and abstract language engages the reader's curiosity and reinforces the theoretical core. For example, Koolhaas describes the Wall as “<i>an erasure, a freshly created absence</i>,” a paradoxical statement that underscores the theory's central argument. Such linguistic strategies compel readers to rethink the meaning of architecture and space. Similarly, his description of the Wall as “<i>the transgression to end all transgressions</i>” introduces a powerful irony that shifts the reader's perception of the Wall's essence. In statements like “<i>absence would always win in a contest with presence</i>,” Koolhaas emphasizes the void's paradoxical power to surpass physical existence, driving home the significance of absence as a spatial and architectural force. Thus, the memoir form enables readers to engage with the text not just analytically but experientially. Koolhaas's abstract, ironic, and paradoxical language highlights key points and guides readers to grasp the core of his argument. By allowing readers to indirectly share in Koolhaas's experience, the text offers a unique methodology for achieving architectural insight and understanding the void as a critical spatial concept.	Furthermore, the use of philosophical and abstract language to narrate the experience captivates the reader's interest. A prime example is the description of the Wall as “<i>an erasure, a freshly created absence</i>,” a paradoxical statement that underscores the theory's central claim: the act of creating absence. This linguistic strategy compels readers to rethink the meaning of architecture and space. Similarly, when Koolhaas describes the Berlin Wall as “<i>the transgression to end all transgressions</i>,” he uses extreme and paradoxical language to express its essence, employing a strong sense of irony to provoke a shift in the reader's perception. His writing often features powerful paradoxes. For instance, in the line “<i>absence would always win in a contest with presence</i>,” Koolhaas highlights the concept of absence triumphing over presence, reinforcing the void's potency as an architectural force. The memoir format, therefore, allows readers to engage with the text not merely as an analytical exercise but as an experiential journey alongside Koolhaas. The abstract, ironic, and paradoxical sentences within the text guide readers to intuitively follow Koolhaas's experience while effectively pinpointing his theoretical argument. Readers can easily identify the moments of significance and gain a clear understanding of Koolhaas's central claims. This unique methodological approach enables readers to indirectly share in Koolhaas's journey, providing a sensory and reflective path toward architectural insight and an understanding of the void as a critical spatial concept. How does this theory work? What is the context? At the time marking the tenth anniversary of the Berlin Wall's construction, shortly after Berlin's division, the Wall stood as the most emblematic symbol of Cold War Germany. This context encouraged a perspective that went beyond seeing the Wall as a mere	
physical structure, instead focusing on its political and ideological dimensions, as well as the various activities occurring around it. What is the intended audience? This text, which recounts and analyzes Koolhaas's experience of the Berlin Wall, primarily targets architecture students of the time. The inclusion of reactions from students at the AA School, following Koolhaas's presentation, underscores that the theory's initial audience was students. This highlights Koolhaas's intent to share his architectural experience and present a new perspective on architecture. What is the mission or strategic role of the theory? The core of this theory lies not only in introducing the concept of the void but also in shifting the way architecture is viewed. It challenges the architectural perspective of the time, which was confined to physical dimensions, and encourages an exploration of architecture's power independent of form. Furthermore, it critiques the idealized potential for liberation often associated with architecture, proposing instead that division, enclosure, and exclusion are intrinsic architectural strategies. Koolhaas seeks to persuade readers that architecture's efficiency does not solely lie in connecting people or creating beautiful spaces but can also produce tragic and paradoxical consequences. What identifies it as “theory”? & What argument is made and in what way? While Koolhaas's text appears, on the surface, to take the form of a memoir, it transcends personal narrative and evolves into architectural theory. The text is clearly divided into two major sections. The first section contrasts Koolhaas's expectations of the Berlin Wall with his actual experience, detailing his personal observations. In the second section, titled <i>Reverse Epiphanies</i>, these observations are distilled into five structured arguments. This two-part framework elevates the text beyond memoir, establishing it as a work of architectural theory.	1. The Power and Negative Consequences of the Wall Through the Berlin Wall, Koolhaas highlights the immense power of architecture and its inevitable negative consequences—division, enclosure, and exclusion. He acknowledges these outcomes as intrinsic attributes of architecture, exposing the utopian ideals of liberation championed by 1960s architecture as mere rhetoric. The Wall creates separation, yet paradoxically demonstrates the fundamental efficiency of architecture through this very division. 2. The Proportion Between Horror and Beauty The Berlin Wall reveals that the beauty of architecture is proportional to its ability to evoke horror. Koolhaas describes the gradual evolution of a simple line on a map into soldiers, barbed wire, and concrete blocks, framing this transformation as an architectural inevitability. He argues that the progressive development of the Wall transcends its role as a mere boundary, carrying a deeper significance. 3. The Disconnection Between Form and Meaning Koolhaas observes that the Berlin Wall severs the traditional relationship between form and meaning. The Wall operates independently of its physical form, demonstrating that even the simplest shapes can hold immense significance. This insight redefines the role of form in architecture, emphasizing that architectural meaning need not rely on form itself. 4. The Power of Absence The Wall proves that absence can function more powerfully and flexibly than physical presence. This disrupts the traditional connection between importance and mass in architecture, underscoring the architectural force and potential of the void. Koolhaas argues that absence is not merely emptiness but rather a primary force that organizes and reconstructs space.	5. The Coexistence of Chaos and Order The Berlin Wall transforms from an absolute and orderly state into an amorphous and chaotic one. It demonstrates that architecture can exist in a state of chaos and order, and that the Wall's function is to create a void, a space that is not simply empty but a space that is defined by its boundaries. The Wall is not a wall, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The Wall is not a wall, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Simultaneously, images of citizens exchanging items through barbed wire, people holding hands from across the wall, and children drawing on the Wall further complicate the narrative, suggesting that the Wall's function is not simply to divide but to create a new meaning. The Wall is not a wall, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The Wall is not a wall, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. What does the theory take for granted? & What does it not? cannot be taken for granted. The theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Through the case of the Berlin Wall, Koolhaas underscores the inseparability of architecture and politics, emphasizing that architecture holds no meaning without its political context. What is the role of images? In his text on the Berlin Wall, Rem Koolhaas uses a variety of images to visually support his theory and make it more compelling to readers. These images go beyond the Wall's physical form, highlighting the activities and meanings surrounding it, thereby emphasizing the Wall's complex characteristics. Koolhaas uses photographs of buildings with windows and doors bricked up, illustrating the Wall's impact on the urban environment. He also includes images of citizens exchanging items through barbed wire, people holding hands from across the wall, and children drawing on the Wall. These images further complicate the narrative, suggesting that the Wall's function is not simply to divide but to create a new meaning. The Wall is not a wall, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. 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The Wall is not a wall, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Furthermore, Koolhaas incorporates photos of West German observation platforms that allowed tourists to get as close to the Wall as possible. On the East German side, parts of the Wall eroded over time, transforming into tourist attractions that highlighted its temporal nature. Koolhaas described this evolving Berlin Wall as <i>heartbreakingly beautiful</i>. Depending on its urban context, the Wall's meanings, spectacles, interpretations, and realities varied. To Koolhaas, the Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. This architectural theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. The Theory Is Neither an Experiment Nor an Invention This theory was not proposed through advanced experiments or substantial capital investments. Nor was it created by discovering unprecedented elements. Instead, Koolhaas simply viewed the Berlin Wall—a structure accessible to everyone—from a	completely different perspective than others. Despite this simplicity, his theory is profoundly persuasive, grounded in his unique experiences and memories. His attempt to transcend conventional architectural theory and to see architecture as not about imagining or creating a new form but about understanding the existing one is a powerful statement. The void theory proposed by Koolhaas is strikingly straightforward. Our societies and cities are already filled with architectural phenomena that defy expectations. Architectural theory, therefore, focused not on the physical appearance of the Wall but on the political forces that shaped it. The Berlin Wall was an architectural phenomenon that fundamentally responded to the political and social conditions of the time. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. There was no architectural experiment or invention. The political and social conditions of the time created the Wall, and Koolhaas's theory was a response to it. In this sense, the theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. This architectural theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The theory is not a theory, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. The void theory proposed by Koolhaas is strikingly straightforward. 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He argues that the void is not a void, but a space that is full of meaning and potential. It is a space that is constantly being created and recreated, a space that is always in the process of becoming. The void is not a void, but a space that is full of life and energy, a space that is constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Without examining the Wall's essential nature and instead focusing solely on its supposed potential for liberation, one cannot grasp its true significance. For the next ten years, the role played by the Berlin Wall in the chaotic and uncertain landscape of post-war Germany was not fully understood. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. Koolhaas had no need to experiment further. The void was already functioning in Berlin as a spatial and architectural force. The void was not a void, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The void was not a void, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society. The void theory proposed by Koolhaas is strikingly straightforward. Our societies and cities are already filled with architectural phenomena that defy expectations. Architectural theory, therefore, focused not on the physical appearance of the Wall but on the political forces that shaped it. The Berlin Wall was an architectural phenomenon that fundamentally responded to the political and social conditions of the time. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of meaning and potential. It was a space that was constantly being created and recreated, a space that was always in the process of becoming. The Wall was not a wall, but a space that was full of life and energy, a space that was constantly being shaped and reshaped by the forces of architecture and society.	For Koolhaas, the Berlin Wall was not a structure designed with architectural intent but a product of political and ideological conflict. Its material characteristics—its size, shape, and location—were dictated by political decisions, which granted the Wall a sense of purity. However, Koolhaas shifts his focus away from the Wall's physical appearance to the political forces and processes that brought it into being. The Berlin Wall, as he describes it, evolved fluidly in response to shifting political circumstances, demonstrating that architecture is not a static form but a system of uncertainty. The text's persuasiveness derives from Koolhaas's vivid, sensory descriptions and philosophical insights. Paradoxical and provocative statements like “<i>absence would always win in a contest with presence</i>” highlight the void's power as a force in architecture, compelling readers to rethink the meaning of architecture itself. Furthermore, Koolhaas's strategic use of specific questions and paradoxical language challenges readers to engage critically with the theory rather than passively accepting it. By questioning the “<i>division, enclosure, and exclusion</i>” inherent in architecture, he exposes the limitations of utopian ideals and reveals the inescapable intersection between architecture and its political context. In this process, the use of images further reinforces the theory's impact. Koolhaas highlights not only the Wall's multi-layered form but also the various human activities occurring around it—citizens exchanging items across barbed wire, couples marrying beside the Wall, and children drawing on it. These images emphasize the paradoxical coexistence of disconnection and connection within the void, allowing readers to intuitively grasp the spatial meaning and latent potential that the Wall generated. By shifting the focus from the Wall's physical characteristics to its broader spatial and social implications, the text enables readers to see the void as a space of contradictions and possibilities.

Ultimately, *Field Trip: A Memoir* introduces a new paradigm for architectural theory, using the personal narrative of a memoir as its foundation. Through the reality of the Berlin Wall, Koolhaas discovers the void's potential as a space of absence and division that paradoxically generates new meaning and possibilities. He proves that architecture can operate more powerfully through absence than through physical form. The text encourages readers to engage in an experiential and reflective understanding of space, challenging them to see architecture through a new lens. In doing so, Koolhaas subverts conventional architectural discourse and successfully reconstructs the essence and potential of architecture around immaterial elements such as absence, division, and the void.

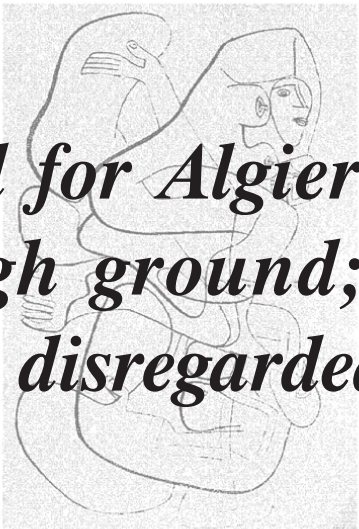
Absence, rather than presence, can be a more powerful and flexible force in architecture

Year: Spring 2025 Instructor: Amale Andraos
Course: The Arab City
Title: From Casbah to Viaduct: Le Corbusier's Visual Analysis and the Abstraction of Algiers

Le Corbusier was preoccupied with the question of what one sees—and it was this visual focus that, for him, defined the poetic quality of architecture



His proposal for Algiers preserved only the view from the high ground; all other aspects of his analysis were disregarded



From Casbah to Viaduct:
Le Corbusier's Visual Analysis and the Abstraction of Algiers

Introduction: The Poetics of Vision

In Le Corbusier's architecture, it is difficult to discuss his work without mentioning the "architectural promenade." This idea was presented alongside his Five Points of Architecture — pilot, rooftop garden, free plan, horizontal window, and free facade. Together, these five elements create a new kind of interior landscape. Upon entering a building, one is greeted by an architectural promenade that unfolds in a sequence of visual scenes, light washes across walls or casts shadows to produce shifting atmospheres, and the horizontal window opens up views to the outside. In other words, the architectural promenade is a way of seeing the world through the eyes of the inhabitant.

Reading Algiers: Le Corbusier's Visual Analysis of the City

Around 1932, Le Corbusier proposed a future city plan for Algiers and, in his book *Poésie sur Alger*, described both his analysis of the existing city and architecture and his personal interpretation, explaining the direction Algiers should take. He called urban planning an "expression of a society's vitality" and sought to transcend the rigid notions then prevailing in European and American plans. Le Corbusier aimed to realize in Algiers a new city that would deliver one solution. His philosophy for housing within this city was simple: to provide the essential pleasures of sun, space, and greenery.

He observed that the traditional architecture of the Casbah in Algiers had already been polluted. The Casbah, completed by the Turks, was originally a masterpiece harmonizing with nature, but during



Figure 1. Casbah on High Ground with a Free-Form View



Figure 2. Narrow Interventions of the Casbah

When contemplating the beautiful panorama, Le Corbusier saw the low-lying harbor of Algiers—visible from the heights—as an area in need of transformation. To him, the harbor was composed of "dead space" cluttered with houses, barrels, bundles, coal, and minerals left to deteriorate. He believed this visual chaos had to be corrected. His proposed plan for the harbor was to create a new, unique optical proportion. "On the ground, a public tree doesn't take up more than a football; twenty meters away it dominates like a tree trunk." From the high vantage point, the expansive

La Casbah, The Radiant City: Elements of a Doctrine of Urbanism in the Face of Our Machine-Age Civilization (New York: Dover Press, 1967), 28. Originally published 1933.

La Casbah, Poésie sur Alger (Algiers: Éditions d'Architecture, 1937).

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Figure 3. A View from the Heights Showing the Harbor Covered with Palm Trees



Figure 4. A Sketch of an Elevator for the Three Esplanades, Sea, Space, and Greenery

After conducting his analysis of Algiers' existing city and architecture—albeit focused primarily on views—Le Corbusier proposed the "vertical garden city," or viaduct. Positioned at an altitude of 100 meters, this elevated highway was envisioned as a major artery connecting the suburbs of Saint-Eugène to the city center. The rooftop level accommodated vehicular traffic, while below it, floor plates were stacked at a 4.50-meter intervals to form residential modules, each conceived as a floor with foundations and a waterproof ceiling. This large-scale housing complex was projected to accommodate approximately 200,000 inhabitants. The linear residential form, winding along Algiers' undulating terrain, was designed to offer panoramic views in every direction.¹⁰ Moreover, by tracing the lowest points along the shifting topography, the design sought to maximize usable building volume. Le Corbusier described this as an act of sculptural creation that "responds to the invitation of the landscape"—a proposal that more

La Casbah, Poésie sur Alger (Algiers: Éditions d'Architecture, 1937).

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Figure 5. Housing beneath the Elevated Viaduct

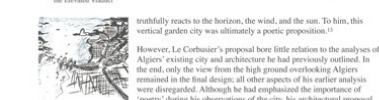


Figure 7. Linear Viaduct Housing in Rio de Janeiro

vertical garden city would save 120 francs per square meter compared to a horizontal garden city. He proposed a total profit of \$60,000,000 francs, along with an additional \$80,000,000 francs in savings by replacing a proposed metro line with the elevated highway.¹¹ Compared to the infrastructure costs of a horizontal garden city—roads, access ways, maintenance, water and sewage, gas and electricity—his proposal appeared far more economical.

Le Corbusier also emphasized that this elevated typology was not alien to Algiers. He cited a historic arcade built in 1850, noting that its underside was already used informally by fishermen as a place of rest.¹² Drawing on this precedent, he argued that the underside of a 100-meter-high viaduct offered an ideal model for housing under optimal conditions. Yet, almost identically, this elevated housing concept had already appeared two years earlier in his plan for Brazil—suggesting that his proposal for Algiers was not shaped by the city's unique context, but rather recycled from previous visions.

In 1929, during a tour of South America, Le Corbusier was struck by the coastline of Rio de Janeiro as seen from an airplane. In that moment, a new idea flashed before him: the only form capable of responding to Rio's dramatic and irregular terrain was the horizontal line. He immediately began envisioning a horizontal viaduct that would follow the contours of Rio's natural landscape.¹³ By harmonizing the chaotic shapes of nature with a single linear form, he proposed a new kind of urban infrastructure. This plan introduced a housing system that did not interfere with the existing city

¹⁰ Ibid., 282.

¹¹ Ibid., 282.

¹² Ibid., 282.

¹³ La Casbah, Poésie sur Alger (Algiers: Éditions d'Architecture, 1937).

fabric of street network, while simultaneously addressing the city's transportation issues in one comprehensive move.

The elevated housing concept that originated in the Brazilian landscape was applied almost identically to Algiers. It is as if Le Corbusier's proposal functioned independently of its analysis of Algiers. The life within the Casbah and the architectural qualities he had praised were not reflected in the viaduct housing. Only the panoramic spectacle from the high ground overlooking Algiers found its way into the final proposal. He did not pay as much attention to Algiers' topography as he did to the coastline of Rio de Janeiro. Moreover, while the viaduct housing was conceived as a solution to Brazil's well-documented urban transportation problems, Le Corbusier did not mention transportation at all in his analysis of Algiers.

In the end, among the many aspects of Algiers he studied, only the view remained relevant to his design; all other factors were rendered meaningless. Fundamentally, Le Corbusier was preoccupied with the question of what one sees—and it was this visual focus that, for him, defined the poetic quality of architecture.

Conclusion: Framing the City Through the Gaze as a Visual Ideology of Modernism

Le Corbusier did not propose a design that reflected the specific contexts of Algiers or Brazil. Instead, he may have been proposing a universal housing typology—one that could be applied anywhere, regardless of site conditions. A linear residential structure that could be constructed on any terrain. The criticisms he has received—of colonialist thinking, disregard for local cultures, and a reliance on formal analysis—are fundamentally rooted in his visually driven approach to architecture. These are retrospective evaluations of an architectural mindset centered on the visual.

Could it be that the thought process he first expounded in Villa Savoy in 1928—the desire to guide people through a space by carefully determining what they would see—was simply extended to the urban scale? For Le Corbusier, the cultural context of the Casbah's domestic life or the religious logic behind Algiers' dense urban form was not of primary importance. What mattered was the question: what will people see? He was experimenting with a picturesque, city-scale architectural promenade—one that could exist anywhere. A city stripped of looking out toward the vast sea, toward expansive mountains, bathed in abundant sunlight. This, to him, was the city of the future. In this view, the traditional architecture and urban fabric of Algiers were reduced to little more than a pretext for proposing a new city.

Le Corbusier's proposal for Algiers is often criticized today as a reflection of Western superiority. I do not intend to defend his thinking as justifiable by today's standards. Like many Western architects of his time, he likely did not perceive his approach as colonialist. After all, objective evaluation often becomes possible only long after the fact. I also do not believe his proposal offered a realistic solution to the problems facing other Algiers or Rio de Janeiro. Perhaps even he did not believe it would.

Yet, might his urban plan for Algiers be seen as a radical proposition for the direction architecture could take in the modern era? A plan uncompromising in its refusal to engage with context, history, or culture—could this be read as a deliberate declaration of what architecture was meant to become? If the proposals for Algiers or Rio had begun with a careful reflection on local culture, history, and context, perhaps they would not have carried such a strong, even provocative message. His architecture remains both simple and radical—focused on providing sunlight, space, and greenery.

Perhaps Le Corbusier intentionally chose not to incorporate his analysis of Algiers' traditional architecture and urban fabric. It may have been, in his view, not yet the time to reflect each nation's culture. What mattered more was rescuing what he saw as polluted cities. One might imagine that he aimed first to offer a singular solution, and that only after its implementation would local history, culture, and context be layered in.

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What mattered was not context, history, or culture—but the framing of a spectacle: a picturesque city enjoyed through the gaze