Systems and systematization allow the organization of ideas, objects, observations, and reflections, making them easier to represent and communicate. Because they are new wholes made with specific and repetitive operations and pieces, they also make it easier to adapt to different scenarios and contexts. This allows architecture to engage with complex networks, expanding its scope and creating new relationships beyond buildings.

MsAAD - GSAPP
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NY

DELVING INTO SYSTEMS AND CONTRASTS

THE SEEN AND UNSEEN OF ARCHITECTURE

PEDRO PABLO GONZÁLEZ
2023-2024

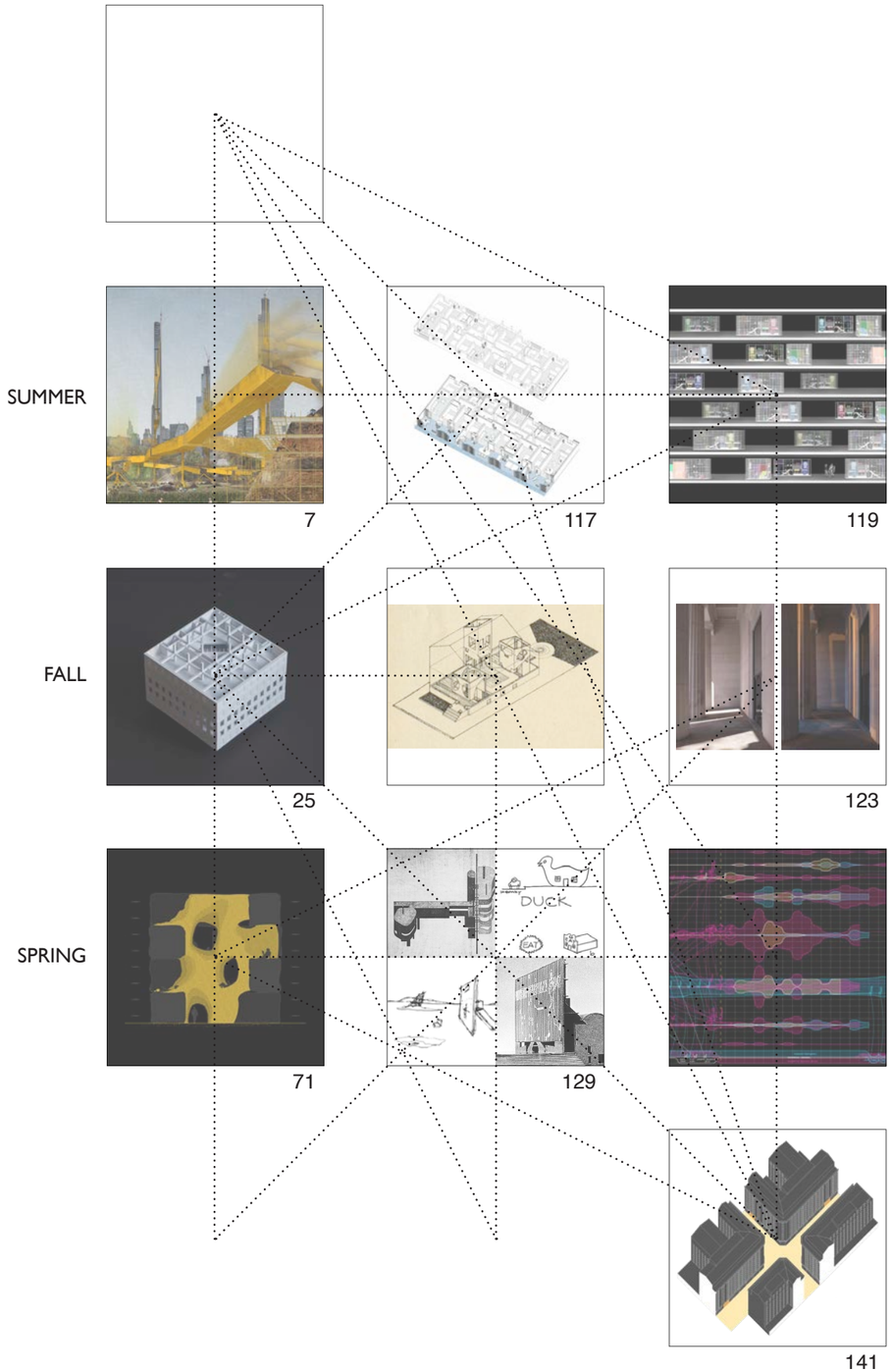


TABLE OF CONTENT

GSAPP has been a place to expand, discover, and create new connections and networks in many ways by unfolding architecture's transscalar relationships with other fields and, therefore, with social, political, environmental, and economic issues. This entangling with different realities, contexts, and history, among many other forces, makes it inconceivable to think of architecture as an isolated practice bounded to just buildings.

Before starting the program, I had been practicing architecture as a dynamic pendulum process between several complementary contrasts, such as old-new, theory-practice, building-detail, representation-reality, imaginary-interpretation, preexistence-intervention, research-intuition, and concept-context, among others, under the light of architecture as the production of fixed objects with a specific human-centered impact on its surroundings.

I have learned that there are unimaginable more fields and networks where architecture has something to say, be part of, and contribute. I have not only faced countless new possibilities, conversation topics, and scopes related to these concepts in contrasts, but I have also found new ones, such as seen-unseen, which has been a real breakthrough to change my perception of how we think and practice architecture. There are so many things architecture is part of –and even accomplice– that have not been shown and discussed, missing the opportunity to use its agency to attend to contemporary challenges such as waste, colonialism, reparation, historical injustices, security, privacy, and human-non-human relationship.

As a pragmatic architect, **systems have been a tool to organize, synthesize, address, study, and document** the different actors, contexts, history, and networks of architectural thoughts and challenges, getting away from finding isolated solutions, resulting in the formulation of possibilities from engaging with broader and complex unfolded scenarios. Systems have been the way to drive projects as well as to drive research and reflections, making writing, photography, and other performances new platforms where architecture can be questioned, developed, and transformed.

I have expanded my consciousness in front of a challenge, a project, or a building, facing and questioning them through a transscalar point of view that forces—constructively—to be critical in everything, to ask what lies behind what is visible at first glance, and to go deep enough so as not to fall into "*answer correctly the wrong question.*" These new approaches are not just through design but also through writing, reflections, and conversations, which gradually build up a new constellation of the complex network architecture is part of, **delving into systems and contrasts** as a personal way to engage with architecture.

Arriving at GSAPP was an inflection point, revealing the different scales and scopes of the discipline. Learning an unseen part of architecture opened a new awareness of what architecture can and should be concerned about. I had expanded and pushed to the limit the reflections and critical views of the possibilities that architecture has and the responsibility it carries to address global issues. The research of case studies, constant questioning of practices, and posing the questions and possibilities through design established new starting points through which I do not look for answers but to formulate new questions, understanding that the scope of architecture goes far beyond what we thought. **These connections and expansions in understanding architecture started to build specific relationships and traces** throughout the program, for instance, with remodeling, recycling, adaptive reuse, and intervention systems, crossed with waste, community empowerment, privacy, and security, reflected in the following design projects, researches, and reflections.

Amidst transscalar awareness, **Breathing Machine** proposes a utopian – but pragmatic– system for organic waste management in NYC. This project embodies how compost can address social, cultural, and economic issues related to colonialism and imperialism by intensely studying history and current practices to reverse and recompose global injustices from the present and the past. Transform the city issues and related history into an organized and staged process that allows one to visualize the problem and think in other, fairer ways. It is not about proposing a definitive solution or project but raising questions and generating a possibility of addressing issues affecting our environment composed of humans and non-humans. It is to seek a balance that improves our quality of life and relationship with nature through engaging with existing and new materials.

Breathing Building aims to provide a simple and systematic alternative to addressing building reuse for residential units through several strategies that maximize the usable and livable area on every floor. This fosters community interaction and allows the building and units to breathe, regenerate, and adapt permanently over time. The project uses a modular wood-based system for building adaptation as a natural material, offering scalable solutions that could be used and fitted in different buildings.

Systems of Repetition is an exploration and personal introspection from a design perspective. It tests systematization and contrasts, building the framework to operate and create physical objects from four different materials. The drawing's documentation was also systematized, allowing the analysis and exploration of the variations through repetition and iteration. In the same way that systems allow assembling, they allow disassembly, engaging with the recycling and reuse of the parts when no longer needed, in addition to using natural materials, keeping the integrity of the elements, or by using the minimum of material to reduce the carbon footprint of the construction.

The **Transformation of 530 dwellings** and **Light House** Essays were the starting points for expanded reflections from specific case studies exposing the transscalar dimension of architectural decisions and the opportunities that lie in questioning the "status quo." Psychological well-being, waste and cost savings, carbon footprint, political struggles, stigmatization, and security and privacy by fostering communities are concepts discussed and addressed simultaneously.

As an exploration of the systematization of observation and photography documentation, **Transformative qualities of light** aims to expose how light and time affect our perception of the physical environment and how important they could be for designing different kinds of experiences.

In the same way, by organizing the study and reflection on architectural theory through chapters confronting the contrast between valuable and outdated ideas, **Contemporary reflections on 55 years of architectural theory** facilitates learning, understanding, and discussion about different movements that have led architecture over the last time, allowing to talk –under a contemporary and transscalar perspective– about the concept-context relationship and why it is relevant in the search of meaning in architecture.

"Mapping of the abandoned for a city adaptive recovery" emerges from the Breathing Building project as an extension and test of the intervention system to address similar local issues with local resources in Santiago, Chile. By overlapping it with the unique existing and downgraded gallery system in the city's downtown, it aims to explore new possibilities of city regeneration by addressing transscalar issues and crossing unattended and hidden realities with an organic, strong, and systematic potential.

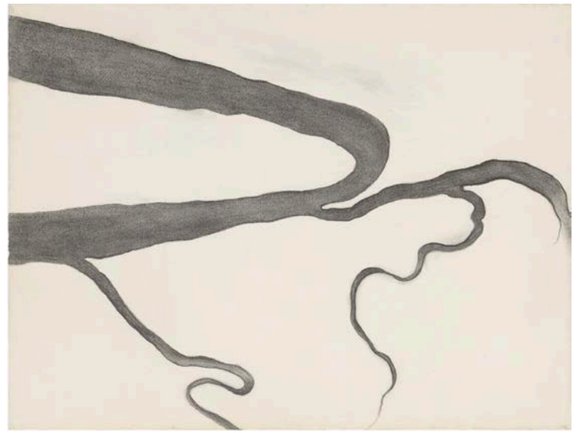
In times when it is difficult to express and share personal opinions and feelings, with many distractions and forced leads, **Uniqueness and identity for a new sense of belonging** is a short reflection upon a conversation with the artist DeVonn Francis. Through his own practice, D.F. teaches us the opportunities that lie in authenticity by merging heritages and backgrounds to create a new sense of belonging, raising the question: Can we think that way in architecture?

Architecture is always built on a preexisting site, environment, or context, where it inevitably touches –and becomes part of– a network of actors and forces generating new contrasts and opportunities. We can engage with those complex networks through systems and allow their adaptation to address concerns beyond buildings committed to an uncertain future and upcoming challenges.

BREATHING MACHINE

REVERTING NYC'S COLONIAL AND IMPERIAL PRACTICES THROUGH A LARGE-SCALE ORGANIC WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM IN CENTRAL PARK.

Breathing Machine is a provocative utopian project that exposes transscalar and hidden realities, footprints of colonialism, and historical injustices to propose a systematic management of a current reality under the logic of reparation and staying with the problem. The project highlights extended and concealed connections –as rivers– with multiple places and actors that were the core for proposing an in-motion system that could generate awareness and thinking of current and increasing problems in the city and its history.



Drawing IX - Georgia O'keeffe
MoMa, NY

NY organic waste trace and involved transscalar actors and backgrounds.

For over 50 years, the massive organic waste of NYC had been dumped in the Fresh Kills landfill. 8 MILLION pounds of organic waste is generated daily In New York City. That is 4.000 tons daily, reaching only one-third of the total waste.

After Fresh Kills landfill was closed in 2001, this material kept getting there, where it is used to make compost and to export the useless parts far from the city, benefiting big companies in waste management and paying poor states and countries to receive it. This current reality makes Fresh Kills a dual hinge in managing and exporting NYC garbage far from the city, which is a common strategy that generates social and environmental injustices, in addition to the CO2 emissions through transportation, reaching a cost of $421 million in 2021 for waste export out of NY state, and it is increasing.

In time, the compost produced is sold for profit and to supply –among others– the NY Botanical Garden, which has Pfizer as a sponsor with a Laboratory Department inside the Botanical Garden, where they import the extraction of tobacco species from Latin-American countries to research and profit.

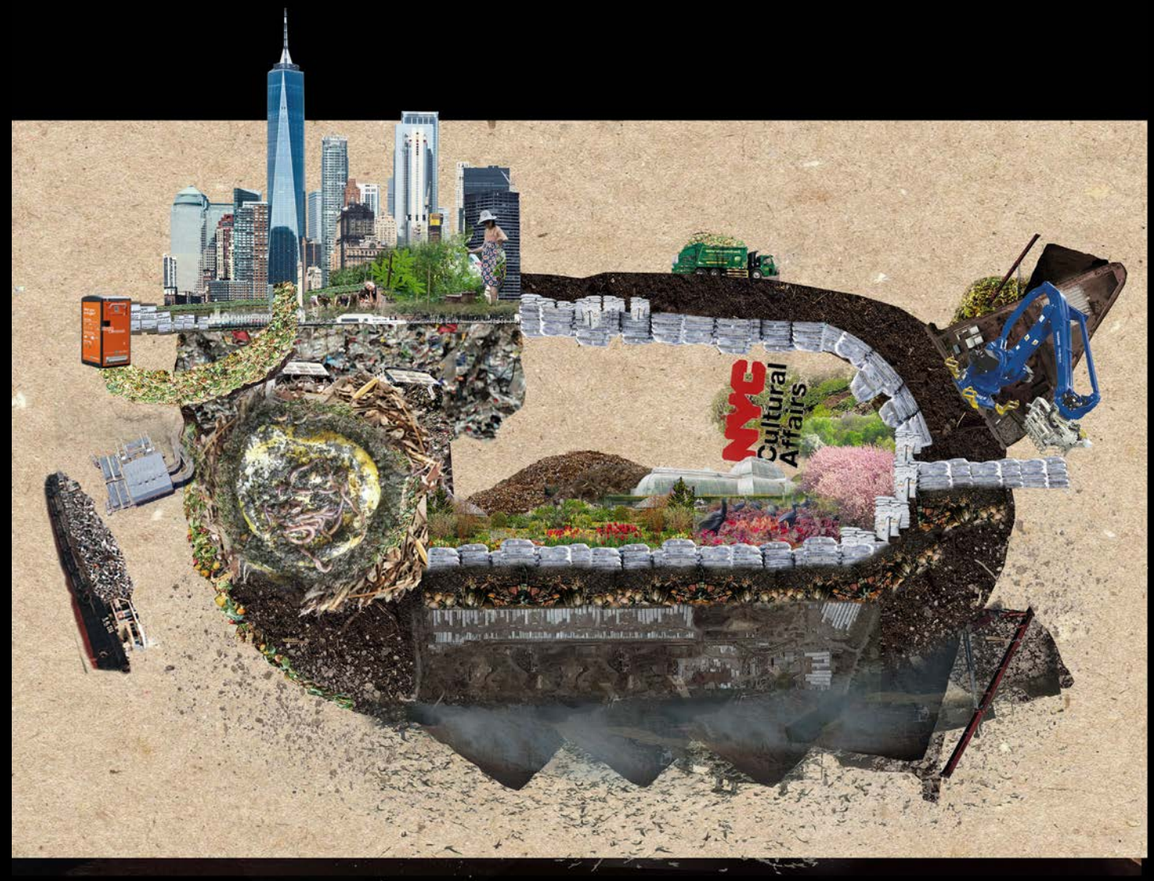
On the other hand, to build Central Park, thousands of tons of guano were extracted from the Perú Islands –enslaving Chinese and Peruvian people– to fertilize the land and build the greener and most iconic park in NY, increasing the surrounding buildings' wealth.

What if we stop organic waste colonialism and revert to imperial practices, keeping the waste where it is produced?

To recompose the colonial and imperial practices and histories, the large-scale organic waste management system seeks to redistribute the management, production, and use of organic waste and compost in Central Park.

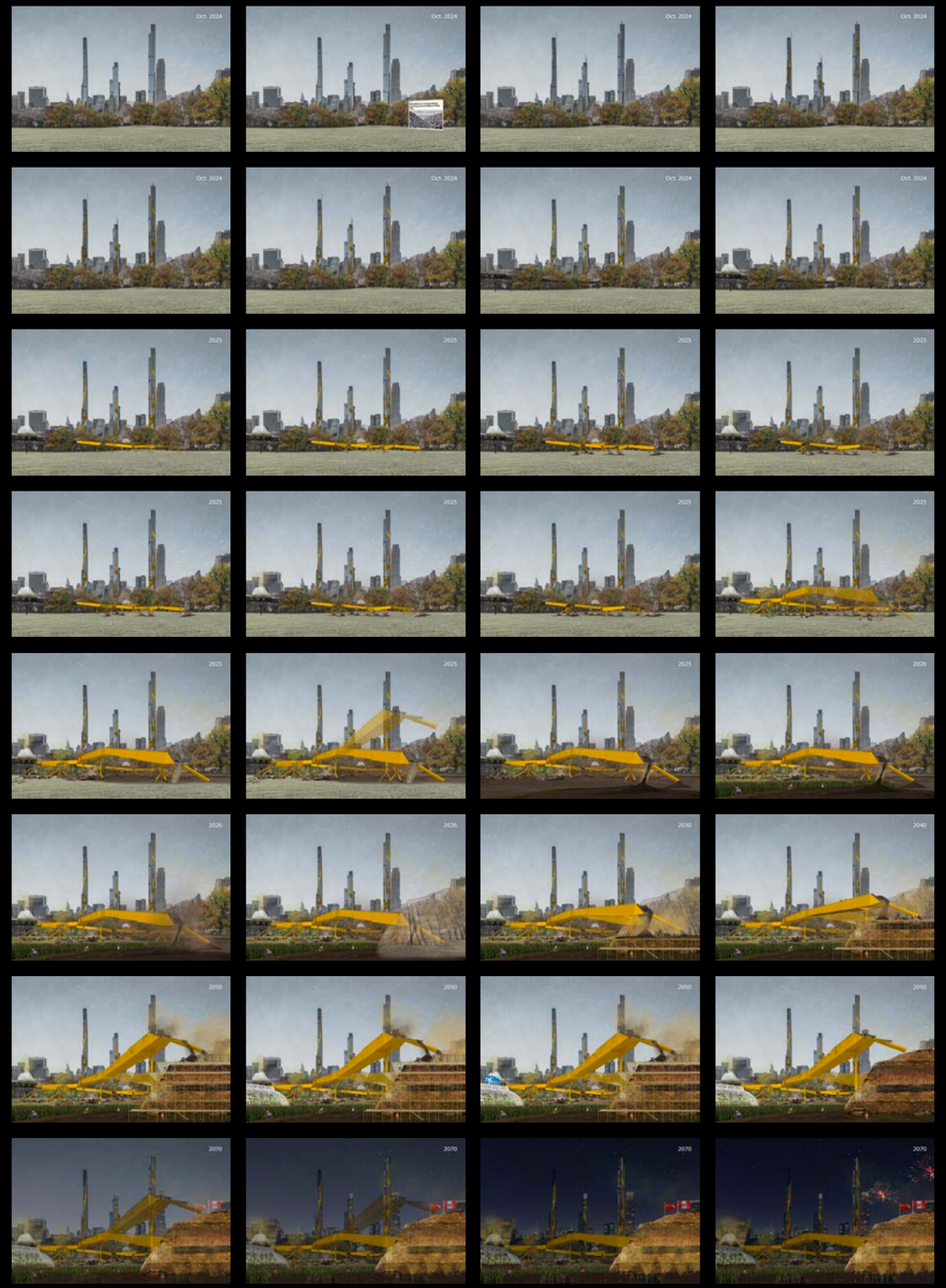
Starting from the fact that compost will be mandatory in New York from 2024, new compost system façades are installed in the surrounding buildings, and the ready-to-use compost –beside the other organic waste of the city– is transported and distributed through a movable modular structure to Sheep Meadow, as the first test ground. Here, the waste and compost are used for conservancy and research plants in greenhouses led by NY Botanical Garden and Pfizer, to build farms for Peruvian and Chinese communities, and to build a monument that symbolizes Guano Island Mountain.

By 2070, when compost mountain equals guano mountain, people will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the end of guano extraction. Through the intervention, organic waste is permanently processed and kept where it is produced, preventing waste colonialism and making visible what it takes to do so.



NY organic waste cycle collage

Background research of places and involved actors



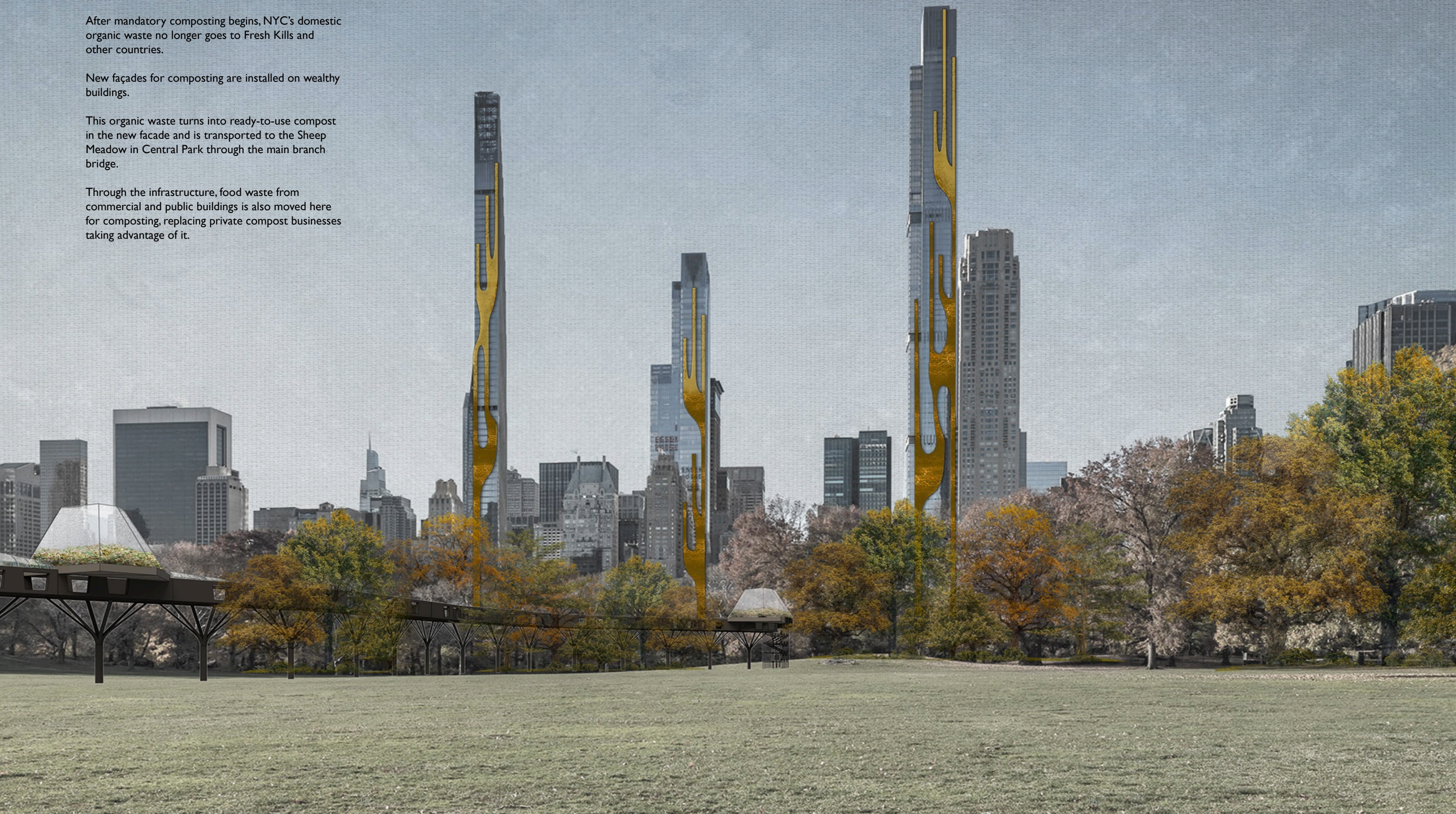
Breathing maching time-lapse. From 2024 to 2070

After mandatory composting begins, NYC's domestic organic waste no longer goes to Fresh Kills and other countries.

New façades for composting are installed on wealthy buildings.

This organic waste turns into ready-to-use compost in the new facade and is transported to the Sheep Meadow in Central Park through the main branch bridge.

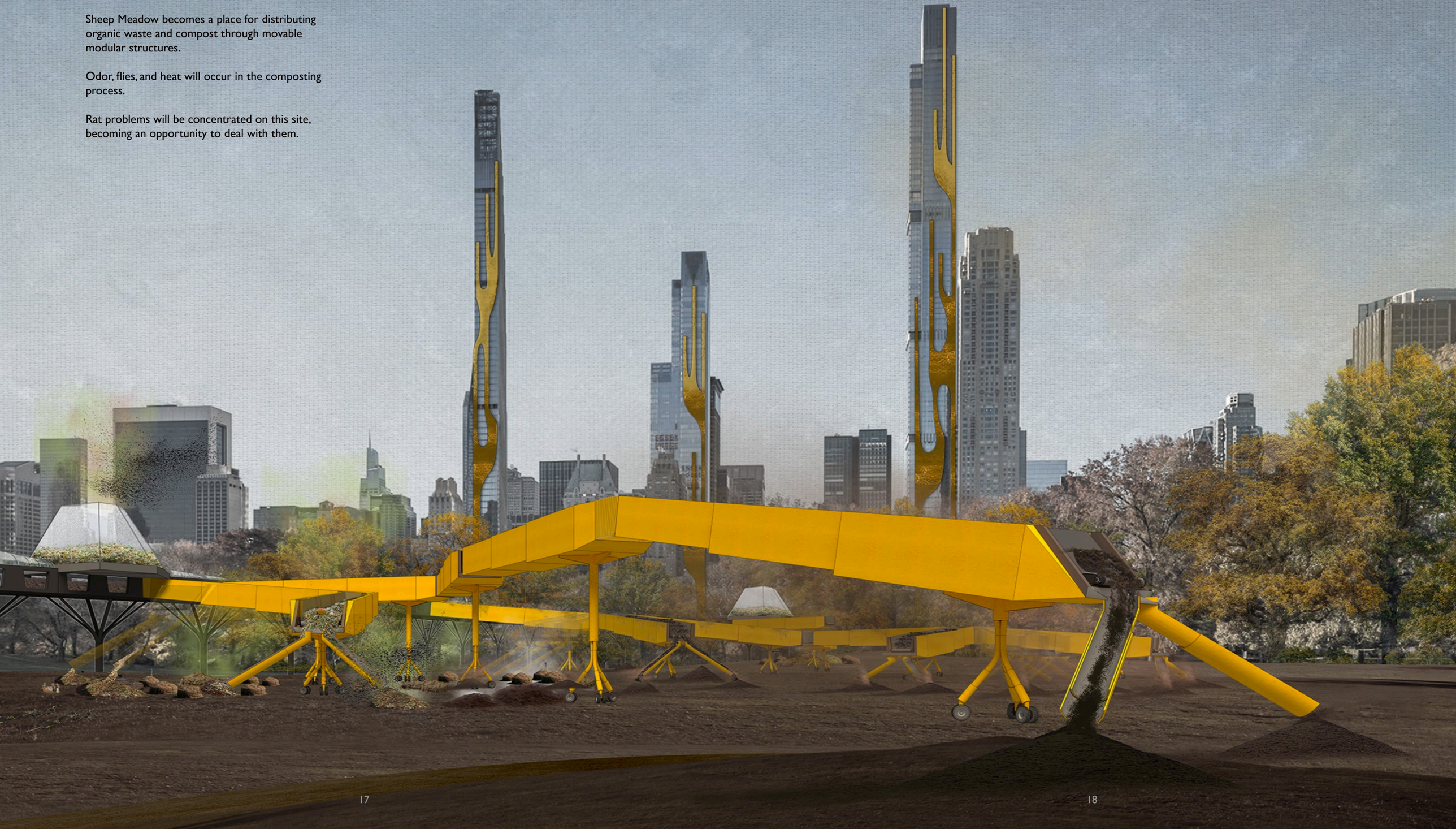
Through the infrastructure, food waste from commercial and public buildings is also moved here for composting, replacing private compost businesses taking advantage of it.



Sheep Meadow becomes a place for distributing organic waste and compost through movable modular structures.

Odor, flies, and heat will occur in the composting process.

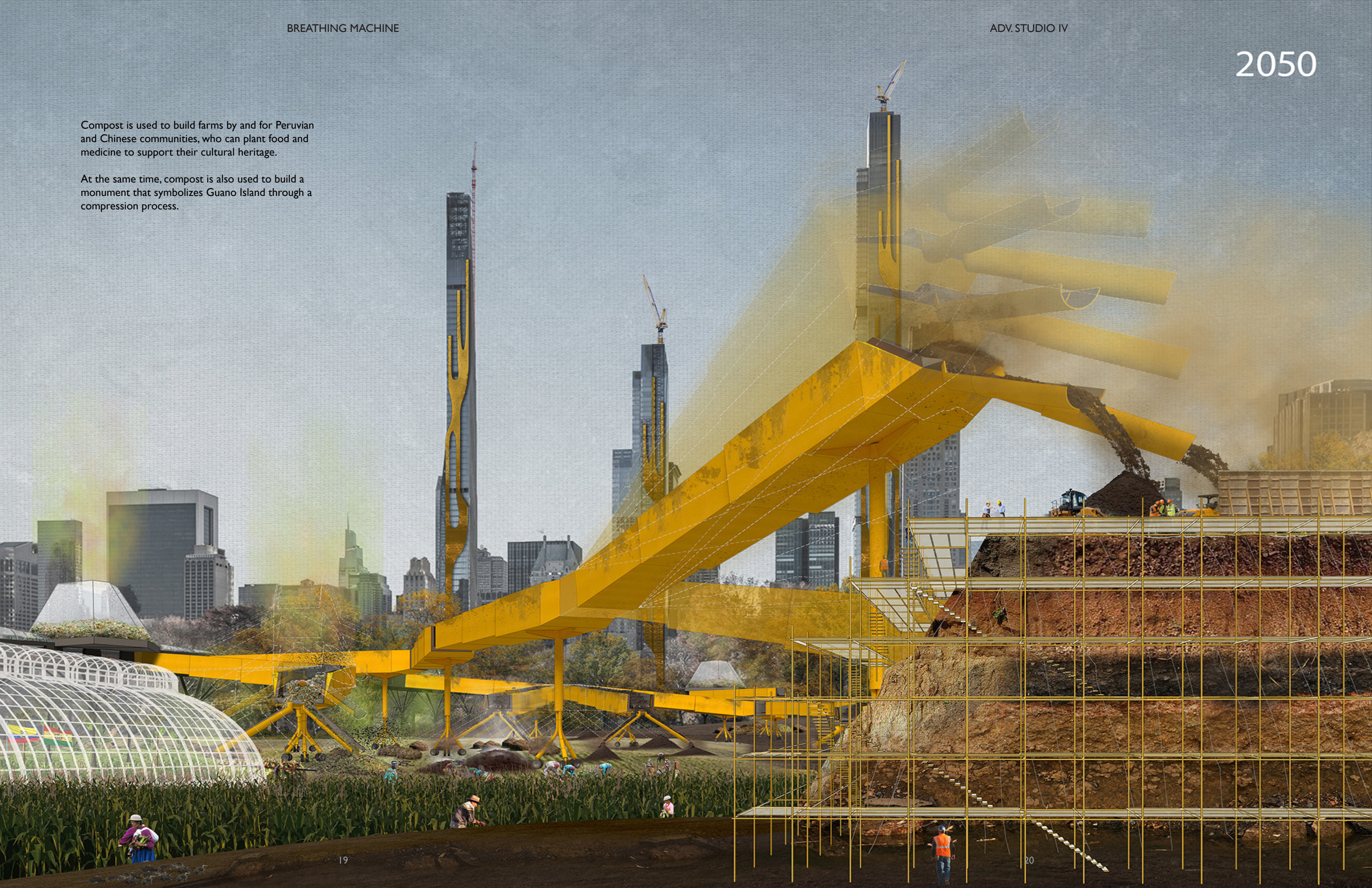
Rat problems will be concentrated on this site, becoming an opportunity to deal with them.



2050

Compost is used to build farms by and for Peruvian and Chinese communities, who can plant food and medicine to support their cultural heritage.

At the same time, compost is also used to build a monument that symbolizes Guano Island through a compression process.



2070

Over time, the monument gradually takes shape.

In Addition to Peruvian and Chinese farms, Botanical Garden provides greenhouses to produce tropical plants, such as tobacco.

Thus, Pfizer conducts its research here using compost made from the city's waste without colonizing foreign countries.

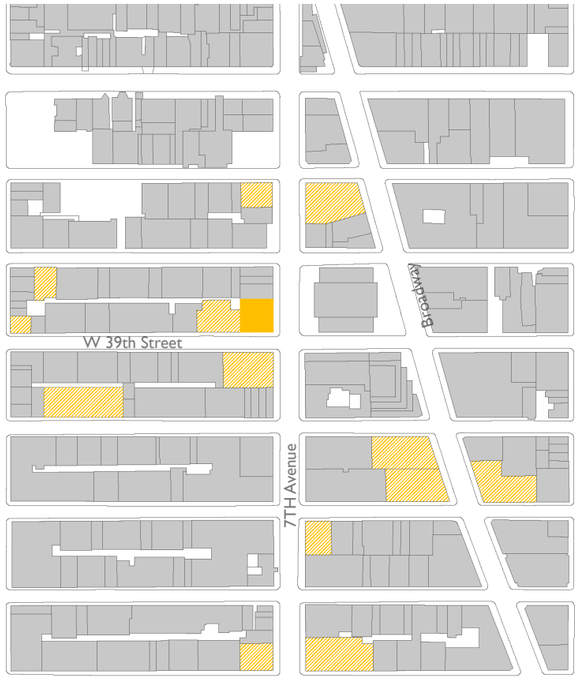
By 2070, when compost mountain equals guano mountain, people will commemorate the 200th anniversary of the end of guano extraction.

*Through the intervention, organic waste is permanently processed and kept where it is produced, preventing waste colonialism and making visible what it takes to do so.

BREATHING BUILDING

A MODULAR SYSTEM FOR RE-INHABITATION

We are dealing with a large building stock, an increasing demand for residential space, and the awareness of the carbon footprint of old and new constructions. Breathing Building aims to provide a simple and systematic alternative to address building reuse through several strategies in two scales –the building and construction modules– that maximize the usable and livable area on every floor, allowing the building and units to breathe, regenerate, and adapt permanently over time. The project propose a modular wood-based system for building adaptation, offering scalable solutions that could be used and fitted in different buildings, using sustainable materials, preserving almost the entire building structure, and recycling the demolished. Thus, flexibility to generate and change spaces, active community areas, inhabitant interaction, natural lighting and ventilation, maintenance independence, and climate control performance for the building is achieved.



Case study building - 550 Seventh Ave, NY.
and similar building typology for system implementation

Breathing Building takes place on the 550 Seventh Avenue Building as a test case study, which is a typical 24-story building in midtown Manhattan constructed in 1924. It is a square floor plan building with two blind faces to the north and two facades to the south.

The project aims to reach a simple and systematic alternative to address new and different programs (residential mainly) in an office building through several strategies in two scales that maximize the usable and livable area on every floor, allowing buildings and units to breathe and regenerate permanently over time.

The main idea for both scales is to get scalable solutions using sustainable materials that can also be reused, preserving almost its entire structure and recycling the demolished concrete.

Due to the systematization of the proposal, the project can be implemented in other buildings with the same typology and even in different buildings by adjusting the geometry of the strategies and using the same modular construction system.

BUILDING SCALE STRATEGIES

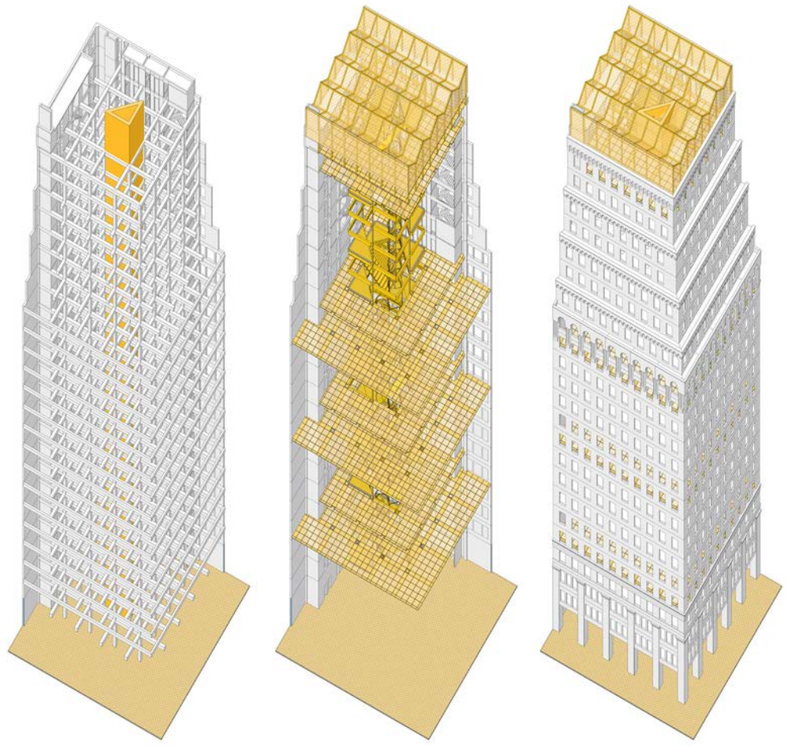
There are two main strategies with several add-ons:

(1) The first is cutting every slab center to build the active core, reorganizing the circulation and programs, and creating a vertical, continuous, and livable space where the air flows through. The active core includes terraces around on every floor that –through alternation– generate cross perspectives and the interaction between stories where residents and inhabitants share. It also generates surfaces, allowing the incorporation of small trees and plants larger than one story height.

On one side of the void is a new enclosure core (shaft) in the center of the building to shorten the distance between any far point of the story and the new shaft. Thus, the raised floor for plumbing could be as low as possible. The modular raised floor –made of CLT panels– allows for avoiding compromising different stories for maintenance or program changes, making every floor utterly independent from each other. The slab's demolished concrete is reused as a thermal mass material on the facades' interior face.

(2) The second strategy is voiding intercalated stories with double height, allowing light and ventilation to the building and core, whereby the five common and shared spaces take place beside the active core that connects all of them.

The early program destinations for these places are:



Building structure and new shaft

Communal floors and continuous core

Facade and activated communal areas

Main intervention strategies

- An Open Plaza and Art gallery on the first floor integrating and merging the building life with its near context.
- A sports, playroom, and lounge in the middle, providing space for community activities.
- A greenhouse on the rooftop enhancing the Stack Effect for ventilation and climate control, addressing the community garden and farm.

These places are an opportunity to enhance the community in the building, providing necessary spaces for it to be developed, allowing gathering, interacting, organizing, enjoying, surveilling, and protecting one another under the successful logic of CO-Housing and CO-Operatives.

MODULAR SYSTEM SCALE

(2) The second scale of intervention is the construction elements and building materials. The raised floor and the telescopic wall panel system. Their main material is wood, a sustainable and noble material often undervalued.

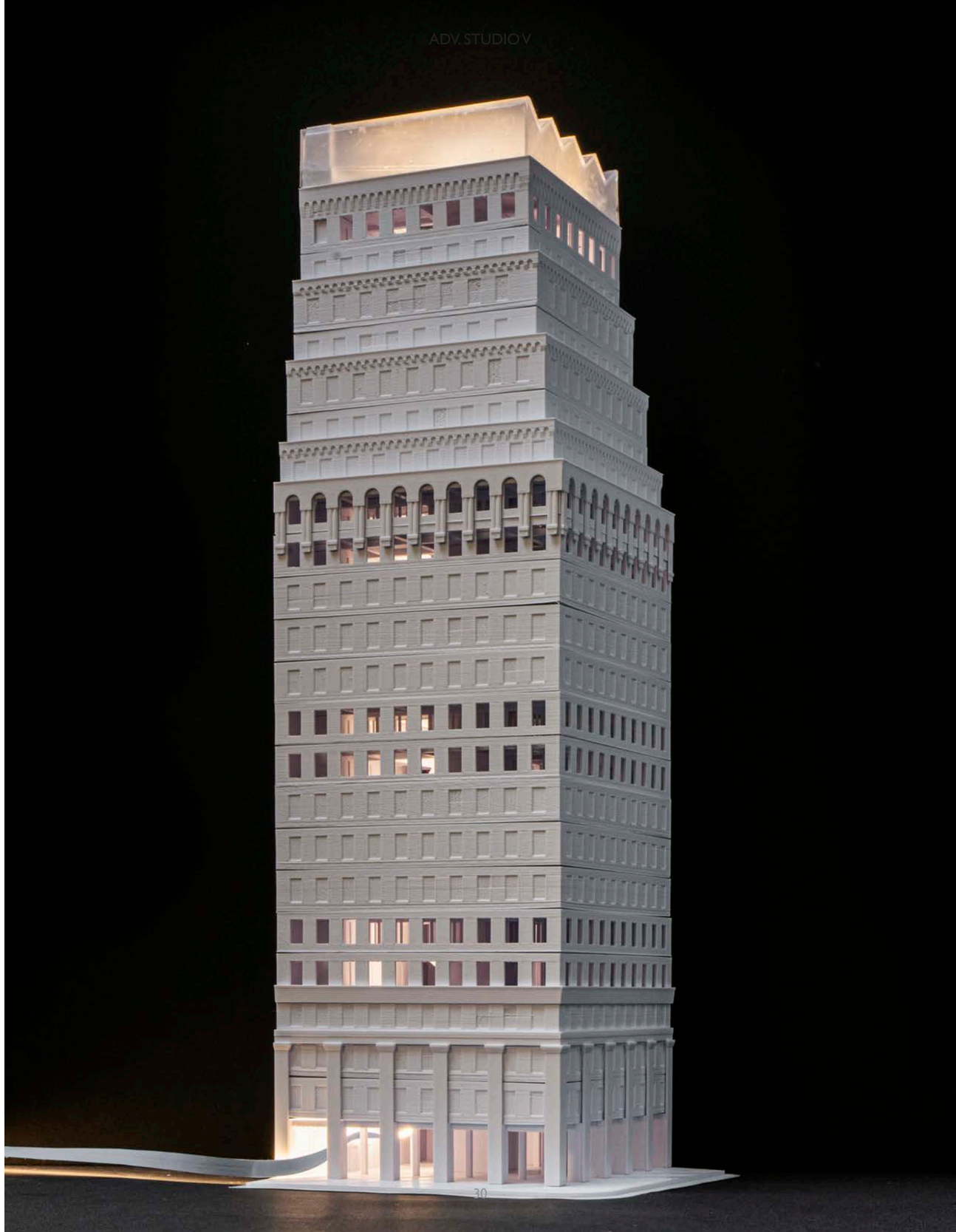
(A) The Raised floor is made of a 3" CLT panel (A stable large-scale plywood)
(B) The Telescopic Wall System comprises plywood panels and cellulose insulation. They can adapt to different heights, skipping the concrete beams and addressing the irregularities on the ceiling through a thin cork layer.

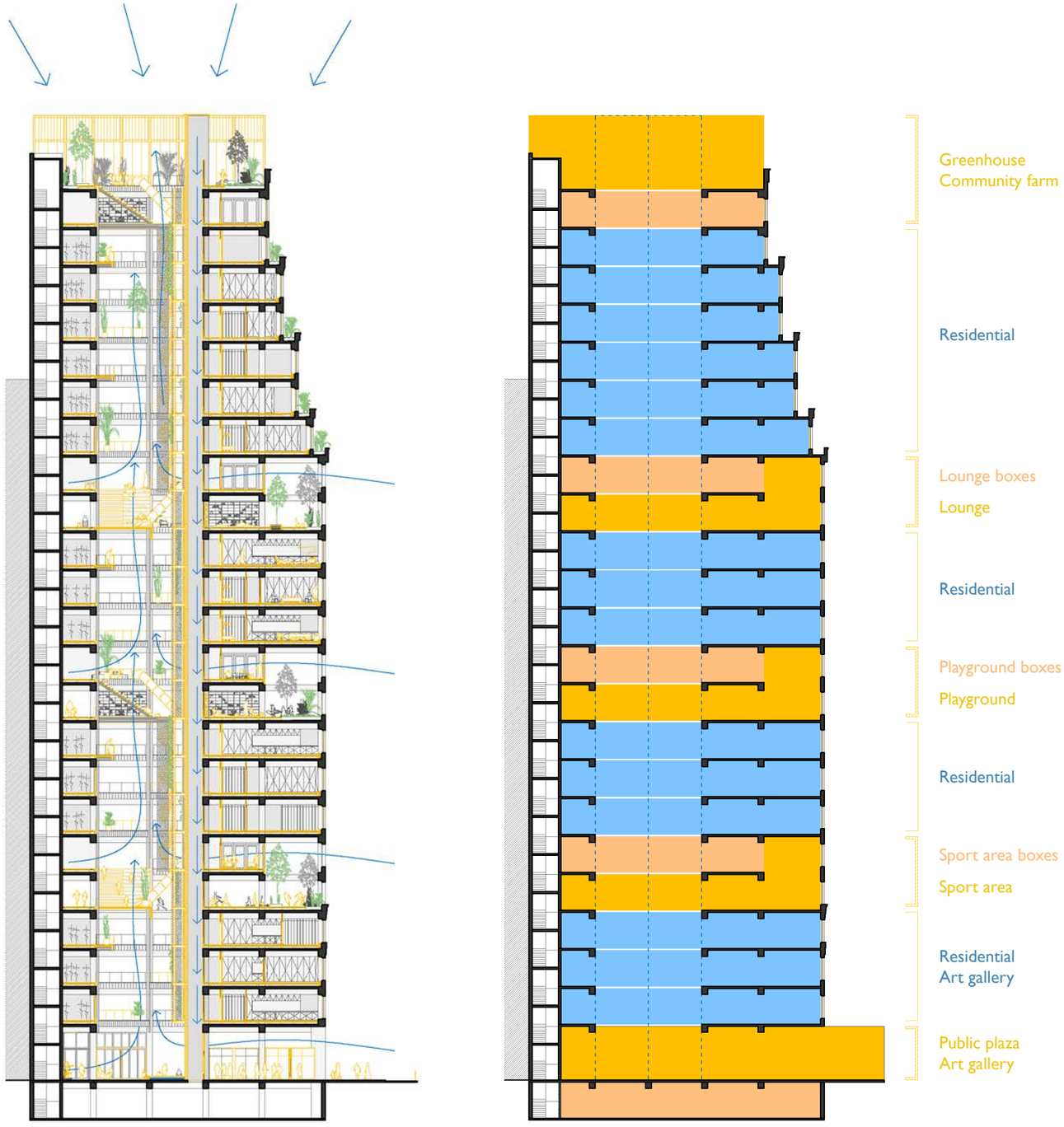
The panels that are used for any program configuration are the following:
- The 48" Windows panel. (4 feet)
- The 48" Door panel. (4 feet)
- The 48" Wall panel (4 feet)
- The 24" Wall panel (2 feet)

Every panel can adapt to different heights and join the next one, allowing the removal and changing of a single panel without moving the others.

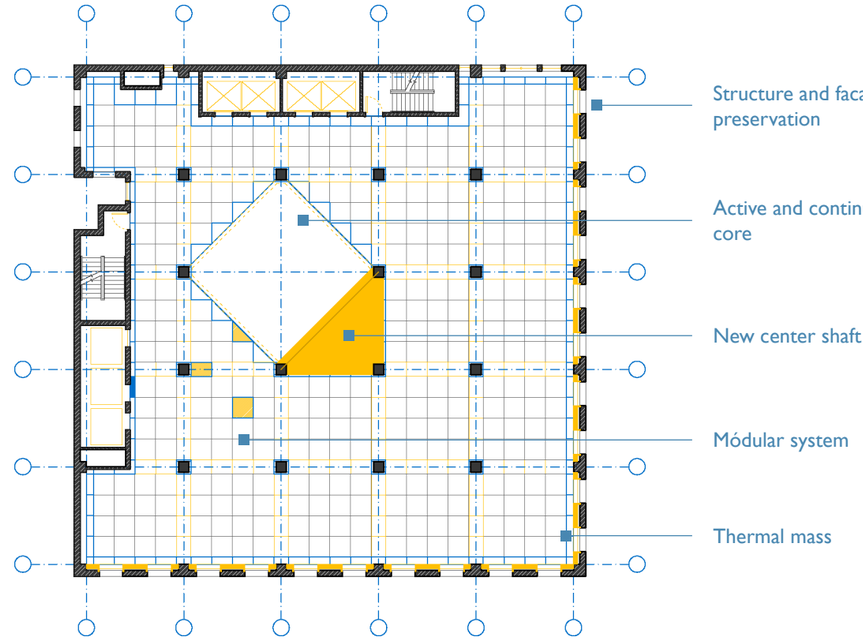
All layout configurations and distribution were built using the modular system, addressing different programs through its flexibility and precision.

Wall panels catalog

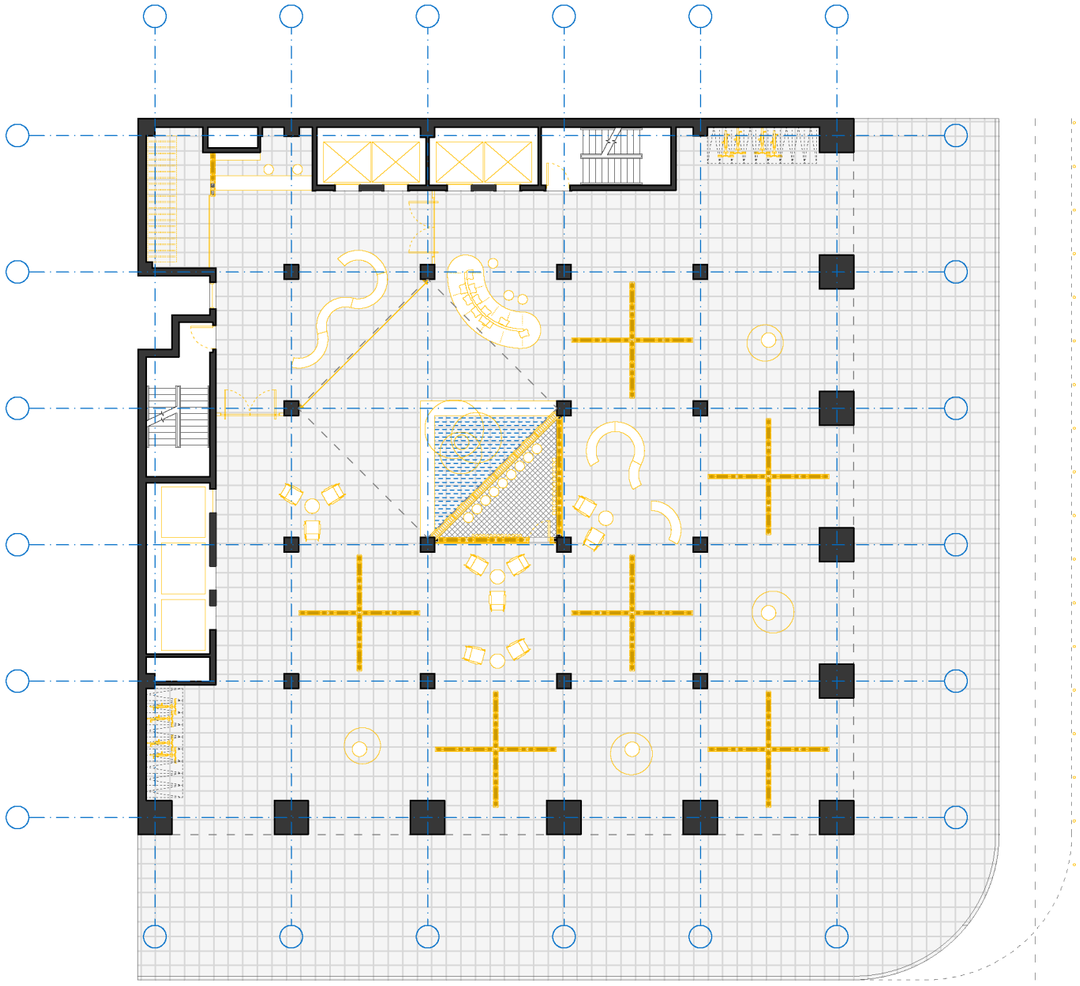




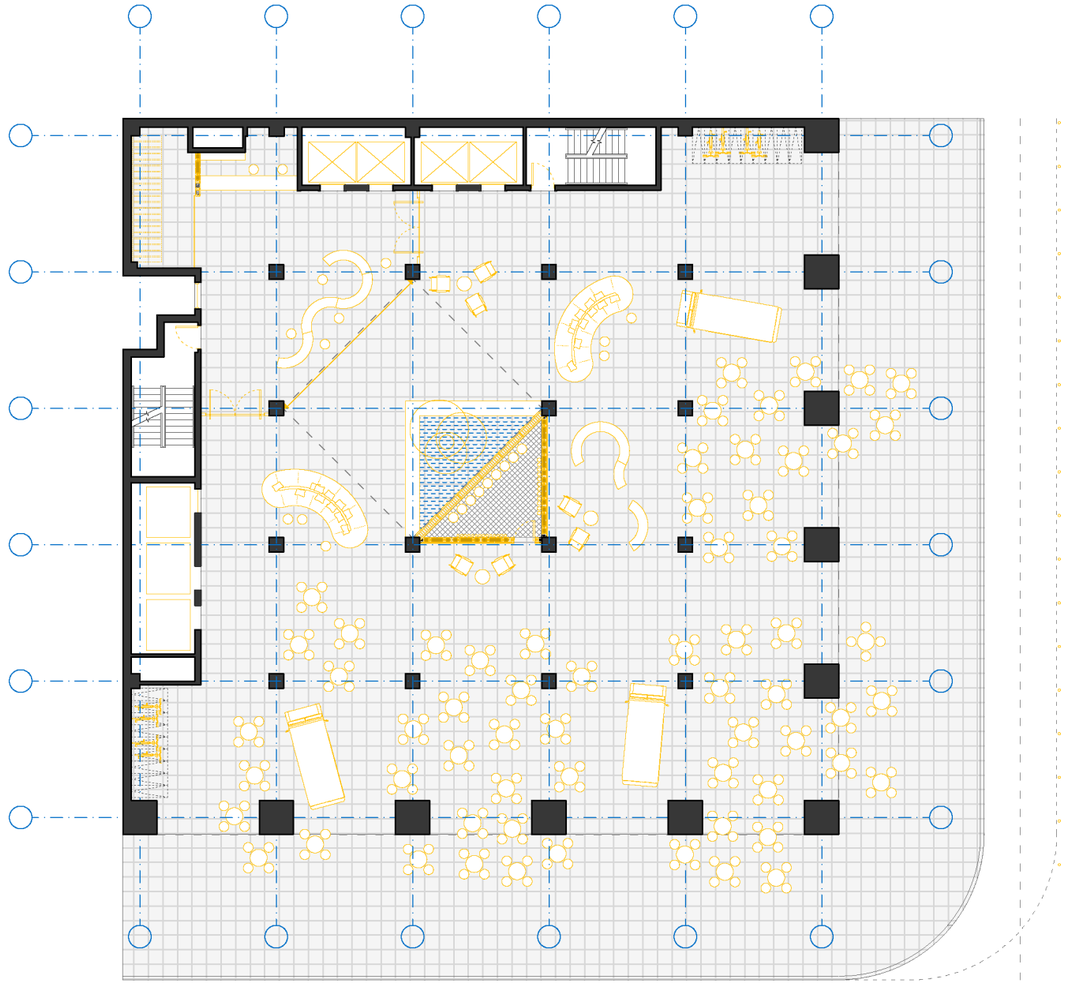
General section, stack effect, and new program distribution



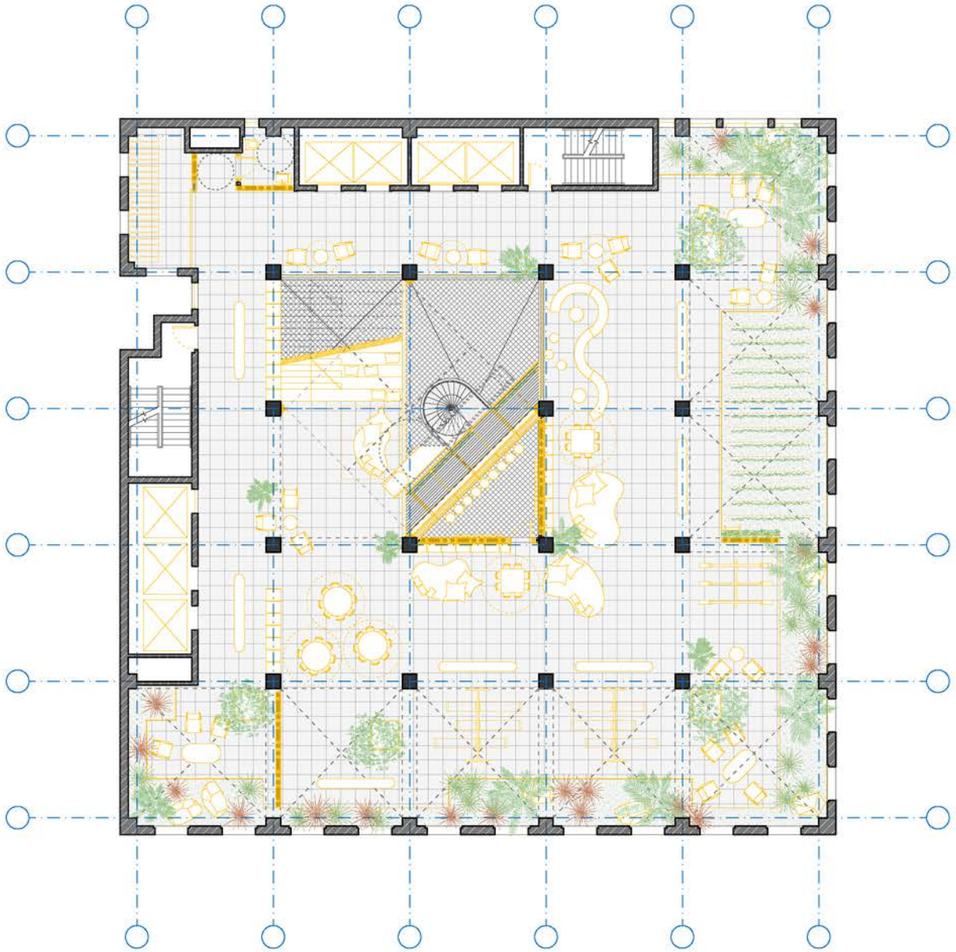
Specific strategies - Generic floor plan



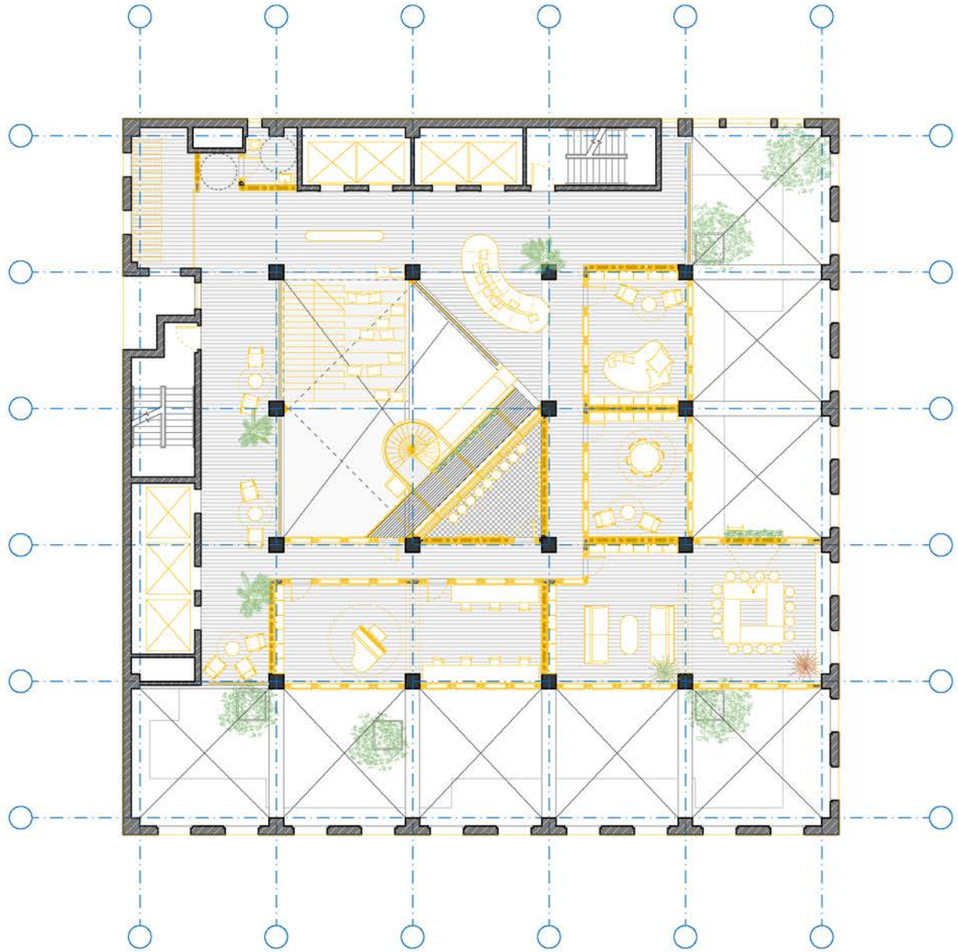
First floor plan, 1:250 - Public art gallery and exhibition



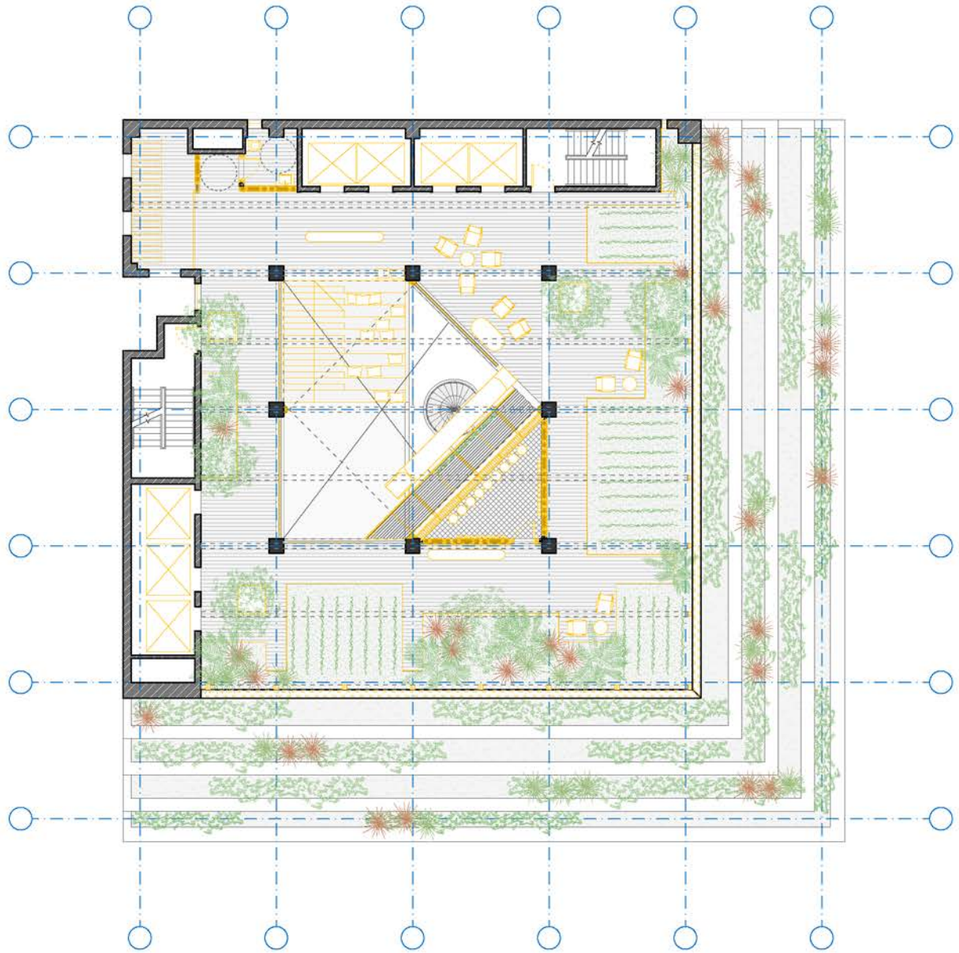
First floor plan, 1:250 - Open plaza



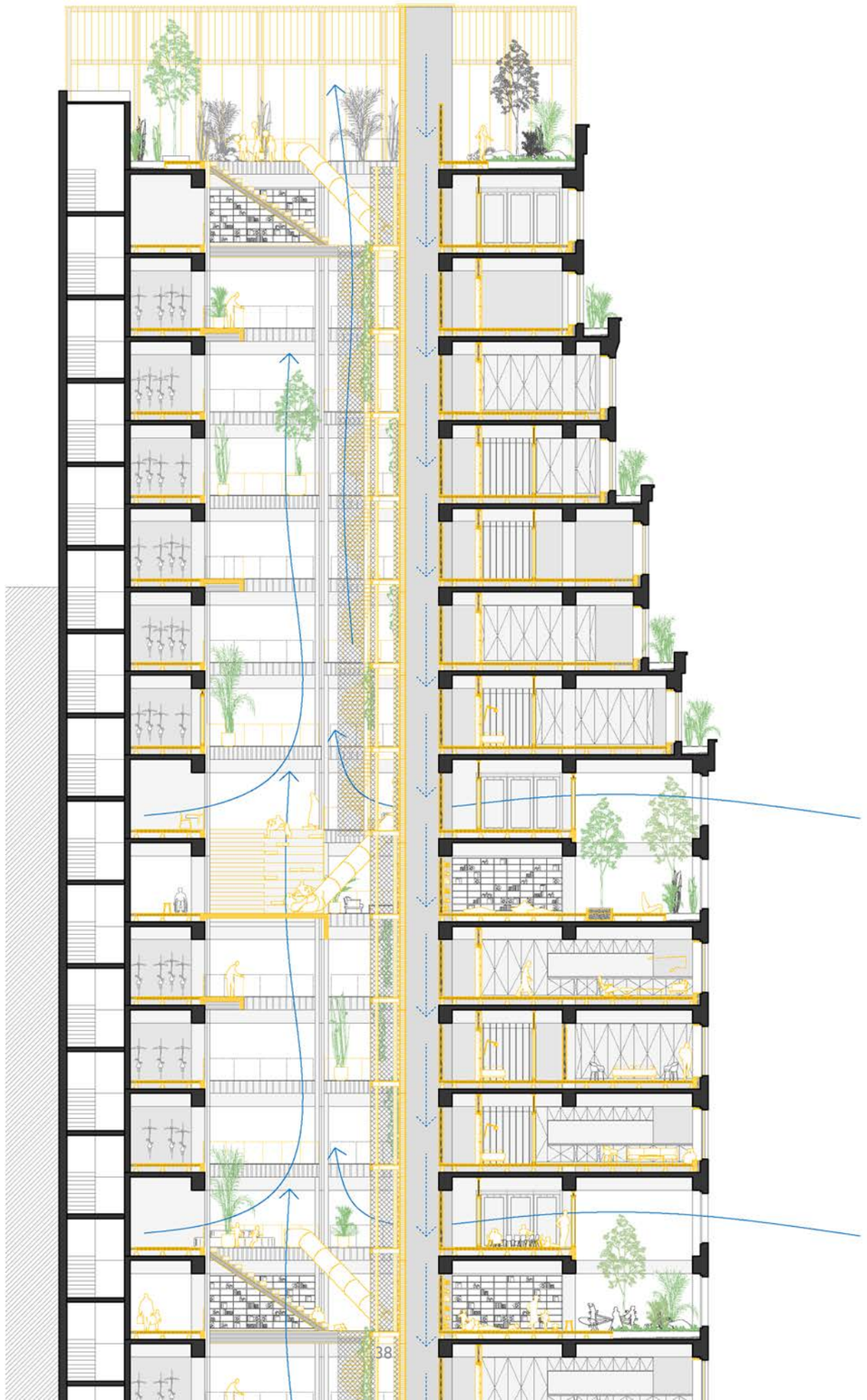
Comunity playground - Common area
10th floor plan

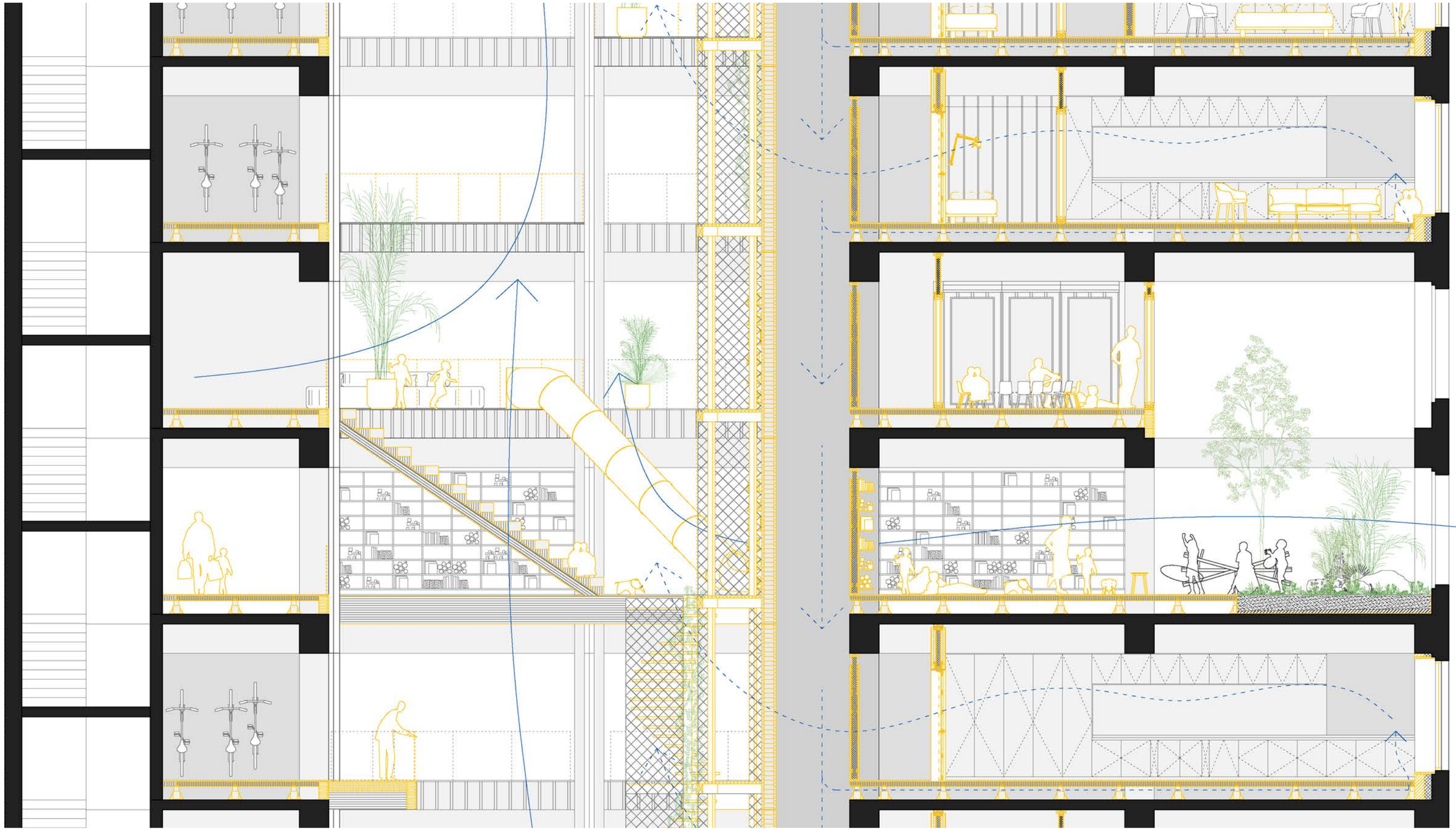


Comunity playground - Boxes and private rooms
11th floor plan

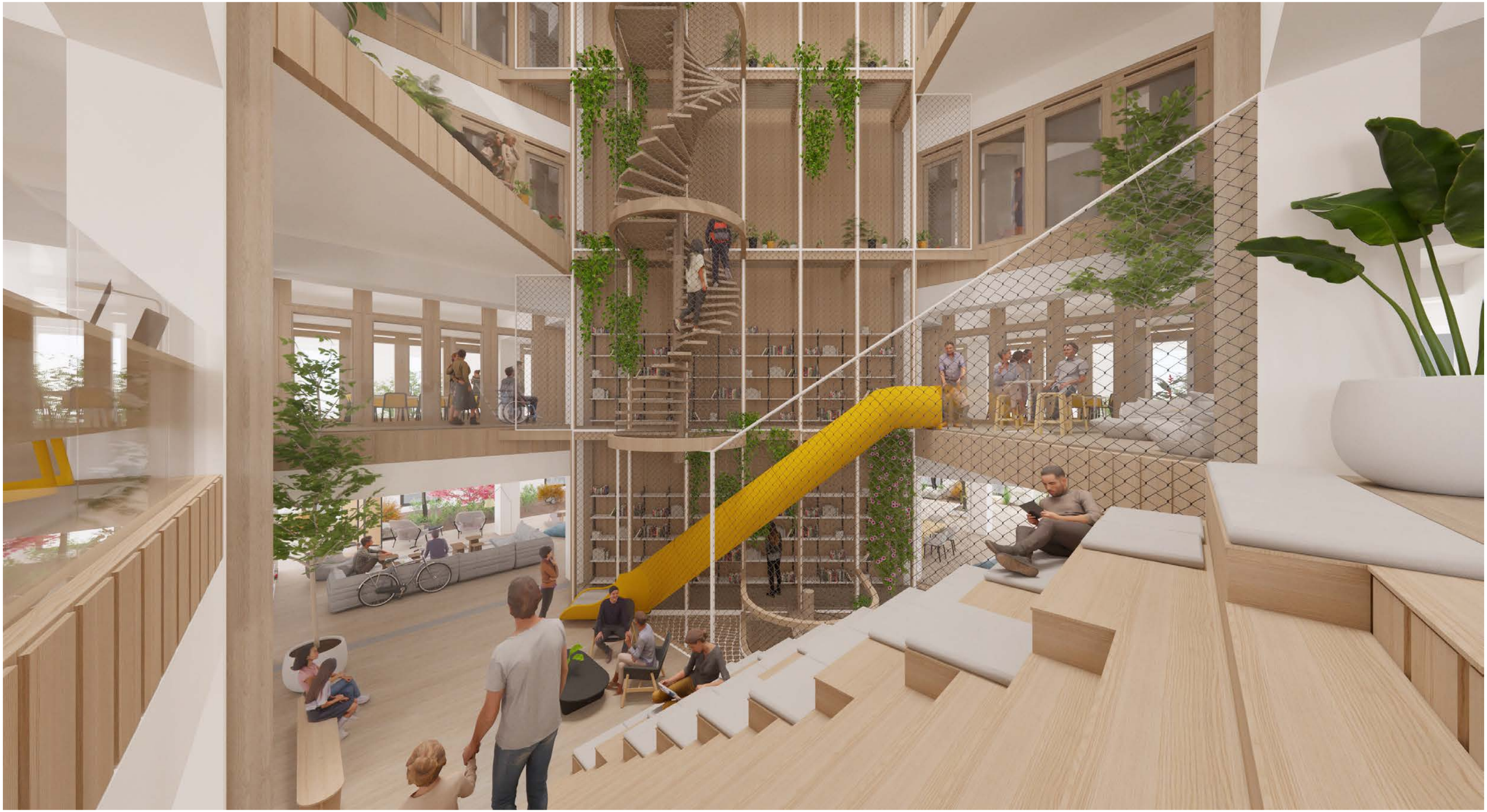


Community garden - Common area
24th floor plan



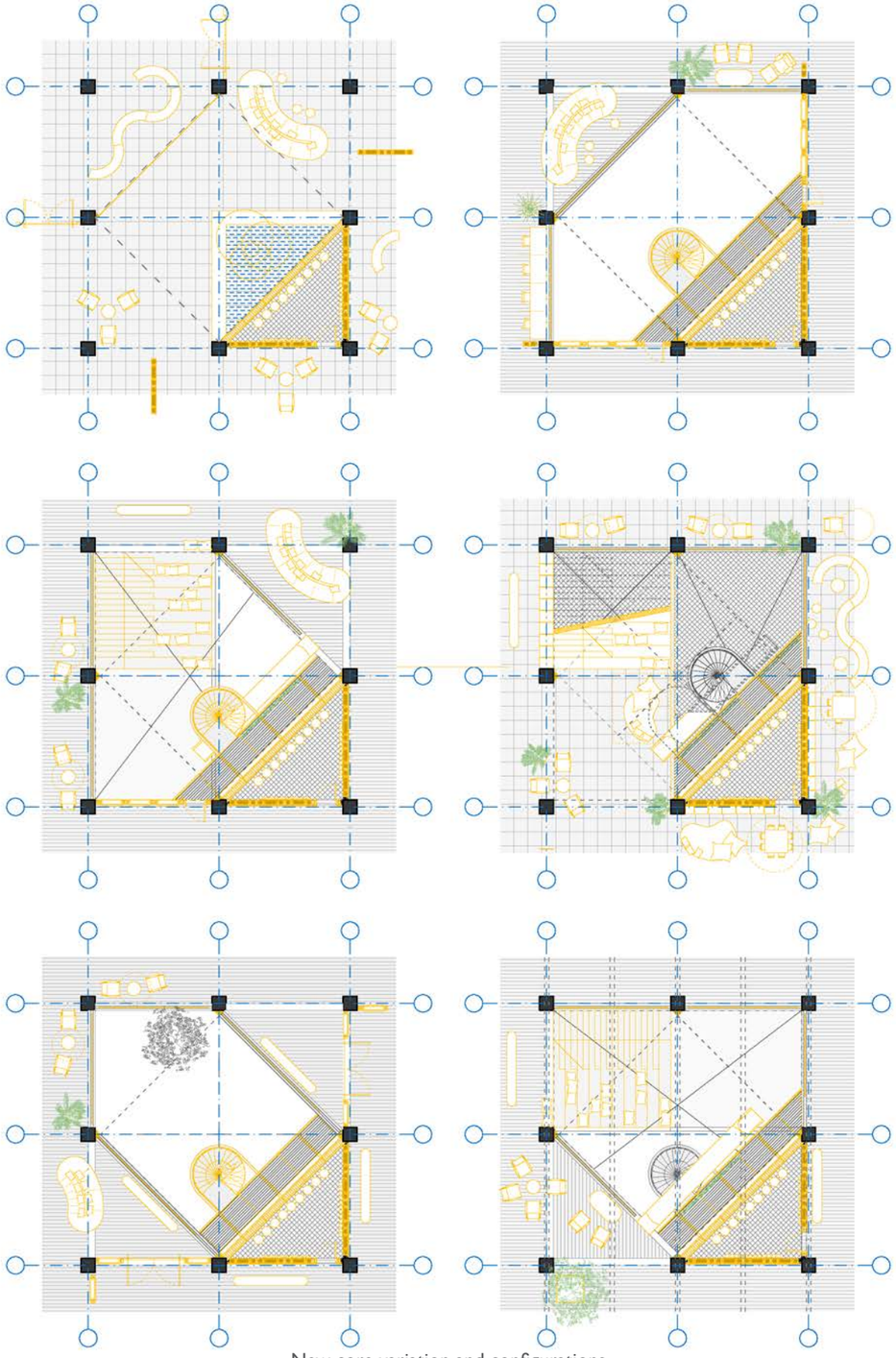


Community playground section

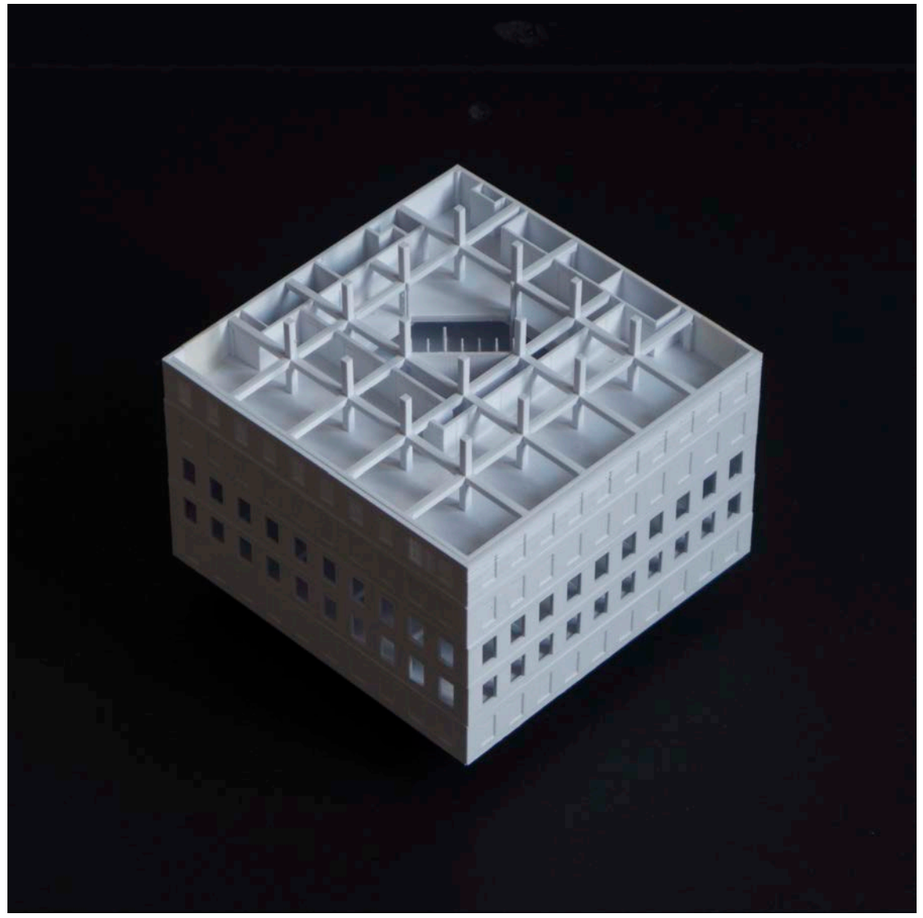


Community lounge upper level - New core view

Community playground lower level

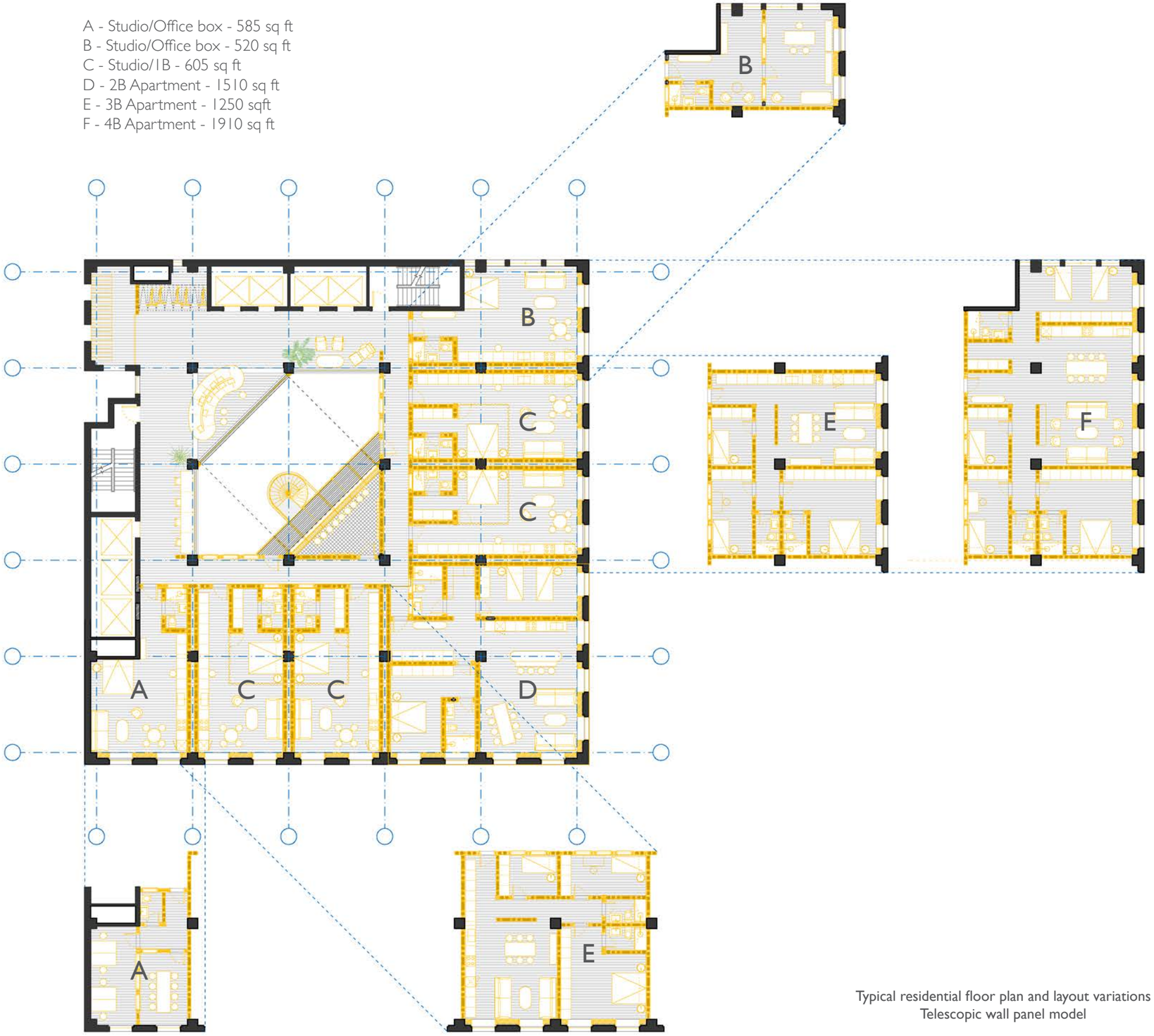


New core variation and configurations

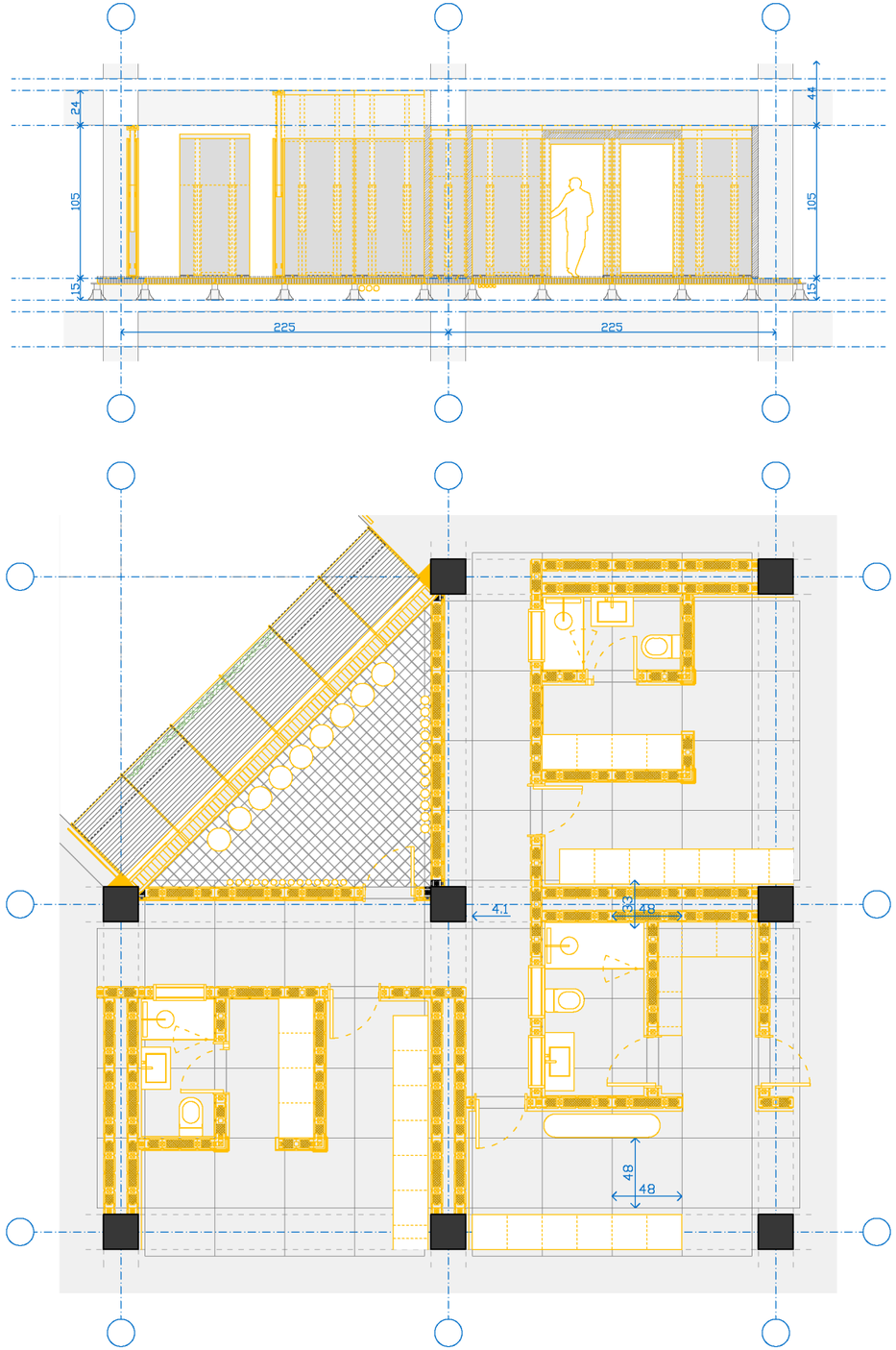


Piece of building model

A - Studio/Office box - 585 sq ft
B - Studio/Office box - 520 sq ft
C - Studio/1B - 605 sq ft
D - 2B Apartment - 1510 sq ft
E - 3B Apartment - 1250 sqft
F - 4B Apartment - 1910 sq ft



Typical residential floor plan and layout variations
Telescopic wall panel model



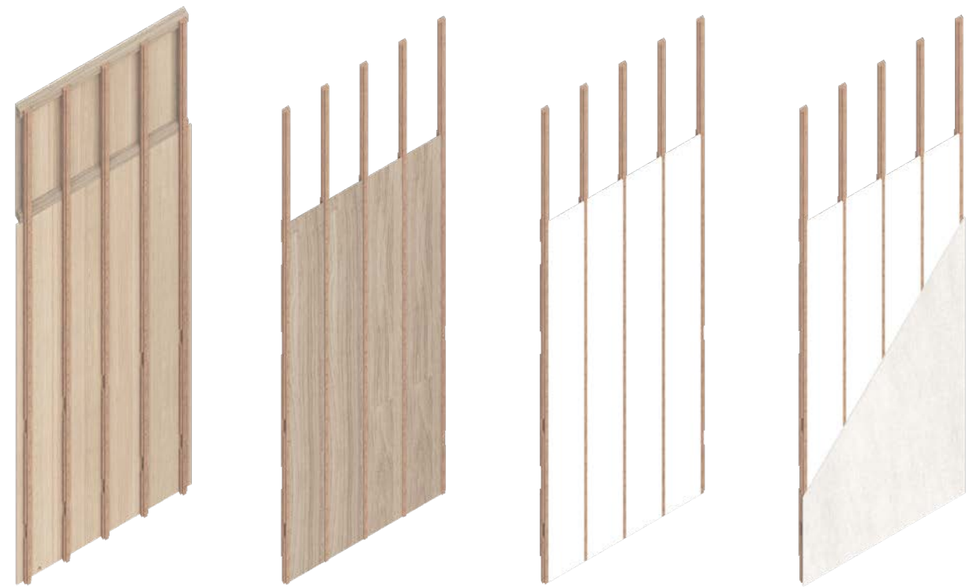
Modular system implementation

48” window panel

48” door panel

48” partition panel

24” partition panel



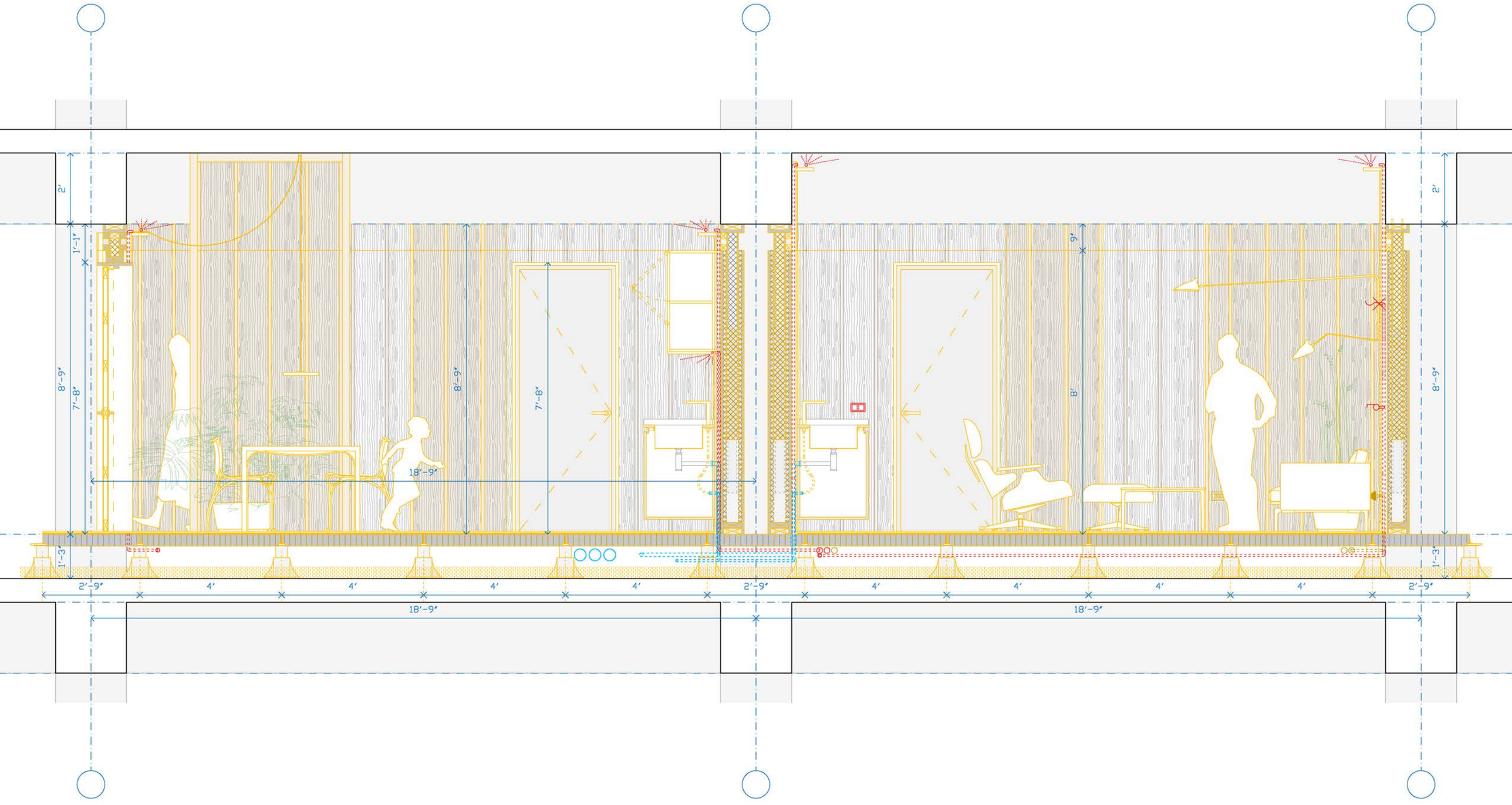
Wall panel finishing

Wooden finishing

Plasterboard finishing

Waterproof finishing

Wall panel catalog and finishing panels alternatives



Section of modular system implementation

Mounting construction system

Construction system (Wooden finishing option)

Wooden guide rail and slab anchor

Attachment of wall panel to guide rail

Wooden guide rail and floor anchor

Wall panel mounting over guide rail

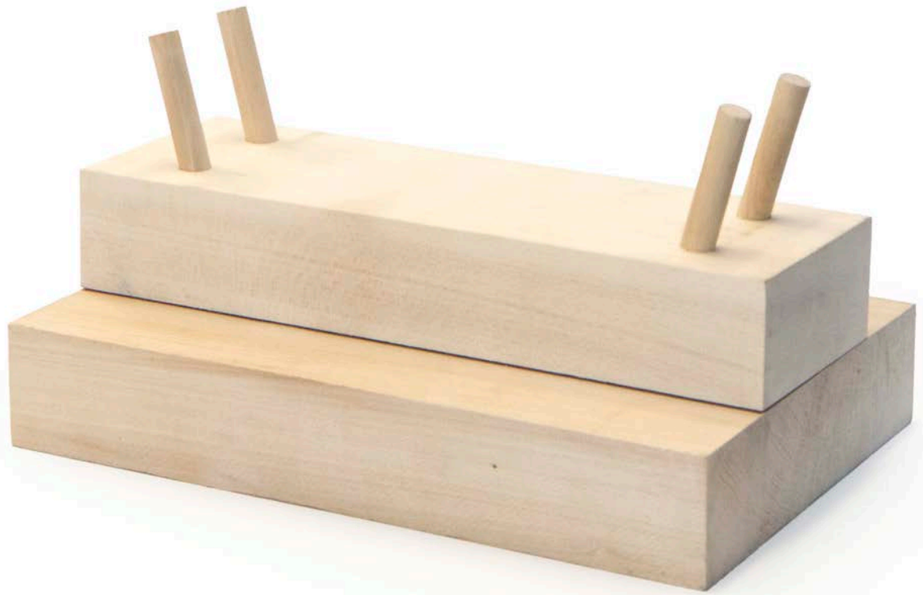
Lock piece, strips and wood finishing panels

Ceiling finishing

Special strip spacer for plumbing

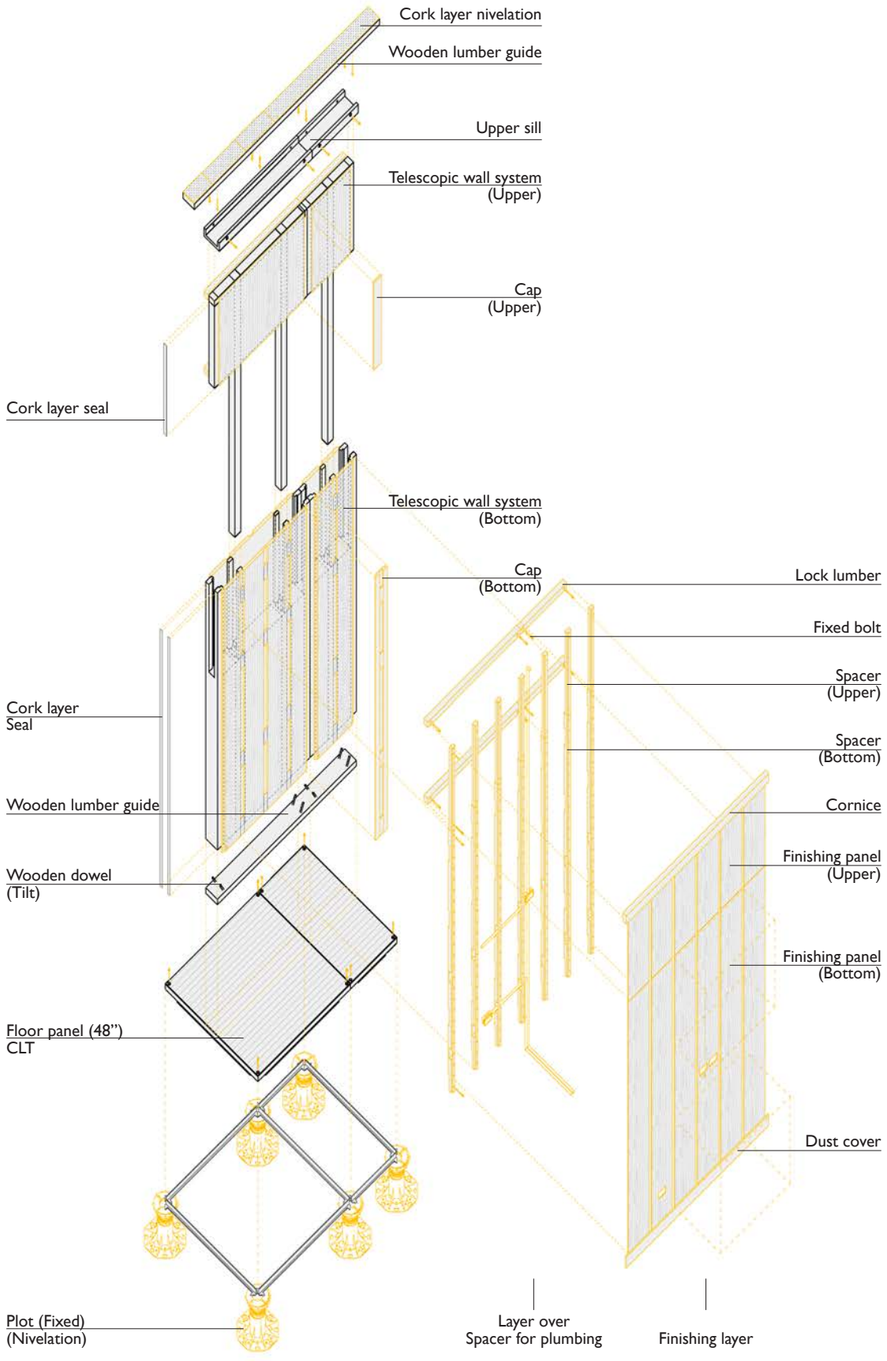
Anchor wall system for furniture

Details of mounting construction system

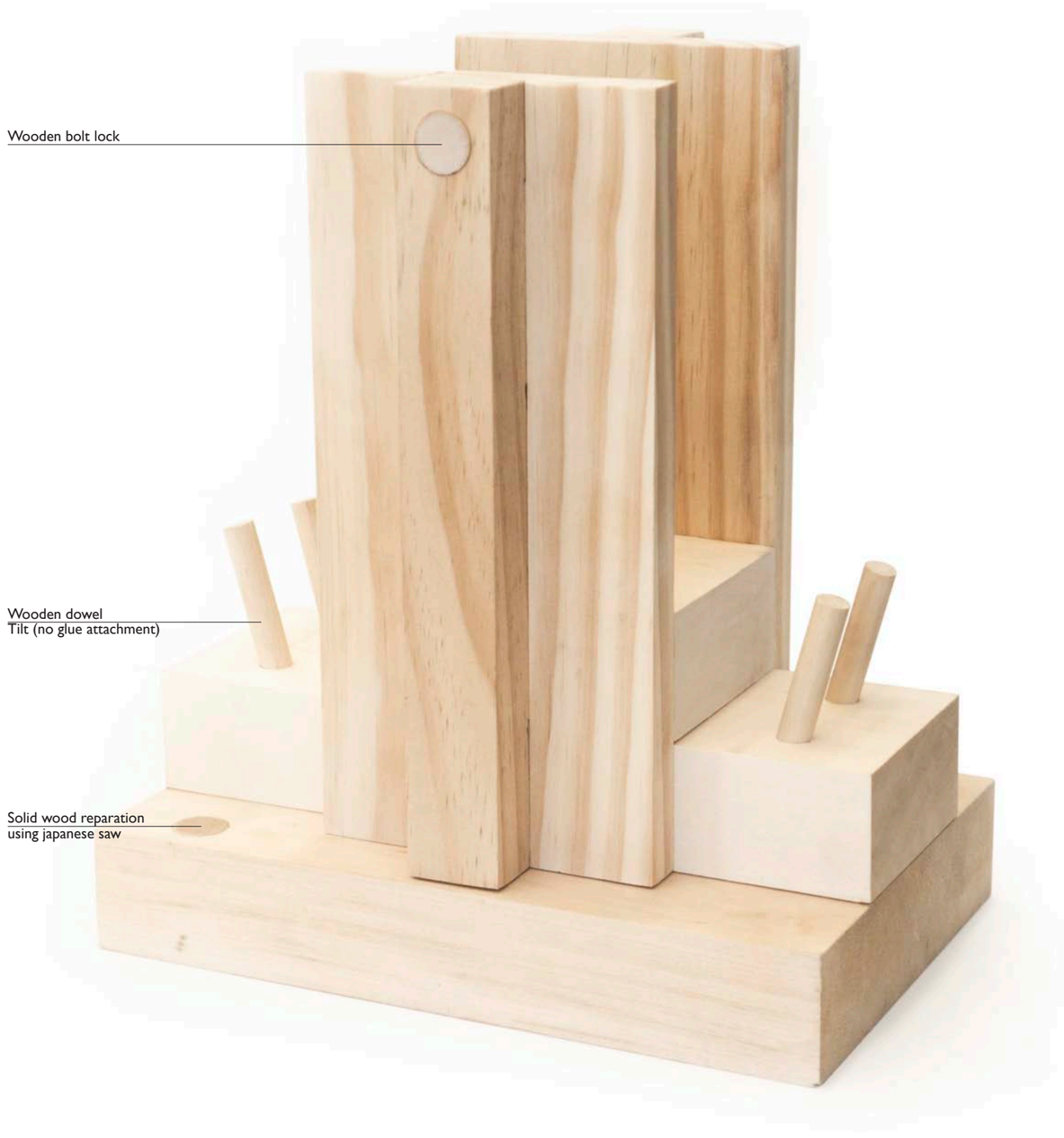


Prototype - Wooden guide rail attachment to wooden floor panel thougth tilt wooden bolt (no glue)

Prototype - Wall panel mounting on wooden guide rail.



Floor and wall system panels exploded axonometric



Prototype - Clear lumber attachment to wall panel.

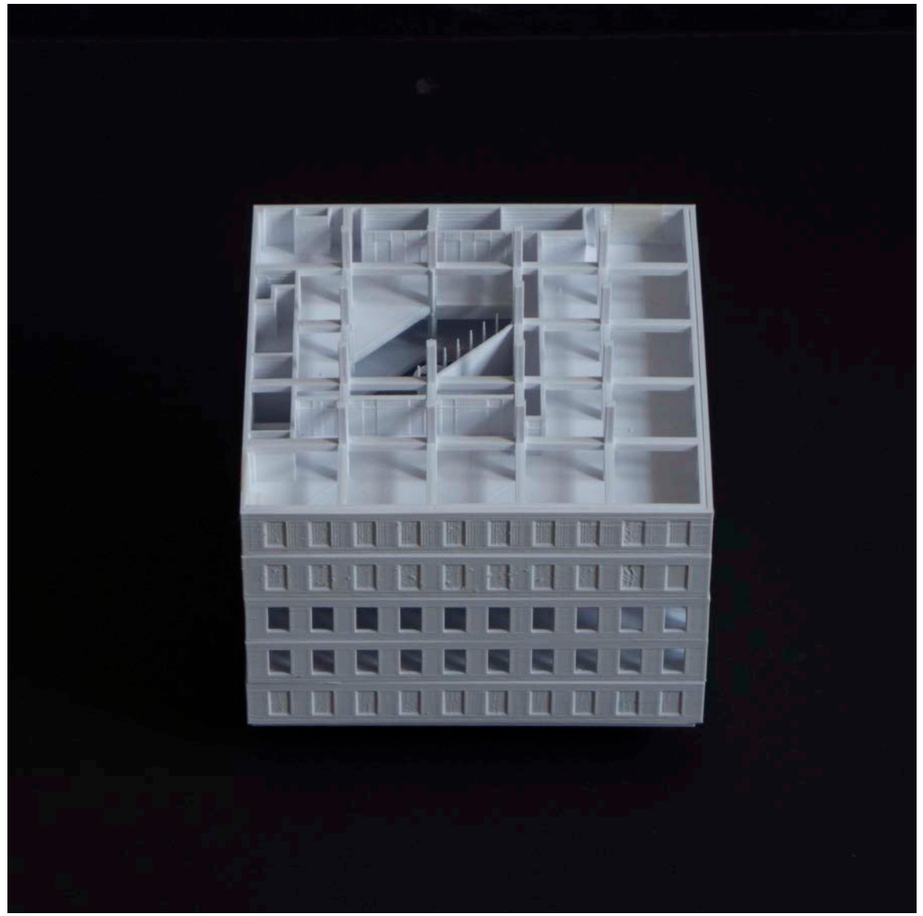
Apartment unit construction and maintenance and transformation sample

Mounting and assambly system

Wooden panel finishing attachment prototype

Special lumber trip mounting system

Modular panels system prototypes and models

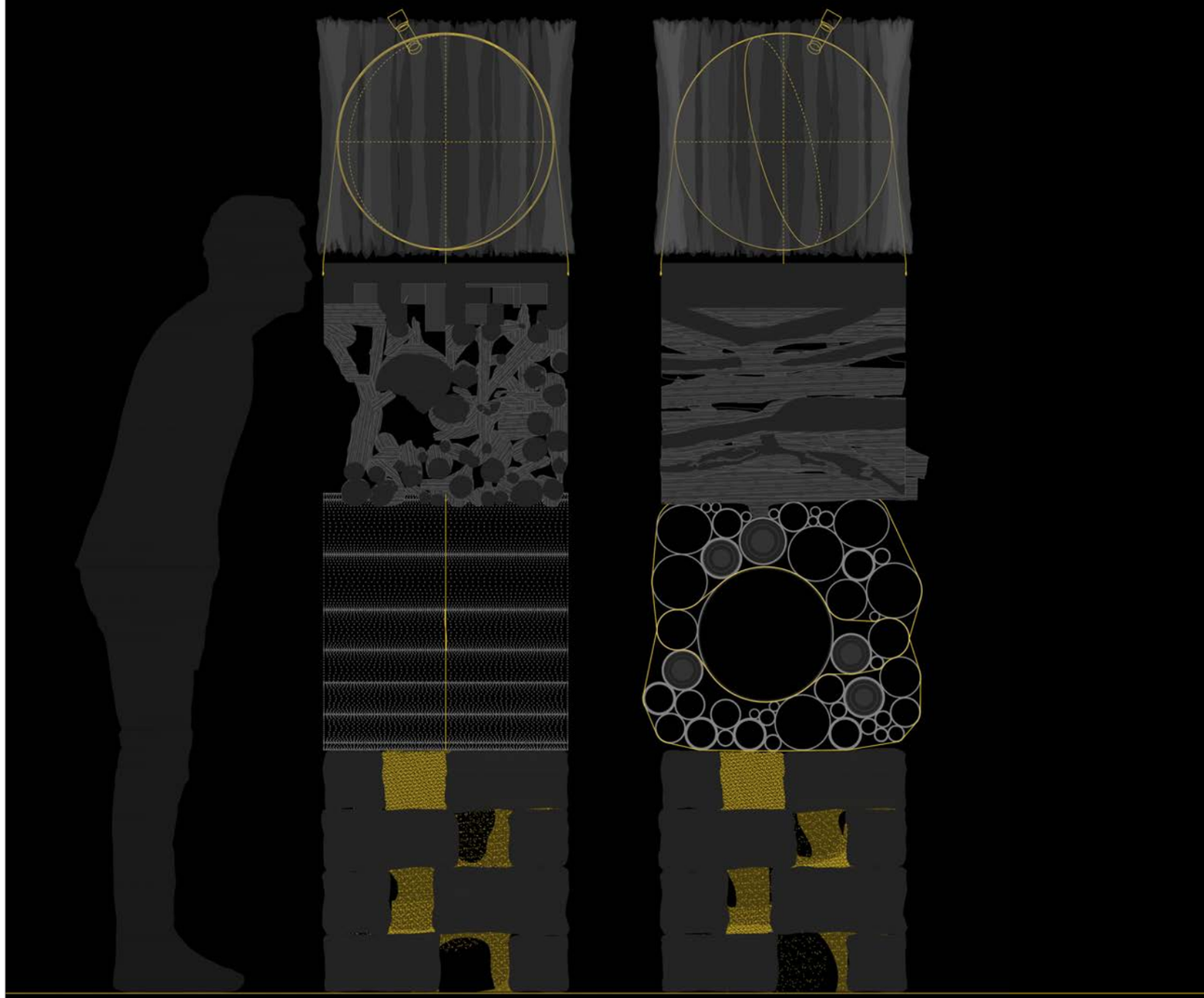


Piece of bulding model

SYSTEMS OF REPETITION

MAKING OF CONTRASTS

Materialization of ideas and concepts is an essential part of architecture, meeting with the physical world of weight, gravity, material tensions, and the specificity of each material, especially when they are part of the natural world. Systems of Repetition explores the form and organization of four different materials through the iteration of operations and elements, looking for a physical and emotional stabilization of them – and the resulting tower– by making contrasts. Amidst the personal exploration and introspection, while thinking, building, and shaping the four cubes, there was an awareness and concern about choosing and using the requested materials, the carbon footprint behind them, and the afterlife for reuse and recycling. The plastic cube –the more toxic of the four– aims to go as much lighter as possible using the minimum of material that could shape a cube, being, in turn, the opposite and contrast of the other three cubes.



Elevations of the cubes tower

Systems of repetition explores my lifelong obsession with finding and building systems that create balance and harmony through contrasts. The obsessions come from personal experiences with sound, music, instruments, expanded spaces, and quiet environments, which I pursue to materialize in the four cube iterations that systematically compile elements to create a sense of stability and calmness with minimal, simple, and systematic operations.

OBSESSIONS

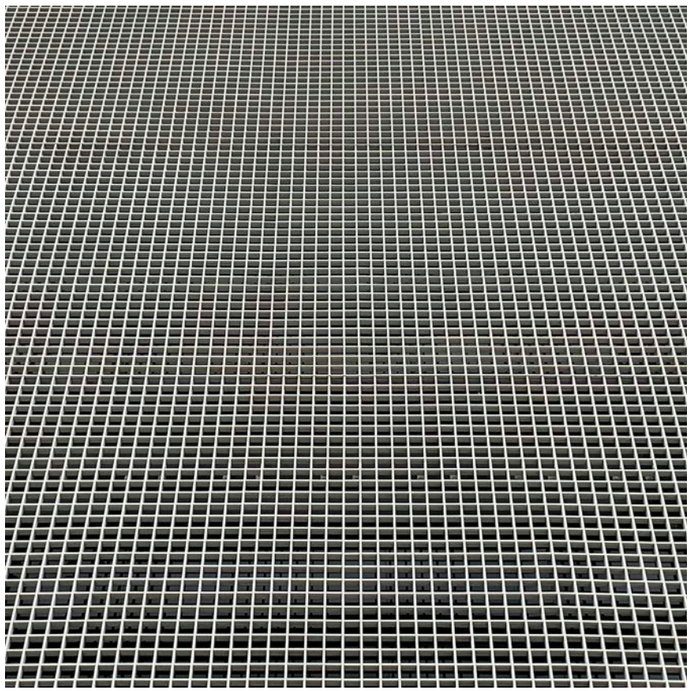
Chapter 1 consists of a collection of personal photographs of different kinds of systems of repetition shot in two instances. The first was during Studio Kinne Travel's trip to Brazil as an exercise and evidence that I found them everywhere. The second is my obsession with the pianos, which are systematic and simple-organized objects that can produce complex and beautiful sounds and compositions. Simple from the outside and complex and sophisticated on the inside. Related to the latter, and probably related to my personality, I have always been fascinated and obsessed with repetition, organization, stacking, and so on, looking for some level of abstraction and, in turn, a new perception of extension. Chapters 2 and 3 navigate to the spaces I continuously try to reach, enjoy, and frame. Most of the time, it is by looking for that level of abstraction, getting this feeling of extension, expansion, continuity, deepness, and emptiness, that somehow results in a horizontal direction. Sometimes –among this horizon– I found transitions and continuities, creating a feeling of smooth continuity and progression. Finally, Chapter 4 explores a late experience with snow, which extended and embodied the latter reflections, bringing me very comfortable feelings. The whiteness and the silence of the snow bring with them the feeling of neutrality, simplicity, extension, lightness, quietness, and calm as if the environment floats a little.

CUBES

The four 18" cube iterations explore these obsessions, experiences, and observations through repetitions and a game of contrasts. (1) The first cube, made of bricks and earth, creates a contrast between a systematic, regular, and standard enclosure structure, which then was filled with earth and finally dug on it to get an organic and continuous hidden space. (2) The second explores the dual features of metal pipes, open faces, and blindsides. They were cut with the same 18" length and then heaped in the same direction, tied with one wire using a unique metal quality: thin and strong to tension. Thus, it results in a contrast between transparency and blindness. (3) The third goes further with the latter idea of stacking elements cut with the same lengthm but it added the concept of transitions through operations and composition using branches and wood strips from dense to void space, from raw to manufactured pieces of wood, and from irregular organic faces to a flat, empty, and horizontal surface on top. (4) Since the first three iterations were heavy and opaque, I wanted to balance by doing the opposite, a contrast of the whole, going as light as possible using plastic qualities of lightness, transparency, and inflation. The last cube iteration is suspended, almost floating, creating this horizontal gap in tension –but calm simultaneously– between objects in contrast. At the same time, the plastic cube has its own internal contrasts between the core and the wrapper, deflated and inflated and wrinkled and smooth.

DRAWINGS

The drawings of the cubes aim to systematically build floor plans and sections like an x-ray study of each, exploring a different kind of documentation through repetition of an operation, revealing and highlighting in yellow the concealed and sophisticated world inside what is in plain sight.



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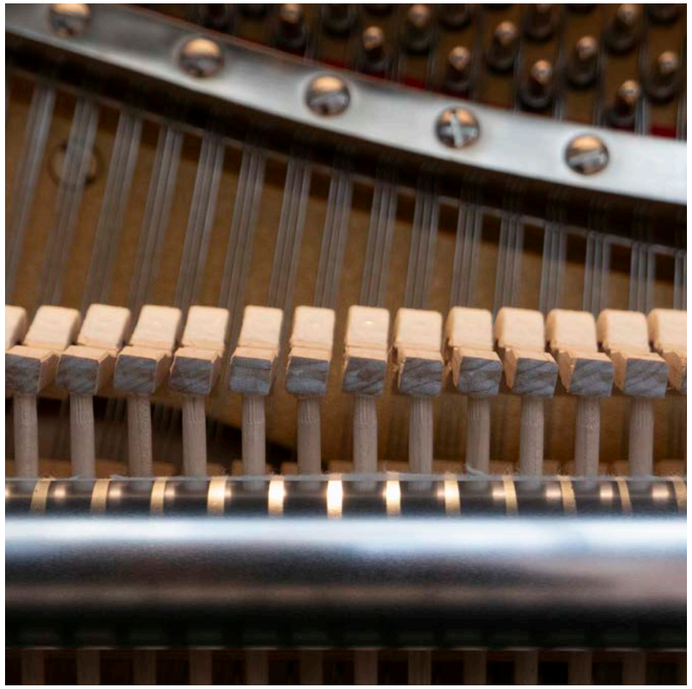
CHAPTER 1



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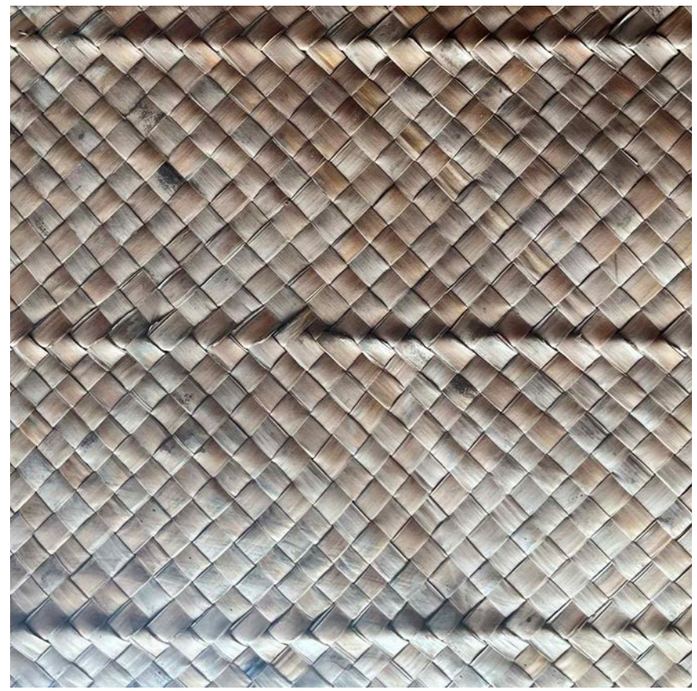

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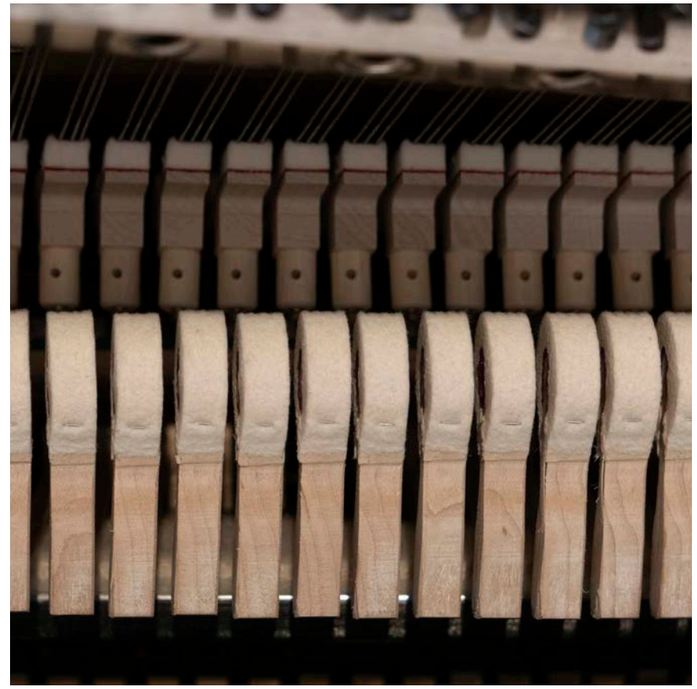
SYSTEMS I FOUND AND FRAME



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(1) Brasilia National Library Façade system from outside. Brasilia, Brazil
(2) Steinway & Sons Grand piano internal system and pieces. Steinway Hall. New York, USA.
(3) Kalunga's craftsman fabric envelope. Aldeia Multiétnica Alto Paraíso de Goiás, Brazil.
(4) Steinway & Sons Upright piano internal system and pieces. Steinway Hall. New York, USA.

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CHAPTER II

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3

MOMENTS OF EXPANSION

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(1) Single boat at the sea. Tongoy Bay, Chile.
(2) Pisco Elqui Wine farms. Pisco, Chile.
(3) MUSEU Nacional da República Ground edge from outside. Brasilia Brazil.
(4) National Congress Water edge. Brasilia Brazil.

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CHAPTER III

3

TRANSITIONS AND SHELTERS

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(1) Catedral Metropolitana Nossa Senhora Aparecida Baptistery Outside facade. Brasilia, Brazil.
(2) National Congress Main entrance. Brasilia Brazil.
(3)Organ Piano wooden tambour cov er. St. Paul's Chapel, Columbia University Campus. New York, USA.
(4) Kylo Ren at Exegol entrance. Star Wars Episode IX: The Rise of Skywalker screenshot.

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CHAPTER 1

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SNOW: A NEW EXPERIENCE OF EXPANSION

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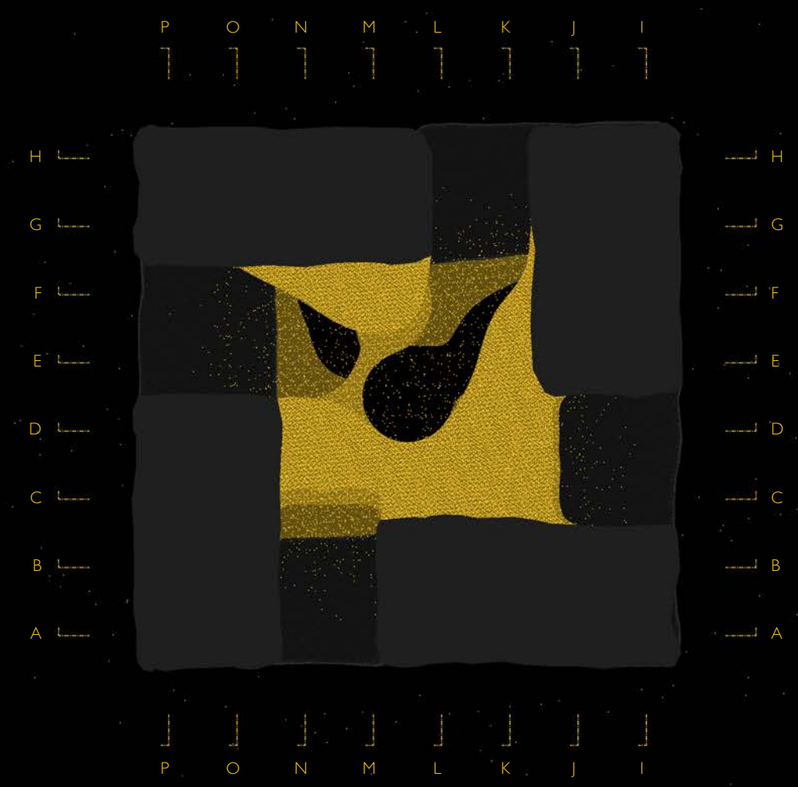
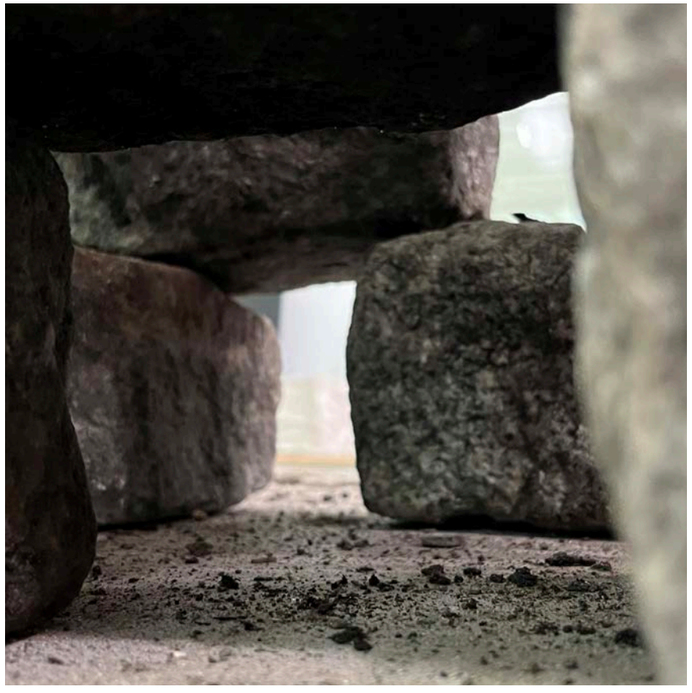
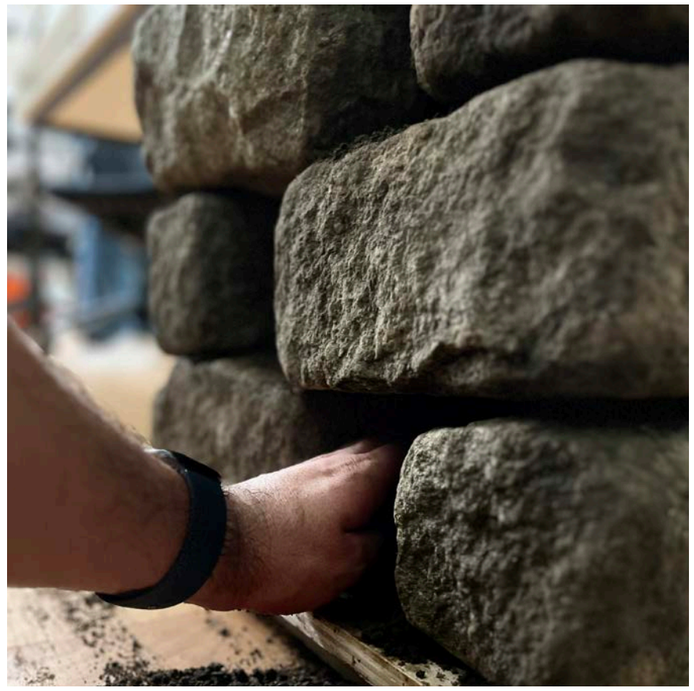
(1) Close-up of snow over dry bushes. Central Park. New York USA
(2) Macro of crystallized snow over horizontal brunch. Central Park. New York USA
(3) Snow over Sheep Meadow. Central Park. New York USA.
(4) Macro of crystallized snow. Central Park. New York USA

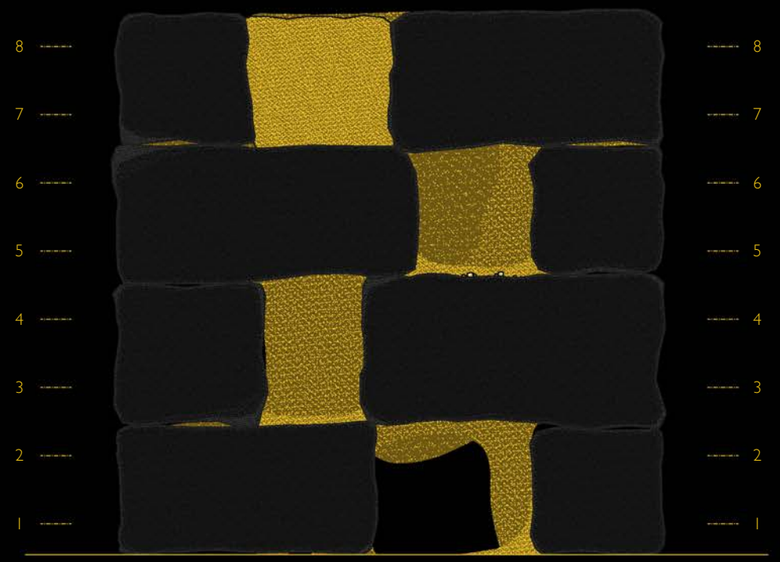


Floor plan 4

Cube 1 is an object made of stone bricks and earth. Each material uses its qualities to get opposite languages intended to work together or, at least, coexist. The cube consists of a perimetral square structure of stocked stone bricks in a regular, conventional, and repetitive way, leaving gaps between the bricks and generating holes and perforated faces in the cube, allowing the outside to connect with the inside. The cube's interior was entirely filled with earth and dug from the side holes, getting a continuous fluid mass that touches and stabilizes the bricks from the inside. The center of the cube is voided and has a vertical empty core, which is connected to the dug holes –from the gap between the bricks– of the faces. Just as the earth's mass is given as an organic continuum form, so is the center void. It is the negative. Cube 1 is a game of contrast between two worlds: the regular, known, rough, and systematic enclosure made with defined elements, with a hidden, unknown, smooth, and continuous mono-material space. It is made with natural, easy-to-get, and easy-to-handled materials. They are lent materials that will be returned to their original site, leaving no footprint of the use and making no money spent. Cubie 1 is an iteration and expression of myself.







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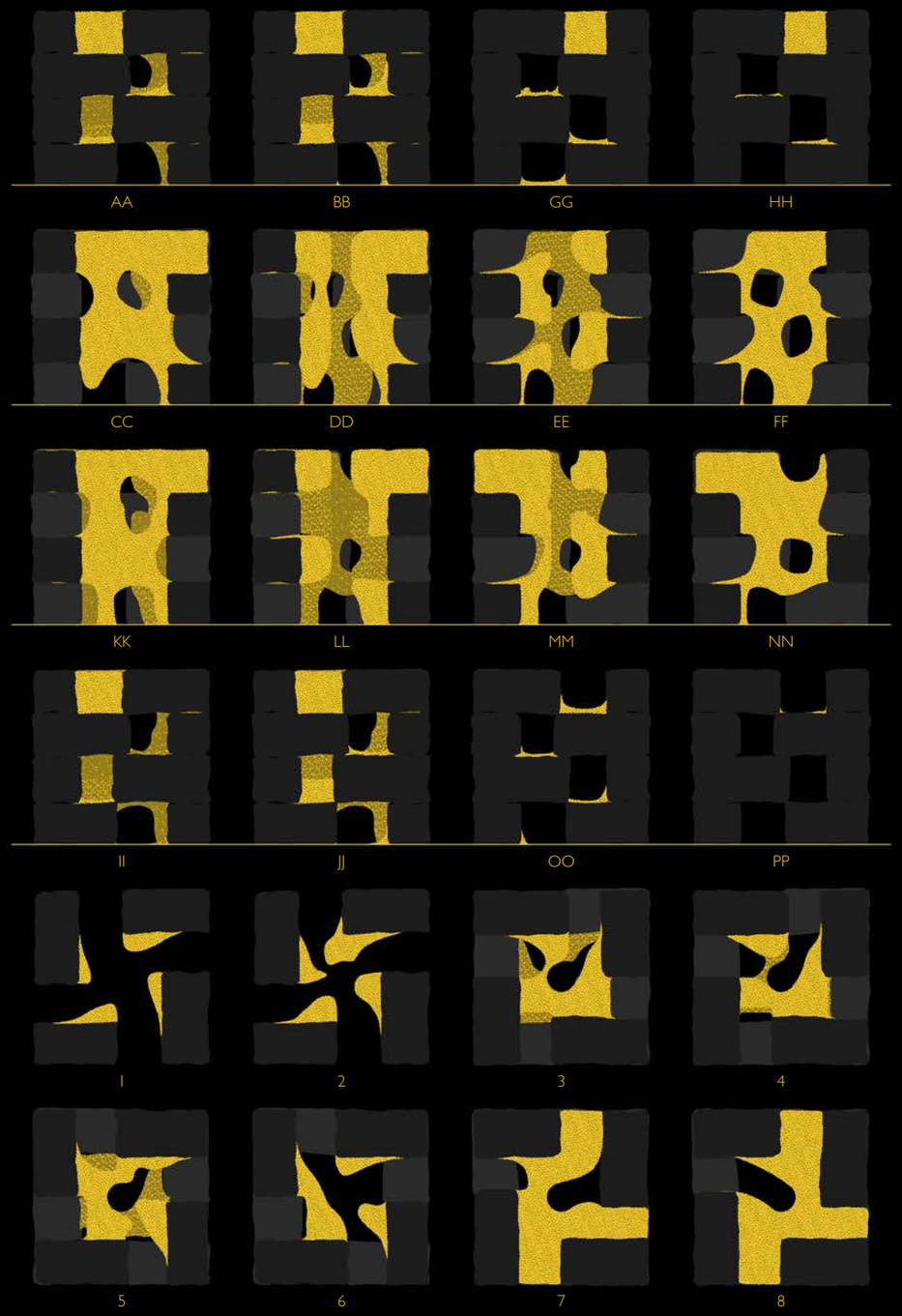
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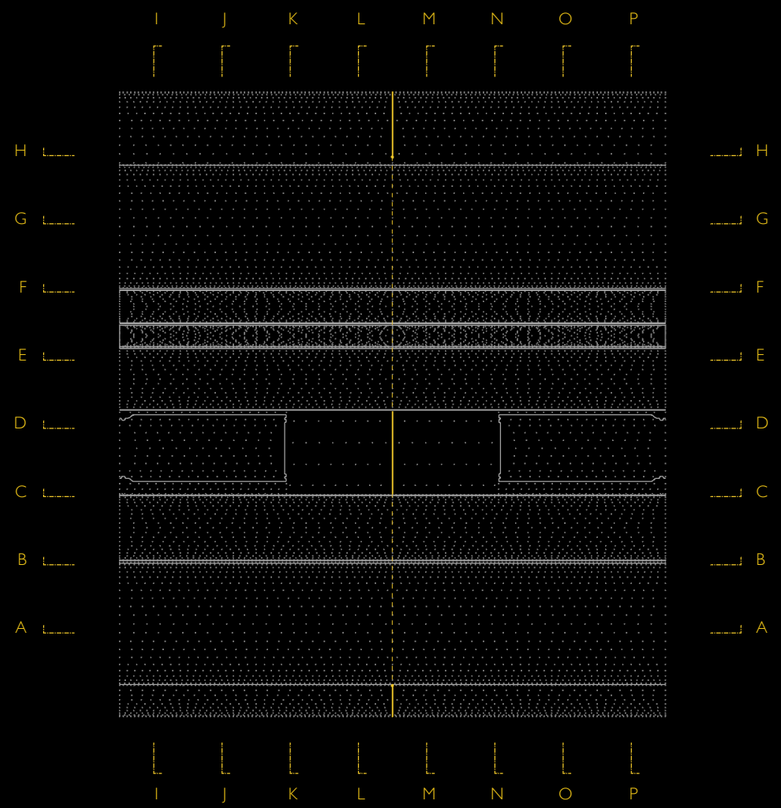
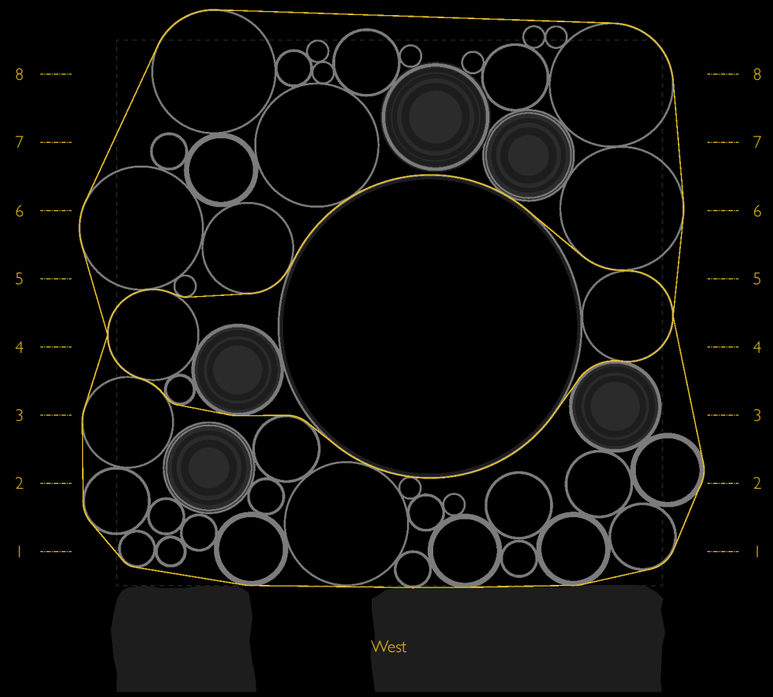


Floor plan 8

Cube 2 is made of many metal pipes cut to the same length and then compiled horizontally in a square metal cage. The cage was removed during the process, keeping the resulting cube wrapped with minimum wires. Some pipes were presented and found that way, others intervened, and others assembled. In turn, some of them are snippets –but are aligned in the same path-– and others are incomplete and capped. Some have holes that link to others. Some are heavy and meaningful for stabilization, and others are light and wide, filling the space. Some are clean and pristine, and others are marked or damaged. Some are opaque, and others are bright and reflective. All Pipes are compiled in the same direction – wrapped with a fragile but strong element, contrasting two opposite sides. One is blind, and the other is entirely open, exposed, and transparent. As expected, there are always hidden, unformed spaces and experiences between the pipes to be discovered and explored. Cube 2 is made of pipe remnants and fragments that can be recycled or reused due to their integrity preservation as hermetic tubes. Cubie 2 is a systematic iteration and expression of the accumulation of experiences in the continuous process of life.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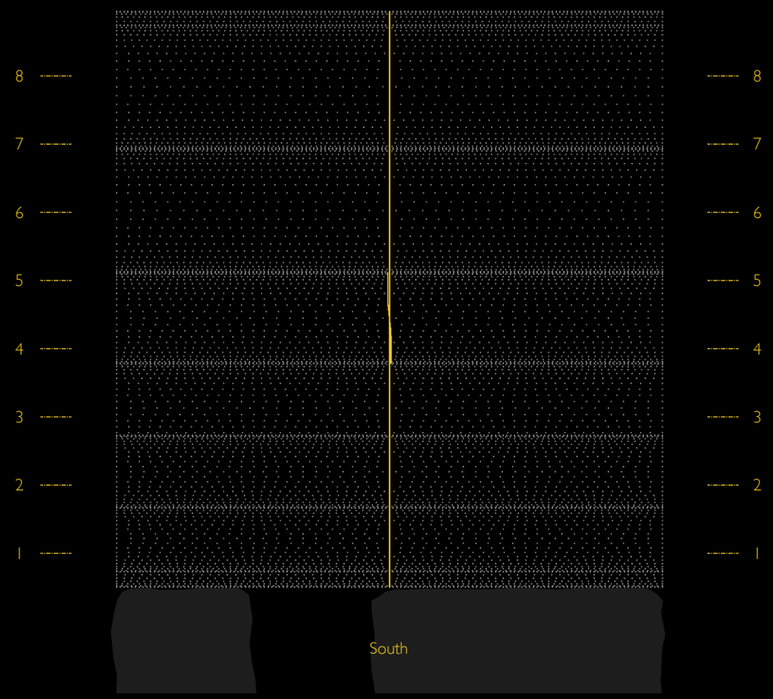
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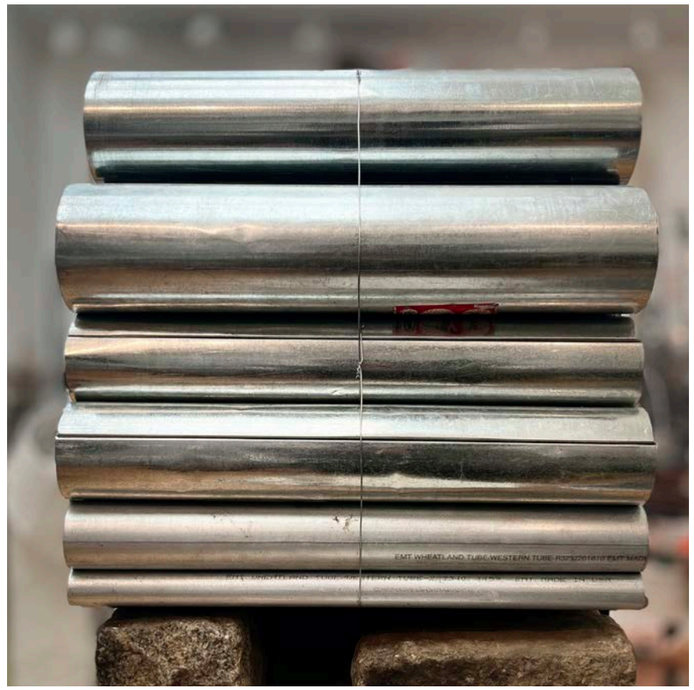

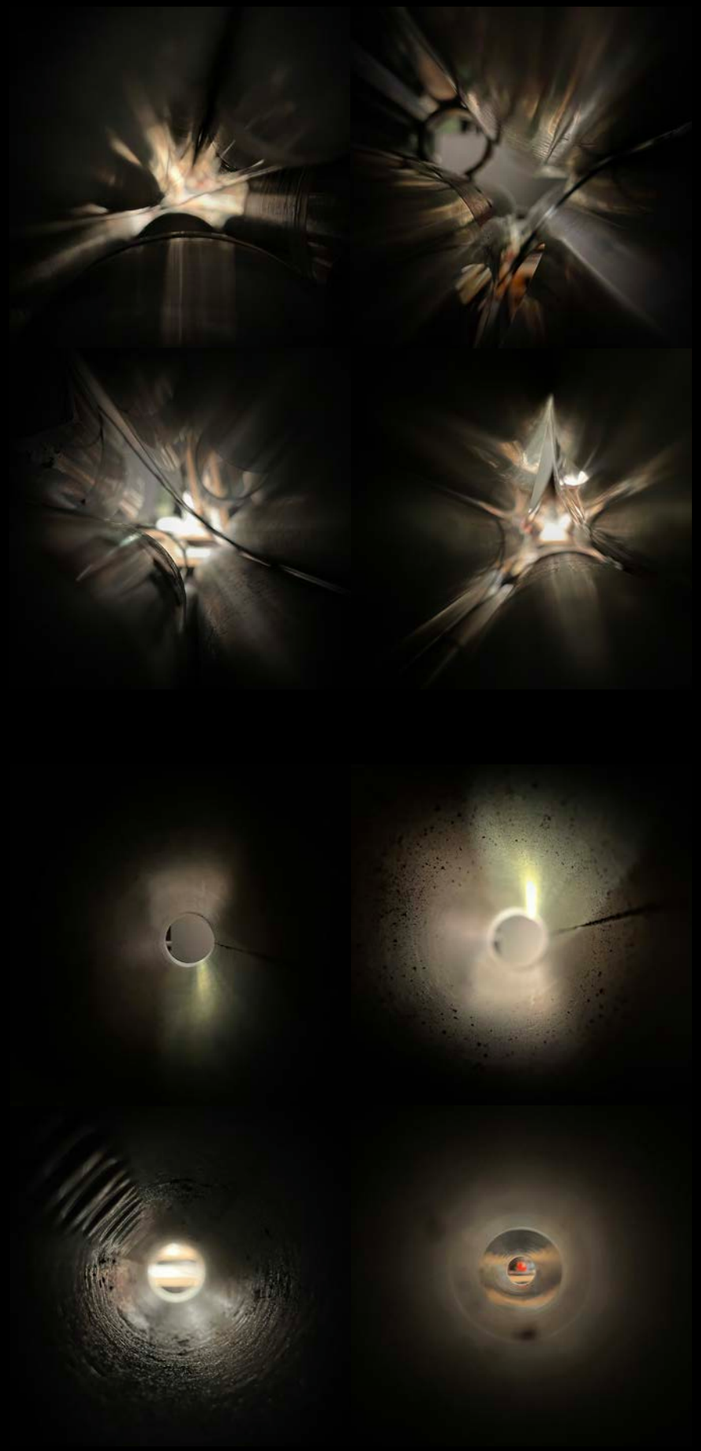

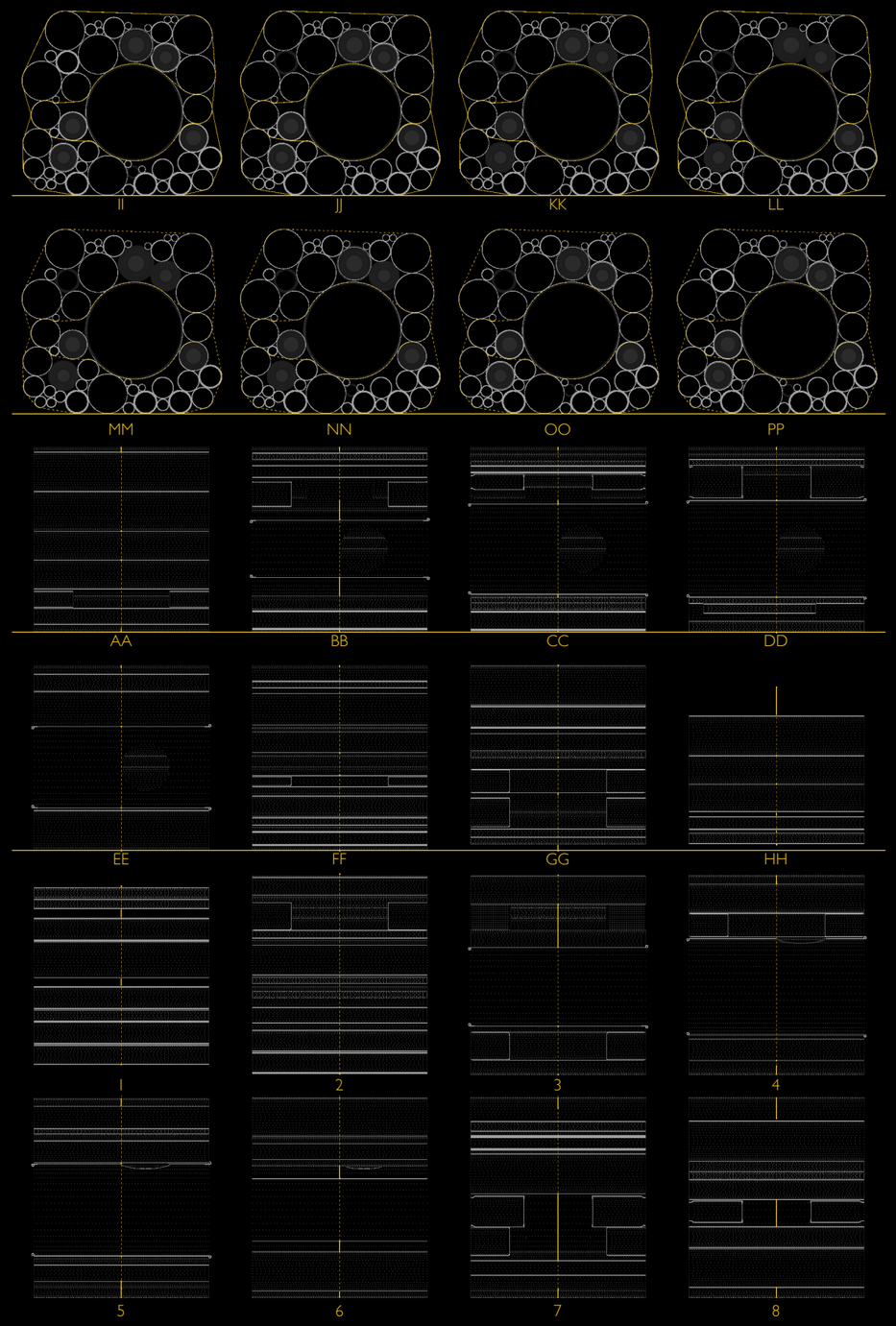
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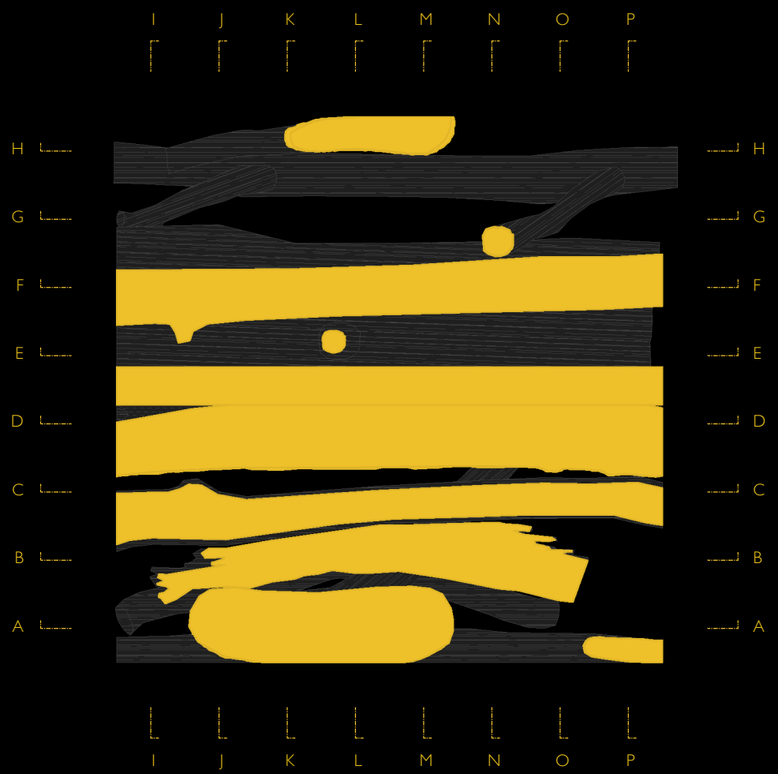
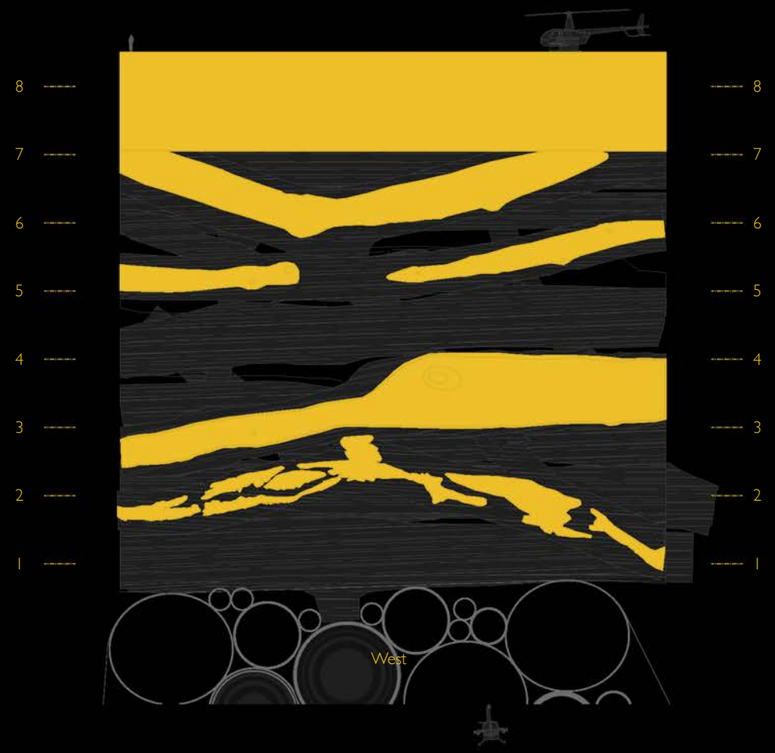


Floor plan 3

Cube 3 is made of different branches, planks, and lumbers cut to the same length and then stacked horizontally –as much as possible– creating transitions and moments in the contrasted and shaped cube. Vertically, from raw branches to shaped and sanded clean wooden strips. In the same direction, a transition from the complex and natural forms of stacked branches to a straight systematic organization of the planks and lumbers without in-between space, creating a whole new flat and open space. Horizontally, from a dense area of lumbers and branches to an empty, void space among the pieces and from the wildness and freedom of the branches forms to the flattened by cutting them to conceive a shaped cube. Paradoxically, the cube was built upside down, starting with a clean, flat, and horizontal surface and getting wild to the top, which later was turned up to leave the new extended and open surface to upcoming events. Cube 3 is made with natural materials using minimum additives. They can be easily reused, recycled, and decomposed, leaving no footprint of the use. Cubie 3 is a complex expression of transitions, processes, and moments under a clean, shaped, and open surface for following new experiences.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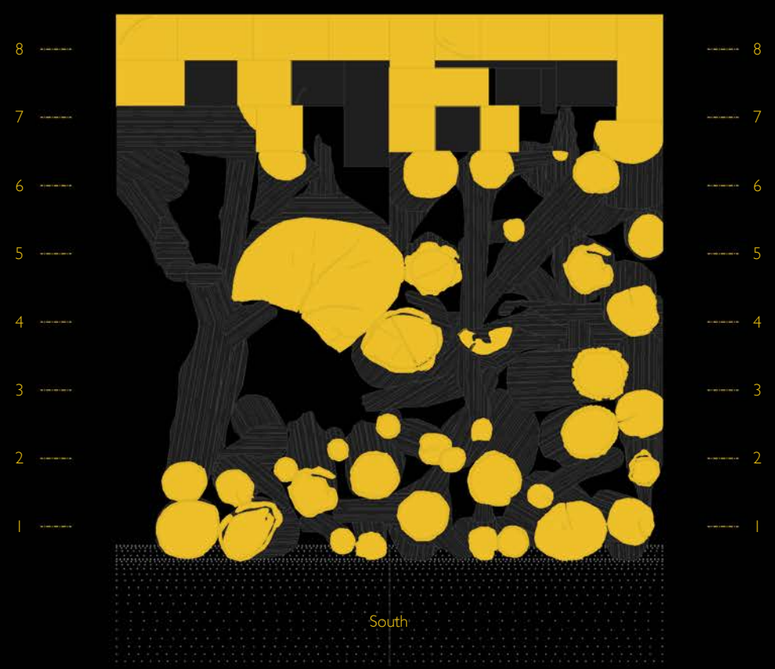
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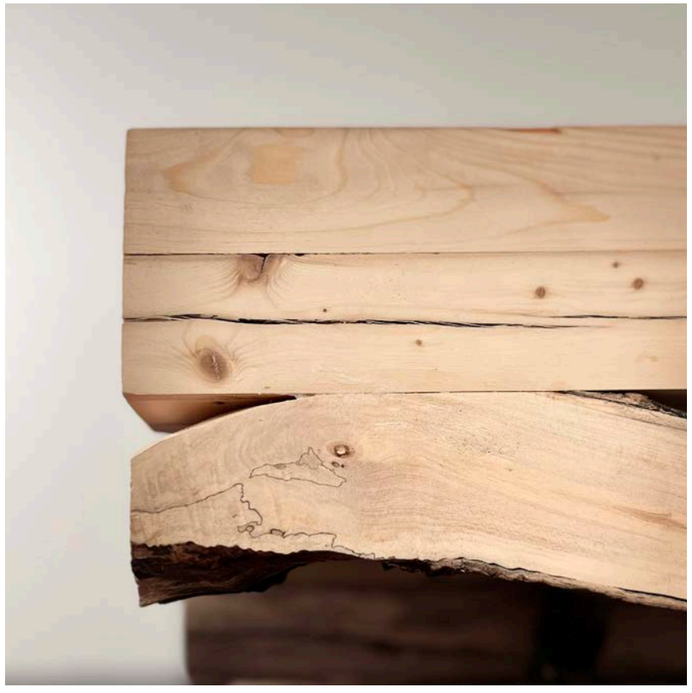

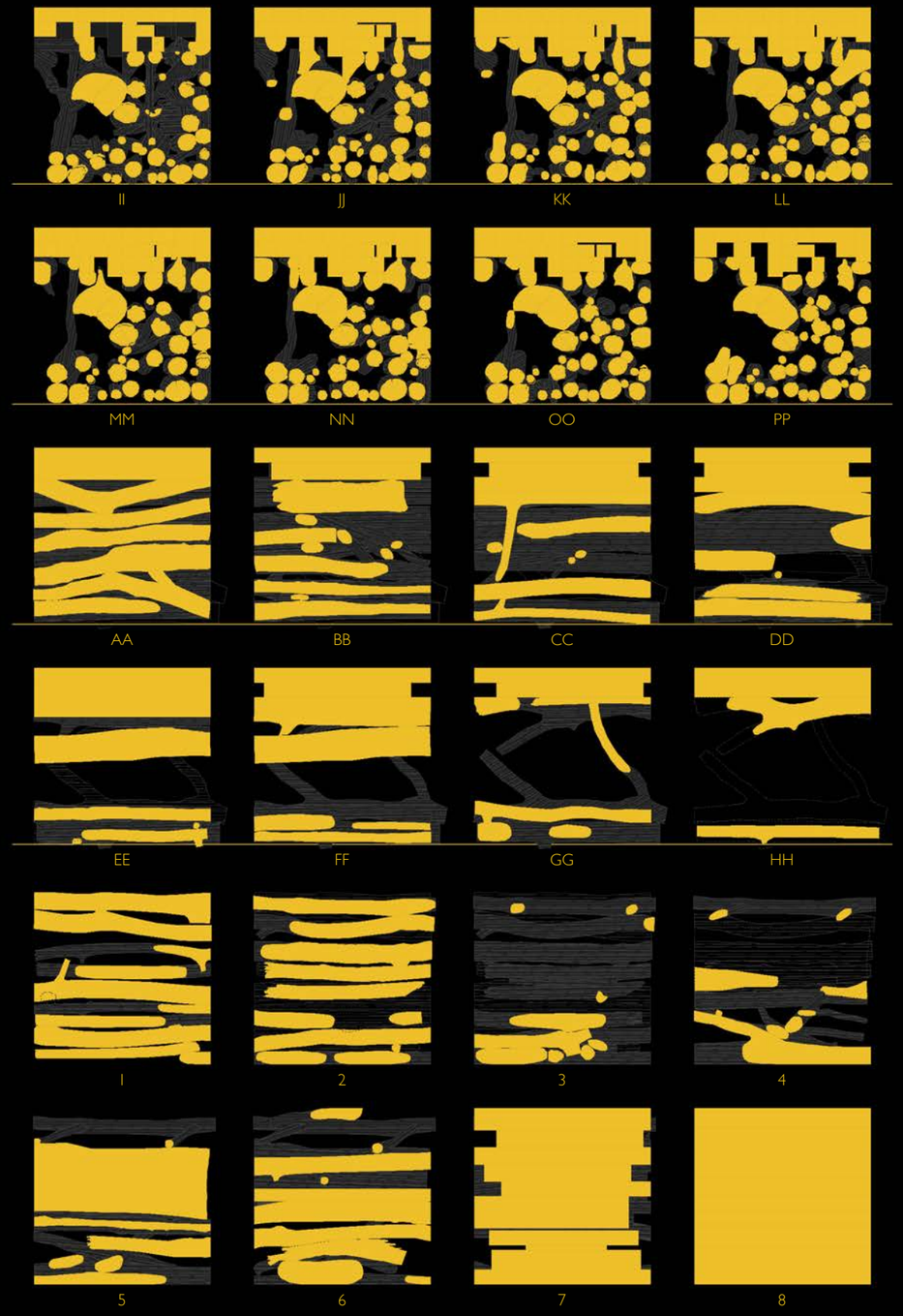
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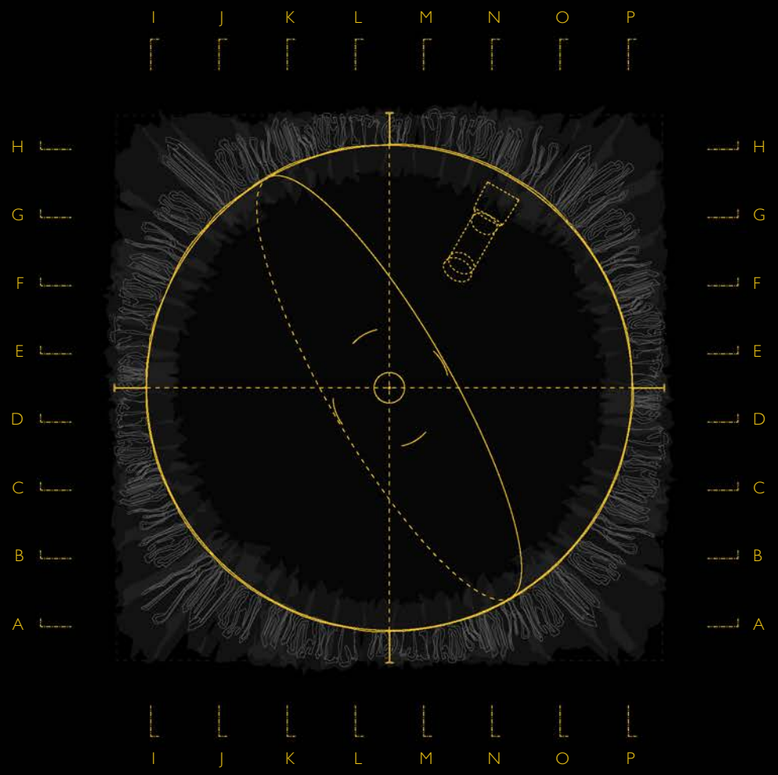
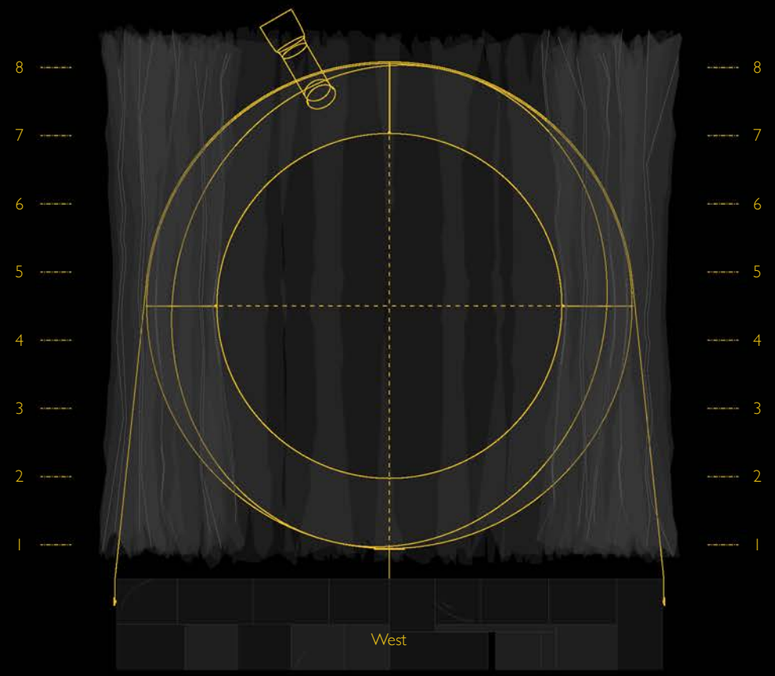


Floor plan 4

Cube 4 is a delicate object. It is sophisticated since it aims to reach a large volume with very light and minimum materials. It is half-controlled and contrasted. It has a raised structure that is significantly formed and precise, and a wild wrapping that is forced to generate a cube shape. The core was made with one large 18" balloon inflated with helium, anchored to the base through nylon strings, leaving a gap over the base with a single-point support spacer. The wrapping was made of plastic bags, the cheapest, worst quality, and lighter bags of supermarkets, commonly for fruit, vegetables, and bread. These were perforated and bundled with a single ribbon, forming a belt that was then put around the balloon, leaving the resulting volume in suspension to the base, getting an in-between horizontal space. The bags were individually arranged by hand to keep a vertical direction, trying to achieve a cube shape, using the folding of each and their collaborative position. Cube 4 aims to go wild and free with minimum operations and components, pursuing suspension and lightness. It is a way out to liberation: to go lighter, simpler, and detached using precise and sophisticated techniques, being the opposite –and contrast– of the first three cubes in weight and density, pushing to the limit some unique combined qualities of plastic: lightness and translucency.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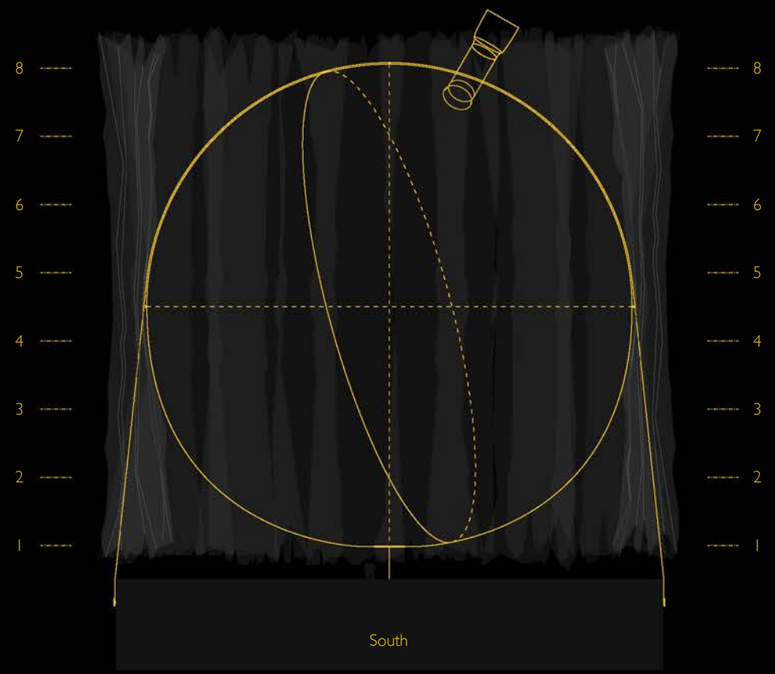
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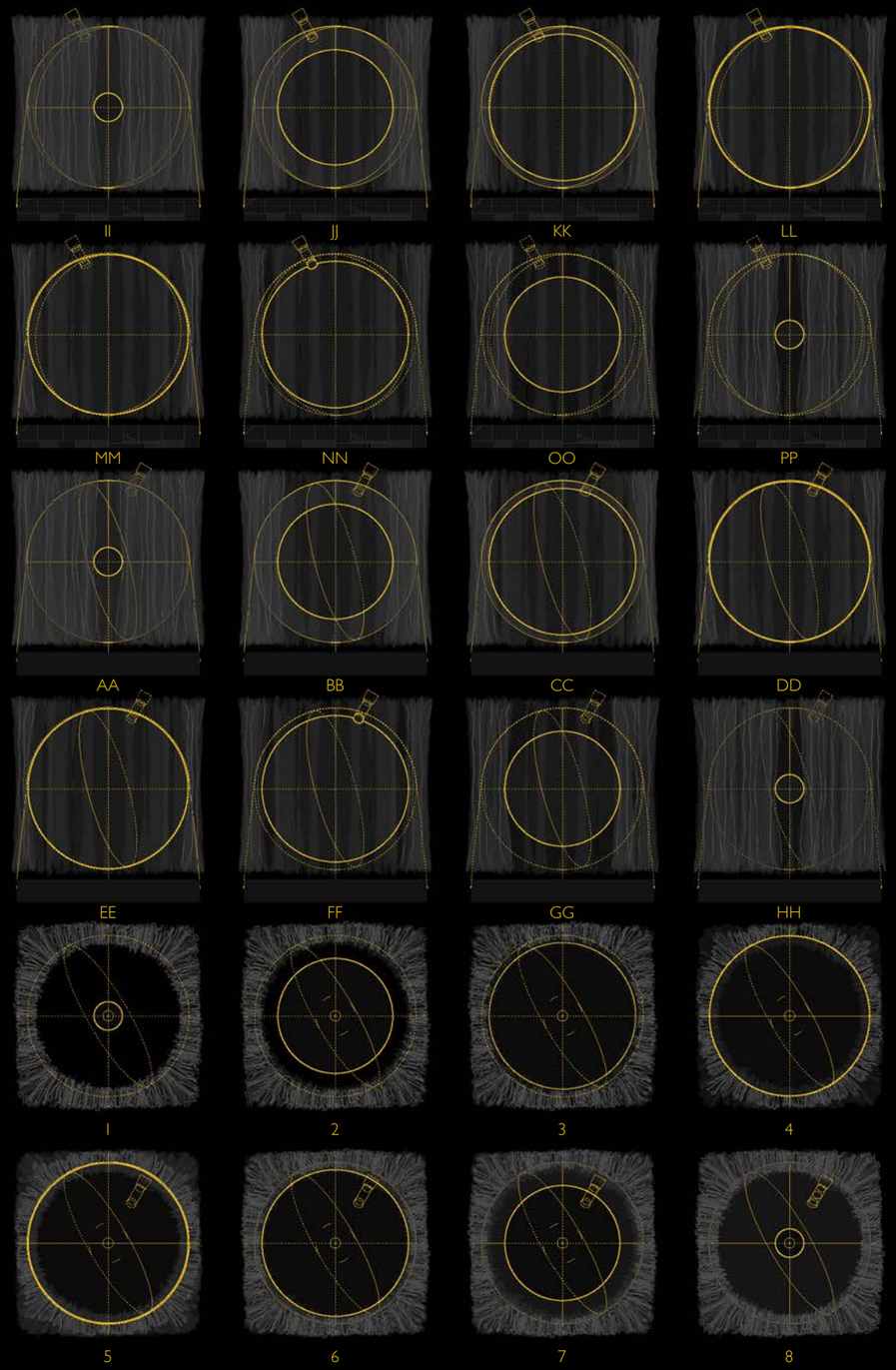
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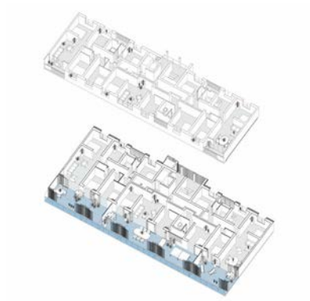
TRANSFORMATION OF 530 DWELLINGS

An Essay about transscalar architectural facts

Architectural decisions are not confined to the physical aspects of a building. They encompass a wide range of factors, from the choice of materials and structural systems to maintenance, context, and user experience. These decisions also have a profound impact on social engagement, integration, and historical context. This broad scope of architectural decisions highlights the significant responsibility of architecture for the built environment, affecting not just the specific site but every actor involved in the process, reaching economic, social, psychological, sociological, environmental, and political issues.



Amidst what sustainability means in architecture, this remodeling project takes place in three fully inhabited social housing buildings. The intervention was the initial phase of renovating the Cité du Grand Parc in Bordeaux, a housing complex built in the early 1960s –by Lacaton y Vassal– to meet the growing demand for low-income social housing. The main transformation strategy was the extension of the single unit's private winter gardens and balconies, thus offering a new, livable, thick skin on the façade of the buildings.

The intervention took place as part of a political discussion regarding demolishing old buildings to be replaced with new ones that would offer better living conditions. As demolition is often considered politically expedient, 150,000 dwellings have met that fate, replaced by 130,000 new ones on which fifteen billion euros have been spent. In other words, it has been a net loss of 20,000 homes at a high cost in the context of increasing demand for housing. Furthermore, these buildings were part of the city's history and architectural heritage since they had been built in response to the housing crisis, which addressed the growing demand for dwellings in the aftermath of World War II. This scenario matches the architects' basic proposition in their PLUS manifesto (2007): "Never demolish, never remove or replace, always add, transform and reuse."[1] Thus, as an alternative to demolition, this project proposes a transformation into completely new dwellings adding value with redefined qualities and comfort with the half of a new building cost.

The intervention on the facades of stigmatized social housing gives a new, contemporary, and green face to the city and additional space to enrich the lifestyles and personal needs of the inhabitants freely. The total renovation offered a solution to raise the worth of the dwellings and the basic living conditions without causing a rent increase due to the architects' negotiation for the project.

The total intervention time per apartment was 12-16 days. To avoid the temporary relocation of the occupants –which would have involved moving expenses as well as psychological stress that would, in turn, have required further political management– the extensions were carried through in apartments that were entirely inhabited. This decision placed the human scale at the center of the discussion. To succeed within this short period of time, prefabricated modules were used, allowing a fast construction as if it were scaffolding in front of the building. Precast slabs and columns were transported to the site and lifted into position with a crane to form a freestanding structure.

At the bodily scale, the new interior was a game changer. The extension of 3.8 meters allows light and views to flood the apartment. It involves two transparent layers: a wall-to-ceiling double-glazing sliding on the inside and a corrugated polycarbonate mobile screen delimiting the exterior and public corridor. Thus, the extension is tempered by the winter gardens, which form a sort of inhabitable insulation. These winter gardens strategically enhance energy efficiency and are complemented by an interior thermal curtain and a reflective solar curtain behind the corrugated polycarbonate mobile screen. In addition to the exterior insulation on the back façade, the building is sealed using the mass of the original structure for thermal inertia, obtaining a high passive energy efficiency in the apartments.

The new space provides several other benefits. It works as a buffer space between public and private, allowing for an authentic community experience and offering the possibility of sharing along the public corridor while keeping privacy a choice for the inhabitants. It provides free circulation, freedom of movement, multiple routes inside the apartment, and spatial and visual depth by increasing the width of the building. The wide glazing facade permits establishing a new connection with the urban context by integrating it into the apartments.

The project has been considered successful over time by addressing political, social, and economic challenges, embodying an example of sustainable and long-lasting renovation. In the words of the architects: «Transformation means: spend less to do more»[2]

[1] Lacaton, Anne. (2022, March 29th) Inaugural Jaqueline Tyrwhitt Urban Design Lecture, Graduate School of Design. Harvard University.
[2] Lacaton, Anne. (2022, March 29th) Inaugural Jaqueline Tyrwhitt Urban Design Lecture, Graduate School of Design. Harvard University.

LIGHT HOUSE

An Essay about Privacy and Security

How does "Light House" redefine the role and concerns of architecture by situating the problem and fostering the community to manage Privacy and Security.

One might think living in an abandoned place, inside a light and translucent construction, and next to strangers could contradict the privacy and security concept as they are known in contemporary living. On the contrary, Rachaporn Choochuey —the head lead of the "Light House" project (fig.1)— proposes a different way of understanding the problem of inhabiting by observing around and giving part of this challenges to the users and communities. This contradiction raises the question:

What should architecture be concerned about when addressing these concepts?

"Light House" is a prototype of a two-unit project that addresses the intricate economic and social challenges in Bangkok's urban context. These light modules are assembled inside an abandoned parking lot building with minimal use of easy-to-find materials, taking advantage of the existing building's structure, shading, eaves, and thermal mass. The name "Light" that Rachaporn and her design team used for this prototype is because they intended it as a temporary and mobile living structure. To achieve this, they built a thin steel structure with a polycarbonate enclosure that is easy to reassemble and relocate. Because of the materiality, it allows hearing through the walls and slightly to see the interior since the light passes through it. The 11.5 square meter living space was designed for one person per unit and can be duplicated, developed, or reworked by anyone.

The design team explains, "Recent housing projects are so closely tied up with global real estate investment that it makes it almost impossible for a young middle-class or a new generation of urban poor to live in the city."[1] Light House is a quick alternative solution for young professionals looking for better job opportunities in the city who do not have the budget to rent a personal space. It radically establishes another possibility to achieve privacy and security by providing a quick temporary solution to this young generation.

Based on the experiences of Rucha and Paka, inhabitants of lighthouses, the Privacy and personal space that each gained is compelling. Both left their former homes, where they shared a room with other people, making the living situation untenable. In Light Houses, each has its own private space at a budget cost (fig.2). This evidences privacy as context-bound.

In response to skepticism about the actual experience of the inhabitants, the author said, "Privacy is quite subjective. We as architects should not be so sure about things, instead leaving space for people to decide what they like or dislike. Let the unit quality and expansion grow with its tenants. We (as architects) can provide a framework for the habitats to build upon".[2] This statement suggests the architect's role as a facilitator who uses buildings as a starting point rather than a problem solver who predicts the inhabitant's needs and desires.

On the other hand, she adds, "*There would be no possibilities of architecture if we focused too much on privacy*"[3] because it does not allow for building community, which is an essential part of architecture. In our modern society, we tend to be over-sensitive to our privacy, which, in her opinion, is an emergent thought in contemporary life. Looking at the history of housing, we can see that people have always shared, making communities stronger than we have now.

Since the design team conceived the overall project as a collective system of several units (fig.3-4), the initial prototype considered two units, quickly generating a minimal community feeling and providing a social environment of trust and security. As in Lacaton and Vassal's outstanding project 'Transformation of 530 Dwellings', where one of the new attributes in the extension is to share with neighbors through the long public balcony (fig.5), people are using the new shared spaces and enjoying them by feeling part of something else while building community.

By turning away from privacy and security as individual concepts to understand living, we can conceive them as consequences when building communities. This new way

[1] Senda, Shuhei. "All(Zone) Installs Habitable Dwellings within an Abandoned Bangkok Parking Lot." Designboom, 12 Oct. 2015.
[2] Choochuey, Rachaporn. "Fragile Wall." AAD Arguments, GSAPP Columbia University, 1 Jun. 2023, Wood Auditorium, New York. Lecture.
[3] Choochuey, Rachaporn. "Fragile Wall."

of understanding could be achieved by providing —as a testing practice— a framework for the community to develop its own comfortable environment. Rachaporn said,"*Architects cannot solve all the problems, but we can bring them to the public through work to be managed collectively.*"[4] She looks to inspire the public and also learn from them. But how does she start this? She argues, "We can't test if we don't materialize. We can't have conclusions before the spaces were inhabited and shared"[5]. She finds more realistic stopping when the design is finished, even without knowing all the answers. Then, after the Light Houses were inhabited and after observing and discussing them, Rachaporn and the design team could go forward with guiding an expansion and the construction of a collective "light housing." If more and more people gathered and lived in abandoned parking lots, they would create mutually agreed rules in their communities and find answers between them to live together. More observation and learning from people and communities are needed to build better places for society.

Another example of successfully engaging the community in architecture is Anupama Kundoo's Wall House (fig.6), where, working with local materials and craftsmen, they created a community around the construction with a strong sense of belonging (fig.7-8). They used this, among other vernacular materials and building processes, to build this contemporary house and many other projects. Rachaporn also engages with this way of making architecture using light and simple elements, allowing people to have more contact and interaction, and where they could even modify the environment and the project through the process. In the same way, she used integrated design methods that harmonized with the surrounding context. In Thailand's culture, people are willing to come out and set up tents in the middle of the street to spend cozy time together during events. This situation inspired Rachaporn to think the built enclosure could be thin and light in a tropical climate by using familiar and known resources to them.

"Light House" was designed for the 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial, defined as "*a platform for groundbreaking projects and spatial experiments that demonstrate how creativity and innovation can radically transform our lived experience.*"[6] The design team intended to build something that would reflect the living conditions in Bangkok. To this, it has not only generated new ways of living and an effective quick solution for its inhabitants. It has also contributed to what architecture should do. They know this project will not solve institutional injustice or make policy changes, but at least it becomes the first step in the right direction. The aim is to have the capacity to look around in the context and create architecture that brings the community together.

There is an opportunity to attend to concepts like Privacy and Security by understanding the specific context, using accessible and local elements to build, and involving the community in the process. Thinking about architecture this way could help us find a way out of the problems we always try to solve as individuals when living in society. Instead of fixing those issues individually, it is about creating the right conditions for people to build the environment to live well and thrive together by fostering a community.

[4] Choochuey, Rachaporn. "Fragile Wall." AAD Arguments, GSAPP Columbia University, 1 Jun. 2023, Wood Auditorium, New York. Lecture.
[5] Choochuey, Rachaporn.
[6] "About." About – Chicago Architecture Biennial, 2015. chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org/about/. Accessed 3 May 2024.

(1) Light House in their context. © Soopakorn Srisakul
(2) Light House units. © Soopakorn Srisakul
(3) Light House collective assembly drawing. © All(zone)
(4) Light House collective assembly drawing. © All(zone)
(5) Transformation of 530 dwellings. Video screenshot. © Karine Dana.
(6) Wall House. © Javier Callejas
(7) Building process. Video Ss. © AppleTV+
(8) Building process. Video Ss. © AppleTV+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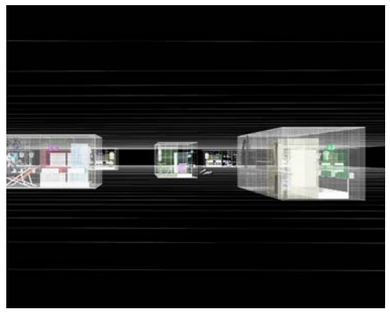
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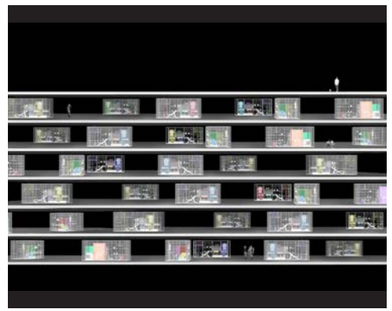
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8

THE TRANSFORMATIVE QUALITIES OF LIGHT

Visual Essay

Light is an architectural element that can radically change and shape our perception of spaces and generate different feelings and emotions. It has the power to provide proper conditions—or not—for inhabiting the built and physical environment. This project is a meticulous exploration of light's transformative nature, achieved through a systematic and rigorous process of capturing its changes. This process involved repeated shooting from the same position and camera setup but at different hours on the same day. The photographs were taken of the General Grant National Memorial building and its surrounding context.

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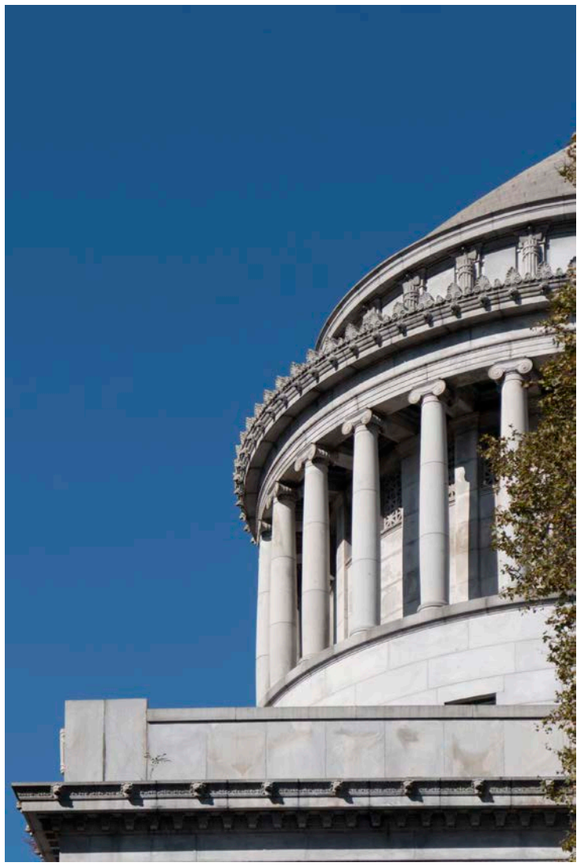

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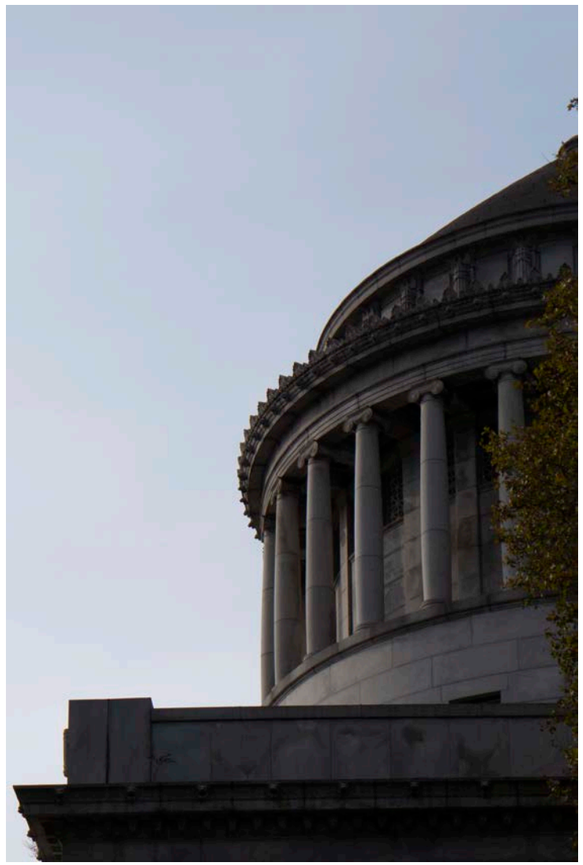

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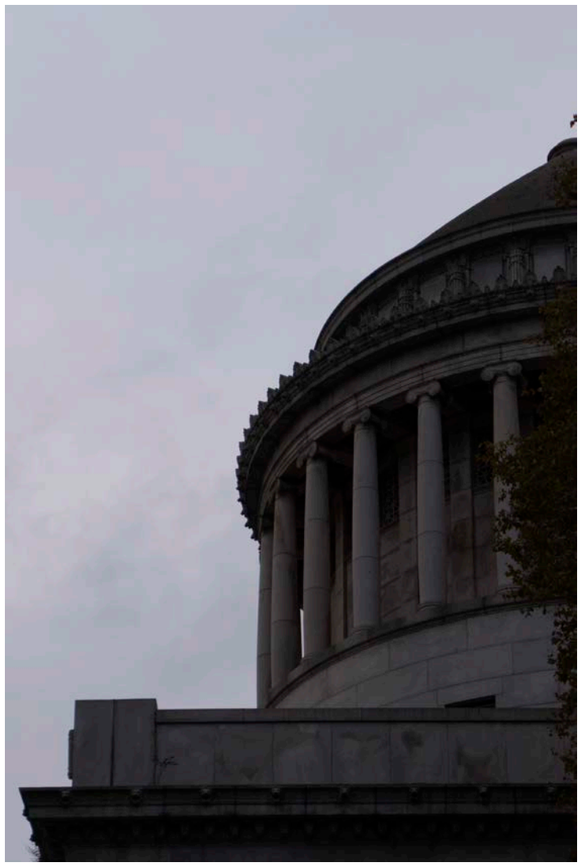

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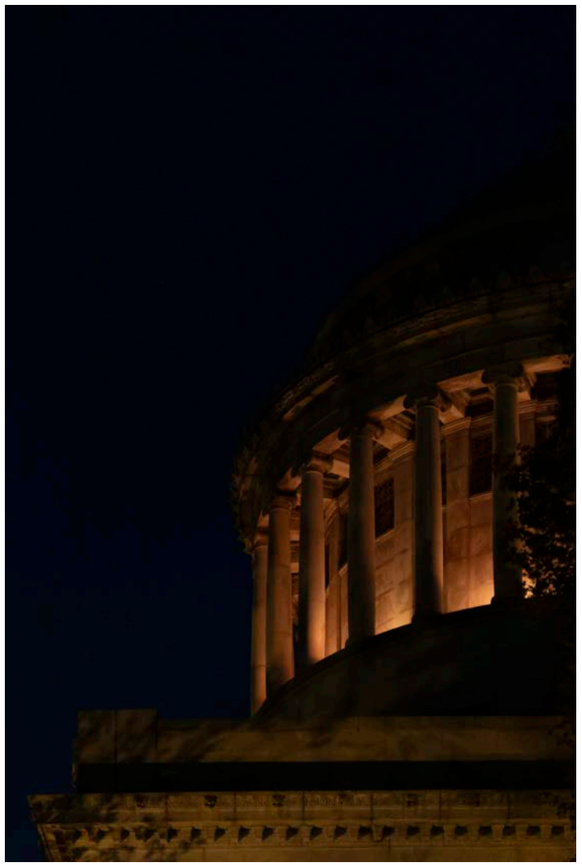

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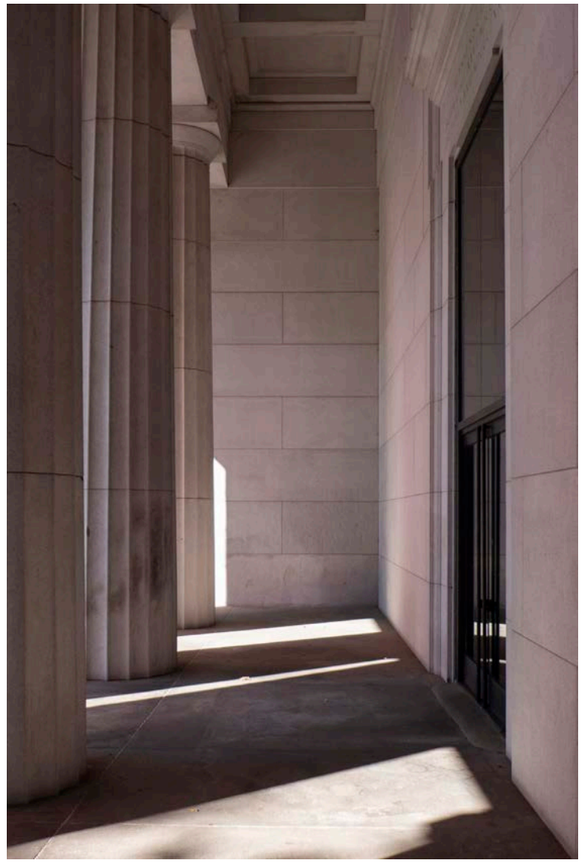

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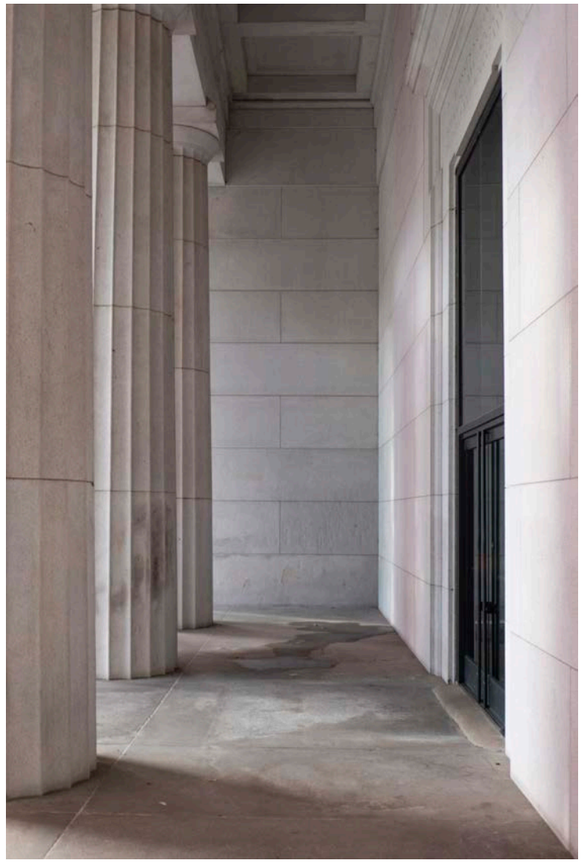

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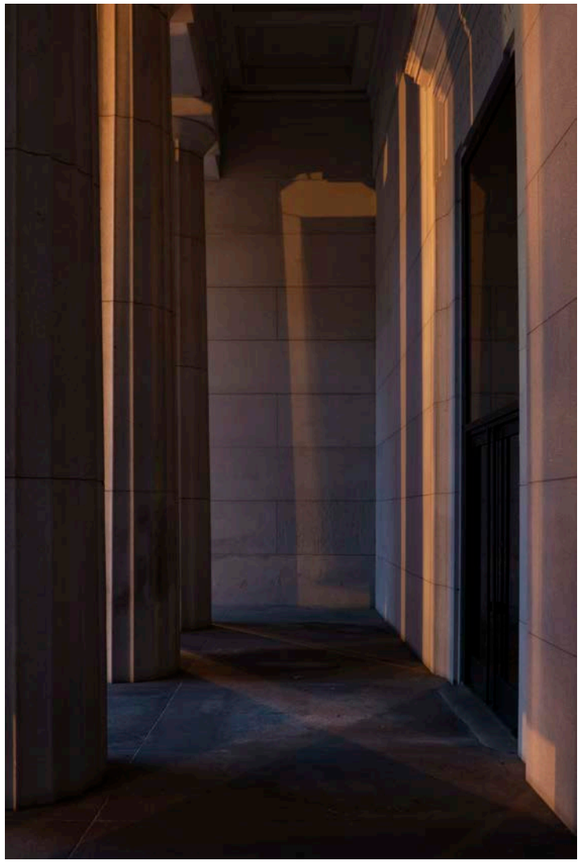

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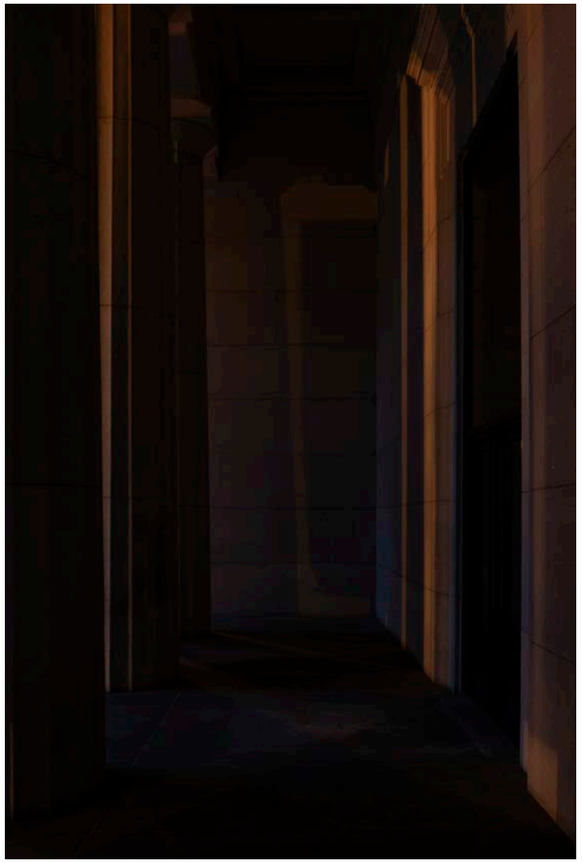

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CONTEMPORARY REFLECTIONS ON 55 YEARS OF ARCHITECTURAL THEORY

An uncommon essay

Architectural theory has always been reflections, ideas, concepts, and many other thoughts on the practice in permanent movement. It is attached to contexts, time, globalization, communication, and so on, making it a dynamic background and reference that provides meaning to architecture. Architecture is made from concepts but also from contexts, raising the question of which one came first and which one led every particular project. The way we study the history of architectural theory is also relevant, and choosing a system or protocol to get a contemporary perspective allows us to better understand the very complex and dynamic search for meaning.

The following piece of writting compiles short chapters of comments and reflexions about chronological moments in the history of architectural theory from 1968 to the present, which marked the history of ideas and concepts in architecture. It discuss differences between concepts, "partis", diagrams and compositions as well as between concepts, percepts and affects from a contemporary perspective.

For each historical moment in the past fifty years, it identify –starting with a provocative subtitle– one or several major concepts that are either still relevant today ("for") or, have become out of date ("against"), as measured in relation to today's moral, ideological, economic, or formal standards. It question whether after modernism and post-modernism, at this time of witnessing a phase of material climatism, climatic materialism or a new poetic imagination. The reflections are organized to the left for the "for" and the right for the "against," generating a permanent questioning of the moment and comments amidst it.

It starts with the jump from the long-term of constants and frozen typologies to the moment when ideas on architecture about concept and context began to change and mutate faster with more intensity, diversity, and responsiveness to external and internal questionings.

"A bicycle shed with a concept is architecture; a cathedral without one is a building."[1]

"There is no architecture without a concept, and that concepts are what differentiate architecture from mere building"
(Bernard Tschumi)

From a contemporary perspective of these last 55 years of Architectural Theory, architecture may be seen as a permanent search for meaning in a constantly changing context and environment. This has led to the understanding that some ideas from specific moments are helpful in addressing current and specific issues. Still, in turn, they carry the circumstances of another context, generating an inevitable questioning of the present. Also, some have gone to extreme and neglected important considerations that may have put architecture outside of itself, closer to other arts and professions. Since the late growth of global communication and technological progress have intensified, they have promoted the sharing of information and ideas, making diffuser and more challenging to project a clear and proper idea for a specific context.

For the relationship between concept and context—and by looking at more successful projects—it can be stated that there is a need for a balance in considering both at the beginning. They could be unequally divided or stay in a permanent pendulum as part of a creative and uncertain outcome process. Still, it has to be considered that it will always be questioned and challenged by the local and involved actors and users. At the same time, concepts in architecture should be strong and clear enough to communicate the idea, having the capacity to survive and, therefore, to lead architecture to generate new concepts.

[1] Tschumi, Bernard. "Disjunctions." In Architecture and Disjunction (NY: MIT Press, 1994), p223

Typological Concepts (Europe)

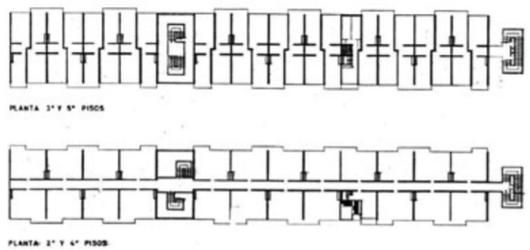
(Constants and Variables, Frozen Typologies: Neorationalism)

FOR

"For Tricart, the social content of the city is the basis for reading it; the study of social content must precede the description of the geographical artifacts that ultimately give the urban landscape its meaning. Social facts, to the extent that they present themselves as a specific content, precede forms and function and, one might say, embrace them".[1]

The city can be read as several dynamic artifacts where overlapping layers of historical, cultural, and collective memory build the urban form and identity of itself over time. In turn, architecture –through typologies– is one of the main active forces (materialization of the present societal status) providing the context and environment for this to happen and be read/analyzed to finally understand it.

Ostia Antica, Rome, reconstructed, Italo Gismondi, – 1940



Villa Portales, B.V.C.H, Chile – General floor plan – 1964-1966

AGAINST

"I tend to believe that housing types have not changed from antiquity up to today, but this is not to say that the actual way of living has not changed, nor that new ways of living are not always possible. The house with a loggia is an old scheme; a corridor that gives access to rooms is necessary in plan and present in any number of urban houses. But there are a great many variations on this theme among individual houses at different times."[2]

Keeping the idea of typology as something permanent, even when it can address new demands and lifestyles, carries a constraint that stuck/froze the discipline because it remains in the present –by reading the past and as a passive actor– and prevents a better and compromised active reading and engaging with the future and upcoming challenges and ways of living. The Cristián Izquierdo's houses series in Chile explores different configurations, skipping –or at least reducing to the minimum– the aisles, stepping away from the overuse of the corridor typology in buildings.

(1) House in Morrillo, (2) House in Chicureo II, (3) House in El Peumo, Chile – Floor Plans – Cristián Izquierdo L. – 2017-2018

[1] Rossi, Aldo. The Arch. of the City (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1982) p.48

[2] Rossi, Aldo. The Architecture of the City (Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press, 1982), p.41.

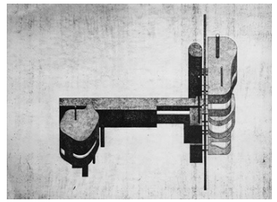
Concepts in Autonomy vs Signs

(The Whites vs. The Grays)

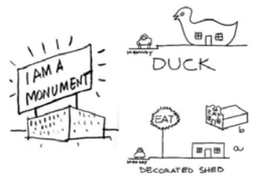
The pursue of meaning FOR

"What you should try to accomplish is built meaning. So, get close to the meaning and build."[3] (Aldo van Eyck, Team 10 Primer, p. 7)

This statement is a permanent and necessary search in architecture to transcend and be accepted (by any context). Even if the result is highly questioned and criticized, it allows architecture to move forward. For the Whites at that moment, it was *"buildings as an excuse for drawing rather than drawings as an excuse for building."*[4] They started the search for meaning in art, abstraction, and personal understanding, interests, and obsessions to make sense of their work. It opened an interesting field and point of view of the space and objects. For the Grays, it was an engagement with the historical past and consumer context. *"Whether you call it "composition" or "plastic organization" you have to have a philosophy about it. Your philosophy may be more or less useful depending on how well it helps you relate forms to requirements."*[5] They used the form to communicate and directly engage with the current American consumer context (users).



Wall House II – John Hejduk



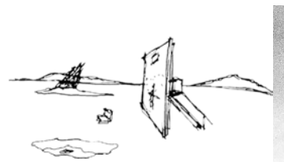
Duck building – Robert Venturi

Art (abstraction), users (to whom), and future (context) AGAINST

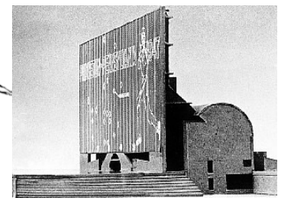
In architecture, the search for meaning is an essential part of it, whether the result. *"The history of building is the history of meaning in architecture."*[6] Still, it will be accepted and recognized as a valuable piece if it both engages with social demands, users, and needs and is presented and formulated from the art field as an aesthetic and conceptually straightforward artifact with some level of abstraction that allows it to change and adapt in time. Otherwise, it will be called just construction.

"The preference for incomplete geometries, voluntary distortions and the recognition of the growth of the building over time."[7] There is a contradiction between one of the Grey's statements and the beginning of the movement with the Venturi Duck building).

The search for meaning has to be careful not to isolate it from the context and users. In turn, it has to be careful not to embrace a caricaturist form and surface reduction to achieve the communication role of architecture. Both ways separately lead to a contradiction.



Drawings – John Hejduk



Decorated shed– Robert Venturi

[3] Rowe, Colin. Introduction to Five Architects. (Arch. Theory since 1968) p.74
[4] Rowe, Colin. p.84
[5] Brown. Denise Scott and Robert Venturi. "On Ducks and Decoration" (1968) (reprinted in Architecture Culture 1943–1968) p.447

[6] Stern, Robert. "Gray Architecture as Post-Modernism, or, Up and Down from Orthodoxy," L'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui 186 (1976) (Arch. Theory since 1968) p.244
[7] Stern, Robert. p.244

Phenomenological Affects

(Critical Regionalism, Phenomenology, Contextualism, Realism)

Meaning of human being and experiences, architecture as belonging to places — FOR

The *"importance of the tactile resides in the fact that it can only be decoded in terms of experience itself: it cannot be reduced to mere information, to representation or to the simple evocation of a simulacrum substituting for absent presences."*[8] *"The tactile and the tectonic jointly have the capacity to transcend the mere appearance of the technical in much the same way as the place-form has the potential to withstand the relentless onslaught of global modernization."*[9]

Using a philosophical perspective to escape the failure of the Modern Movement, Critical Regionalism aims to be down-to-earth and conscious about our surroundings, feel belonging, and recognize it as part of our own. It is the natural human experience itself. There is no utility, not for someone, not for something. It is the meaning of the place itself by being sensitive to the concrete world, where phenomenological concepts such as dwelling, environment, character, and atmosphere are central and rooted with topography, light, and climate to conceive architectural spaces.

C.R. makes sense, especially nowadays, when concepts such as colonialism and imperialism practices are deeply being studied, and how they have affected the sense of belonging –the *"genius loci"*[10] of places. Foreign forms, concepts, and ideas generated could be felt as "modern" but generate a sense of disconnection and strangeness with the context. *"The terror of being lost comes from the necessity that a mobile organism be oriented in its surroundings."To be lost is evidently the opposite of the feeling of security which distinguishes dwelling."*[11]

Architecture is poetry, but it has to be made with concrete geometries — AGAINST

"Architecture belongs to poetry, and its purpose is to help man to dwell. (…) To make practical towns and buildings is not enough."[12]

Under this reflection, architecture is how the world is understood and how we dwell and belong to places, resulting from a built context.

This statement is a passive and reactive thought, where architecture is action. This philosophical way of talking about architecture is not enough to practice architecture. The built environment is a continuous space in process led and constructed by human experiences. It also involves responses to how to compose space, the concrete place with concrete things, and how to organize the spaces to pursue how we want to live and what we want to experience. Christian Norberg-Schulz anticipates: *"Vernacular settlements usually have a topological organization, although the single houses may be strictly geometrical. In larger cities, we often find topologically organized neighborhoods within a general geometrical structure, etc."*[13]

In terms of cultural globalization and local identity, it will prevail in the balance and negotiation between both worlds. There is a lot they can contribute to each other to provide an accurate response to current global and local concerns.

Leon de Grief Library Park, Colombia – Giancarlo Mazzanti

Concon - Chile

8 Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." In The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture. (WA, 1983). p.28
9 Frampton, Kenneth. p.29
10 Norberg-Schulz, Christian. "The Phenomenon of Place." Architecture Association Quarterly 8, no. 4 (1976). (reprinted in Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture) p.418
11 Norberg-Schulz, Christian. p.423

12 Norberg-Schulz, Christian. "The Phenomenon of place". p.426
13 Norberg-Schulz, Christian. "The Phenomenon of place". p.421

Heterogeneity, Disjunctions, Fragmentation

(From the Concept of Deconstruction to the Bilbao Effect)

Meaning of human being and experiences, architecture as belonging to places — FOR

"The modernists argued that form follows function, and that functionally efficient forms necessarily had a pure geometry. But their streamlined aesthetic disregarded the untidy reality of actual functional requirements. In deconstructivist architecture, however, the disruption of pure form provides a dynamic complexity of local conditions that is more congruent with functional complexity." [14]

The dead end of the modern movement comes with the search for meaning and, in turn, the exploration – and then revolution– of deconstructivism, which pushed architecture to the limits, looking for answers to escape and engage with the continuous and accelerated changes in the current cultural contexts. *"There is a need to consider the question of limits in architecture."* [15]

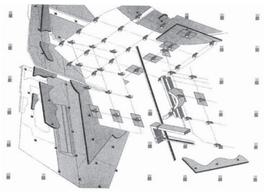
For instance, Park de la Villette creates a new dimension of space, intercepted with reality, working with it, and transforming it, but providing new readings of it instead of overlaying it through systematic operations and providing strangeness at the singular apparatuses. It is a lot of questions and a space where architecture can rethink itself. It is pure tension in a dynamic game between signifier/signified, space/action, form/function, continuity/interruption, mess/organization, repetition/variation, construct/deconstruct, and so on, where there are no answers but questions to rethink architecture looking for meaning. It is *"open to the hazards of a future" and "anticipates the architecture to come. It runs the risk and gives us the chance."* [16]

Deformation by negotiation — AGAINST

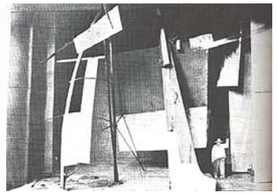
"Moreover, forms are disturbed and only then given a functional program. Instead of form following function, function follows deformation". [17]

In the successful buildings related to deconstructivism –calling the ones that were built, of course– there is a significant sense of meaning from the inside that aims to connect with the chaotic and changing cultural, urban, and social context. In that sense, it is a negotiation. It is a permanent negotiation with the context, not necessarily a wired form where the function will follow.

When architecture abuses form –trying just to escape pure form– it goes beyond the limit, and it could become nothing more than mere decoration (or scenography) without meaning, similar to the phenomenon of post-modernism with the aesthetic style applied to facades.



Bernard Tschumi, Parc de La Villette, Paris, 1982-1983



Vladimir Tatlin. Maquete for stage set of Velimir Khlebnikou's verse drama Zangezi, Museum of Artistic Culture, Petrograd, 1923

14 Wigley, Mark. "Deconstructivist Architecture," (New York: MoMA, 1988) p19.
15 Tschumi, Bernard. "Disjunctions." In Architecture and Disjunction (NY: MIT Press, 1994) p210
16 Derrida, Jacques. "Point de Folie: Maintenant l'Architecture: Bernard Tschumi: La Casa Vide," AA Files (Summer 1986) (reprinted in Architecture Theory since 1968) p418

17 Wigley, Mark. "Deconstructivist Architecture," in Deconstructivist Architecture (New York: MoMA, 1988) p19.

Programmatic Concepts and Diagrams

(Maximalism: Programmatic Dutchness)

Architecture as management — FOR

Have we reached the limits of architecture? [18] *Can architects aspire to take on larger issues and thus be idealistic again?* [19]
Cities were built by society through time, more and less organically, but with modernity and with the "who has the answer" (architects) we arrived at a dead-end trying to do "the right thing" from our truth. That becomes unsustainable. *"OMA faced a situation in which they had to deal not only with the client and the city but with the inhabitants of adjoining districts and future residents."*[20]

"The architect must now justify himself to many different parties, the client, building contractors and engineers, future residents and users, residents of neighboring areas who insist on consultation, and the municipality." [21]
With bigness, called *fin de siècle* [22], there is an opening eye to the programmatic complexity of the built environment and the upcoming and arriving challenges in the cities. (Programmatic hybridizations/ proximities/ frictions/ overlaps/ superpositions). It is a montage 23. Due to the accelerated and sized changes, the Dutch (and in the world in a bit slower process) realized that architecture was not enough to take over the current reality. It is now more than or beyond architecture, where other fields, such as social, political, economic, climates, and so on, play significant roles in the shape and consequences of the built environment.

Architecture has to change its role to part of the cities (or even exist). Architecture is understood as a management more than *"the'art' of architecture"*. [24] It's not about forms and aesthetics but how it engages and communicates with the new context.

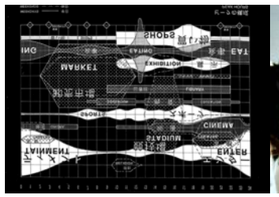
[18] Maas, Winy. "Toward an Urbanistic Architecture." New York: The Monacelli Press, 2003. p.14
[19] Maas, Winy. "Toward an Urbanistic Architecture." p.15
[20] Lootsma, Bart. "The Second Modernity of Dutch Architecture." In Superdutch: New Architecture in the Netherlands (London: Thames and Hudson, 2000). p.19
[21] Lootsma, Bart. "The Second Modernity of Dutch Architecture." p.23
[22] Koolhaas, Rem. "Bigness, or the Problem of Large." In SMLXL (Monacelli Press, 1995) p.510
[23] Koolhaas, Rem. "Bigness, or the Problem of Large." p.506
[24] Koolhaas, Rem. "Bigness, or the Problem of Large." p.500

Context hasn't disappeared but has changed — AGAINST

"Bigness is no longer part of any urban tissue. It exists; at most, it coexists. Its subtext is: fuck context." [25]
"Bigness, through its very independence of context, is the one architecture that can survive." [26]

Although, indeed, the context as an urban container has become obsolete, forgotten, or is no longer good and significant enough, it doesn't mean that it has disappeared. Architecture depends on the context. In this case, it has turned to a not physical but social, political, cultural, and economic (among others) that inform and will shape the built environment. Indeed, following the "one follows other" it can be seen as "project follows the new context." Now, architecture has to engage with more complex cultural and social issues, which can be seen as a new context. Not physical, but closed connected to people and their complexity.

Quinta Monroy. Iquique, Chile. 2003. ELEMENTAL



Competition Diagram. Yokohama Masterplan, OMA 1991

Original design and model of OMA's Jussieu Libraries Wood Model (1992)

[25] Koolhaas, Rem. "Bigness, or the Problem of Large." In SMLXL (Monacelli Press, 1995) p.502
[26] Koolhaas, Rem. "Bigness, or the Problem of Large." p.515

Minimalism and the Art of Construction

(From the "Dutch Corner" to the Swiss Baths to SANAA)

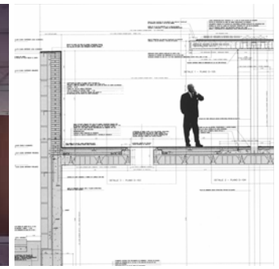
Honest, transparent, and open to interpretation — FOR

Minimalism is *"a far-reaching reaction to the noise, the visual noise, the disorder, and the vulgarity"* [27] in which fewer things are imposed. It is open to interpretation and the giving of meaning and experiences. It is strongly related to the context, environment, or site, which allows the subject to connect personally and intimately with the build. *"The meaning of the emptiness they produce lies in the way they allow the subject a quasi-spiritual experience of himself."* [28]
Minimal use of material and simple forms produces an openness to several interpretations. *"Simplicity of shape does not necessarily equate with simplicity of experience."* [29]

At the same time, it goes beyond the program, which can be changed, thus opening the possibility of adaptation with a new interpretation while keeping the essence or atmosphere created by the building. *"The capacity to adapt is, after all, the criterion for survival."*[30]

The management and use of materiality in minimal constructions can run in both ways, through the expression and exposure of it in the case of Alberto Campos Baeza's Centro de Innovación Tecnológica, or by hiding it, looking for a sort of inmateriality of the built found in the Sanaa's Glass Pavilion.

Alberto Campo Baeza, Centro Balear de Innovación Tecnológica.



Alberto Campo Baeza, Centro Balear de Innovación Tecnológica. (Section)

[27] Ruby, Ilka and Andreas. "Essential, Meta-, Trans-. The Chimeras of Minimalist Architecture." In Minimal Architecture (Munich: Prestel, 2003) p.19
[28] Ruby, Ilka and Andreas. "Essential, Meta-, Trans-. The Chimeras of Minimalist Architecture." p.18.
[29] Ursprung, Philip. "Minimalism and Minimal Art." In Minimal Architecture (Munich: Prestel, 2003), p.8
[30] Ursprung, Philip. "Minimalism and Minimal Art." , p12

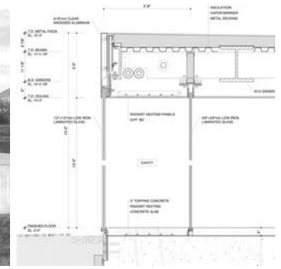
Architecture buildings should not be considered sculptures — AGAINST

Minimalism is a tricky concept and movement that moves on the edge or limit of architecture. It gets diffused by becoming closer to minimal art (landscape architecture). *"Every Indication of a supposed relationship between Minimal Art and architecture was therefore extremely welcome."*[31]

By so, it might forget architecture's purpose and essential characteristic, which is its need to produce both an interior and an exterior. Sculpture has become closer to architecture, making it more spatial and immersive and creating atmospheric experiences in concrete and meaningful physical contexts. However, architecture needs to create these two experiences; in fact, the interior is essential to produce the atmosphere that will connect with the subject. *"Interiors are like large instruments, collecting sound, amplifying it. transmitting it elsewhere."* [32]

"…as buildings. in contrast to artworks, do have an interior space that, in the utilitarian sense, also represents their raison d'être, the primary social experience of architecture includes both the surrounding space (=outside) and their internal space."[33] Building the interior and keeping the space clean, abstract, and simple involves very complex, sophisticated, and dishonest (or less transparent) effort, making –in some cases- a forced kind of architecture.

Donatd Judd. 15 Untitled Works In Concrete



SANAA, Glass Pavilion, Toledo Museum of Art, Section drawing.

[31] Ursprung, Philip. "Minimalism and Minimal Art." In Minimal Arch. (Munich: Prestel, 2003), p.9
[32] Zumthor, Peter. Atmospheres: Architectural Environments Basel: Birkhäuser, 2006. p.28
[33] Ruby, Ilka and Andreas. "Essential, Meta-, Trans-. The Chimeras of Minimalist Architecture." In Minimal Architecture (Munich: Prestel, 2003) p.25

Ideological and Ecological Envelopes

(Single and Double Conceptual Envelopes)

An openness to a multicultural (global) context, engaging and connecting with them — FOR

"In this new machine which does not, like the older modernist machinery of the locomotive or the airplane, represent motion, but which can only be represented in motion, something of the mystery of the new postmodernist space is concentrated." [34]

It is a fact –or an intuitive feeling– that interaction with classical buildings (in Europe) and modern buildings (in New York) is from far or at least from some distance (unless you are an active user of the program inside), but with Pompidou Center, there was a strange opening to interact, to touch, to get closer through the transparency, exposed, and brutal honesty of the building's envelope. The building shows itself alive, in movement, and ready to be played with. The envelope of Pompidou Center (Beaubourg) is not just a skin but a highly expressive membrane, a permeable interface between the institution and its urban context. *"The envelope has the capacity to re-present ancient political role that articulates the relationships between humans and non-humans in a common world."* [35] It has the capacity to mediate and connect inside and outside, natural and artificial, private from public and land ownership, being an active political, cultural, and economic tool.

Furthermore, it is clear that in an increasingly interconnected world, *"if modern architecture was "the international style," then such neo-modern architecture must count as "the global style."* [36]

Pompidou Center – Renzo Piano + Richard Roger

City Hall, Norman Foster. London

[34] Jameson, Fredric. Rethinking Architecture, ed Neil Leach [London: Routledge, 1997]), p.233
[35] Zaero-Polo, Alejandro. "The Politics of the Envelope," Log #13/14 (Fall 2008) p. 195
[36] Foster, Hal. "Crystal Palace" and "Light Modernity," in The Art-Architecture Complex. London: Verso, 2011 p. 66

Back to facadism and lack of further/ current ecological issues — AGAINST

"The building envelope has become the last precinct of architectural power." [37] *"The postmodern approach reinstated the relevance of the envelope as a representational mechanism"* [38]

While this is true in most of the cases of Foster, Piano, Roger, and others, which are exemplified in the texts of Jean Baudrillard, Alejandro Zaero-Polo, and Hal Foster, the use of envelopes is often taken in itself as a screen, a representation of political or economic power that only has personal interests of manipulation, leading to the architecture to the mere production of facades where the inner surprise falls into a disillusionment of a kind of deception with a commonplace.

"Do they inflect in response to multiple agencies and incorporate specificities rather than resorting to the mere production of political affects, spectacular embodiments of global capitalism, or authoritarian bureaucracies?" [39] Not many times. *"The envelope has become a field where identity, security, and environmental performances intersect."* [40]

Regarding the excess of greenhouses and energy consumption by the overuse of glass, even if the building gets a successful engagement with multiple agencies at that moment, one may say again –Foster, Piano, Roger, and others– it looks like a passive and responsive practice to fulfill demands (Political, economic, cultural) instead of being an active manager and anticipator of the coming environmental and ecological issues of climates changes.

Torres Siamesas, Alejandro Aravena (ELEMENTAL)

Centro de Innovación, ELEMENTAL

[37] Zaero-Polo, Alejandro. "The Politics of the Envelope," Log #13/14 (Fall 2008) p.198
[37] Zaero-Polo, Alejandro. "The Politics of the Envelope," p.200
[37] Zaero-Polo, Alejandro. "The Politics of the Envelope," p.203
[38] Zaero-Polo, Alejandro. "The Politics of the Envelope," p.199

Post-critical and Iconic

(From Blobs to Blogs)

Less autonomous — FOR

"The new generation has endeavored to overcome the concepts of autonomy, resistance, and negation associated with the notion of "criticality," as expounded by Eisenman and Hays–by means of a pragmatic return to the architectural project." [39]

After the different autonomous, rigid ways of thinking, reviewing, and conceiving architecture, there is a turn to engage with other disciplines (political, social, economic, etc.). Rem Koolhaas (and others) *"alternatively enlists a vision of architecture as contributing to the production and projection of new forms of collectivity."* [40] Architecture is not enough by itself, or at least when it becomes isolated and autonomous. While there is a clear and strong presence of concepts and arguments between critical and post-critical positions -rather than just buildings, of course- there is a kind of deconstruction of rigidity and control in how architecture is thought and conceived. There is a beneficial shift from indexes (autonomy and process) to diagrams (force and effects) to engage with politics, economics, society, and cultural issues and demands.

"Architecture is not an isolated or autonomous medium; it is actively engaged by the social, intellectual, and visual culture which is outside the discipline and which encompasses it ... It is based on the premise that architecture is inevitably involved with questions more difficult than those of form or style." [41]

McCormick Tribune Campus Center – Rem Koolhaas

IntraCenter - WWArchitecture

[39] Martin, Louis. "History Theory Criticism" in Joan Ockman's Architecture School: Three Centuries of Educating Architects in North America (2012). p.334
[40] Somol, Robert and Sarah Whiting. "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." Perspecta 33 (2002). p.75
[41] Somol, Robert and Sarah Whiting. "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." p.73

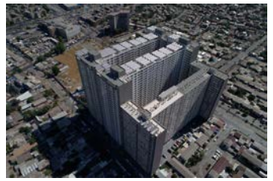
Complacency of freedom and permissiveness — AGAINST

"Within architecture, a project of delivering performance, or soliciting a surprising plausibility, suggests moving away from a critical architectural practice - one which is reflective, representational, and narrative - to a projective practice. Setting out this projective program does not necessarily entail a capitulation to market forces but actually respects or reorganizes multiple economies, ecologies, information systems, and social groups." [42]

Even when this is true and welcome, is post-critical a liberation optimism or complacency to operate freely? Architecture may be asking the right question (B.Tschumi). But the right question is for what context, and also for whom? Is it for architecture itself or to fulfill specific external demands? If post-criticism leads architecture to that kind of allowance and a sort of instability of internal organization, it may lose its conceptual meaning; it could become mere construction in response to external demands; and it could transform itself into a screen in service of the power (market forces), and not the active answer to mediate the environment.

"Every project operates within a specific discourse," [43] which has to go beyond the specific commission.
"A bicycle shed with a concept is architecture; a cathedral without one is a building." [44]

Guetos verticales – Estación Central, Santiago, Chile. (Interior yard)



Guetos verticales – Estación Central, Santiago, Chile. (aereal)

[42] Somol, Robert and Sarah Whiting. "Notes Around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism." p. 77
[43] Tschumi, Bernard. "Some notes on Architectural Theory." New York, Columbia University, 2014. p.227
[43] Tschumi, Bernard. "Some notes on Architectural Theory." p.223

Form follow climates and green new deal or "else"

(2010-Present)

Reconnecting with our natural –or naturalized– environment. A seamless integration

FOR

There is a lot to say—to different directions—about this late period of architectural practices and movement related to climate change. There is no doubt of the *"geological time marked by humans shaping the Earth"*[44] (Anthropocene). For architectural theory and criticism, the new possible label of form follows climates may be a comfort zone to frame in contemporary and planetary issues. Even though, as Lydia Kallipoliti states, *"the restitution of moral values in design thinking and in the revival of an archaic humanist discourse; through the substitution of "performance" for "function," in the restoration of a lost modernist and positivist ethos,"*[45] and *"the poststructuralist denunciation of environmental improvement and the critical recognition of waste and pollution as having a generative potential for design,"* [46] are strong start point to rethink and change the practice of architecture. The recent incorporation of air, light, and heat as architectural materials for the experience of the body in spaces is opening exciting and underseen opportunities for architecture and the interaction between humans and their surroundings to be added to the practice.

A *"seamless integration of human activities with natural processes"*[47] is an exciting statement to follow as it is beautifully narrated in the story-telling of Maple Nation by Kimmerer: *"Leave this place better than you found it."* [47] (p.35) *"We count trees as people, the standing people."* (p.168) *"The trees make a real dent in the energy bill."* (p.168) *"These are the ones we all rely upon, the people who take care of the rest of us, quiet leaders."* (p.169) *"We don't think about them unless they are missing."* (p.170) *"No waste, shared wealth, balance, and reciprocity. What better model for a sustainable economy do we need?"* (p.171)

To do so, *"ceremony is a vehicle for belonging—to a family, to a people, and to the land,"* [48] and belonging is a natural human emotional need. *"When we call a place by name, it is transformed from wilderness to homeland."*[49] *"We just need to build a seamless relationship with it."*[50]

Robin Wall Kimmerer at the SUNY E.Sc.F. Newcomb Campus, NY

An eco-friendly house elevated on recyclable iron stilts. Akeno raised floor, Fuminori Nousaku.

[44] Kallipoliti, Lydia. History of Ecological Design (2018). p.31
[45] Kallipoliti, Lydia. p.3
[46] Kallipoliti, Lydia. p.3
[47] Kallipoliti, Lydia. p.2
[48] Kimmerer, Robin Wall. "An Offering" & "Maple Nation: A Citizenship Guide (2015).
[49] Kimmerer, Robin Wall. p.37
[50] Kimmerer, Robin Wall. p.38

Pro-human – Post-human

AGAINST

The recreation of natural environments or their manipulation is a very controversial practice. Air, light, and heat could be interesting to explore to understand better how our environment is already affecting us such as "The Effusivity Parquet" [51] (Rham,p.315), or to the improvement of the material used for better human body performance such as The "Low-Emissivity Base (Rham,p.316)," "Low emissivity curtain (Rham,p.318)," and even the "Low-emissivity mirror" (Rham,p.318). But, on the other hand –with most of the experimental installations under verbs like redefine, reset, reinforce, rethink, recreate, reproduce, reinstall, and modify the conditions (Rham)– the over-experimentation leads us to get more distant from our natural environment (or naturalized context (Kallipoliti)).

The idea should be to move closer to nature, even if it has been modified or naturalized by humans (Anthropocene) because we are also part of the modified nature. The idea that *"to experience the 'natural' climate, we must now reproduce it 'artificially' because it no longer exists"*[52] is a romantic and nostalgic approach to the current scenario. By doing that, we follow the practice that, in the long term, will affect the human race either way.

Diurnism. National Museum of Modern Art, Centre Pompidou, Paris

Chlorophyllian Remanence, FIAC, Galerie Paris, France, 2011

At the other end, if this approach to climate is based on the human body's performance or perception, which could be named pro-human through an artificial manner, there is a post-human (which is not a non-human) architecture where *"The buildings here are not for humans-but for things and machines,"*[53] such as the case of TRIC (AMO), which is *"beyond our attention, without any symptoms of humanism."*[54]

Then, can we start talking about post-architecture in the sense of non-architecture or anti-architecture?

Dron over TRIC. Tahoe Reno Industrial Center

[51] Rahm, Philippe. Chapter V. "Climate Research," Climatic Architecture, 2023): p302-319.
[52] Rahm, Philippe. p.309.
[53] AMO and Koolhaas, Rem. "TRIC: Post-human Architecture RK," (2020): p.272
[54] AMO and Koolhaas, Rem. "TRIC: Post-human Architecture RK," p.273.

MAPPING OF THE ABANDONED FOR A CITY ADAPTIVE RECOVERY

CROSSING URBAN AND CONSTRUCTION SYSTEMS FOR AN ORGANIC TRANSFORMATION FROM EXISTING BUILDINGS

We are running with a large building stock, an increasing demand for residential space, and an increasing awareness of the carbon footprint of new and old buildings. These facts are a global reality within the cities that carry on abandoned and, therefore, unsecured areas, which has become more evident and increased after the COVID-19 pandemic. As an extension of the Adaptive Capacity Studio project, this research aims to expose and test the opportunities of crossing the particular urban gallery system of downtown Santiago and its current situation of abandoned buildings with a wooden modular construction system for its re-inhabitation and permanent adaptation over time.

RESEARCH

Exploded axonometric of overlapped realities.
Abandonded building (above) and the particular urban gallery system (below)

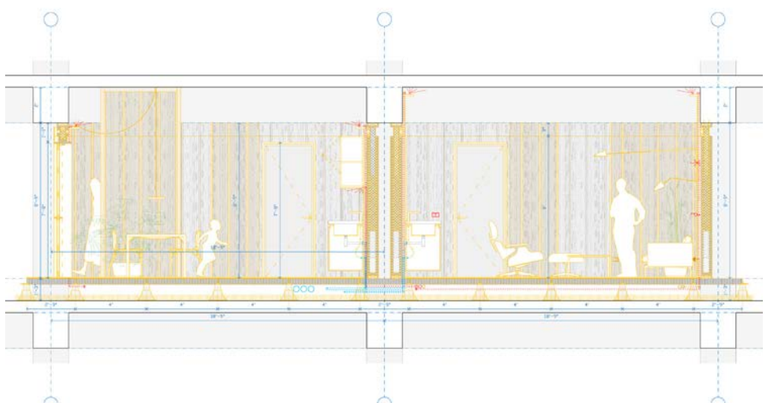
Through 2023, the idea of converting abandoned and empty office buildings into housing units began to be proposed by the current government in the same way as it was proposed in New York –and many other big cities– almost simultaneously. The objective was to respond to the growing demand for square meters of housing, take advantage of existing structures, and reactivate areas that, due to abandonment, generate unsafe and crime-prone environments.

The research is not interested in emblematic and iconic buildings. Instead, it aims to build an accurate map of common abandoned and empty buildings in the historic center of Santiago, Chile, that could be transformed into adaptable residential units connected to the system of unique and hidden internal block galleries of the city for a potential organic and mutual recovery. The transformation of the buildings is driven by specific intervention strategies and by implementing an adaptive modular wooden system for construction and its adaptation over time.

Specifically, the study has two parts from interconnected scales. The first part consists of the research and documentation of the extended current situation of the building stock in the specific area, organizing the buildings by structure and architectural typologies, which will be overlapped with the emblematic gallery system. In the second part, 12 cases of the overlapped Map will be selected to be intervened and connected to the internal block gallery system, getting a new network system plan. The selected studio's cases will also test the implementation of the specific intervention strategies and the telescopic wooden panel system for the potential active transformation and long-lasting adaptability of the specific buildings and, therefore, the city area.

The two scale studies aim to expose a current and problematic reality and opportunity for social, cultural, economic, and political issues and, in turn, inspire the discussion about the regeneration of the city facing the global context from the specificity of the site and innovative adaptive solutions.

Reusing buildings, in addition to preserving their historical and heritage value, is one of the most effective strategies for mitigating the carbon footprint of the built environment and constructions.



New York Plans to Convert Parts of Midtown Manhattan to Housing

Mayor Eric Adams announced plans to rezone manufacturing areas south of Times Square and allow more office buildings to be converted to housing.

Share full article

Mayor Eric Adams announced plans to turn a swath of industrial midtown Manhattan into a mixed-use zone that could include more housing, something the city desperately needs. Hiroko Masuike/The New York Times

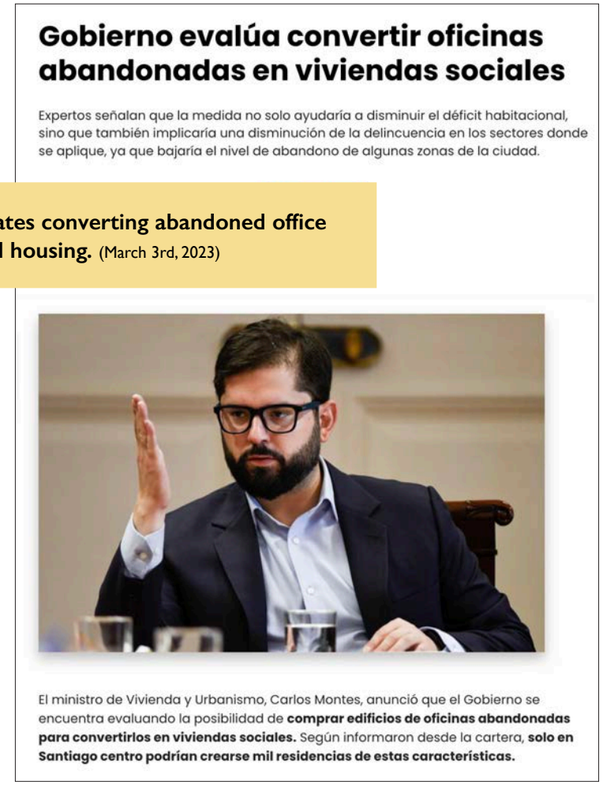
New York City announces new 40,000-unit adaptive reuse office conversion plan

NYC announces Midtown South office conversion rezoning to combat housing shortfall

More than 45 NYC office buildings are slated to become apartments

NY Press 2023

Government evaluates converting abandoned office buildings into social housing. (March 3rd, 2023)



Gobierno evalúa convertir oficinas abandonadas en viviendas sociales

Expertos señalan que la medida no solo ayudaría a disminuir el déficit habitacional, sino que también implicaría una disminución de la delincuencia en los sectores donde se aplique, ya que bajaría el nivel de abandono de algunas zonas de la ciudad.

El ministro de Vivienda y Urbanismo, Carlos Montes, anunció que el Gobierno se encuentra evaluando la posibilidad de **comprar edificios de oficinas abandonadas para convertirlos en viviendas sociales.** Según informaron desde la cartera, **solo en Santiago centro podrían crearse mil residencias de estas características.**

SANTIAGO ¿CONVERTIR OFICINAS EN DEPTOS?

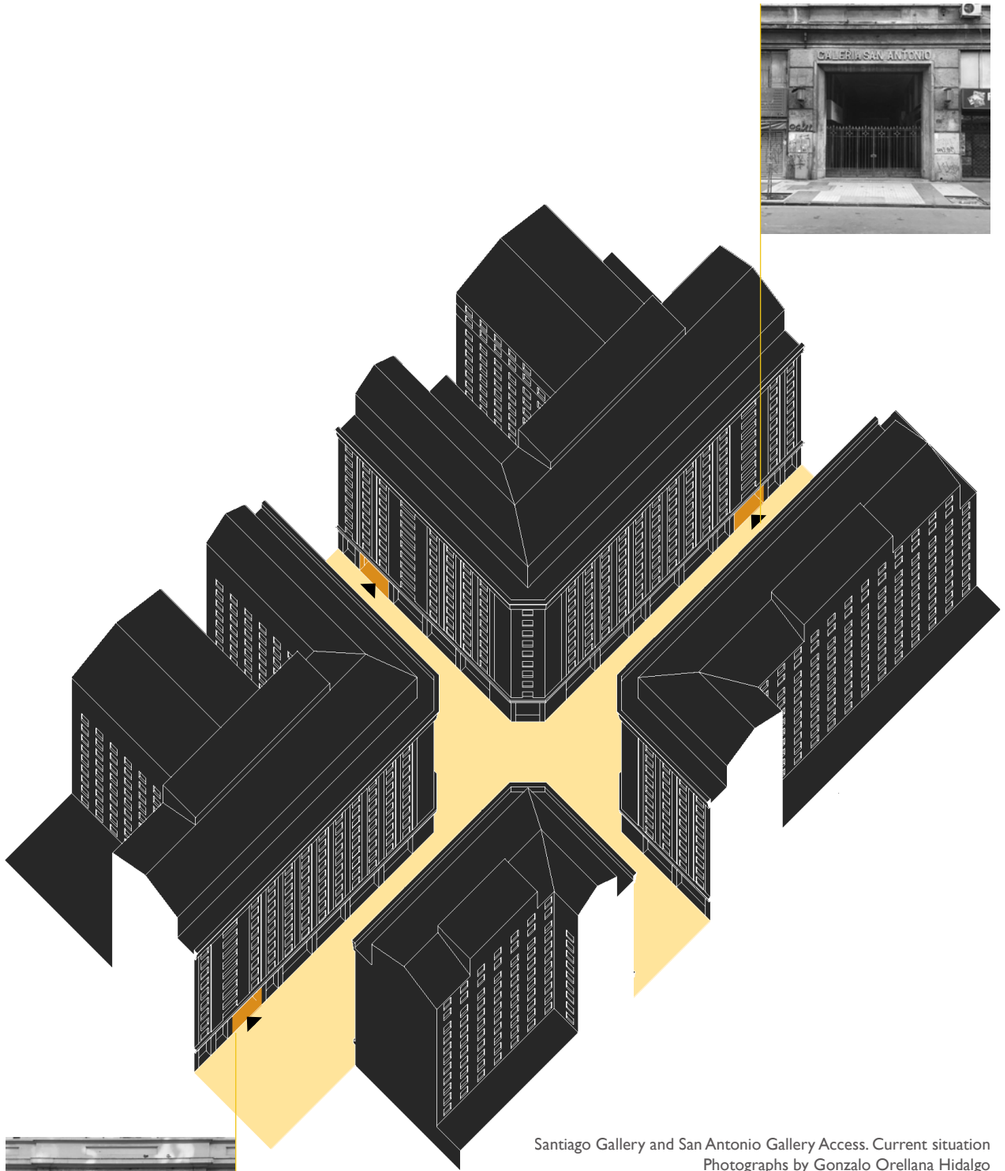
¿Es factible? ¿Cuánto costaría? Sector inmobiliario analiza idea del Gobierno de convertir oficinas abandonadas en viviendas

SANTIAGO ¿CONVERTIR OFICINAS EN DEPTOS?

Gobierno evalúa convertir edificios de oficinas abandonados en viviendas

El abandono del centro de Santiago: Oportunidad para la innovación. Por Joaquín Lavín

Chile Press 2023



Santiago Gallery and San Antonio Gallery Access. Current situation
Photographs by Gonzalo Orellana Hidalgo

Cross-street axonometric - Potencial case study

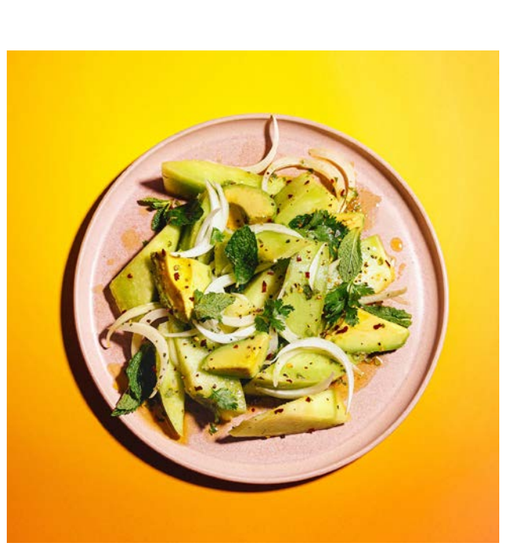
SPECIFICATIONS
Name: San Antonio 418 Building Complex
Architect: Eduardo Vargas V
Year: 1952
Style: Neoclassical
Structure: Reinforce concrete
Stories: 13
Hight: 32 meters.
Surface: 19.256 square meters.

Caja Nacional de Empleados Públicos y Periodistas building.
San Antonio 427.
Photographs by Antonio Quintana, 1955

Panoramic view of the crossstreet

UNIQUENESS AND IDENTITY FOR A NEW SENSE OF BELONGING

Reflection upon a conversation with DeVonn Francis



Melon and Avocado Crudo - by DeVonn Francis

How important could it be to have a voice and authenticity in an overloaded information world that –due to globalization– has become a mixture and clash of realities, histories, cultural backgrounds, and life's meaning?

Amidst flavors and traditions, food emerges not just as sustenance but as a bridge to our cultural roots and heritage. With each bite, we embark on a journey of discovery, unraveling the stories and histories woven into every dish. But as we savor the richness of culinary diversity, we can't help but wonder: Can architecture evoke that same sense of belonging and comfort? Can it, like food, create spaces where everyone feels at home, where culture and identity are celebrated and honored?

DeVonn Francis dares to defy convention and blur the lines between cultures through food. He adds ingredients not just from his Jamaican origins but from the rich tapestry of experiences and places that have shaped him. Through his unique approach, he merges and combines worlds, creating dishes that are as eclectic as they are delicious. In his quest to pursue uniqueness and identity, DeVonn reminds us to find our own icon, to embrace what sets us apart, and use it to carve out our place in the world. It's a message of empowerment, of daring to be different and standing tall in our individuality.

Moreover, DeVonn embodies a positive attitude that refuses to dwell on resentment (from when he talks about time in early childhood education) but instead seizes the good things life has to offer from that uniqueness and differences. He reminds us that in every challenge lies an opportunity, and it's up to us to make the most of it.

The potential to create spaces that evoke a sense of belonging and cultural identity is boundless in architecture. Just as DeVonn Francis transforms ingredients into culinary masterpieces that transcend borders, architects can merge and combine elements from diverse cultures, weaving them into the very fabric of their designs. By embracing the philosophy of pursuing uniqueness and identity, architects can redefine what it means to create a home—where everyone feels a deep connection to their surroundings. With a positive attitude and a willingness to explore cultural diversity's richness, architecture can become a beacon of inclusivity, offering sanctuary and solace to all who enter its embrace. It is not about colonization nor staying still but merging and combining to produce a new future where everyone feels at home.

As part of the art and expression world, architecture has the chance –just like DeVonn Francis and many other artists– to bring and merge contexts for a better life enjoyment through innovation of crossing worlds creating new senses of belonging for current and upcoming generations.

CREDITS BY PROJECT

BREATHING MACHINE
Organic waste managment System Prototype
Project & Research
Adv. Studio IV - Nerea Calvillo
TA: Simran Raswant
Author: Pedro Pablo González / Mingyeong Choi
Year: 2023

BREATHING BUILDING
A modular system for re-inhabitation
Project & Research
Adv. Studio V - Katie Shima
TA: Steven Lin
Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2023

SYSTEMS OF REPETITION
Makergraph
Project & Research
Adv. Studio VI - Ada Tolla & Giuseppe Lignano
TA: Maclane Regan
Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2024

OLD BUILDINGS AS PALIMPSEST
A Framework on Remodeling Theory
Theory & Critique (Essay)
History of Architectural Theory - Mark Wigley
TA: Zoe Kauder Nalebuff
Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2023

VISUAL NARRATIVES
Visual Studies (Visual Essays)
Arch. Photography - Michael Vahrenwald
Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2023

TRANSF. OF 530 DWELLINGS / AIR DRIFTS
Two transscalar case studies
Theory & Critique (Essay)
Transscalarities - Andrés Jaque/Bart-Jan Polman
TA: Marie de Testa
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Year: 2023

LIGHT HOUSE
Rethinking on Privacy and Security
Theory & Critique (Essay)
Arguments - Andrés Jaque / Xiaoxi Chen
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Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2023

CONTEMPORARY REFLECTIONS ON
55 YEARS OF ARCHITECTURAL THEORY
Theory & Critique (Essay)
Architecture. The Contemporary- Bernand Tschumi
TA: Emma Sumrow
Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2024

NOWHERE
Designing the architectural practice
Visual Studies (Visual Essays)
Unorthodox Practices - Juan Herreros
Author: PP González / Raymond Yu / Steven Widyatmadja
Year: 2024

MAPPING OF THE ABANDONED FOR A CITY
ADAPTIVE RECOVERY
Research - Kinne Fellowship
Author: Pedro Pablo González
Year: 2024

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Javairia Shahid
Katie Shima
Emma Sumrow
Steven Lin
Ada Tolla
Bernard Tschumi
Michael Vahrenwald
Mark Wigley