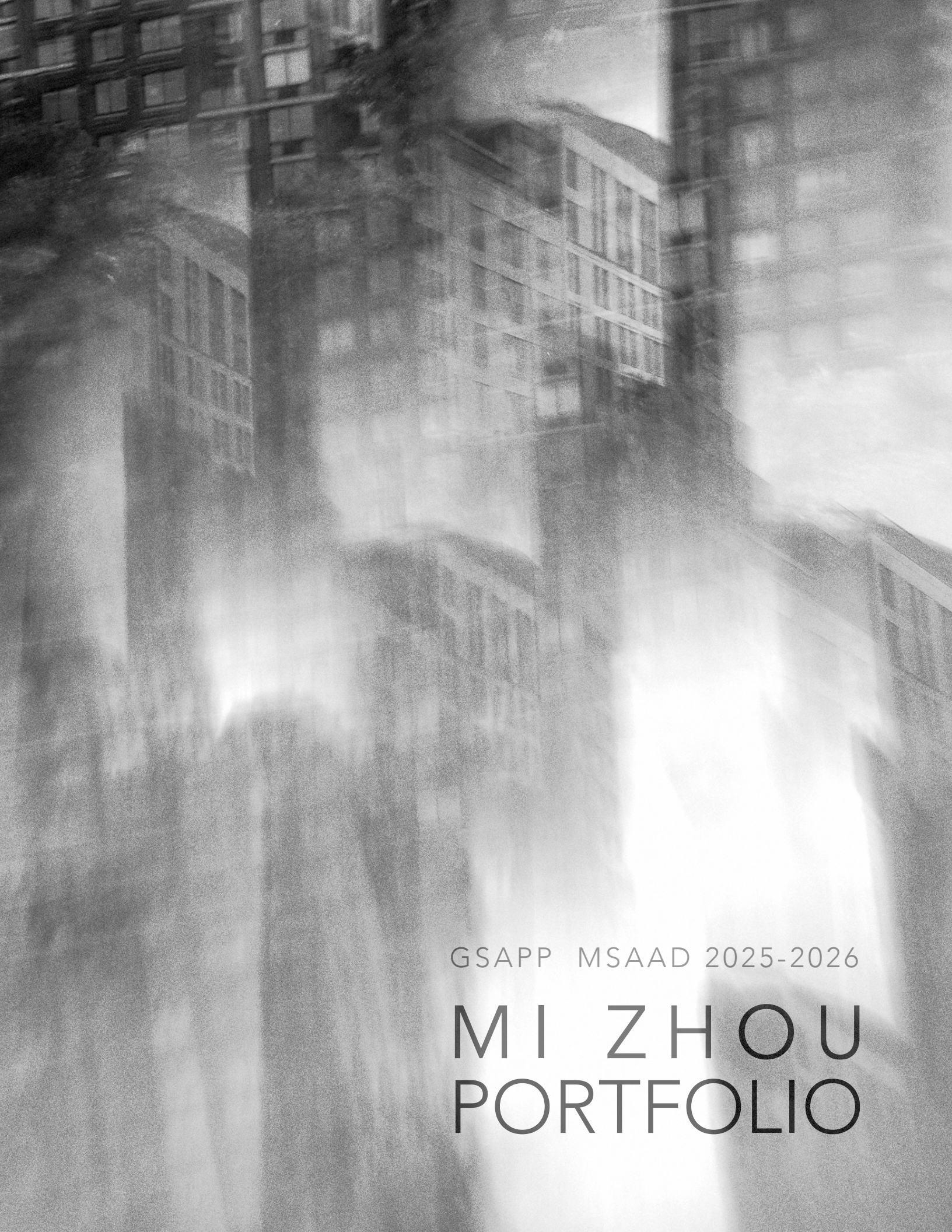




GSAPP MSAAD 2025-2026

MI ZHOU
PORTFOLIO

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Repair of the Deserted Island

Individual Project

Summer Studio, 2025

Professor: Antonas Aristide

A small group of permanent caretakers, periodically joined by invited guests engaged in permaculture, initiates a continuous cycle of maintenance and cultivation. The island becomes a place of sustained work and shared responsibility, organized by a clear protocol of use and cohabitation—an open and adaptive model for ecological restoration grounded in collective care. Kivotos is understood as a ruined landscape that can be preserved—a terrain marked by the remnants of harsh agricultural labor: dry stone walls, cultivated terraces, and the solitary ruin of its former dwelling. Rather than approaching the island as a site for development, the project reactivates its productive history through the restoration of traditional land-based structures and practices.

This project treats the island not as a blank slate, but as a fragile, wounded landscape in need of attentive care. Once cultivated by a solitary inhabitant, the island is now largely abandoned, its soil eroded and its agricultural memory fading. At the heart of the restoration effort lies the reconstruction of traditional dry stone walls—a centuries-old method of shaping and stabilizing steep terrain, which historically protected both ecology and productivity. These walls are not simply infrastructural tools, but carriers of cultural knowledge and resilience.

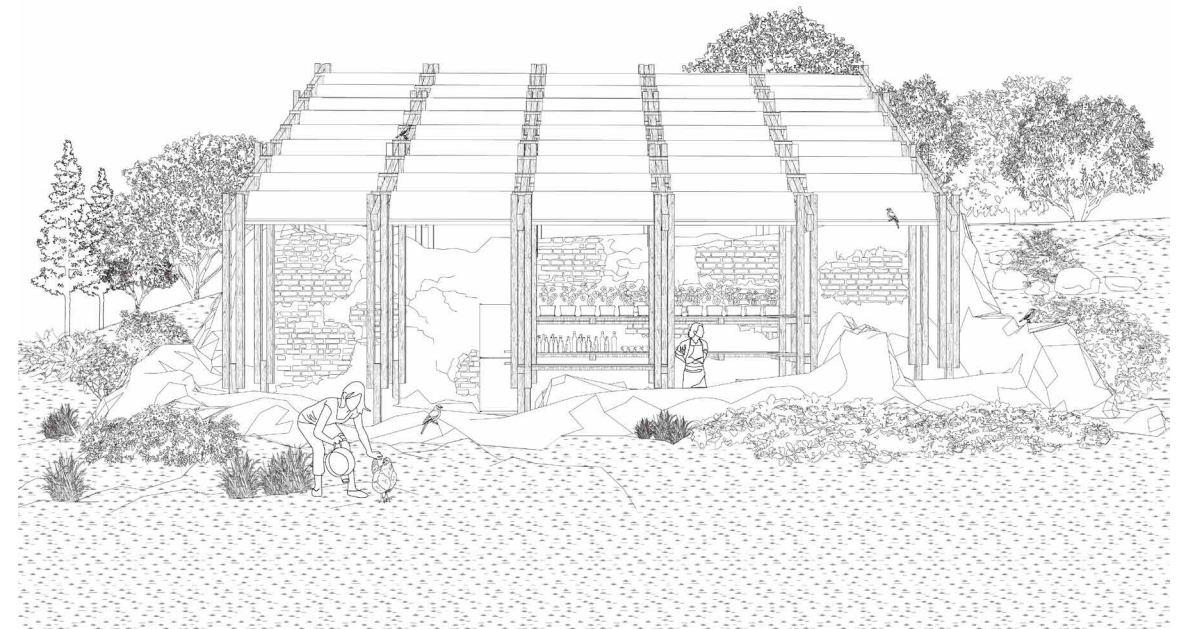
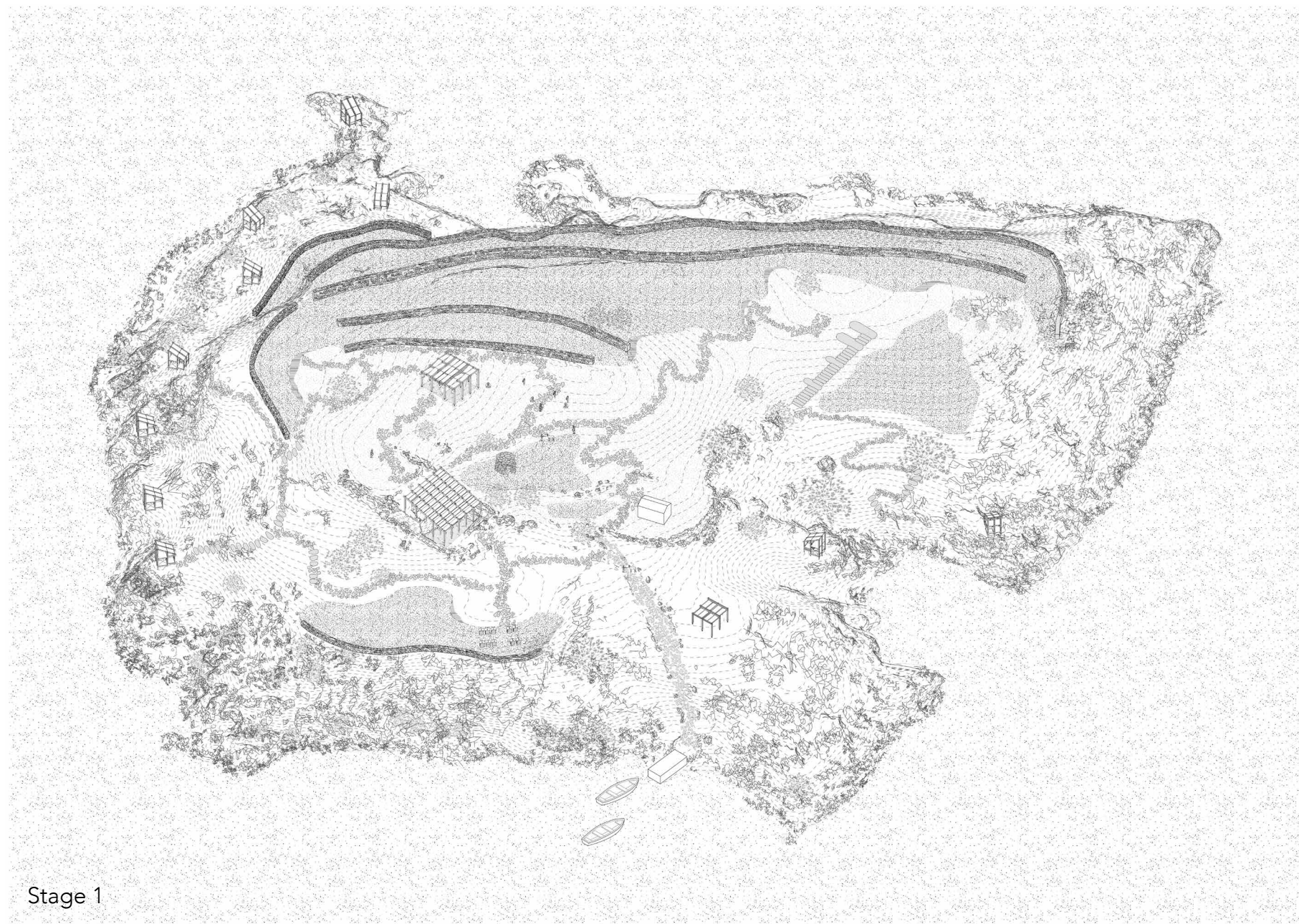
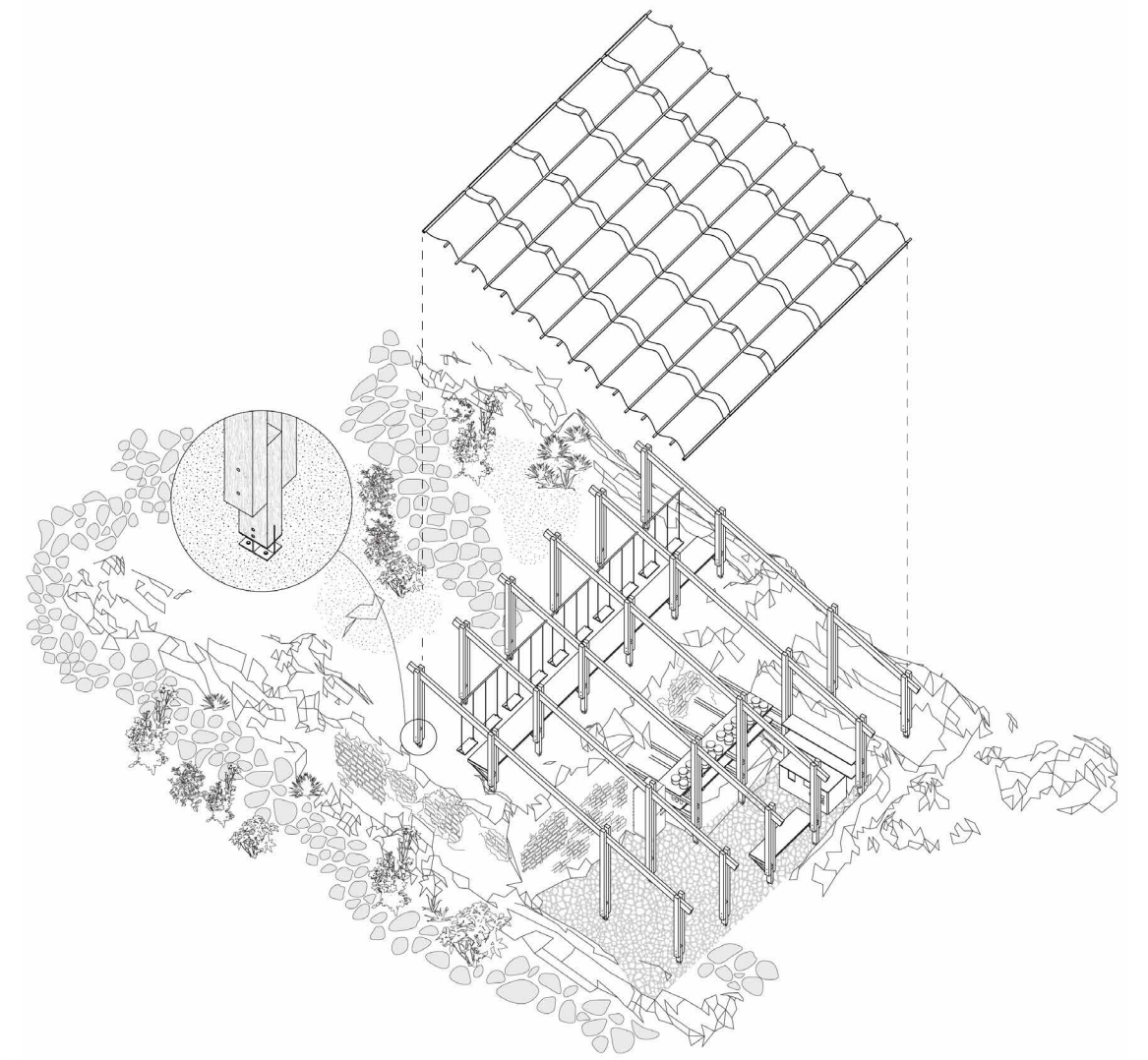
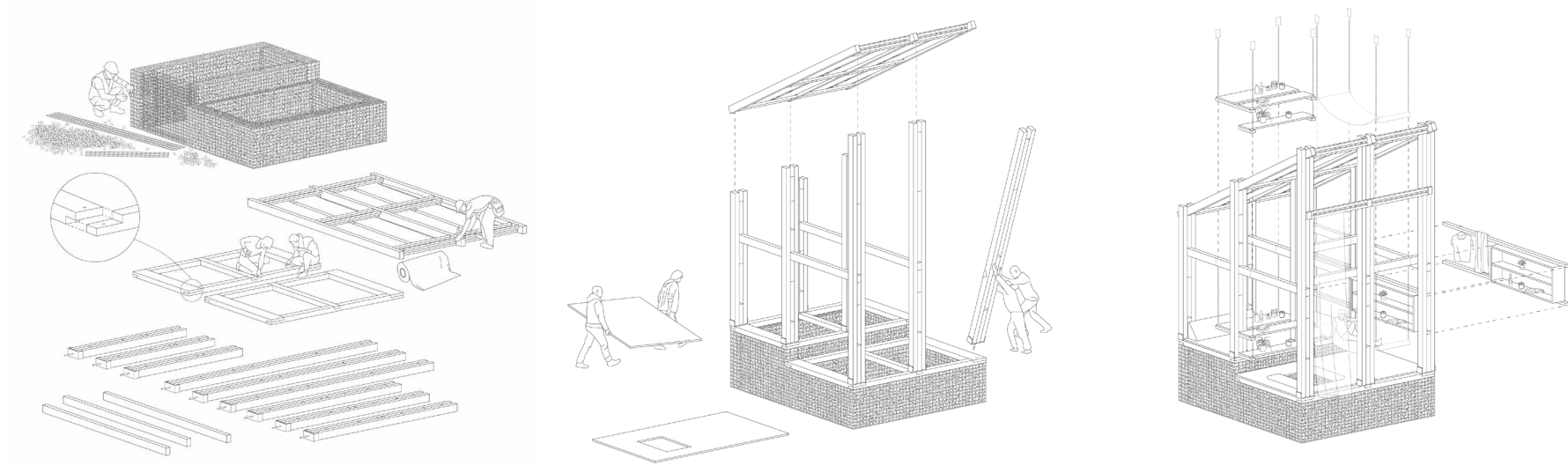
Today, a small constellation of three permanent caretakers has returned to the island, working the land not as private owners but as stewards. Periodically, they are joined by invited guests who participate in cycles of cultivation and maintenance, guided by principles of permaculture. This collaborative model resists the logic of privatized land development or extractive tourism. Instead, it repositions agricultural labor as a shared, ongoing practice of inhabitation and care.

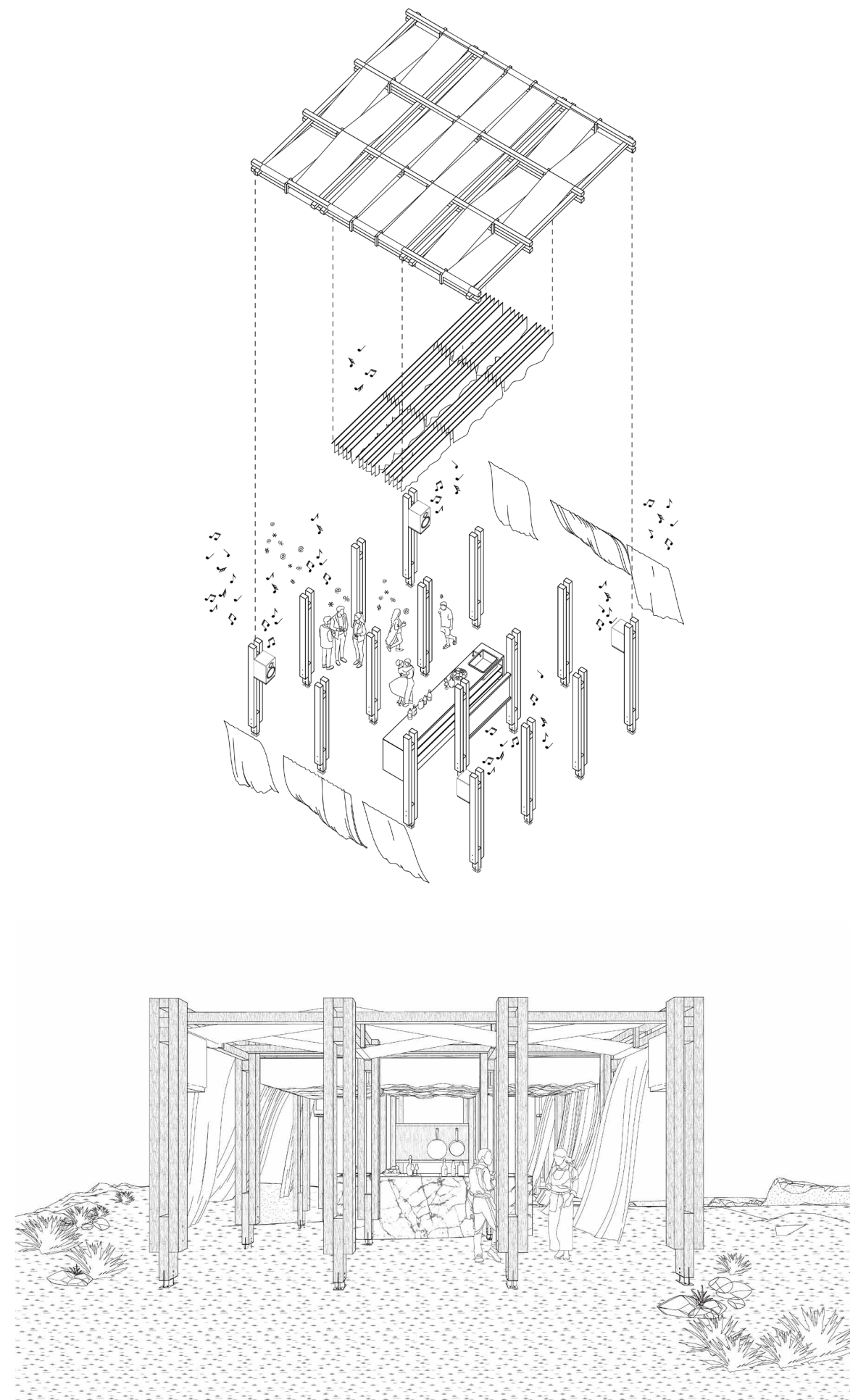
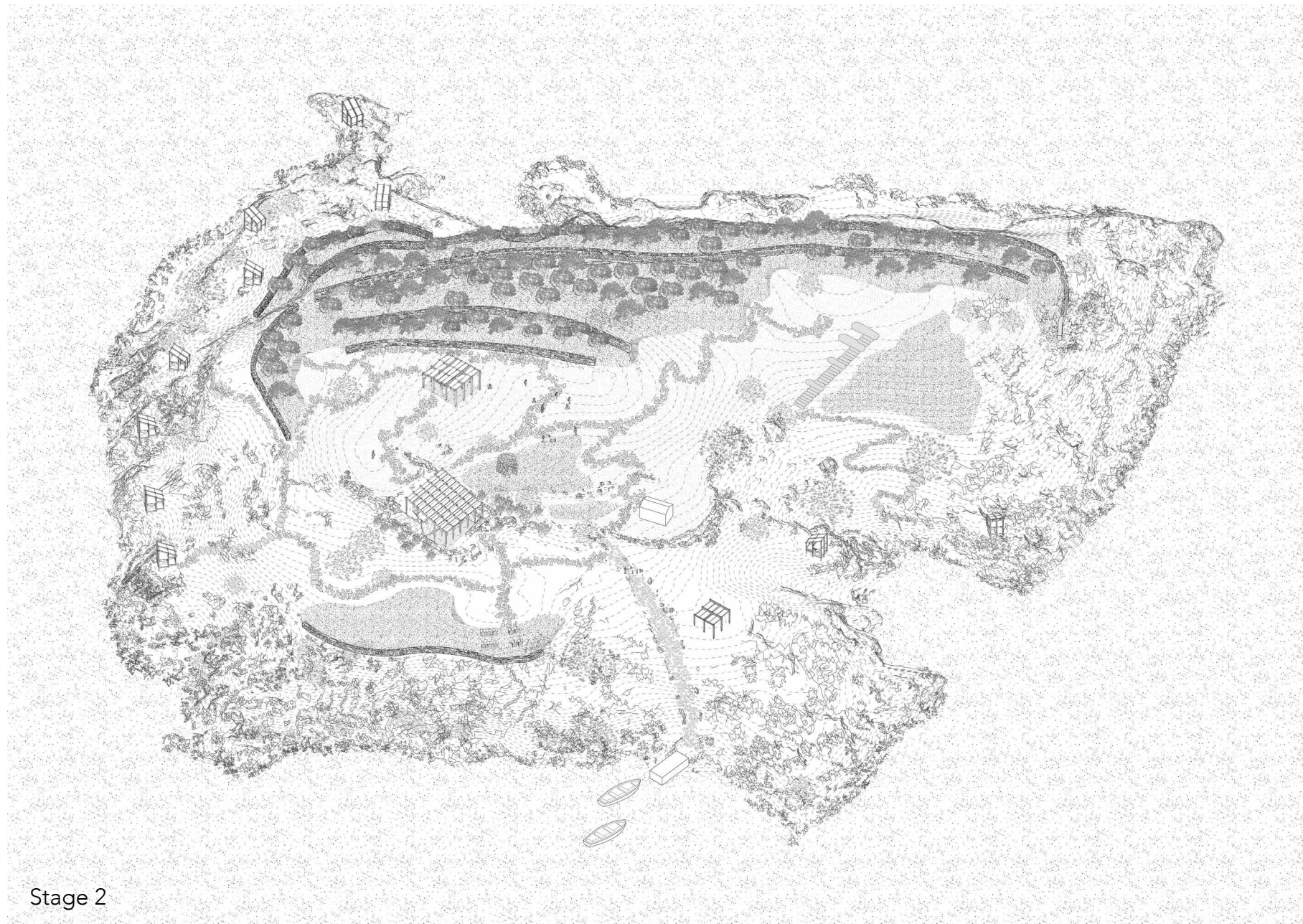
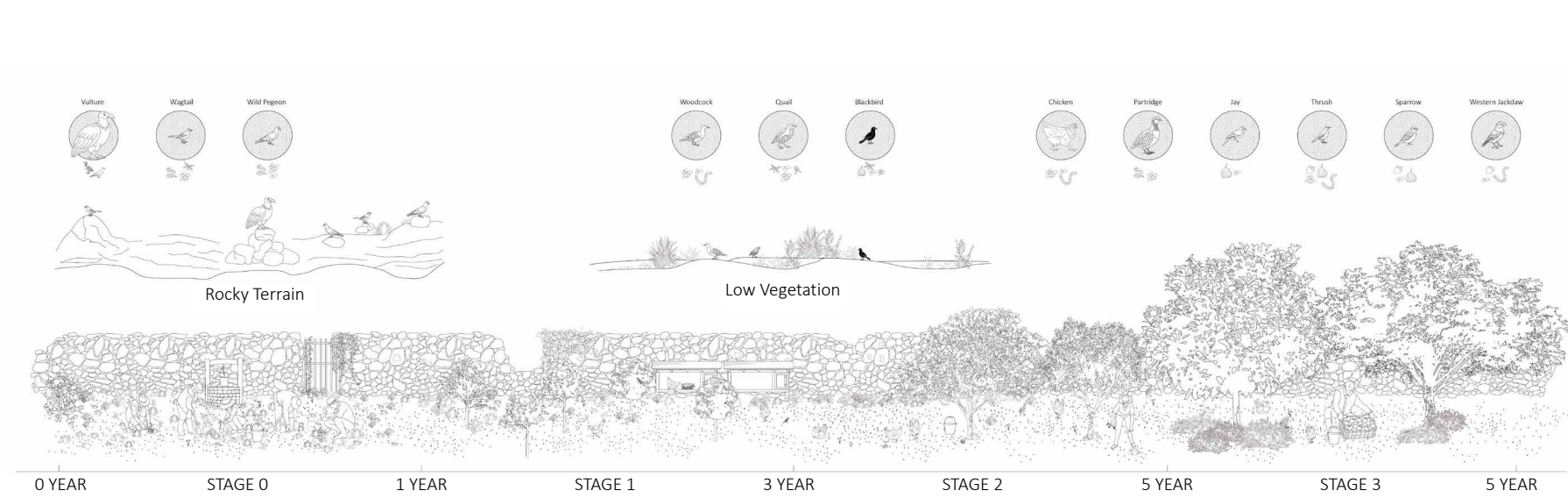
To support this vision, a clear protocol is proposed—defining zones for planting, living, gathering, and rest. The protocol also structures how new guests are invited, how long they stay, and how skills and knowledge are passed along. Rather than enforcing permanence, it encourages rhythms of seasonal return and rotation, echoing the productive temporality of the land itself.

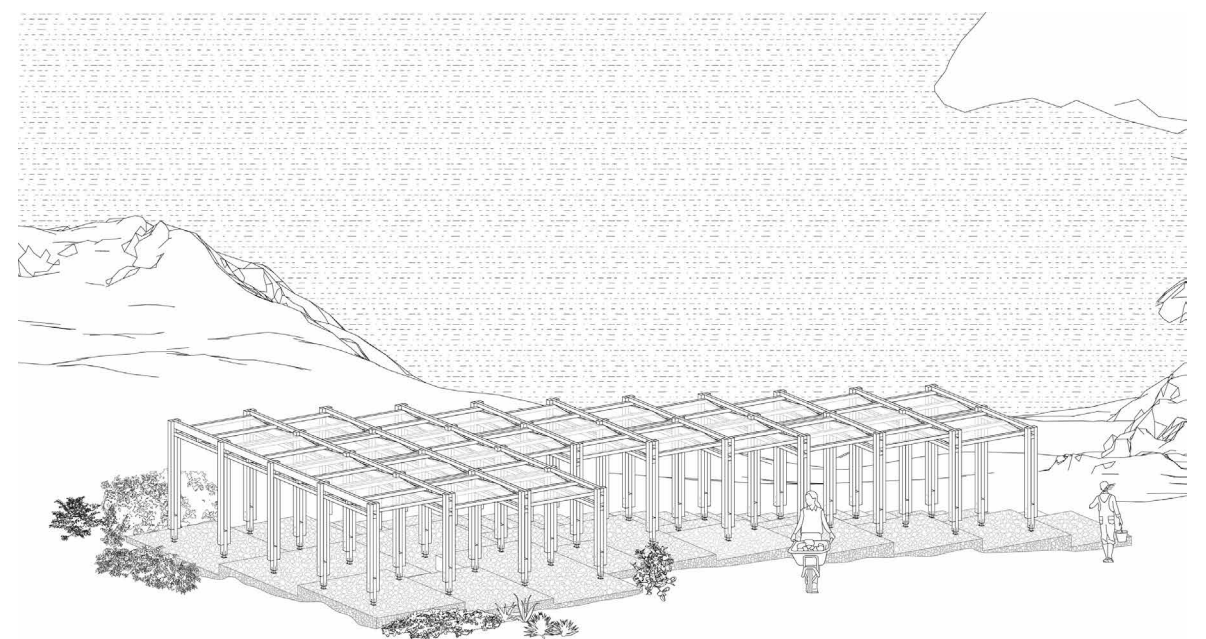
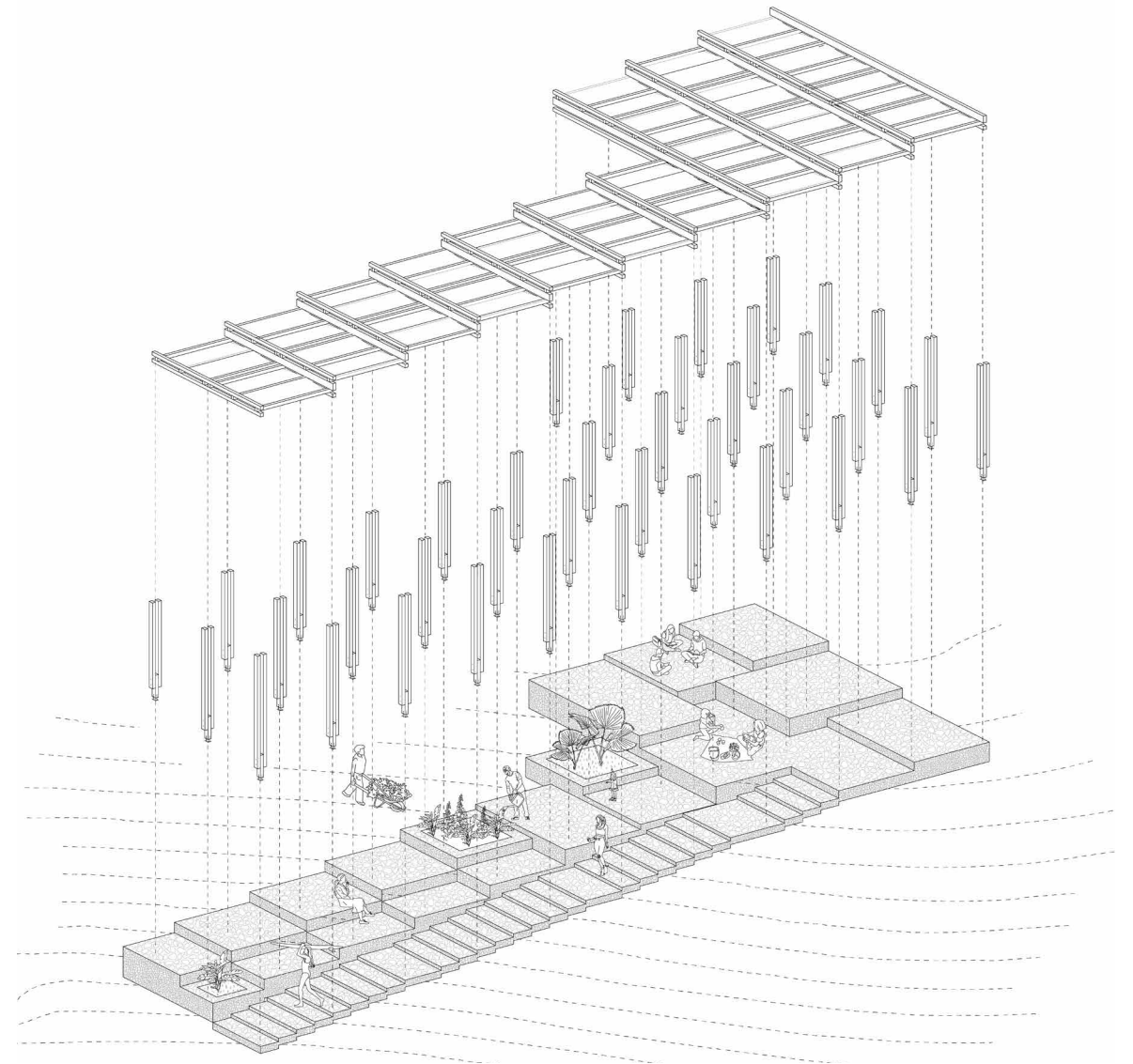
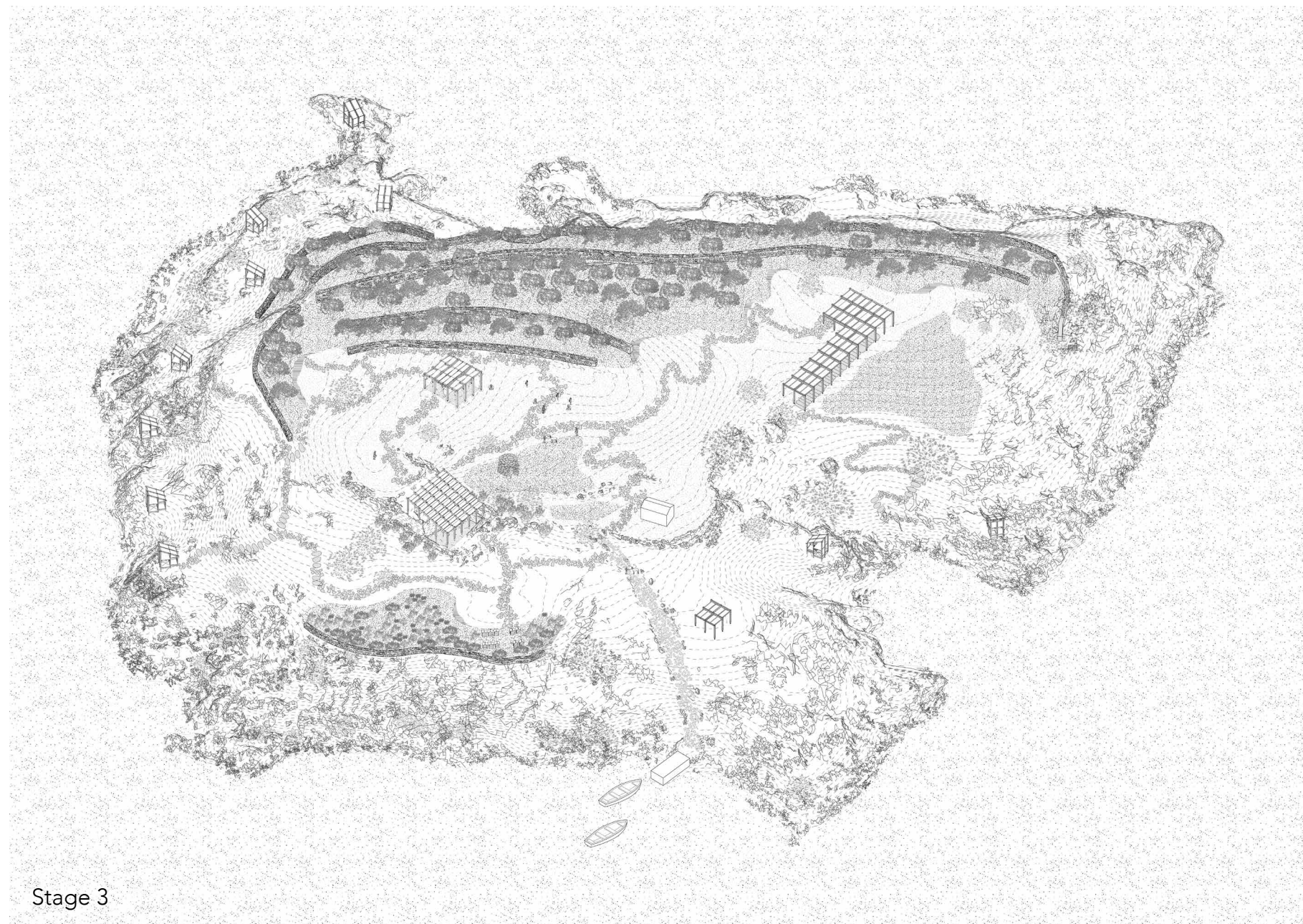
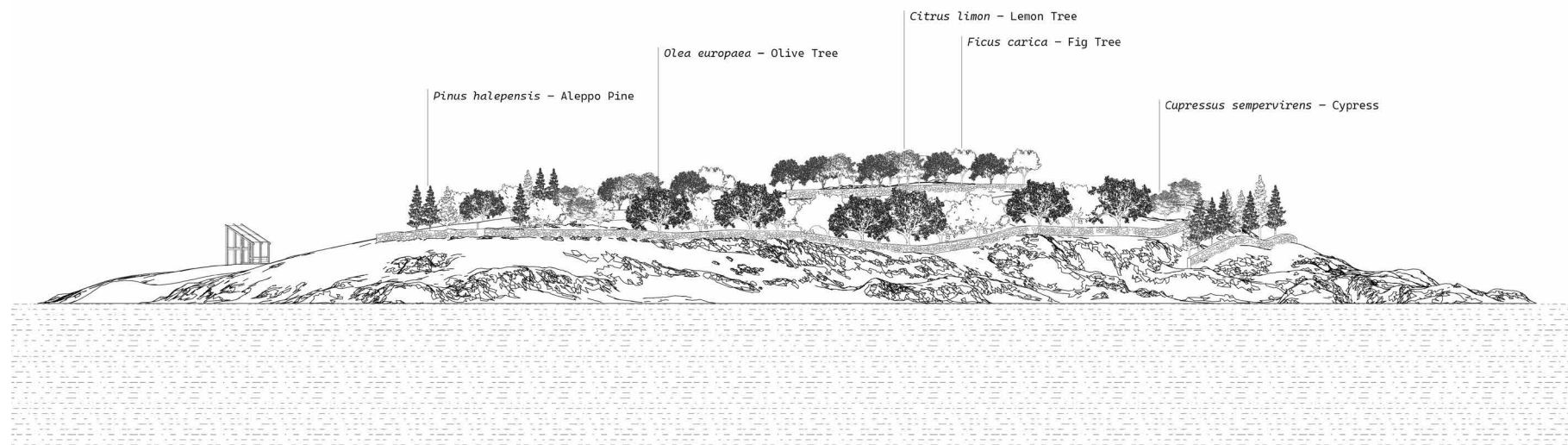
As a precedent, the island of Tinos offers inspiration: there, thousands of kilometers of dry stone walls once preserved soil fertility and ensured long-term cultivation. Similarly, this project seeks to restore continuity through careful repair, low-impact intervention, and cultural reinvestment. Here, permaculture is not introduced as a fashionable label, but as a practical ethic—a method of re-establishing the fragile bond between human labor and ecological sustainability.

Through this approach, the island becomes not a retreat from the world, but a quiet rehearsal for another way of living—with slowness, with rhythm, and with care.











Fluid Pier: Civic Metabolism on the Hudson

Individual Project
Fall Studio, 2025
Professor: Gordon Kipping

This map shows the Heat Vulnerability Index (HVI) across Manhattan by ZIP Code Tabulation Areas (ZCTAs), ranked from 1 = lowest to 5 = highest risk of heat-related illness.

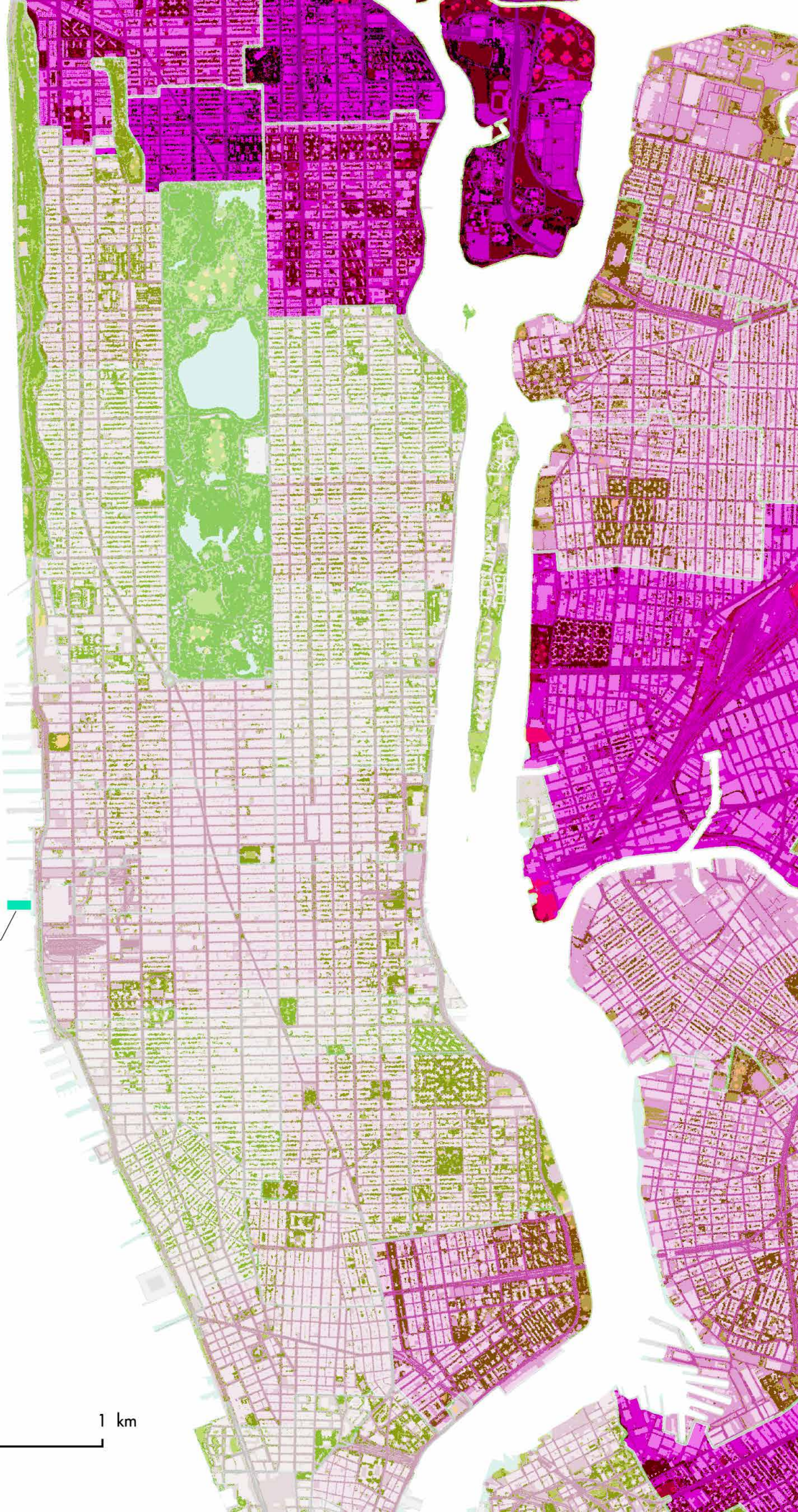
Pier 76, located along the Hudson River, lies within an HVI Level 2 zone—indicating relatively low heat vulnerability due to its open waterfront exposure and building quality. However, limited vegetation and high surface reflectivity suggest opportunities for cooling design strategies, such as shading, ventilation corridors, and green buffers.

Data Sources:
Heat Vulnerability Index Rankings (2025) — NYC DOHMH
Modified ZCTA Boundaries (2020) — NYC DOHMH / NYC Open Data

2025 Heat Vulnerability Index Ranking



0 1 km



This map shows the transportation networks surrounding Pier 76, revealing that the nearest subway access is the 7 train, located at Hudson Yards. Although the pier is not directly served by multiple subway lines, its waterfront position connects it to a strong flow of north–south pedestrian and cycling traffic along the Hudson River Greenway — one of Manhattan’s busiest recreational and commuting corridors.

In addition, two ferry operators (NY Waterway and NYC Ferry nearby) provide alternative mobility options, linking the pier area to New Jersey and other waterfront destinations. Together, these systems position Pier 76 as a multi-modal urban hinge, where land-based transit and water-based circulation meet.

TRANSPORTATION STRUCTURE SUBWAY LINE

- Bridge

Overpass

Pedestrian

Railroad B

Railroad V

Tunnel
- 1-2-3

7

A-C

A-C-E

B-D

B-D-F-M

E

F

L

M

N-Q-R-W

S

SUBWAY STATION

- 1

1-2-3

7-7 Express

A-B-C-D

A-C-E

B-D-E

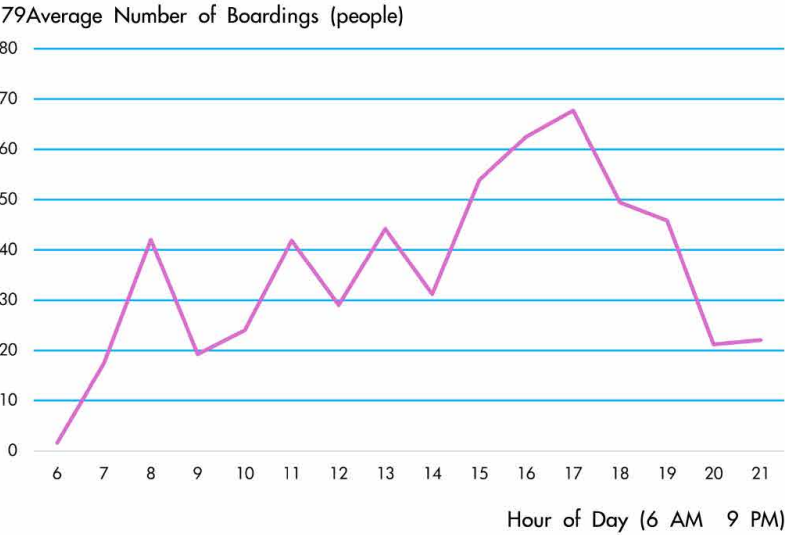
B-D-F-M

L

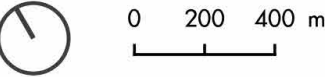
N-Q-R-W

S

AVERAGE HOURLY RIDERSHIP AT PIER 79



Data source: Average hourly ridership at Pier 79 (NYC Ferry SG Route). (NYC Open Data)



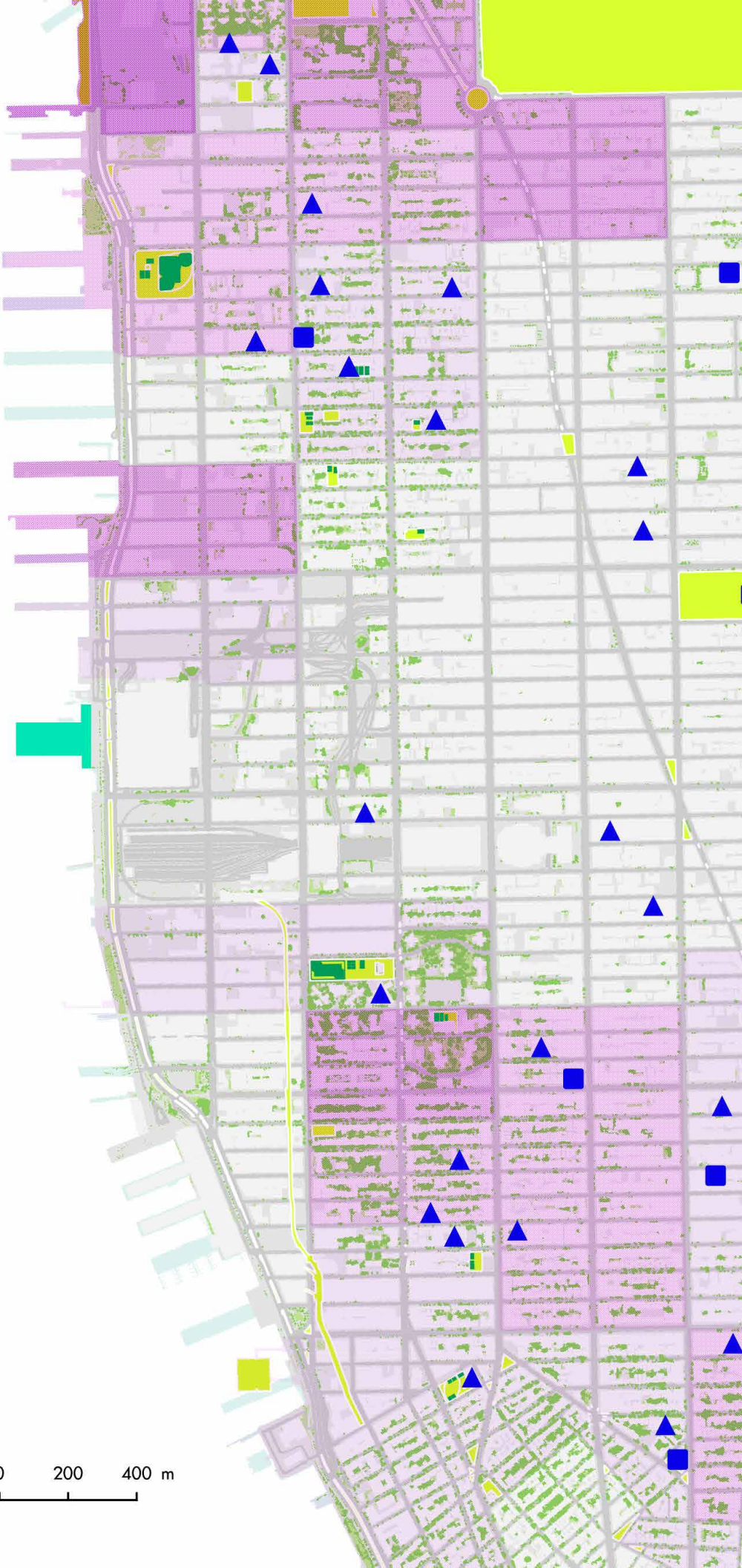
The mapping reveals a clear absence of **educational and cultural infrastructure** along the Hudson River, even though such programs cluster inland. This gap suggests an opportunity for Pier 79 to support daytime learning and community-oriented activities that connect commuters and residents. The map also exposes an imbalance of cultural institutions: visual arts dominate Chelsea, performing arts dominate Midtown, yet the waterfront remains culturally inactive. These insights point toward introducing programs that **merge art, sound, and movement** — transforming the pier’s noisy environment into a new form of urban expression and setting the foundation for future nighttime activation.

New York City Public Schools (2015) — Geodata @ Columbia
New York City Public Libraries (2015) — Geodata @ Columbia
Athletic Facilities — NYC Open Data
DCLA Cultural Organizations (2021) — NYC Open Data

- ATHLETIC FACILITY
- PUBLIC SCHOOL
- PUBLIC LIBRARY
- OPEN SPACE

POPULATION AGED UNER 18 (2020)

- 0 - 377
- 377 - 564
- 564 - 771
- 771 - 1087
- 1087 - 4862



West Side Redevelopment & Future Growth

The redevelopment of West Side Yard into Hudson Yards West will introduce new residential, commercial, and public spaces along the Hudson River, leading to a significant increase in local population density and daily activity. As a result, adjacent areas such as Pier 76—currently under consideration for public programming—will play an essential role in providing complementary cultural, recreational, and community-oriented facilities. The site’s proximity to this emerging urban hub positions it as a potential social and ecological extension of the Hudson River Park network.

Data Sources:
New York City Public Schools (2015) — Geodata @ Columbia
New York City Public Libraries (2015) — Geodata @ Columbia
Athletic Facilities — NYC Open Data
DCLA Cultural Organizations (2021) — NYC Open Data

West Side Redevelopment & Future Growth

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DCLA Cultural Organizations (2021)— NYC Open Data

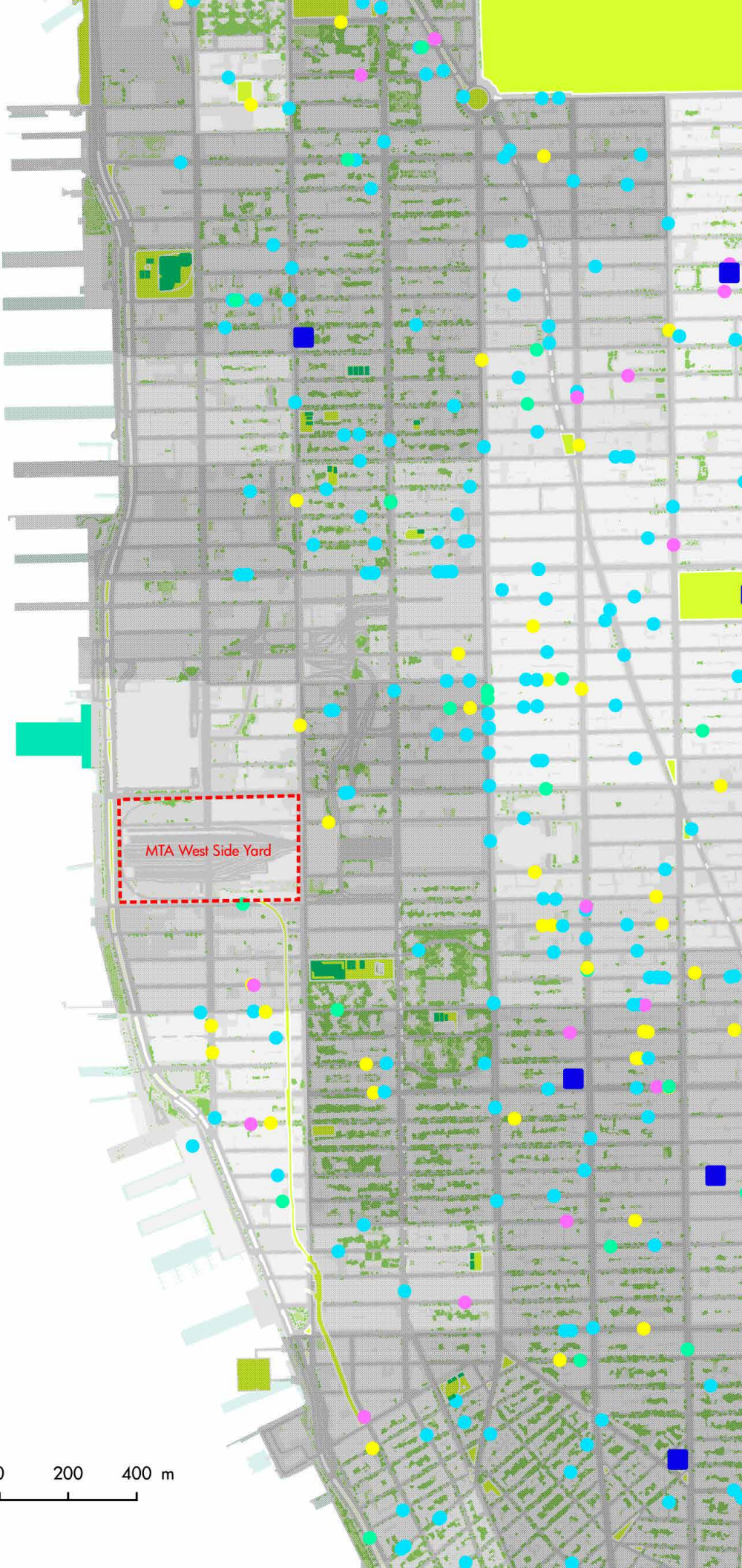
- PUBMIC LIBRARY
- Athletic_Facilities_20251026

CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

- Institutional & Cultural Heritage
- Other
- Performing & Experiential Arts
- Visual & Design Arts

POPULATION (2020)

- 0 - 2095
- 2095 - 3067
- 3067 - 4003
- 4003 - 5387
- 5387 - 17222



This map overlays 311 noise complaints with a housing-density heatmap to reveal how sound and residential patterns interact around Pier 76. Helicopter noise is concentrated along the waterfront, while commercial noise clusters inland in denser mixed-use neighborhoods. Pier 76 sits at the edge of these high-density residential zones, making it a sensitive threshold between quiet living areas and a loud urban environment.

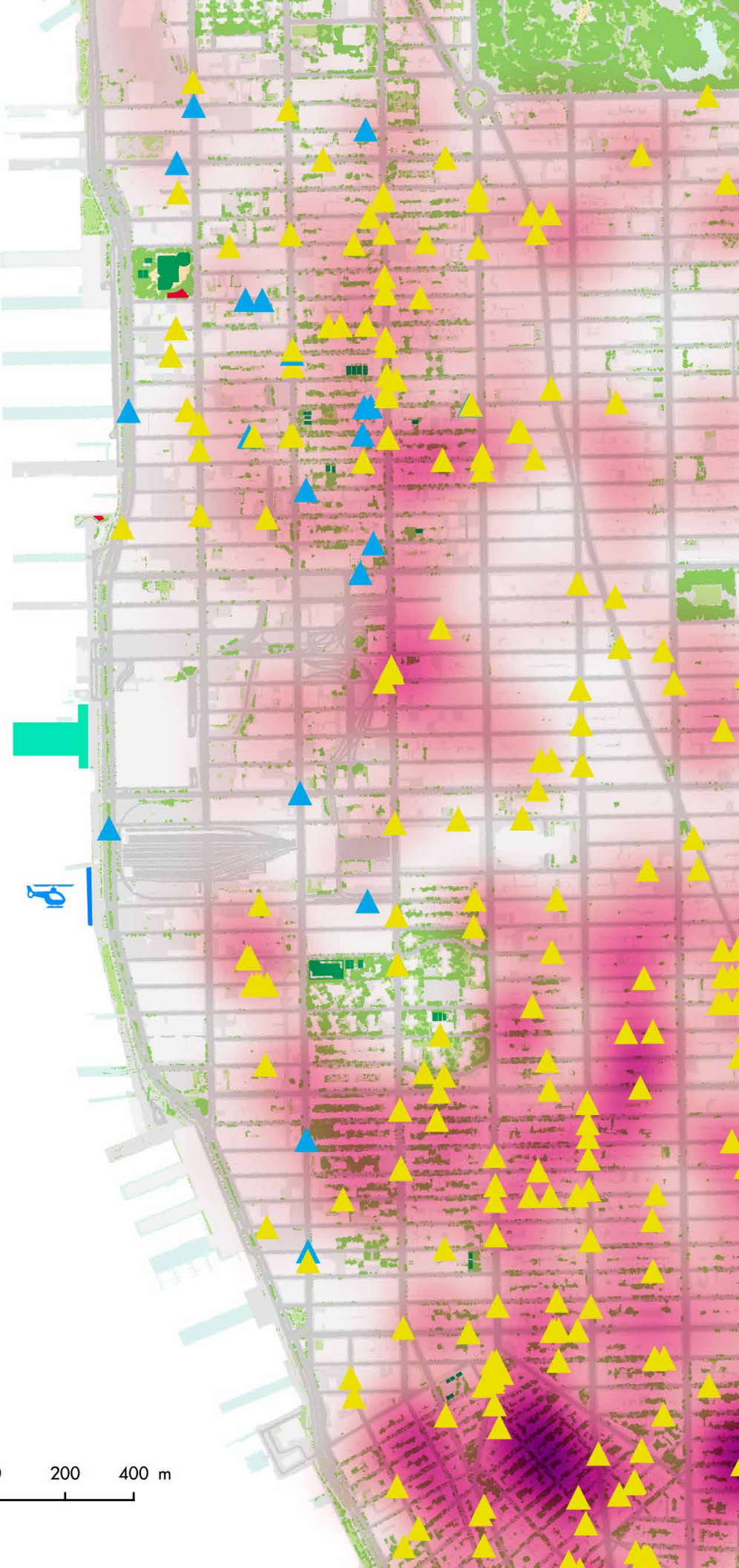
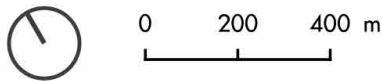
This contrast highlights the pier’s potential to function as a buffer space, where public programming must negotiate sound, activity, and community comfort.

311 NOISE COMPLAINTS

- Noise - Helicopter
- Noise - Commercial

HOUSING HEATMAP

- Low residential density
- High residential density

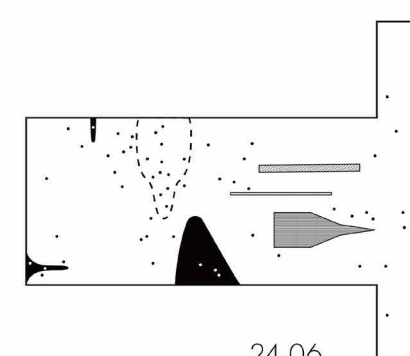
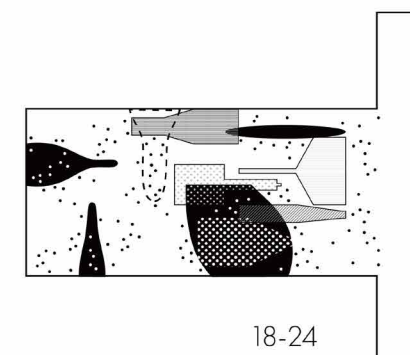
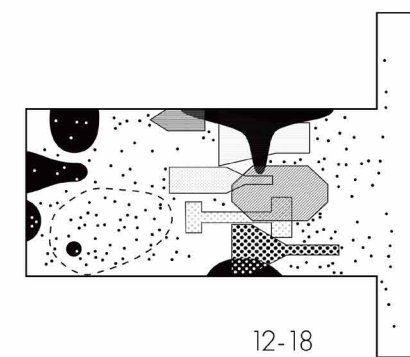
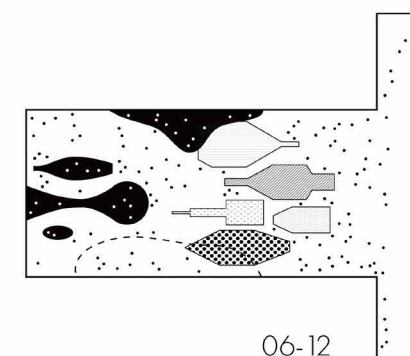
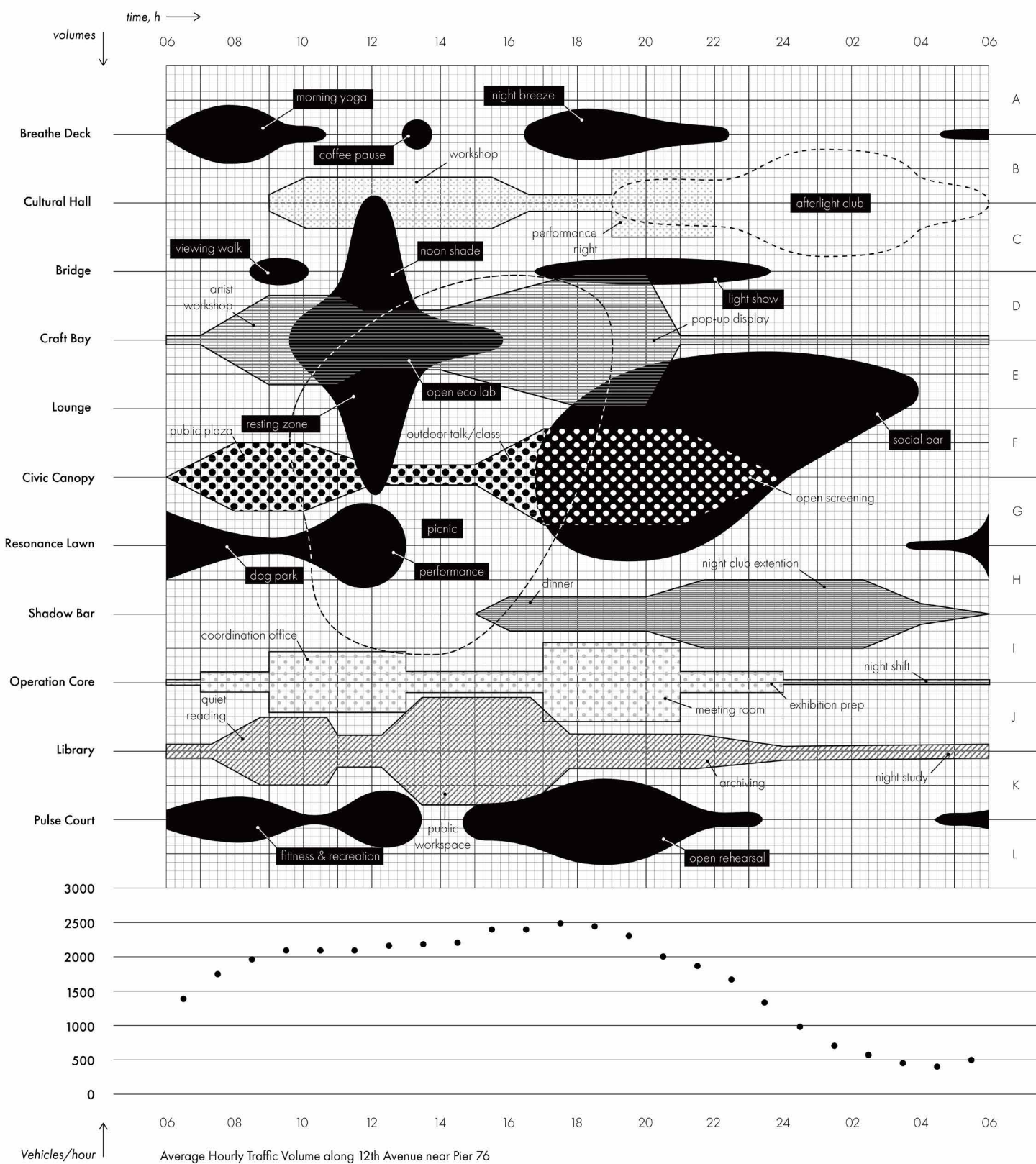


Nightlife venues (DCA-licensed cabarets) were mapped to understand how late-night activities concentrate across Midtown and the West Side. The clusters show a strong nightlife corridor along Hell's Kitchen and the Theater District — but a sharp drop as the city approaches the waterfront. Pier 76 sits right on this “edge condition,” where urban nightlife intensity fades out.

This contrast suggests a potential opportunity: the pier could become a new social threshold,

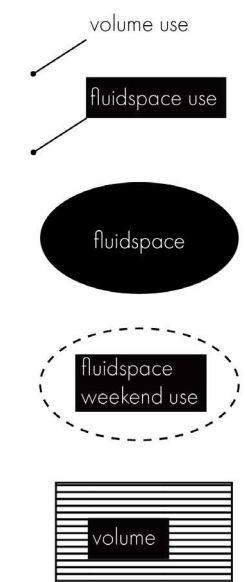


0 120 240 m



A= occupancy, sperson/sqms

legend:

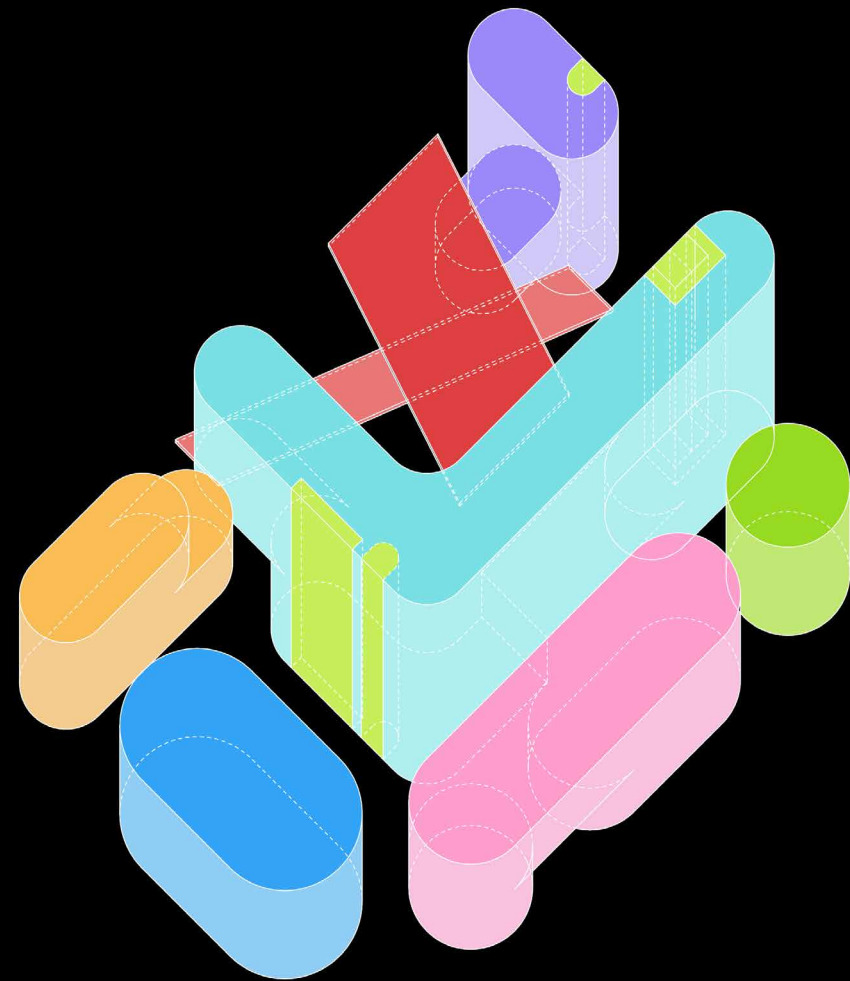


The occupancy map charts **24H** in the collective metabolism of Pier 76.

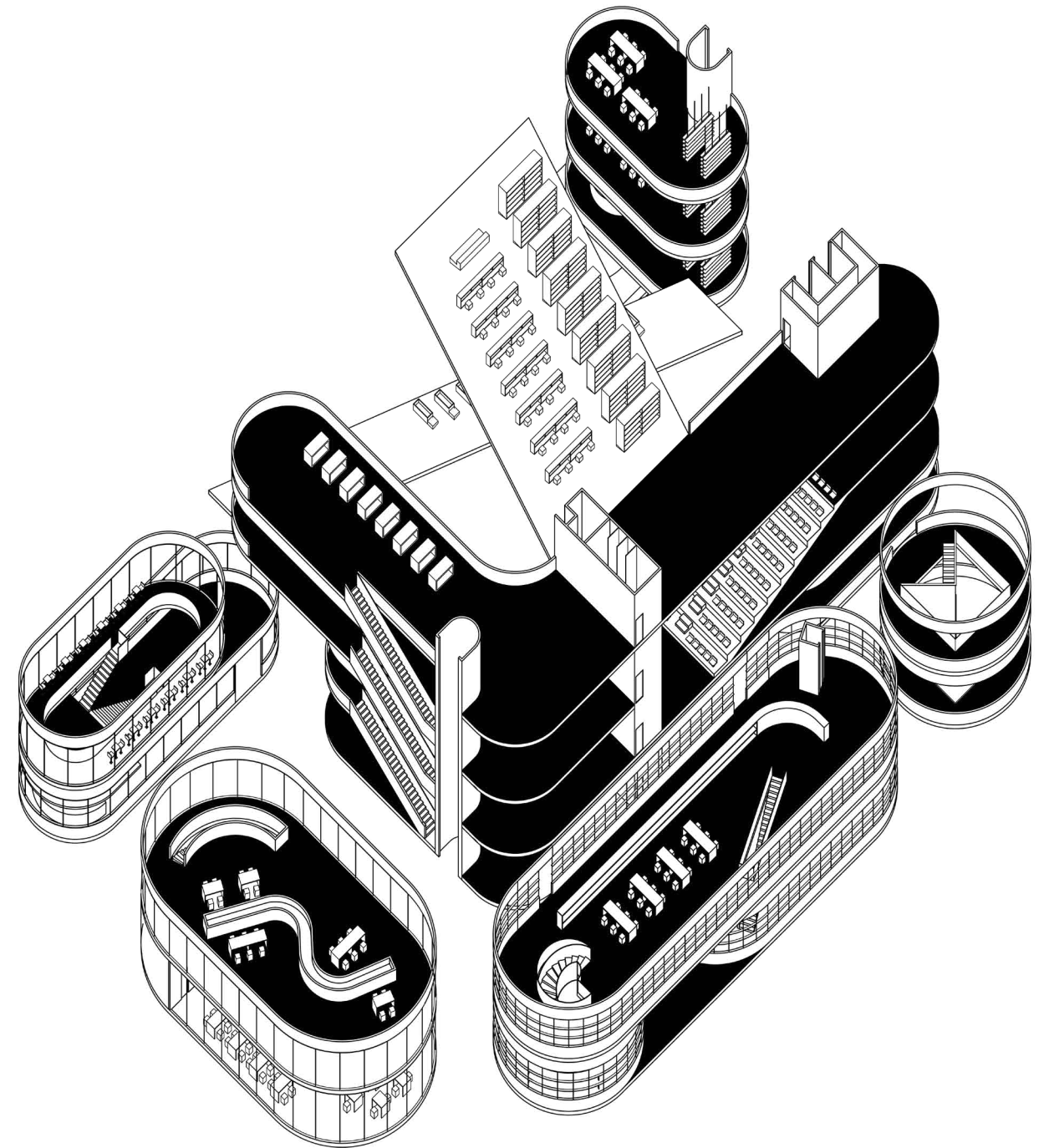
It visualizes how the pier transforms through time — shifting from morning learning and civic gatherings to nocturnal performances and informal encounters. Each volume corresponds to a specific social or cultural condition, while the black “fluidspaces” trace moments of overlap, when different publics, programs, and rhythms intertwine.

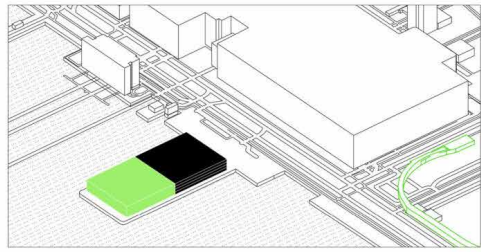
Referencing Mikhail Frantsuzov’s Liquid Babel, this project similarly rethinks the waterfront as a regenerative civic infrastructure. Rather than treating the pier as a bounded site, it embraces the continuous negotiation between fixed and fluid systems — architecture, environment, and occupation — to rejuvenate a decaying urban edge into an adaptive, usable framework.

Therefore, the diagram represents the main ambition of this project:
architecture’s capacity to sustain a continuous civic ecology.

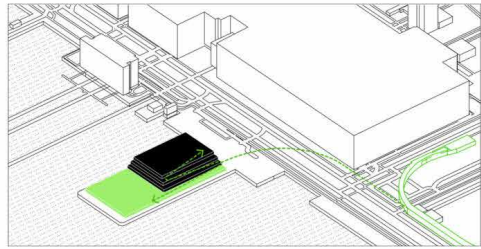


Each volume corresponds to a specific temporal rhythm—study, rehearsal, gathering, performance—and their offsets create shared edges where activities bleed into one another. Rather than a single monolithic building, the project becomes a cluster of interconnected forms shaped by circulation, visibility, and overlap. The composition reflects how the pier operates as a continuous civic engine rather than a fixed program box.

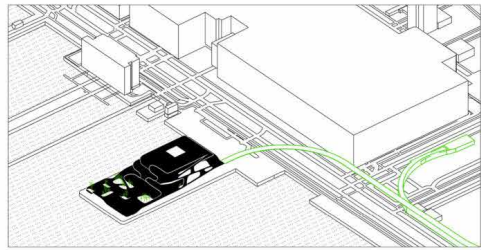




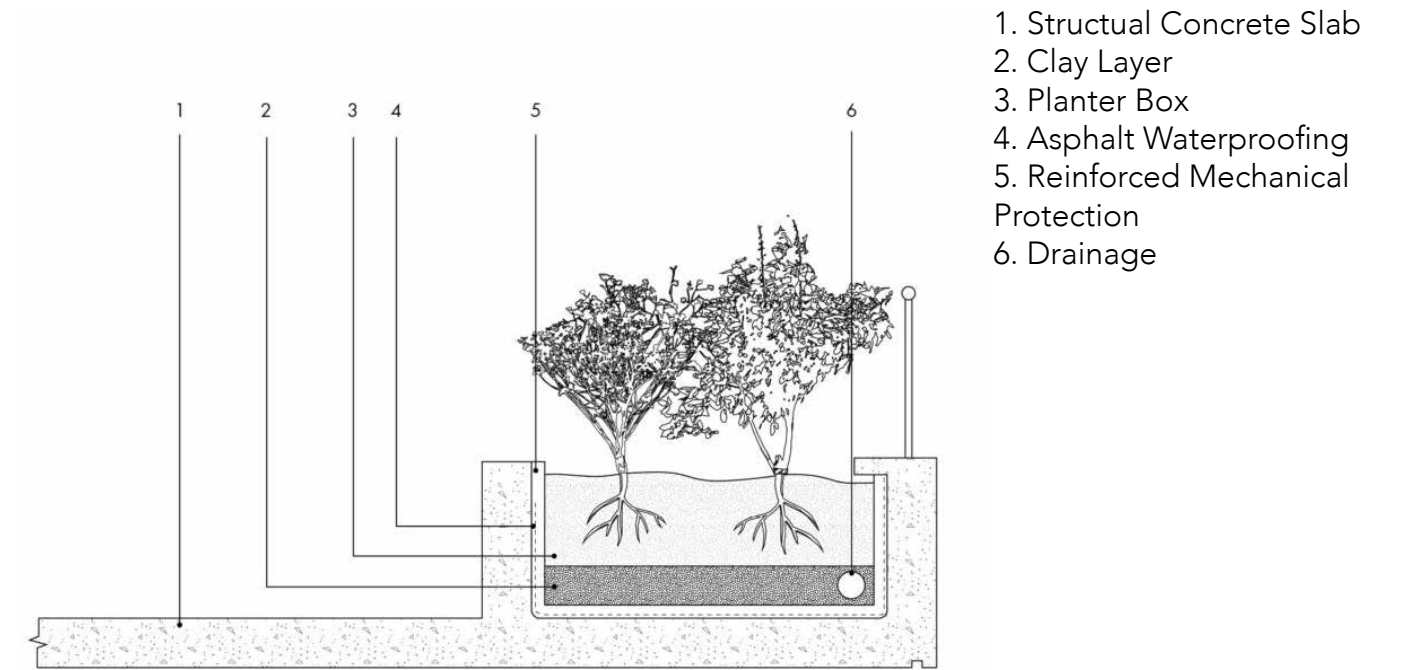
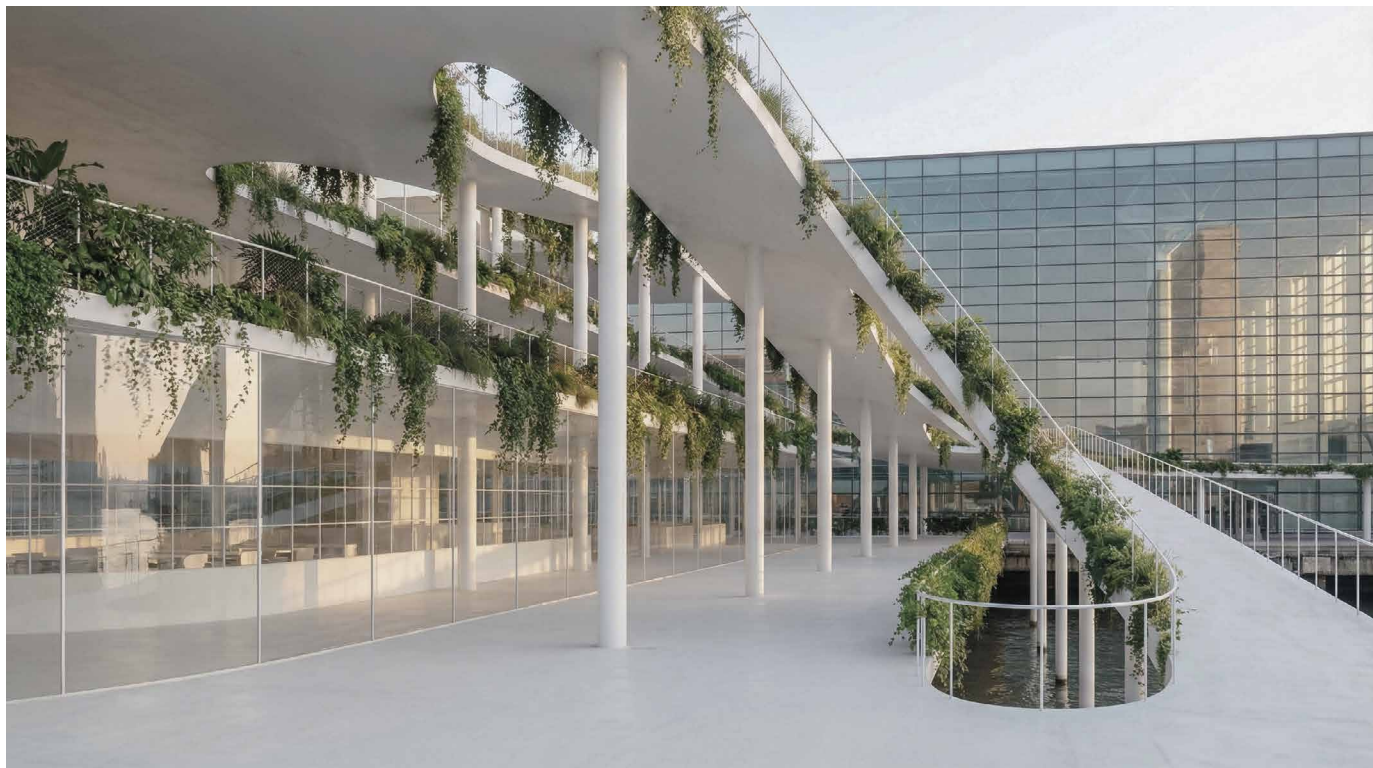
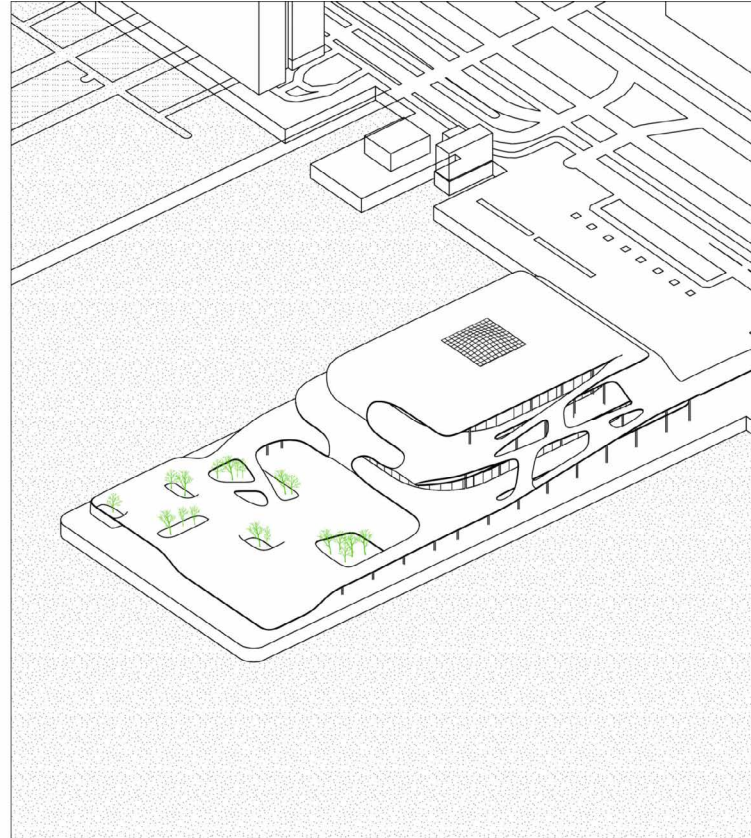
STEP 1

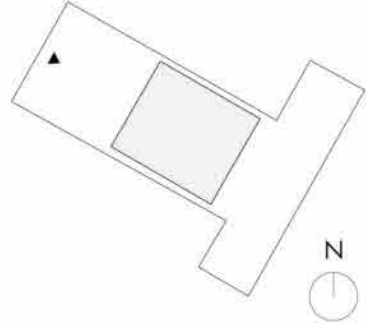


STEP 2

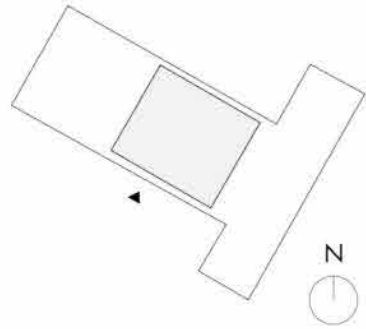
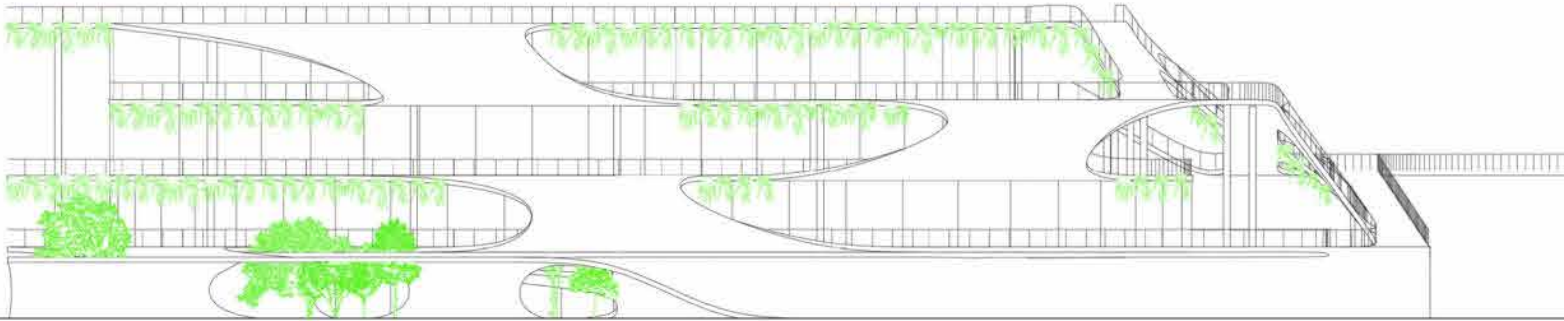


STEP 3

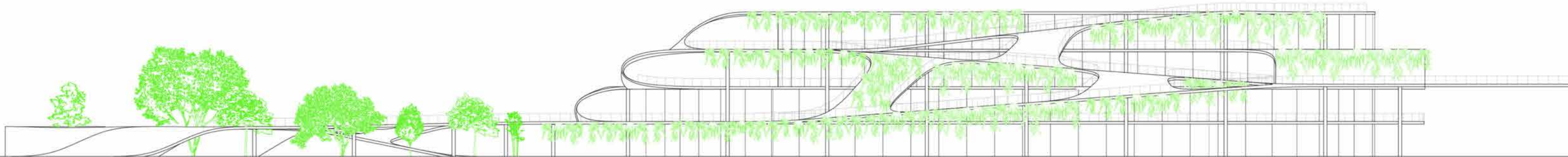




Species	Height	Flowering Season	Sunlight Requirement
Amelanchier canadensis (Serviceberry)	4-8 m	4-5	Full sun / Partial shade
Cornus sericea (Red-osier Dogwood)	1.5-3m	5-6	Full sun / Partial shade
Ilex verticillata (Winterberry Holly)	2-3m	6	Full sun / Partial shade
Solidago rugosa (Goldenrod)	1-1.2 m	8-10	Full Sun
Echinacea purpurea (Purple Coneflower)	60-120 cm	6-9	Full Sun
Bouteloua gracilis (Blue Grama Grass)	30-60 cm	7-9	Full Sun
Salix purpurea 'Nana' (Dwarf Arctic Willow)	1-1.5 m	4-5	Full Sun



Species	Height	Flowering Season	Sunlight Requirement
Wisteria frutescens	6-9 m	5-6	Full sun / Partial shade
Clematis virginiana (Virgin's Bower)	3-6 m	8-9	Full sun / Partial shade
Parthenocissus quinquefolia	10-15 m	/	Full sun / Partial shade
Lonicera sempervirens (Trumpet Honeysuckle)	9-12 m	5-8	Full sun





Re-Connection Memory in a Family Landscape

Individual Project

Spring Studio, 2026

Professor: Emily Ruopp, Harold Fallon



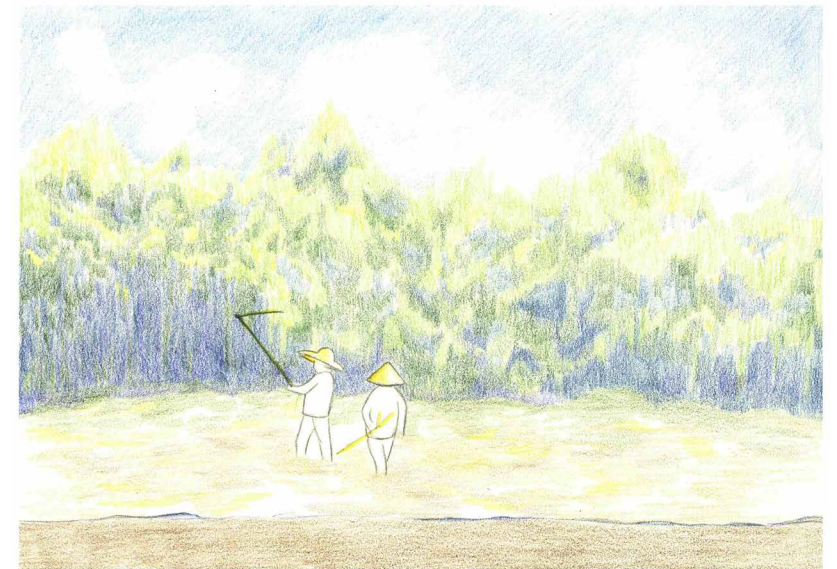
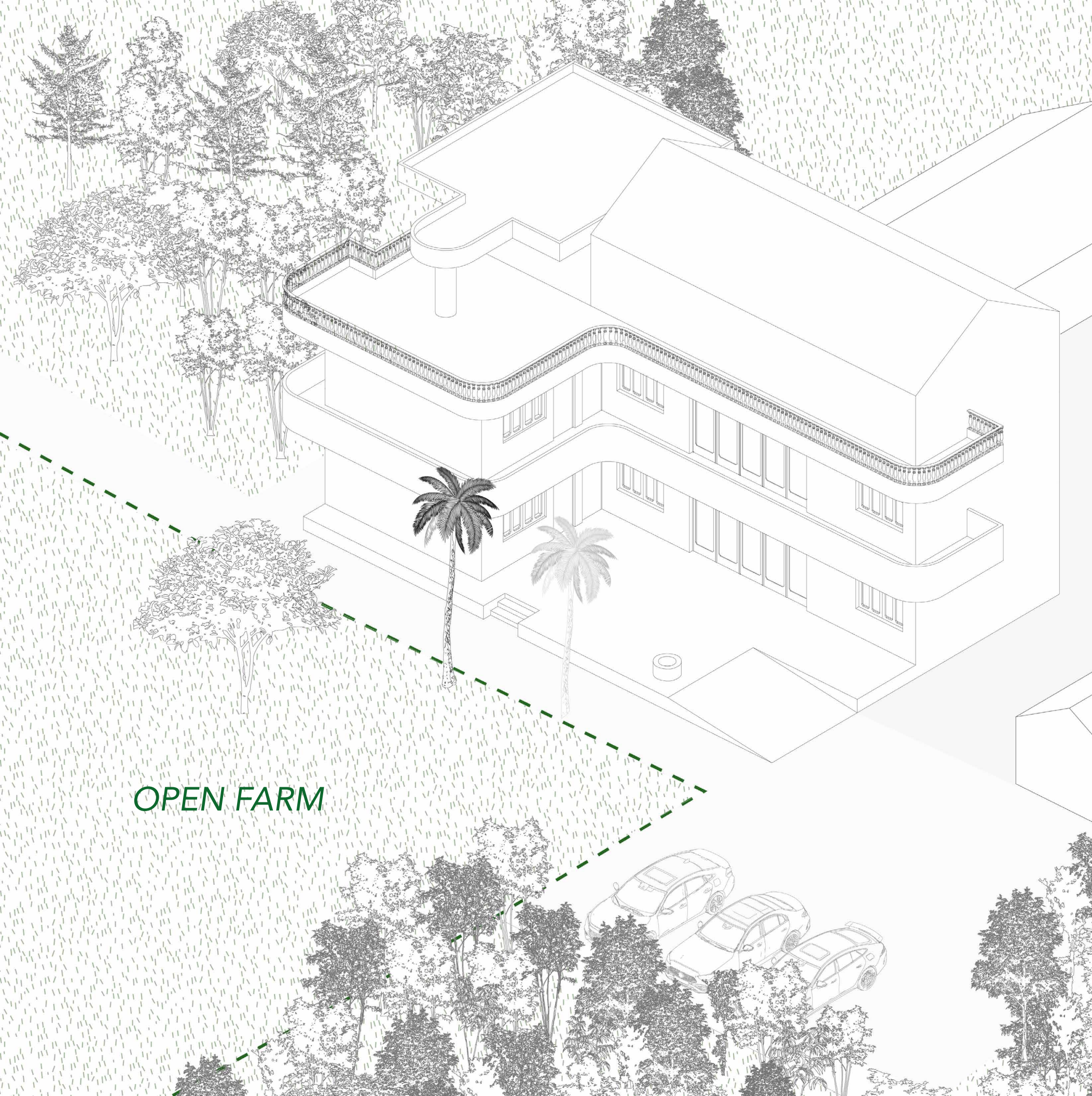
Geographical Context

The site is located in the rural plains of Nantong, Jiangsu, shaped by fragmented farmland, irrigation channels, and dispersed village settlements. This landscape is formed through continuous cultivation rather than formal planning, where domestic life and agricultural production overlap within a porous territorial structure.

Cultural Context

Communal dining in southern China is a central ritual. The square table acts as a social anchor, organizing interaction and hierarchy. During festivals and seasonal gatherings, domestic space expands outward, dissolving boundaries between interior rooms and the productive landscape.





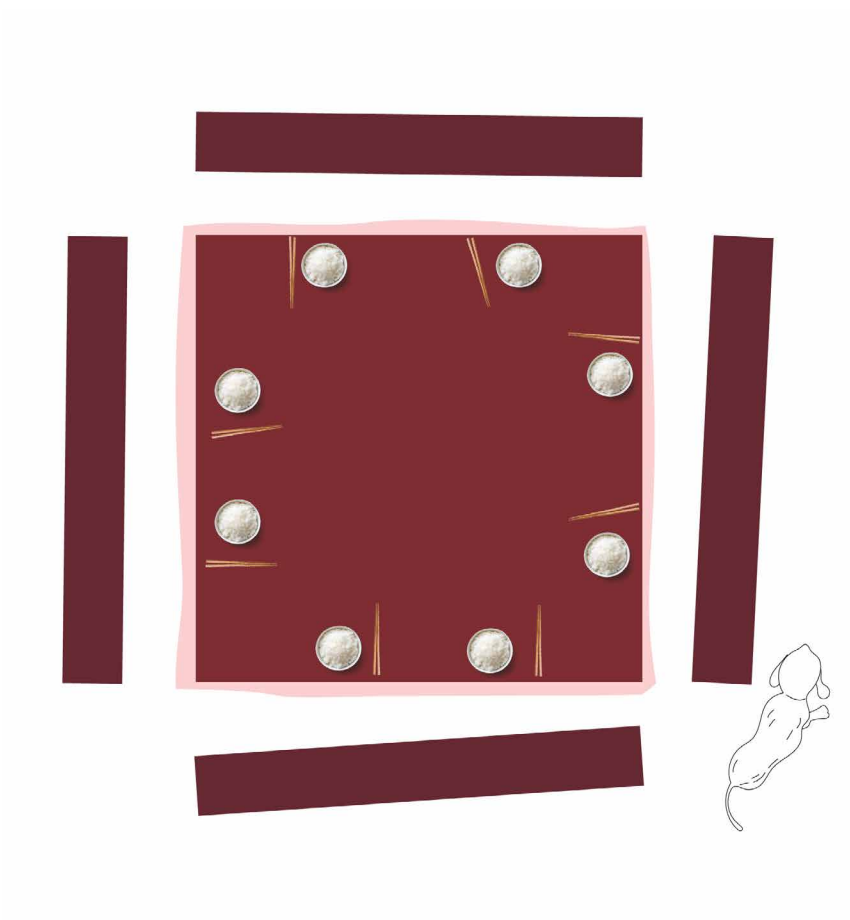
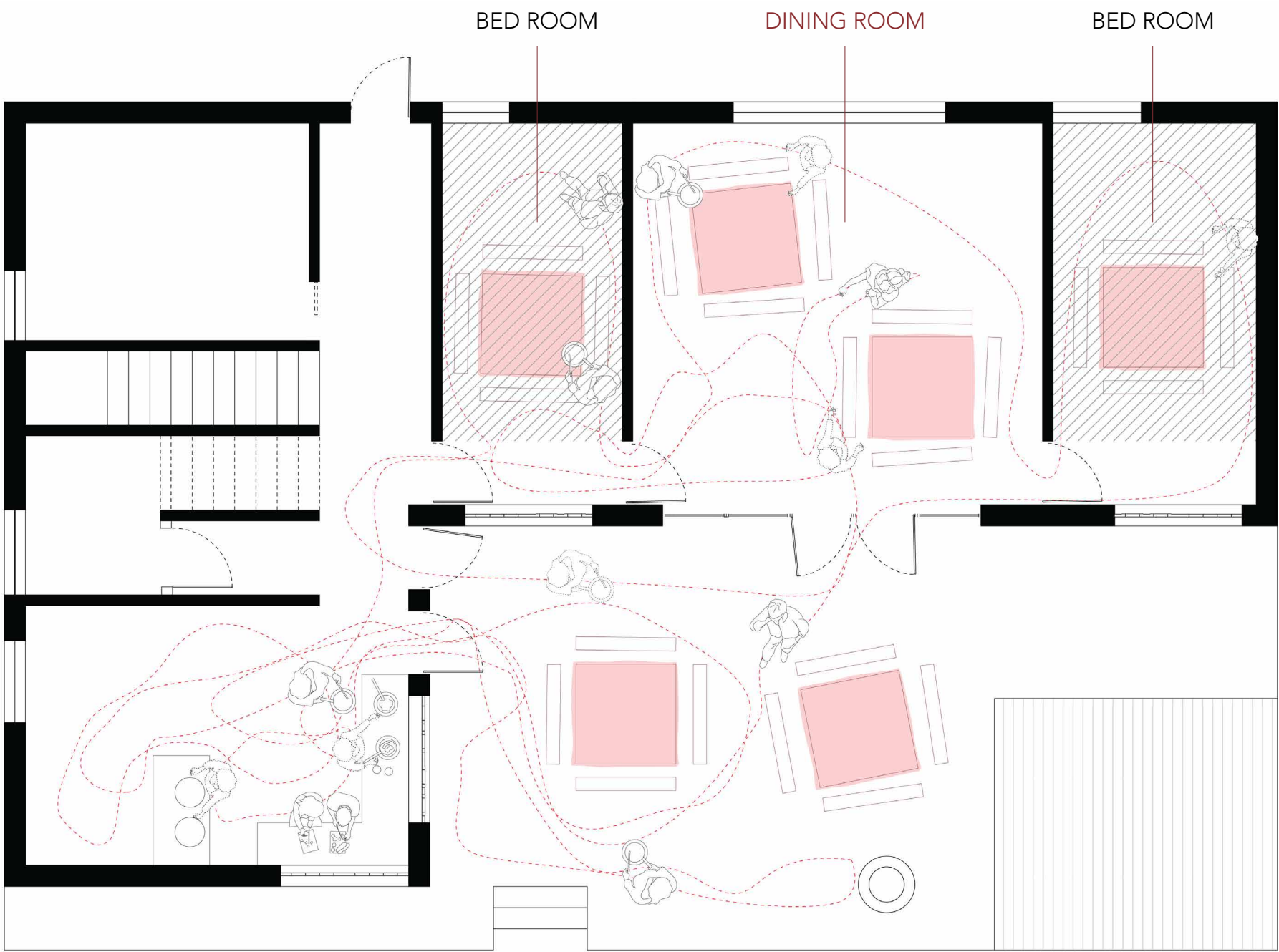
During summer and early fall, my grandmother and aunt harvest oil seeds in the yard.

The heat and direct sunlight make both farming and outdoor activities uncomfortable.

There is no transition between the house and the open farm for dining or gathering.



Seasonal Transformation of Domestic Space

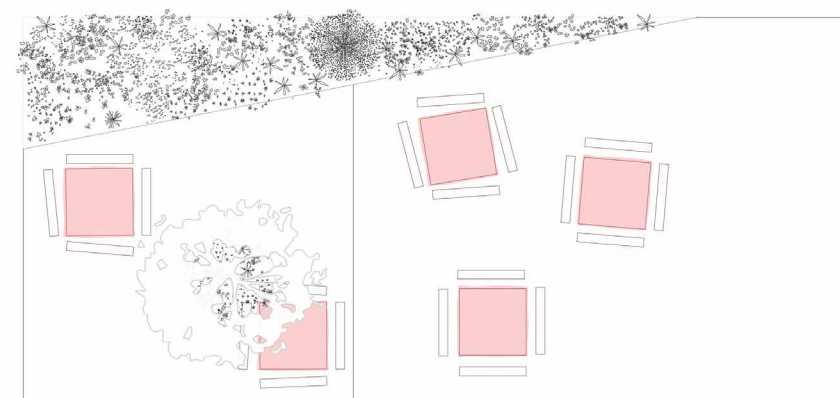
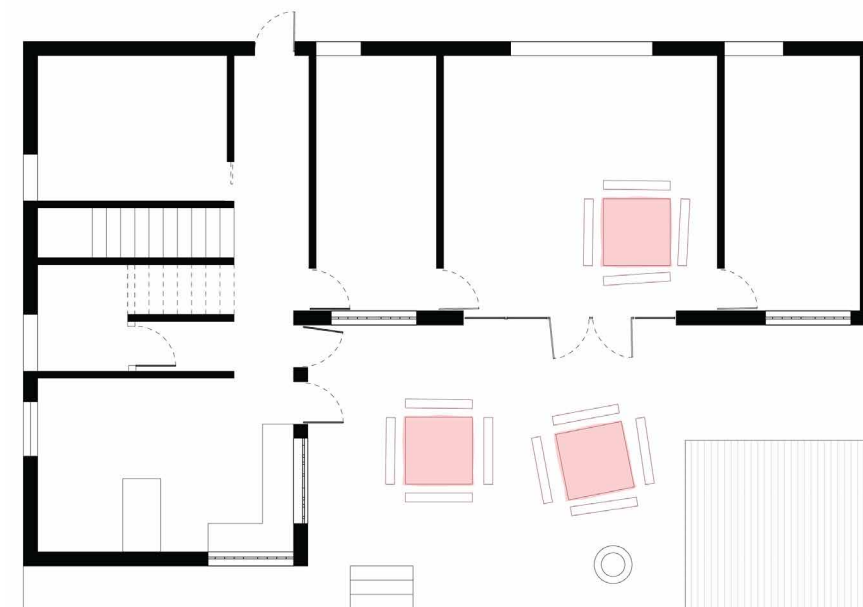


Square Table as Cultural Practice

The square table is a common dining form in southern China.

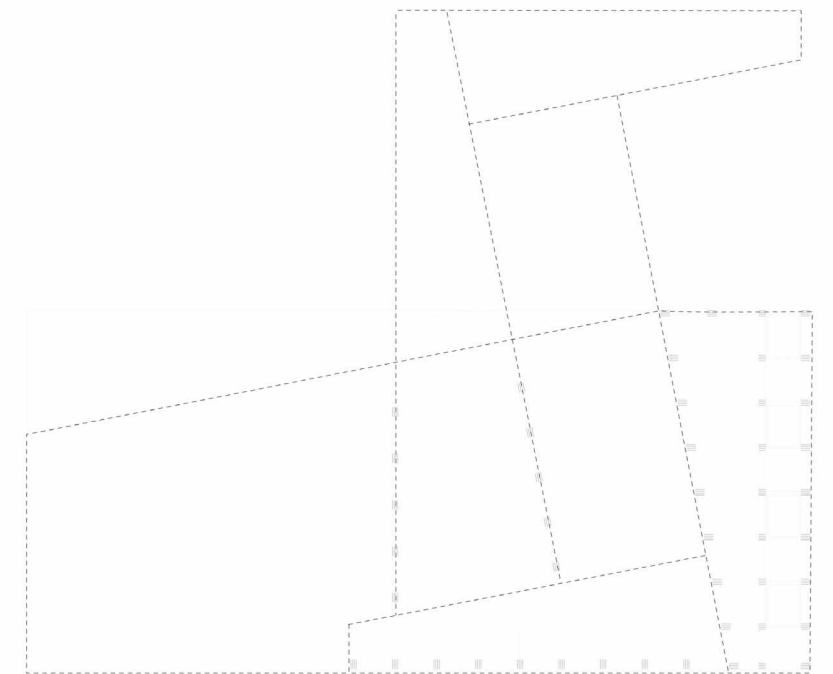
Its geometry supports face-to-face interaction and shared meals.

During large gatherings, multiple tables are combined to accommodate extended family.



Extending the Table to the Landscape

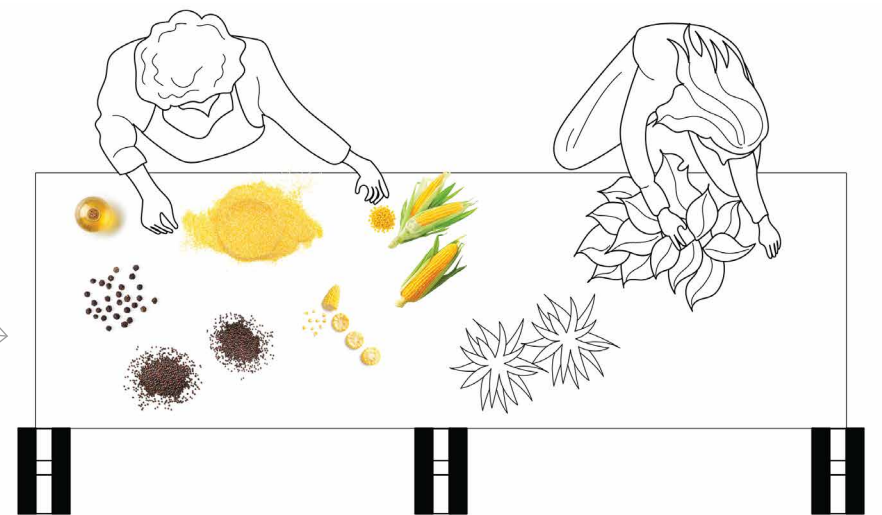
Tables expand outward, occupying the yard as a collective space.



Structural Field

A field of vertical posts extends the house outward. It forms a flexible framework for shade, drying, and seasonal use.





Everyday Processing

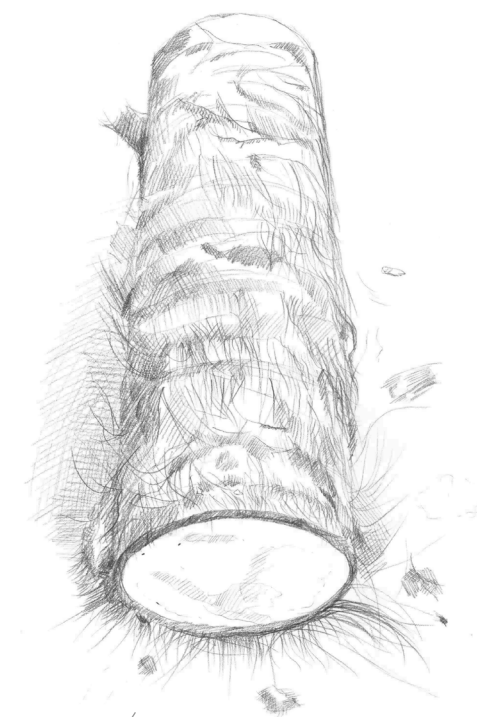
A series of raised racks are introduced beneath the pavilion.

These racks support everyday farming activities such as sorting, cutting, drying, and preparing crops.

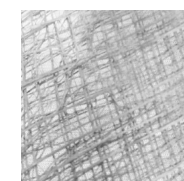
The height and spacing are designed for comfortable use by elderly family members, allowing work to happen in a shaded, accessible environment.



One palm tree is gone.

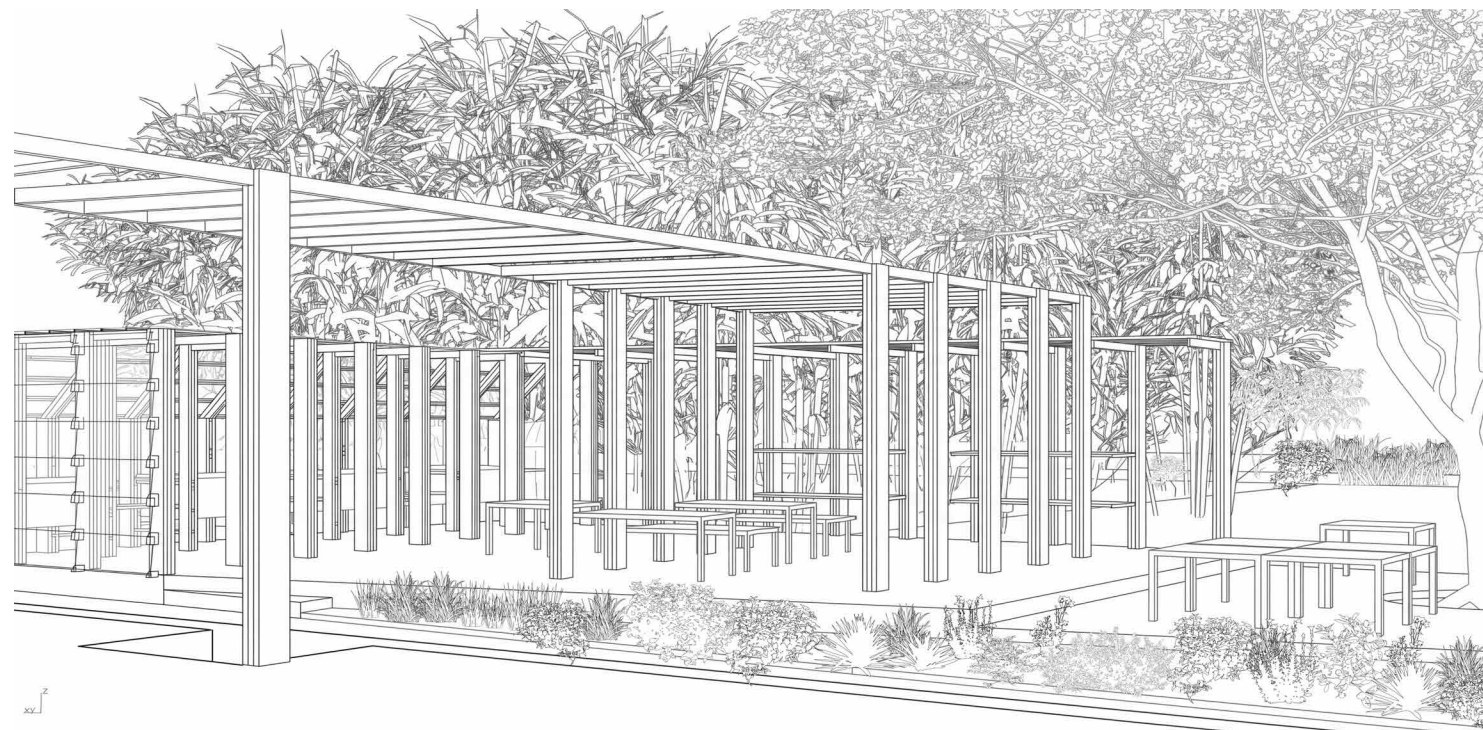
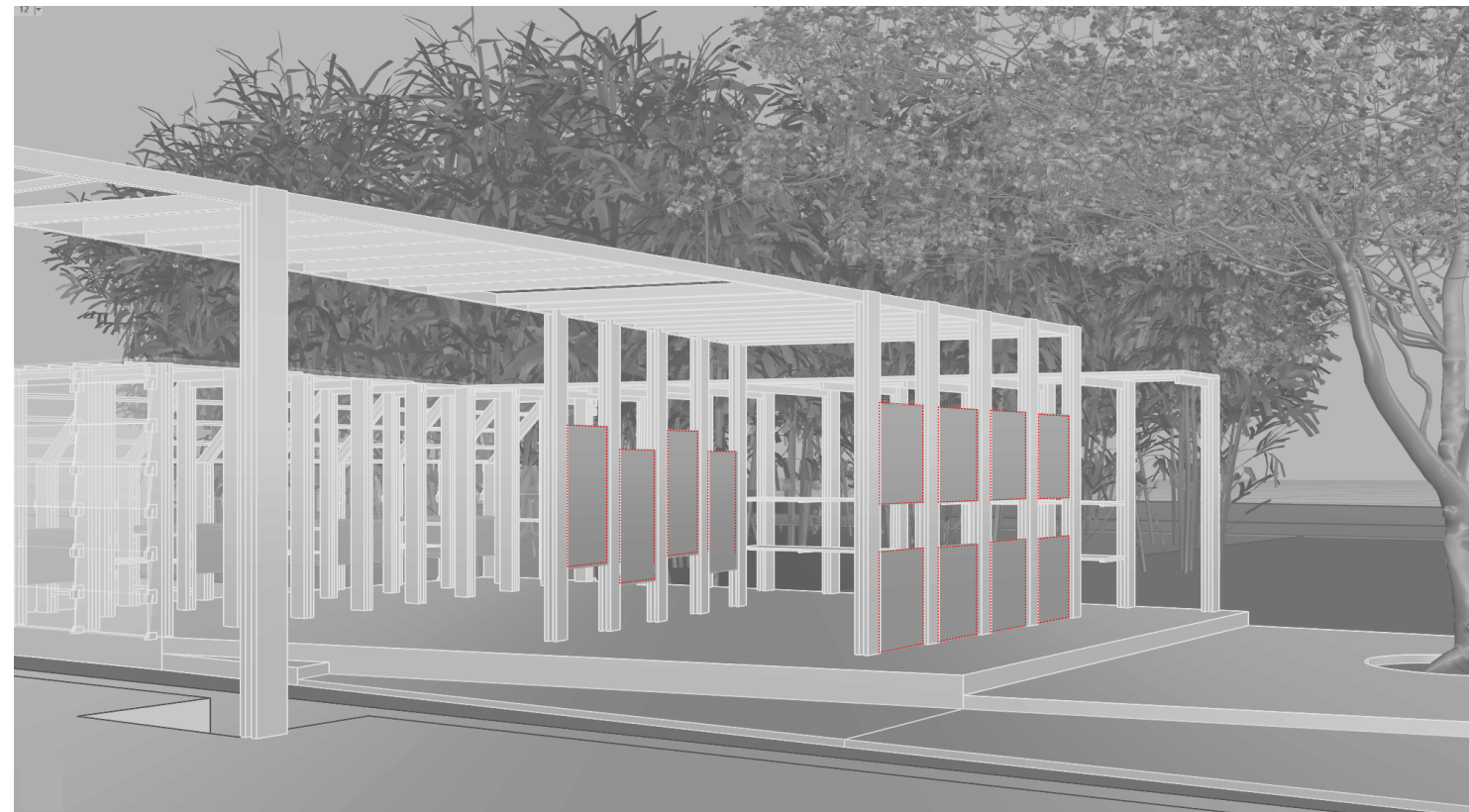
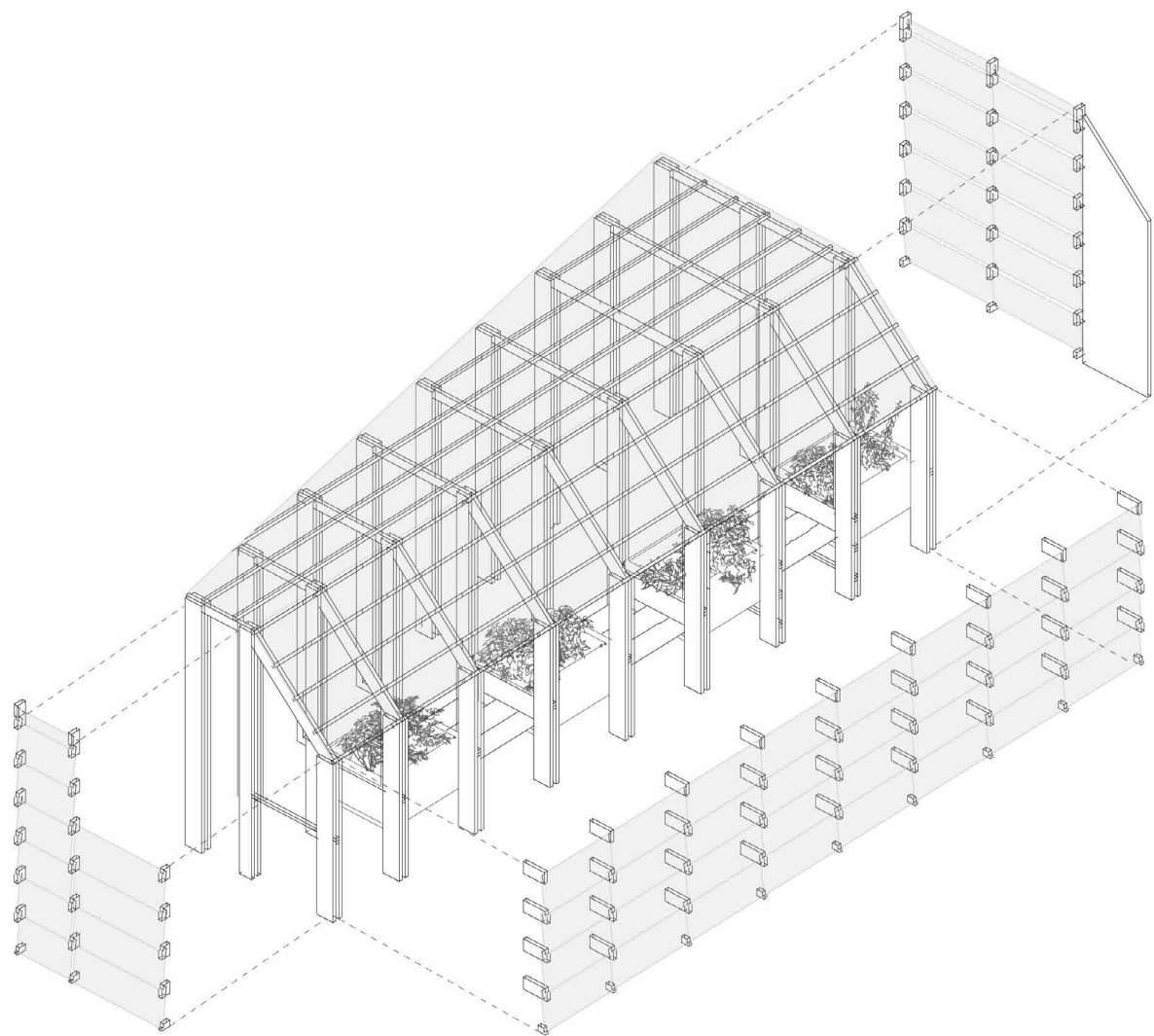


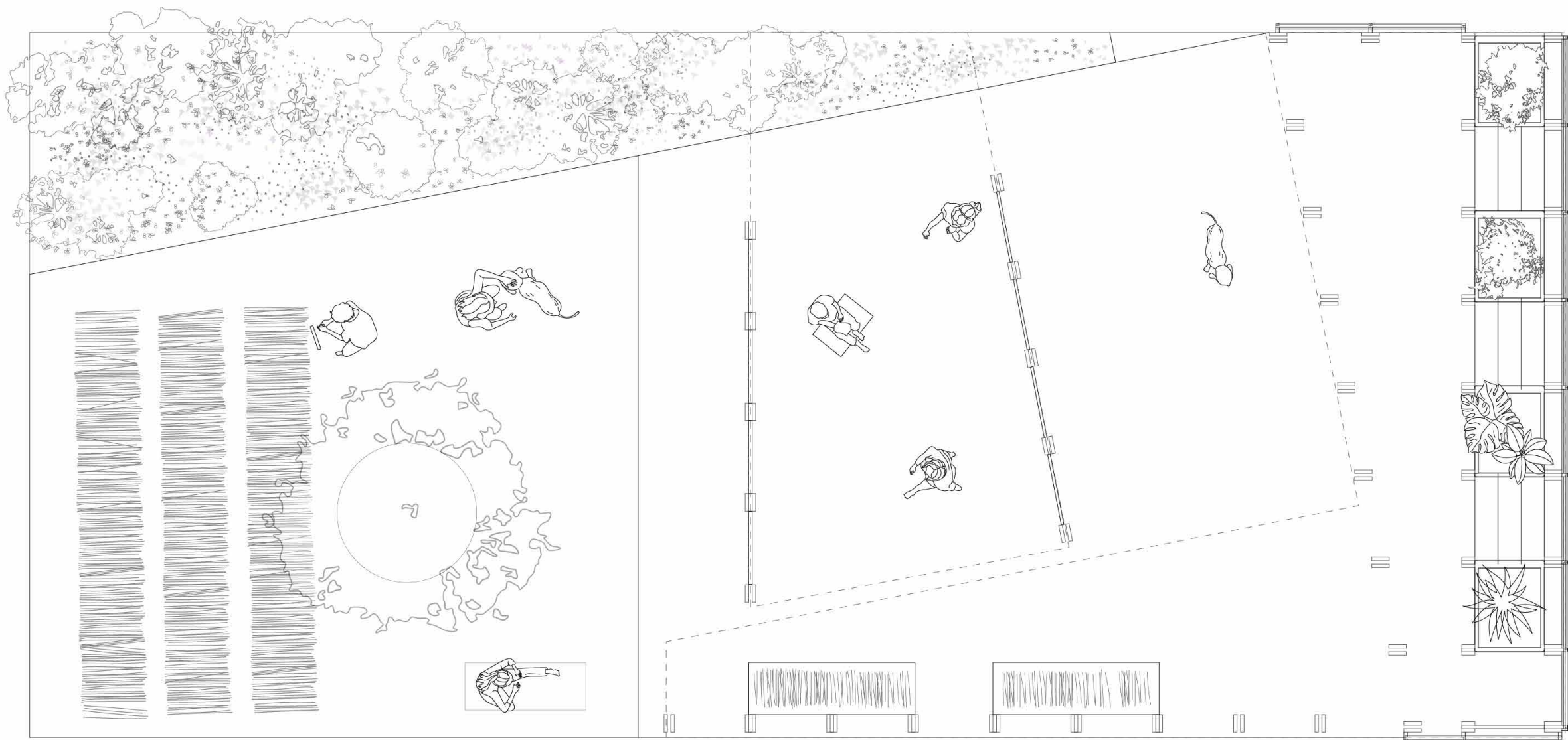
Its fibers return as canopy
transforming absence into shelter.

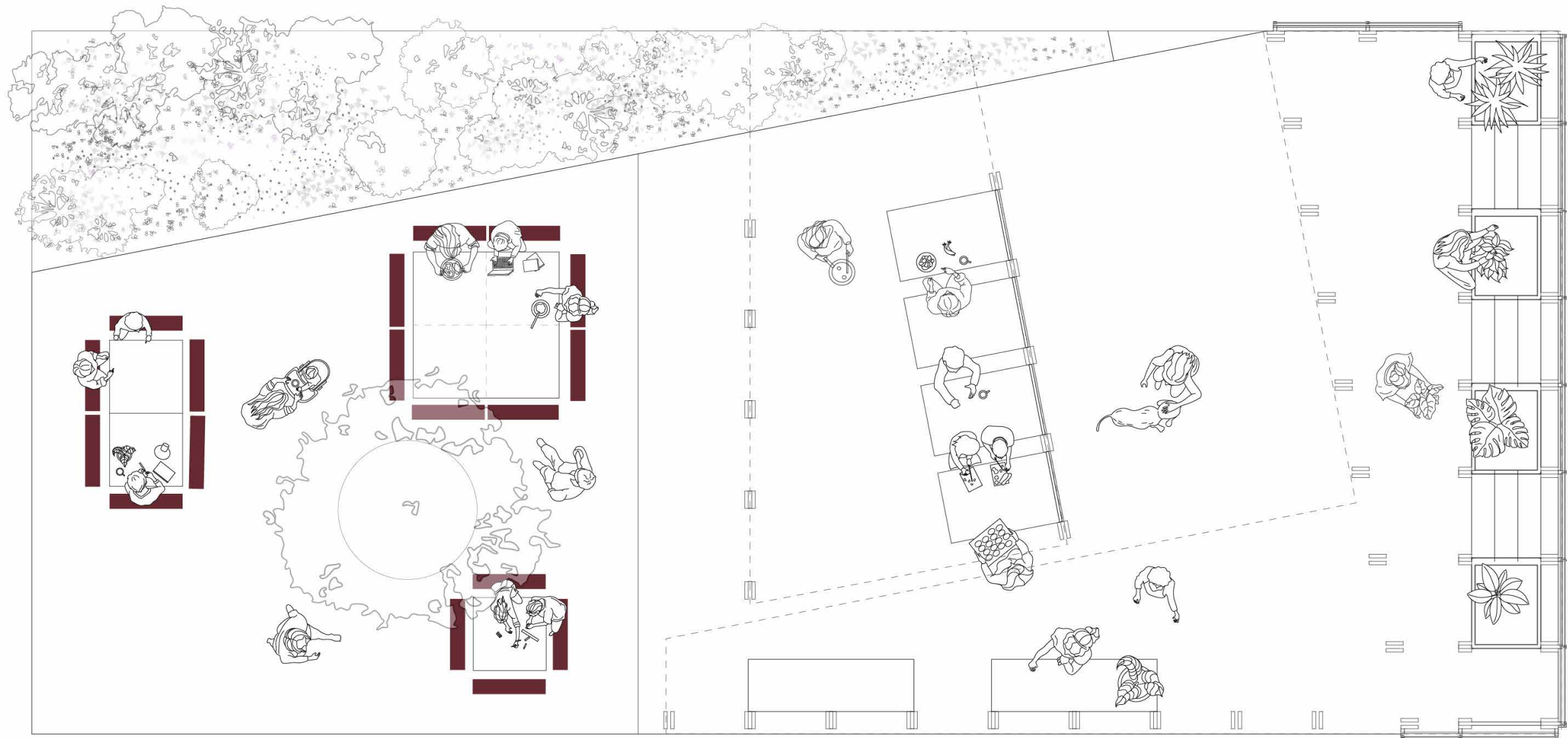


Windmill Palm Fiber

Palm leaf sheath fibers have a layered structure with strong tensile capacity and high flexibility. Their ability to withstand strain makes them suitable for lightweight, woven canopy systems that require both durability and adaptability.







Liminal Ground ***Guinda de Mayo***

Group Project with Juke Jose

Spring Studio, 2026

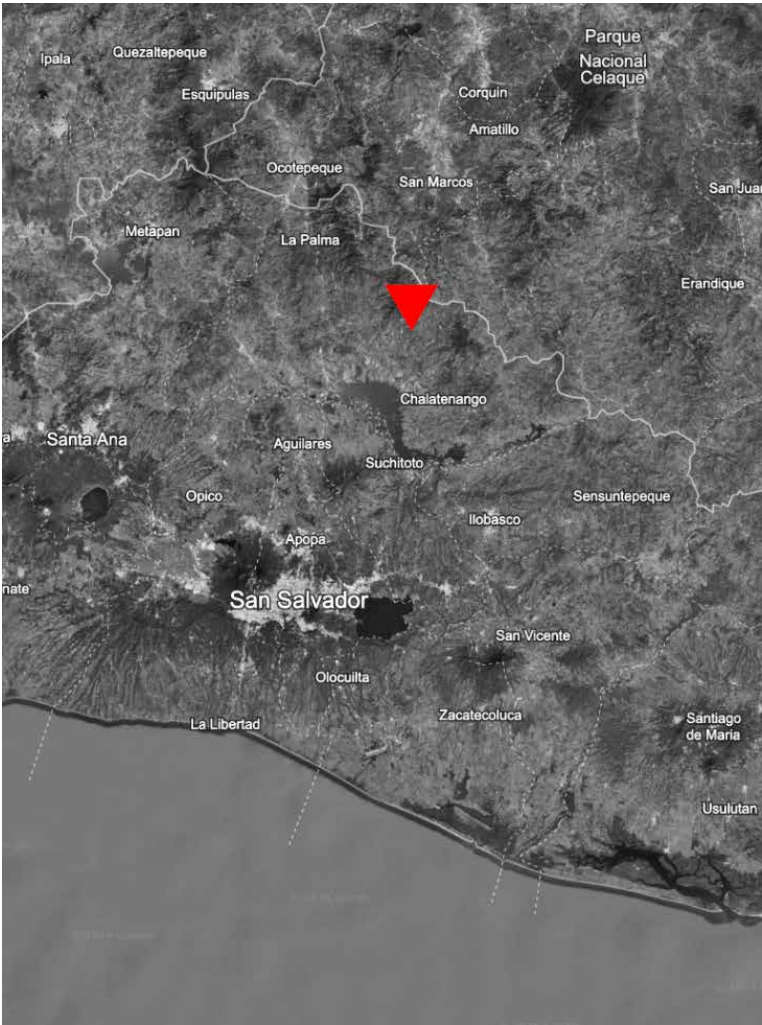
Professor: Emily Ruopp, Harold Fallon



“Memory is like rivers when their beautiful waters run
and create sound as they hit the stones that echo voices
like a whisper in our ears.”
– Eily Ayala, community member

El Salvador

El Salvador is the smallest and most densely populated of the seven Central American countries.



The Rio Sumpul is shared by Honduras in the North and El Salvador in the South

The site sits beside Puente El Cajon along the river near the towns of San Jose Las Flores, San Isidro Salvador, and Guancora

Guinda de Mayo, Massacre

The massacre happened on May 27 to June 1982.
The Salvadoran Armed Forces referred to it as the "Dominguez Operation for Pacification and Cleansing".

The operation resulted in over 500 deaths in the era.
The Guinda de Mayo massacre forced disappearance of at least 55 children, and the widespread destruction of villages.



Guinda de Mayo Ceremony

An annual commemoration in third week of May, people gradually gather at the site with flowers, offer children's clothing, and hold a mass, among other activities.

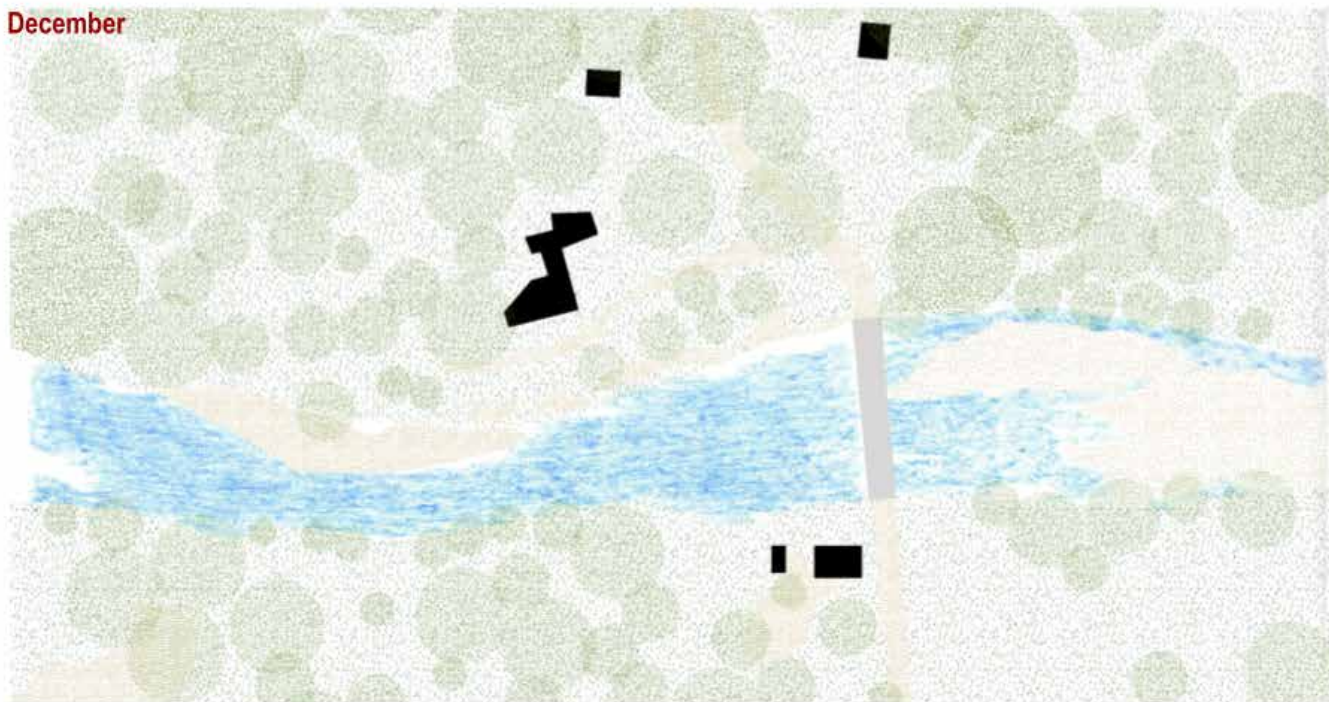
The commemoration site, where people camp and where the various activities are held, is separated from the river by a slope.

The river stands not only as a marker of death but also as a symbol of survival. "Those waters gave us life during the war," survivor Felipe Tobar recalls

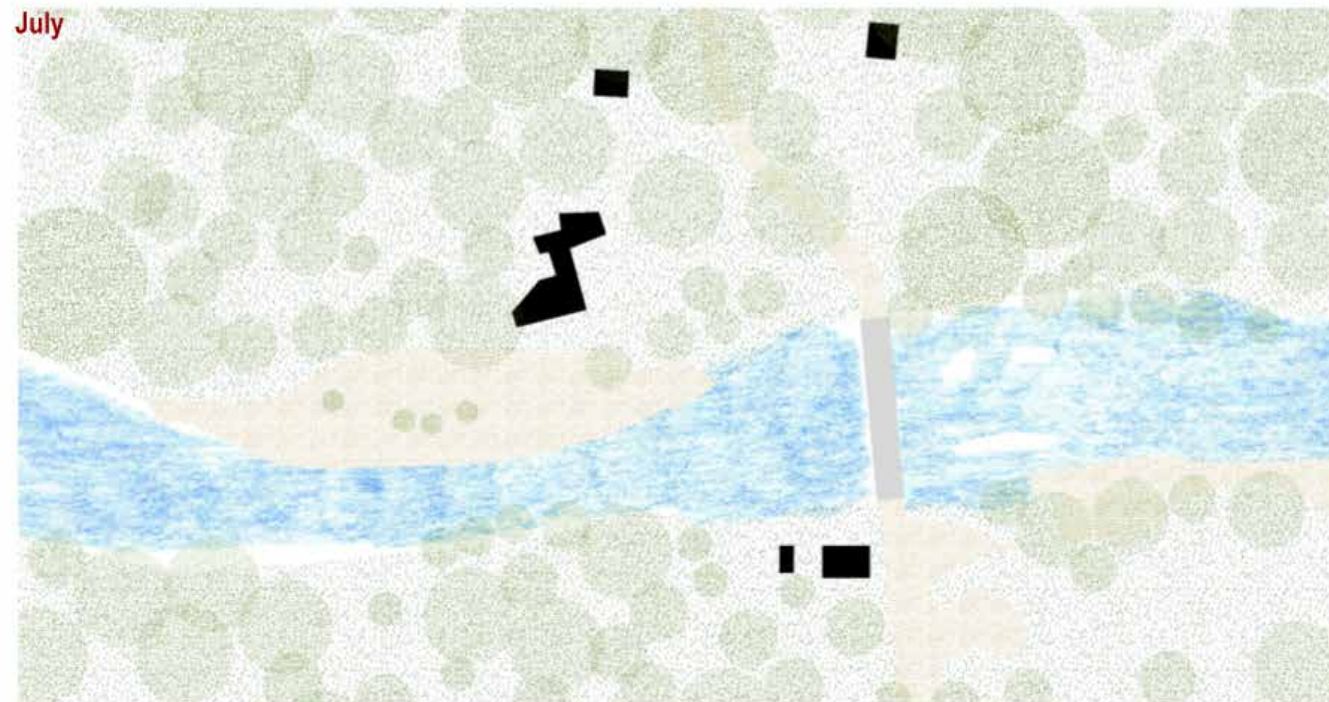
For us, water is a liminal space between life and death



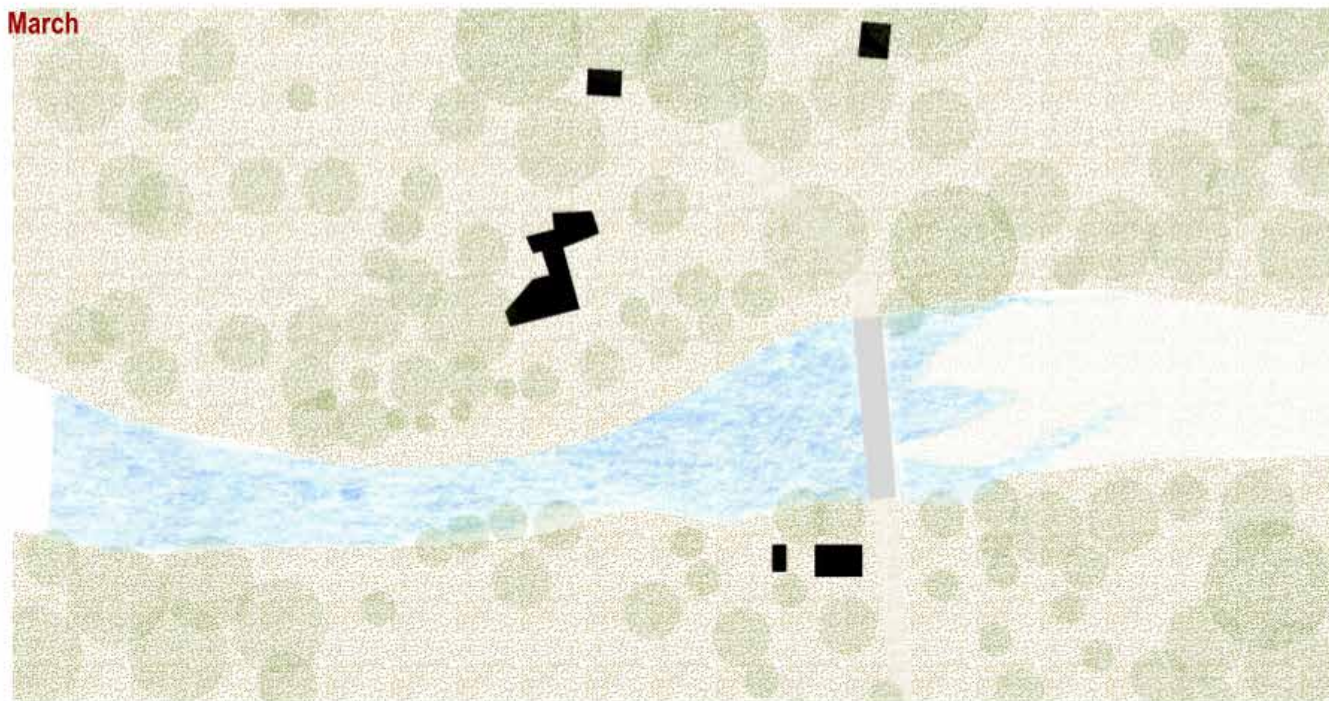
December



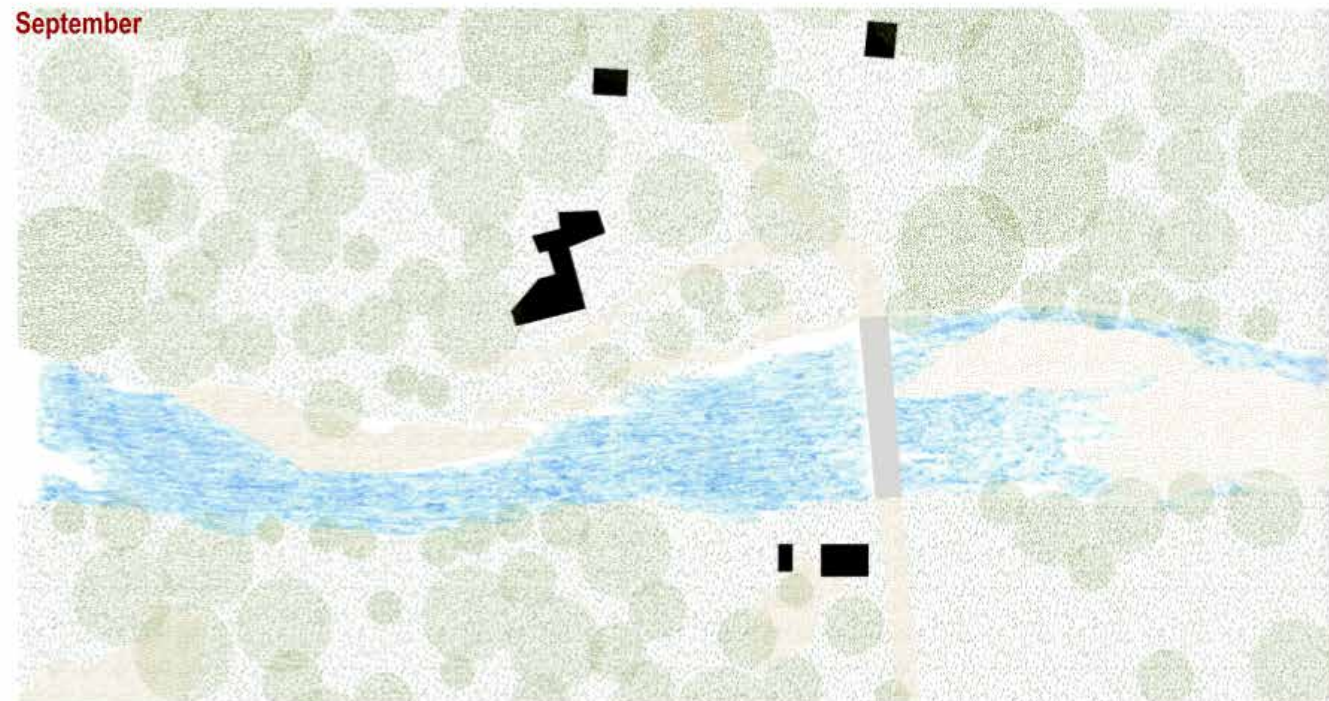
July



March



September



Arbol de Fuego create a visual presence on the site during the time of commemoration. It symbolizes gathering and celebration.

First blooms: March–April

Peak flowering: April–May

Petals falling: often May–June



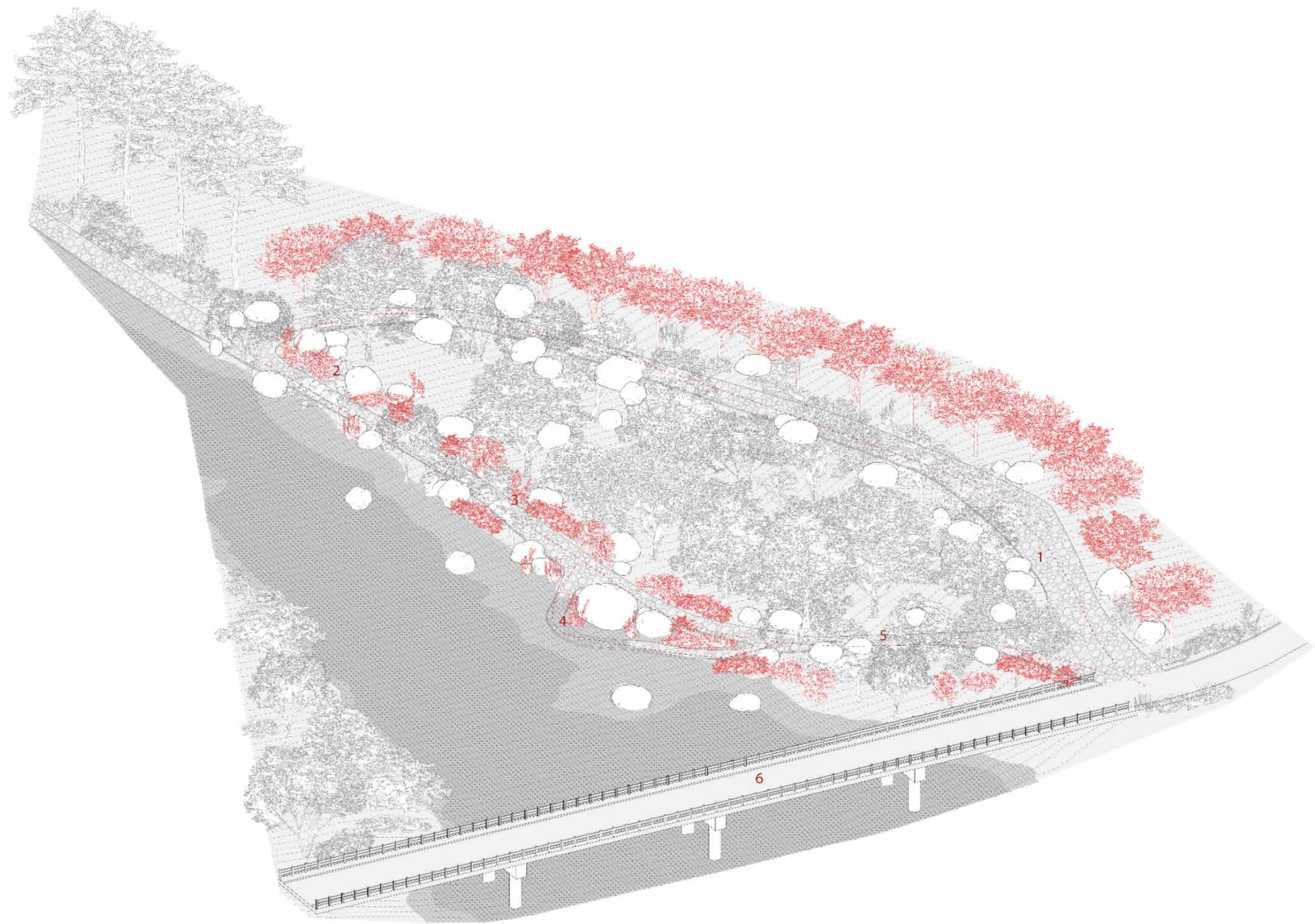
Historic stone sculptures, "Potbelly" are a distinctive element of the sculptural tradition in Mesoamerica. The precise purpose of potbelly sculptures is unknown, although they appear to have been the focus of public veneration and ritual.

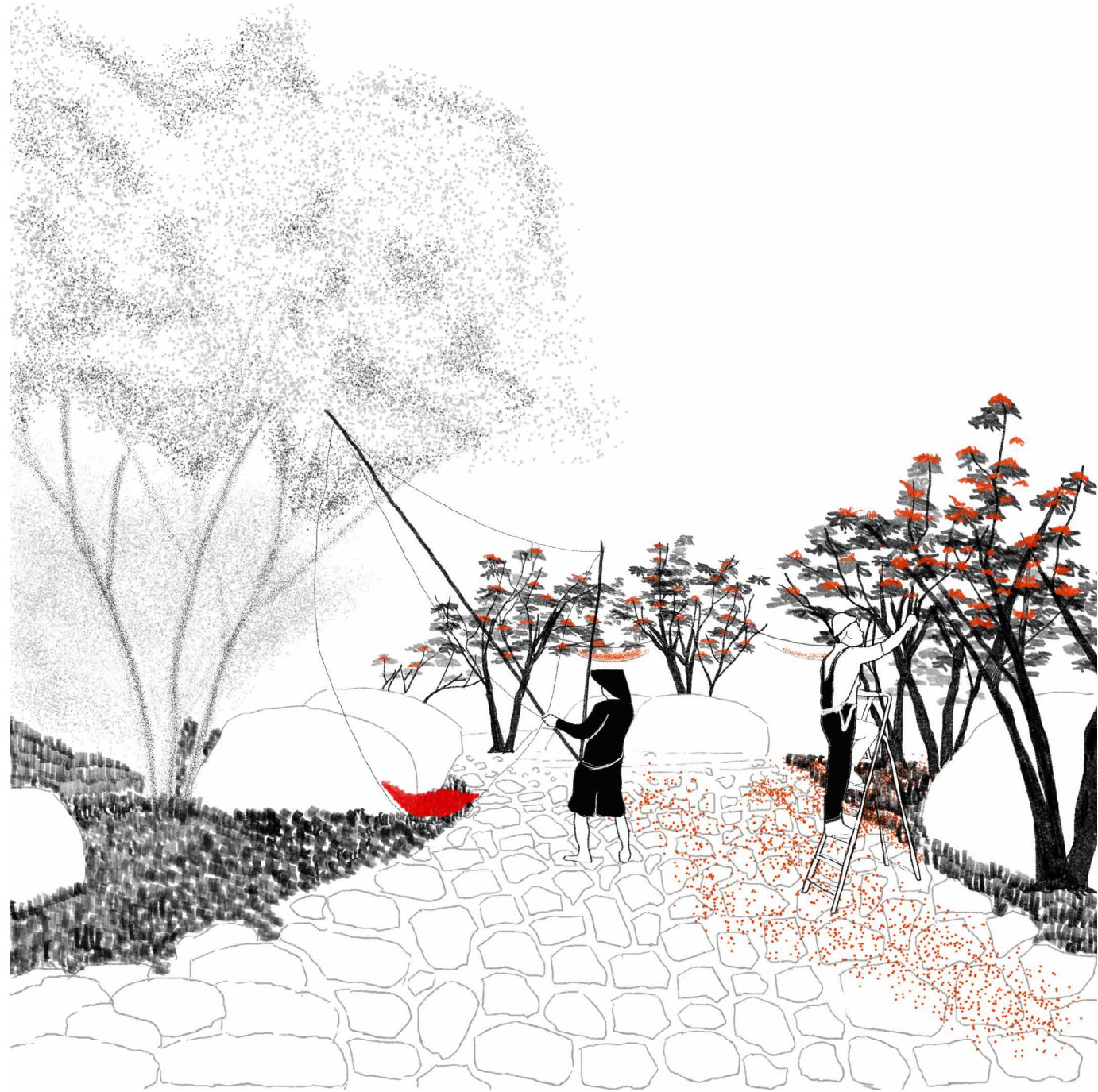
Found in Santa Leticia in El Salvador, dated 500 BCE-100 CE.

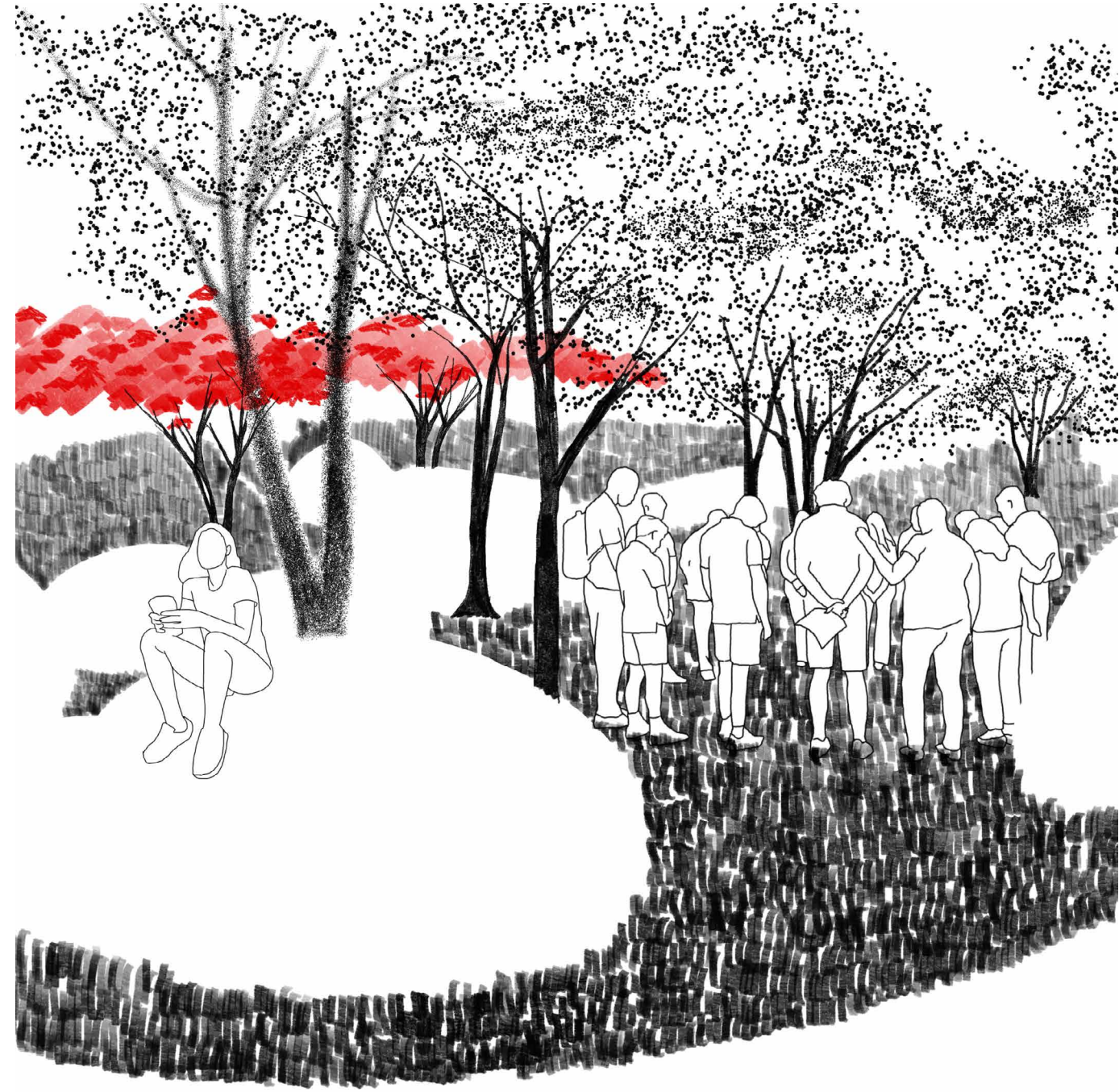


How can we design a memorial that commemorate victims of Guinda de Mayo while giving hope and life back to the community?





















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