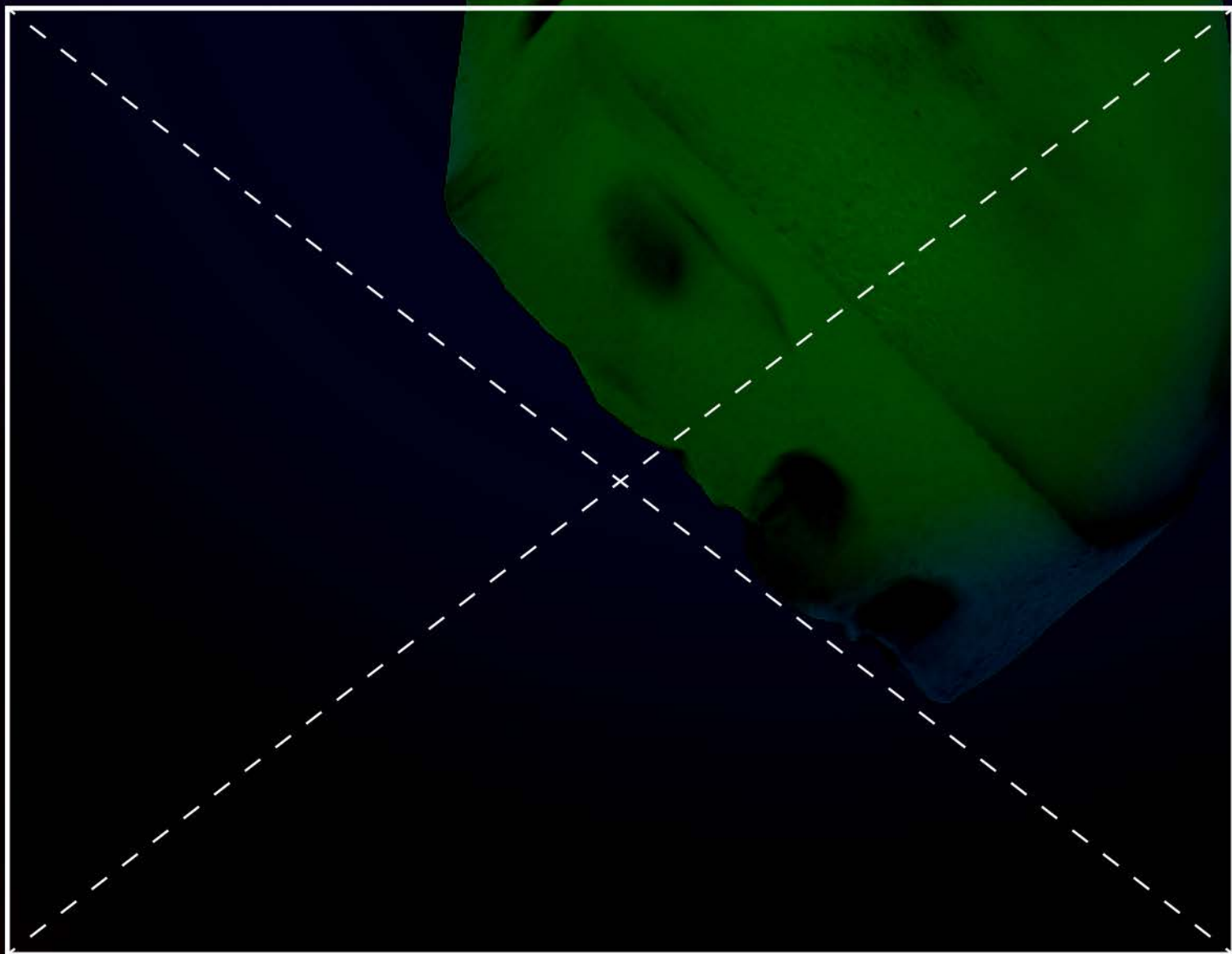


Spatial Autopsy

Not Being There



GSAPP M.S. AAD
SELECTED WORK
2024 - 2025

YAQOUB HASAN

I've Never Been There, But ... Remembers

This portfolio is not about presence. It's about what testifies in absence, what remains, unsettled, and insists on being seen.

At Columbia, I wasn't there for the protest. But I studied the frame, drone footage, promotional clips—trying to understand how a spatial condition could be built from rupture.

At Bryant Park, I never entered what was buried beneath. But an echo led me through layers of silence, exposing a hidden structure beneath the lawn.

In Arlit, I never stood at the mine. But the dust reached me. It carried the radioactive evidence of extraction, particles that refused to disappear.

These are not reconstructions. They are choreographies of what insists. Dust, echo, images: each becomes a witness. I followed them not to arrive, but to confront.

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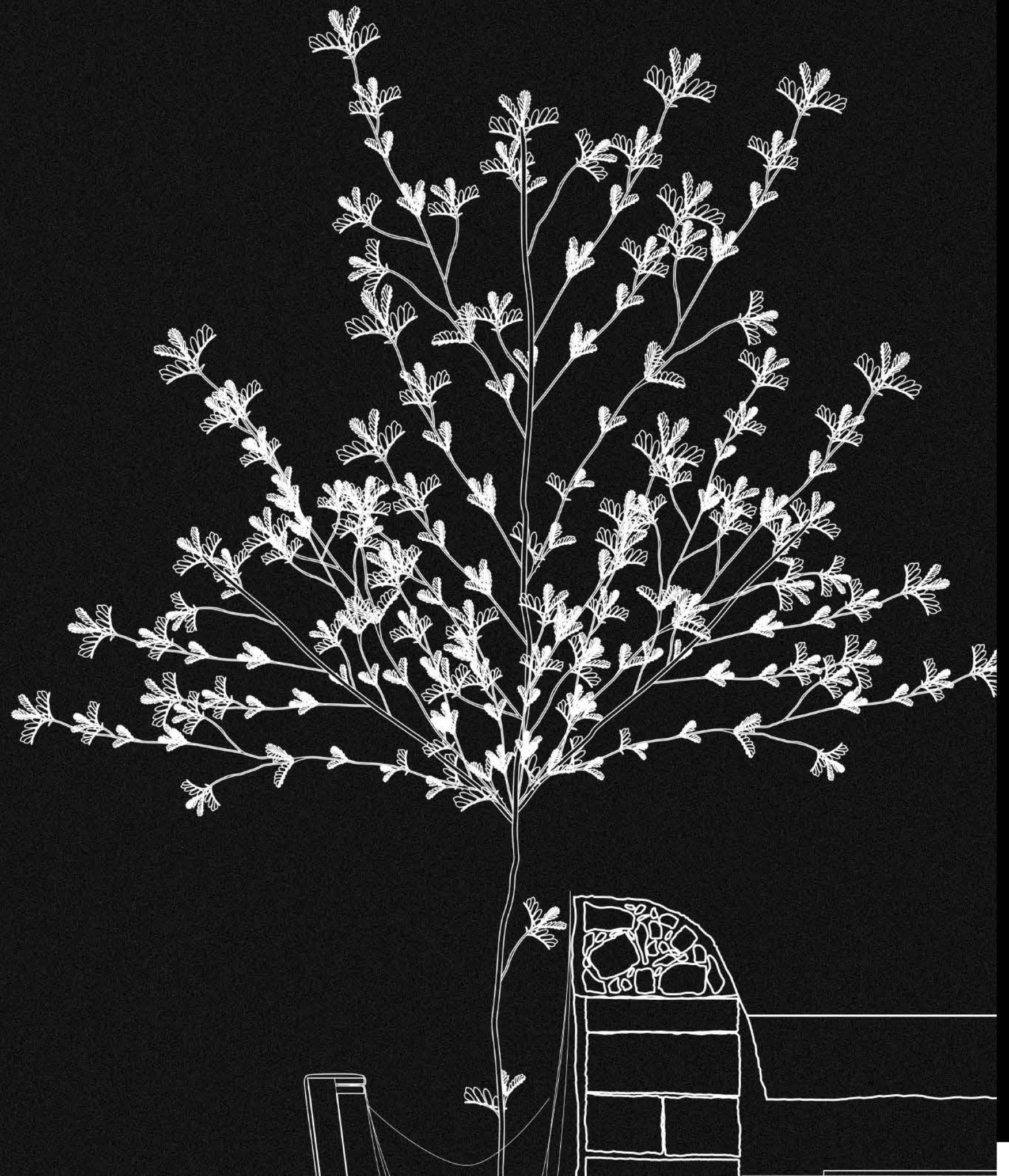
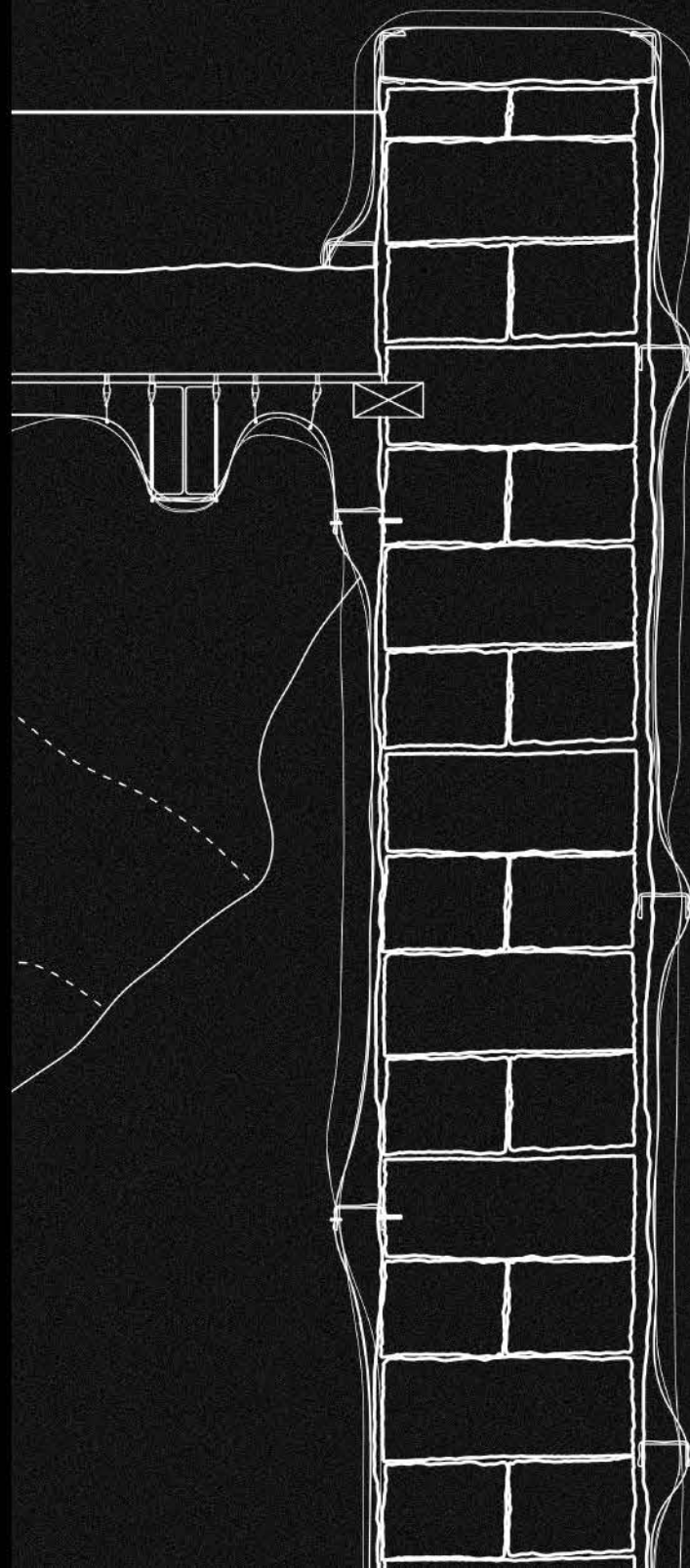
AUTOPSY: MATERIALITY

Scrap, Memory, and Dust

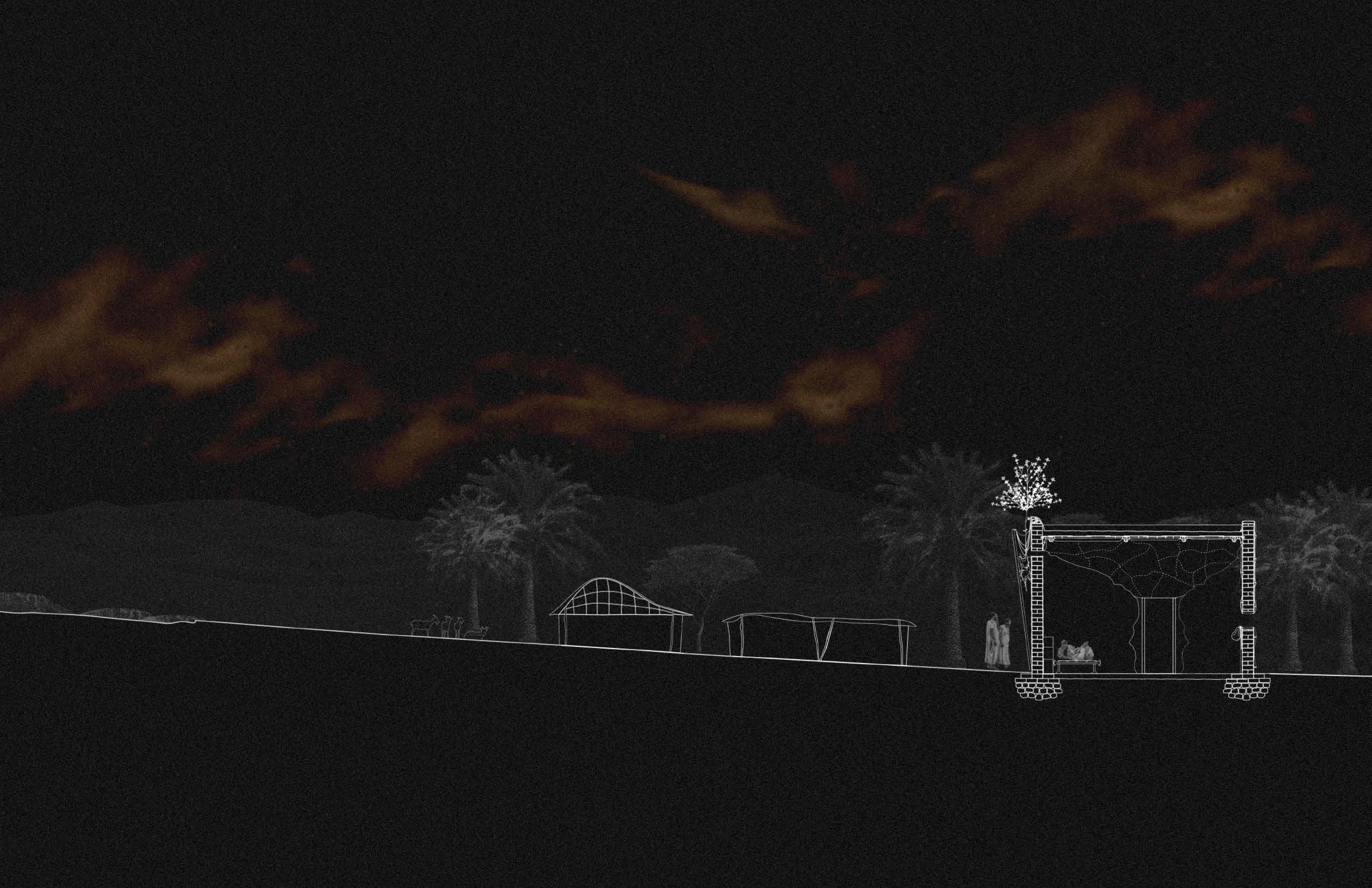
Autopsy, in this context, is not about death but about exposure. It is a method of uncovering the latent forces embedded in materials—forces of violence, care, history, and transformation. To perform an architectural autopsy is to peel back the layers of what appears inert: to read metal not as structure, but as memory; to treat dust not as waste, but as evidence. This is a practice concerned with residues—chemical, social, environmental—and how they index forgotten narratives.

Matter becomes both witness and participant. Scraps carry fingerprints of labor, extraction, weathering. Dust drifts between atmospheres and timelines, accumulating quietly until it testifies. In this work, materials are not neutral—they are active, alive, and ethically charged. Their treatment is both technical and intimate: folding, sanding, reassembling not just forms, but the stories they hold.

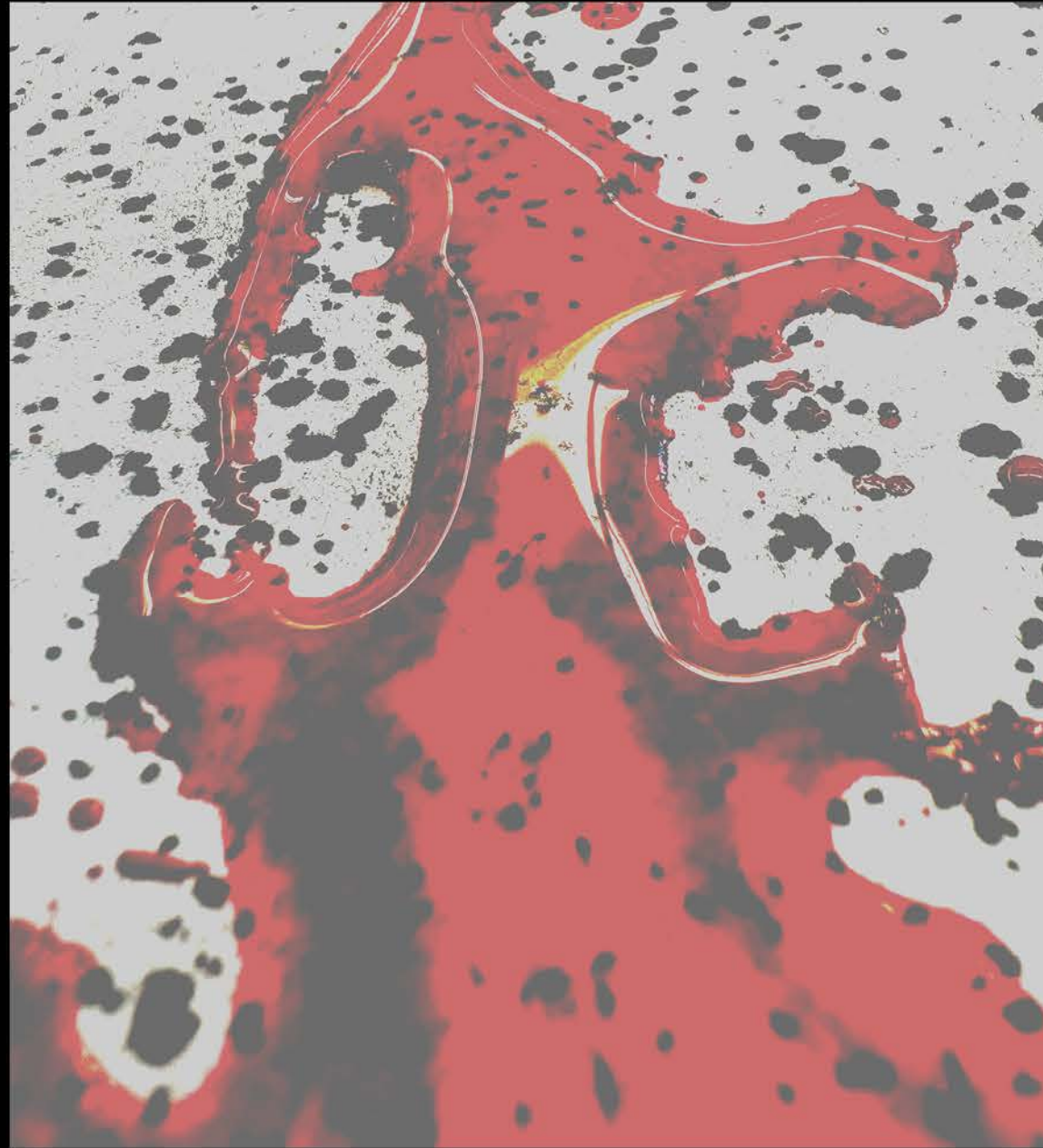
Drawing from forensic aesthetics and environmental memory, this practice blurs the line between construction and excavation. Like ice cores, materials archive the conditions of their becoming. They speak of climates, borders, and the entangled systems that shaped them. Through the lens of autopsy, we begin to see matter as archive—and architecture as an act of listening, stitching, and reconstitution.











[[UN/RE]]Fold

1:1 Crafting + Fabrication
Spring 2025

In Collaboration with
Anais Halftermeyer
New York, NY

Critic
Zachary Mulitauaopele

This a story about scrap metal. This
is a story of care and memory and
wear.

Unfolding sheets from scrap AC
units sometimes a rough process,
with a hammer, sometimes a soft
touch, sanding the chemical coatings
to reveal the material below. Using
scrap rods of different sizes and
metal types: aluminum, steel,
stainless steel structure is created
for the sheets. Bones and skin. Metal
is alive, it is bent, heated, melted. A
new life is given to the pieces with
their wear and lifelines embedded in
their creases.













Beyond Perception of "Empty" Spaces

Arguments
Summer 2024

In Respond to Lecturer: Susan Schuppli

Critics
Xiaoxi Chen
Alireza Karbasioun

In contemporary discussions on environmental stewardship, the urgent political realities of our time emphasize the deep interconnections between environmental and border issues with global challenges such as climate change, migration, and social justice. Susan Schuppli explores the role of ice cores as a medium that can serve as a forensic tool to decipher the Arctic's past atmospheric conditions, including temperature records and greenhouse gas concentrations. These cores are traces of materials of both natural processes and human activities, such as pollution and nuclear fallout. Susan Schuppli discusses in the text the logistical challenges, ethical considerations and broader implications of preserving ice cores as a part of preserving humanity's environmental heritage. It is a way to stitch and integrate the Indigenous knowledge into the scientific study of ice cores, advocating for a more inclusive approach to understanding climate history

Throughout GSAPP's Arguments lectures series, I have been compelled to critically examine the ways we perceive and understand spaces that seem unfamiliar or alien to us. My focus has been on the implications of these perceptions, particularly in how they shape our realities. A question that was developed after Schuppli film screening, "Coming from a place where I never saw or experienced snow, and hearing about attempts of neighboring Gulf countries to tow an iceberg from Antarctica, justified by the belief that 'it is covered by ten thousand trillion tons of snow and ice' and assuming it wouldn't significantly impact the polar region as they claim they want to transform and thrive the Empty Quarter in the Gulf area, how can we decolonize, unsettle

and unlearn the perceptions of both regions as empty places, and open ourselves to new possibilities for understanding and imagining places?" Without warning, I find myself enmeshed in a web of interconnected conversations on colonial ideas about territory and resources, geopolitical aspirations, and environmental manipulation. There is a growing tendency of seeing the world's most inaccessible areas as treasure troves of unrealized potential, just waiting to be explored by humans. One such idea is towing an iceberg, which combines entrepreneurial aspirations with environmental concerns.

Now that I've thought about Schuppli's remark and how it relates to "iceberg economies" and similar entrepreneurial endeavors, I can see that, although driven by need, these projects also have the attraction of being pioneers in unexplored terrain. The speaker stressed that these kinds of endeavors often captivate the audience by fusing the seemingly impossible like pulling an iceberg with the pressing issues of limited resources. But these projects are more often than not just investments in the future, showing how capital tries to innovate on the borders, often without fully considering the environmental and ethical consequences. Previously, Antarctica was controlled by treaties meant to safeguard the continent for scientific research purposes; however, the response brought attention to the fact that these arrangements are changing. Nevertheless, with the frequent reviews of these treaties, there is an increasing amount of talk about allowing economic development in the Antarctic, suggesting a possible change in our approach to these "empty" areas. Because of this, we must decolonize and reevaluate our views on these regions. Colonial mentality, which views some geographies as empty areas to be filled or exploited rather than regions with inherent worth and purpose, gives rise to the idea that some places are empty or neglected.

Looking at the world's so-called empty spaces via a new lens raises the question of how we perceive and engage with them. Recognizing the areas' complex histories and ecological realities is the first step in decolonizing these ideas. It's also important to remember that the seeming emptiness of these locations is often a reflection of colonial desire rather than reality. By shedding our habit of seeing these regions via an exclusively extractive prism, decolonization paves the opportunity for other ways of knowing and envisioning these locations.

The commercialization of "empty" lands is a recurring challenge in global capitalism, as is illustrated by other contemporary themes in the course, such as the exploitation of natural resources in countries like Chile and deep-sea mining enterprises. Our collective imagination and attitude toward resource management are shaped by these attempts, even though they don't always succeed in their most ambitious forms. As the realities of climate change and environmental degradation become increasingly apparent, they highlight a tension between the desire to innovate and the necessity to conserve.

Lastly, the question encourages critical reflection on our understanding of space and location in relation to global economic and environmental activity. By shifting our focus away from colonialism, we can see these areas for what they really are: integral parts of a complicated global ecology that, instead of being exploited, needs respect and control. The speaker's solution is both creative and practical in terms of entrepreneurial capital; yet, it also highlights the importance of decolonizing our understanding of the areas we want to change so that we may use our creativity to shape the future.

Fortunately, one can break free from colonial thinking and the demands of capitalist expansion by reevaluating these perceptions; instead, we can be guided by a profound, decolonized admiration for the intricate beauty and inherent worth of the world's most overlooked and isolated places. If we want to face the problems of the modern day in a fair, sustainable, and equitable manner, we must change our viewpoint.

This inquiry and the response it generated throughout the class reflected a central difficulty in contemporary environmental and geopolitical debates: the continual perception of some areas as "empty" or underdeveloped. While the idea of dragging an iceberg from Antarctica to the Gulf may seem like an ambitious and creative way to solve the water shortage, it is actually rooted in a colonial mentality that views the Antarctic and the Empty Quarter as empty barren land reserved exclusively for human use. The inherent worth of these locations beyond their potential for resource extraction, as well as their complicated ecosystems and cultural importance, are ignored by this simplistic and potentially harmful viewpoint.

AUTOPSY: Memory

Resonance, Exposure, Testimony

Autopsy is not about death but about resonance. It is a method for tracing the immaterial—where feeling, atmosphere, and rhythm become spatial evidence. To perform a memory autopsy is to peel back the layers of the perceptible: to treat silence as signal, sound as sediment, and recollection as architectural structure. This is a practice concerned not only with what was built, but with what was sensed, withheld, or disappeared.

Memory becomes both medium and method. It lingers in ritual, in repetition, in the quiet accumulation of soundscapes—carried through breath, prayer, smoke, and echo. These residues, often overlooked, do not fade; they thicken over time, waiting to be heard. In this work, memory is not fixed—it is atmospheric, unstable, yet urgent.

Drawing from sonic excavation and spatial testimony, this approach blurs the distinction between private recollection and public record. Like a vibration sustained in the body or a call suspended in the air, memory refuses containment. It pulses across thresholds—between the sacred and the ordinary, the buried and the visible.

Through the lens of autopsy, memory becomes an acoustic archive. Architecture becomes not a container, but a listener—a witness attuned to what persists after forgetting.

Excavating Silence

STTLMNT Studio
Fall 2024

New York, NY

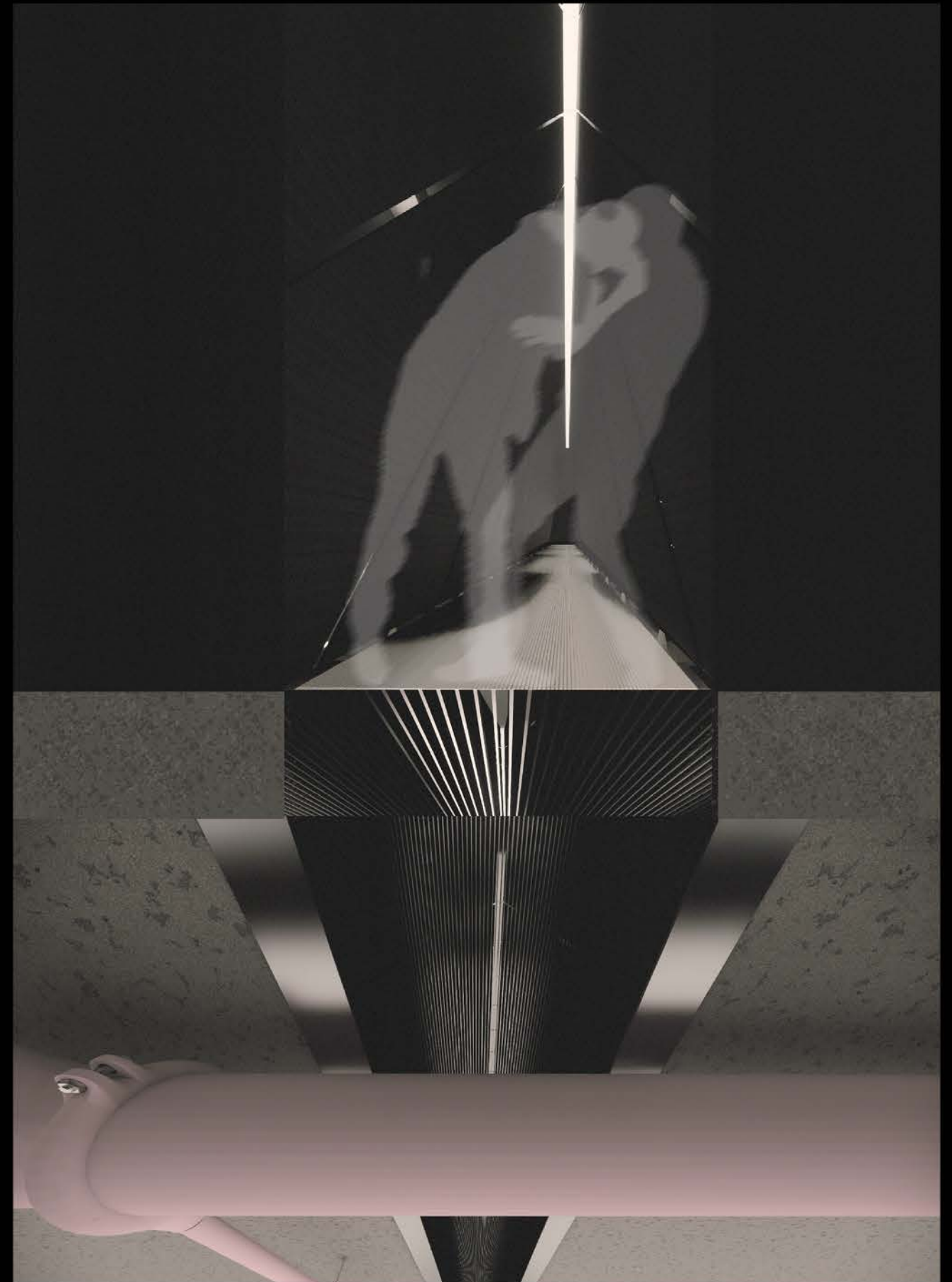
Critic

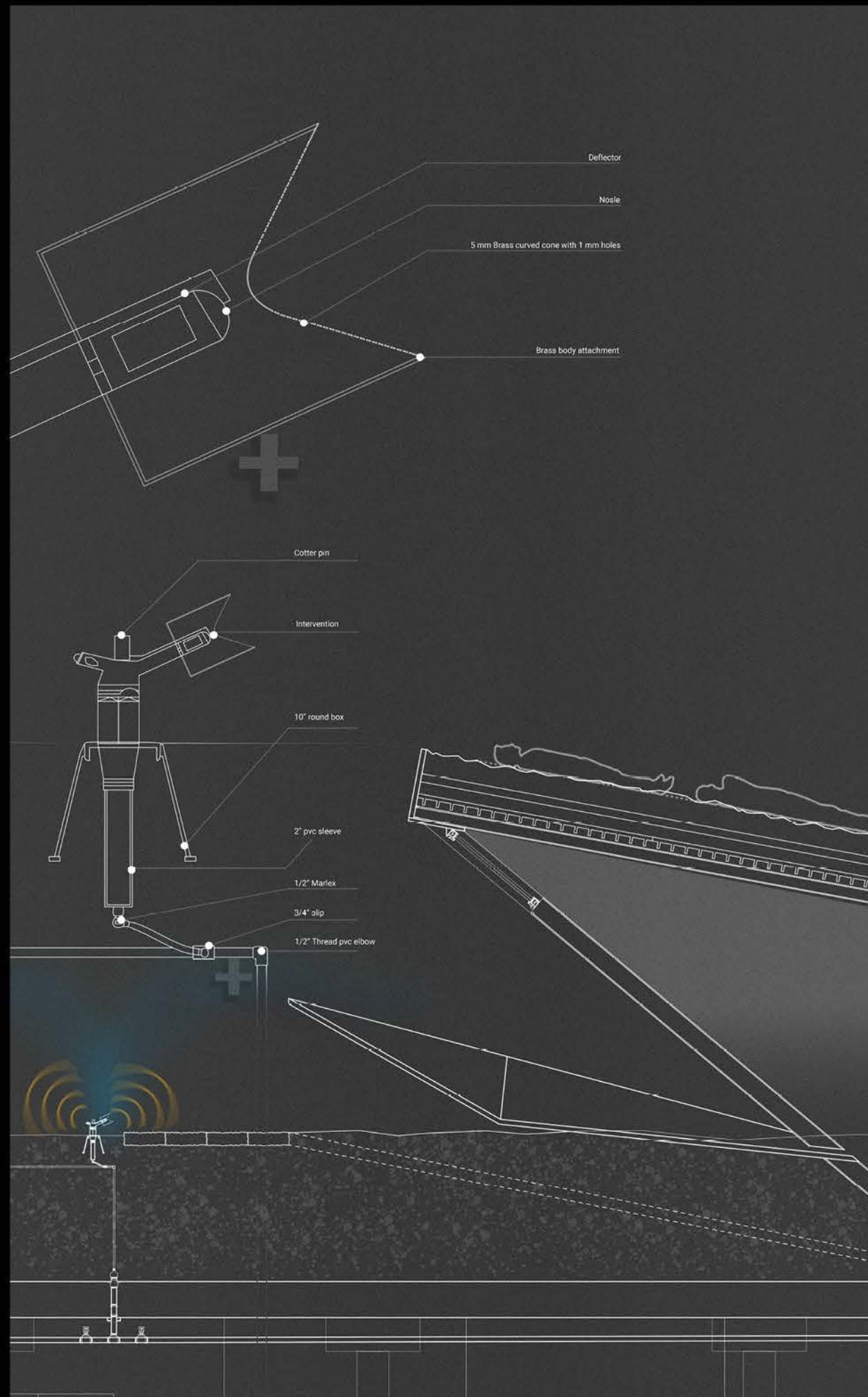
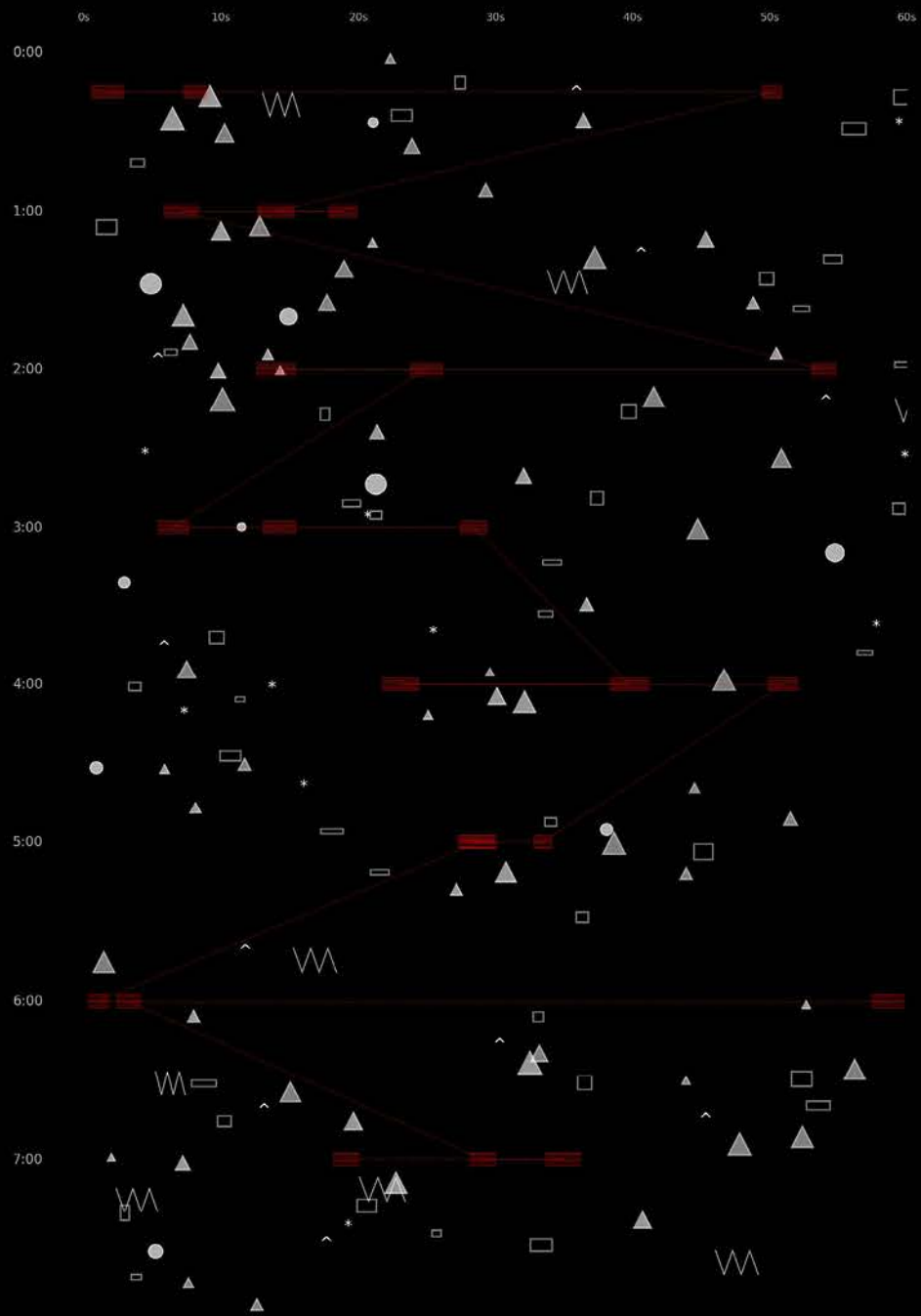
Mario Gooden
Raven Chacon

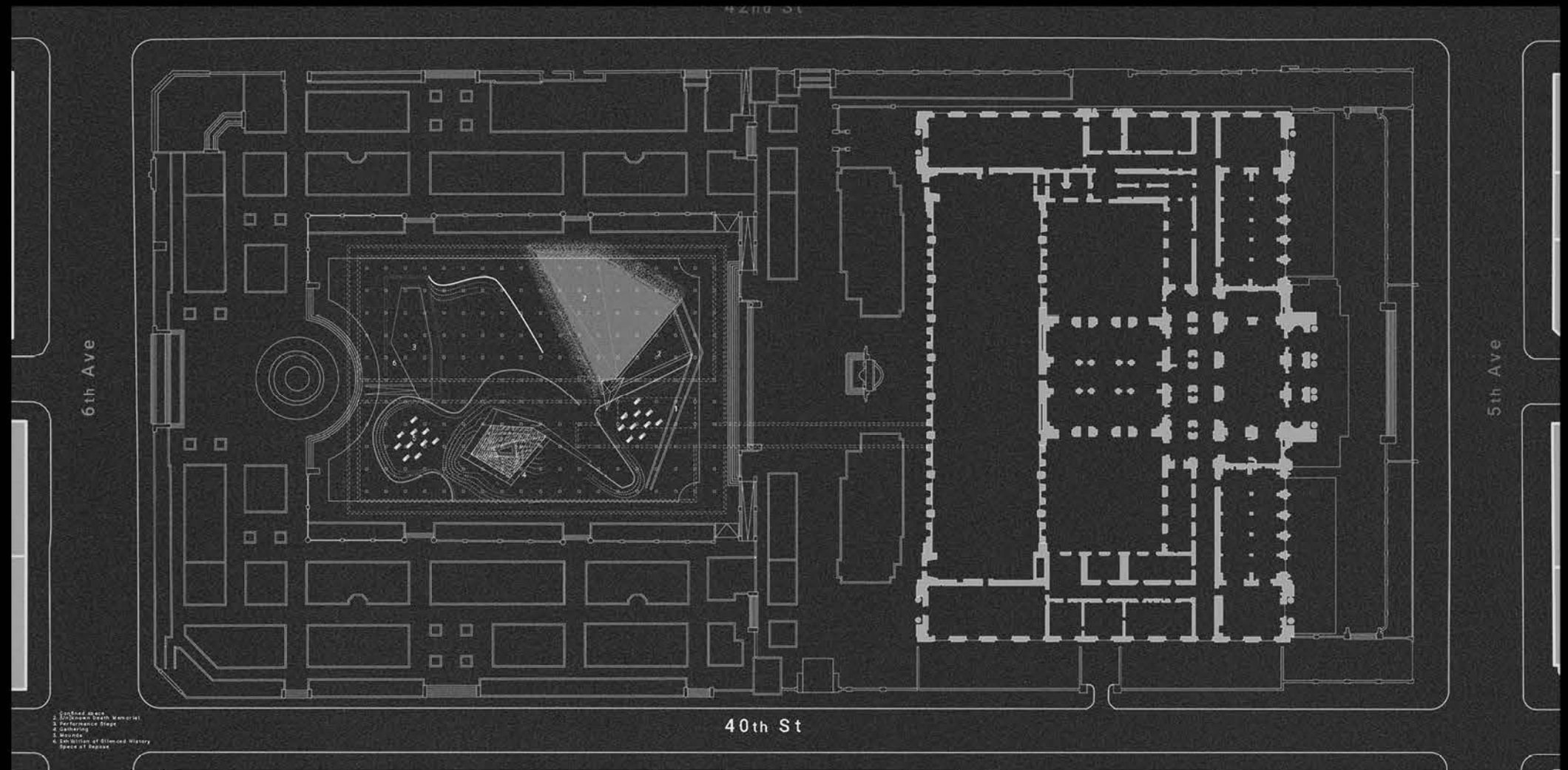
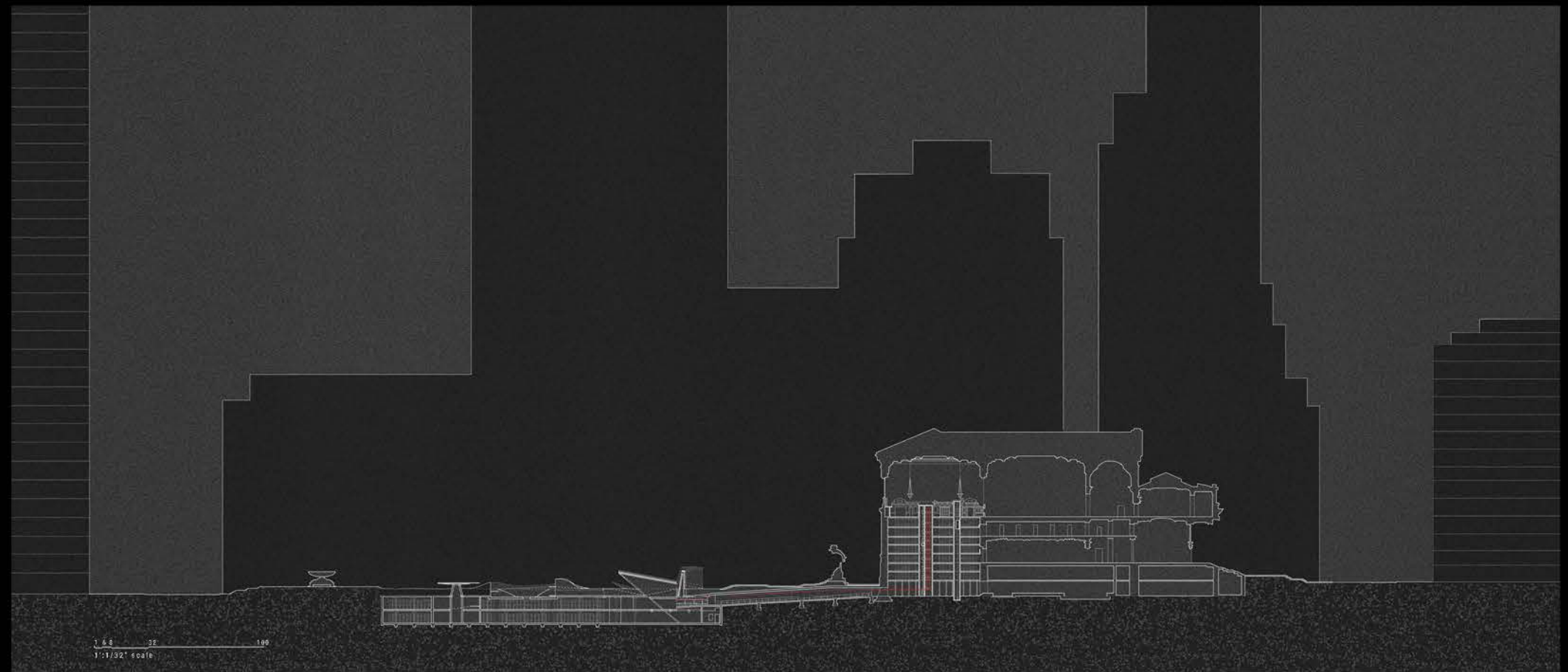
The thesis posits sound as a critical intervention, redefining excavation both physically and metaphorically to uncover silenced narratives. By amplifying the histories of dead, unhoused, and queer bodies, it confronts erasure and displacement.

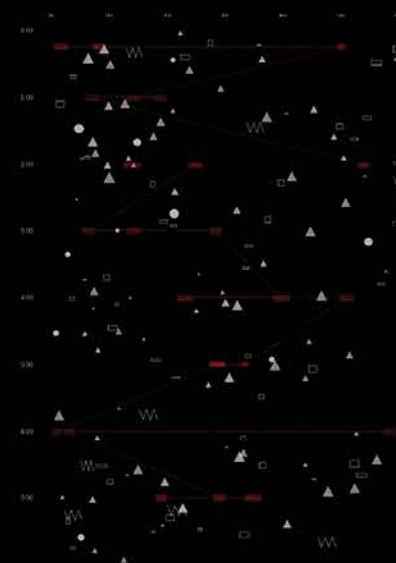
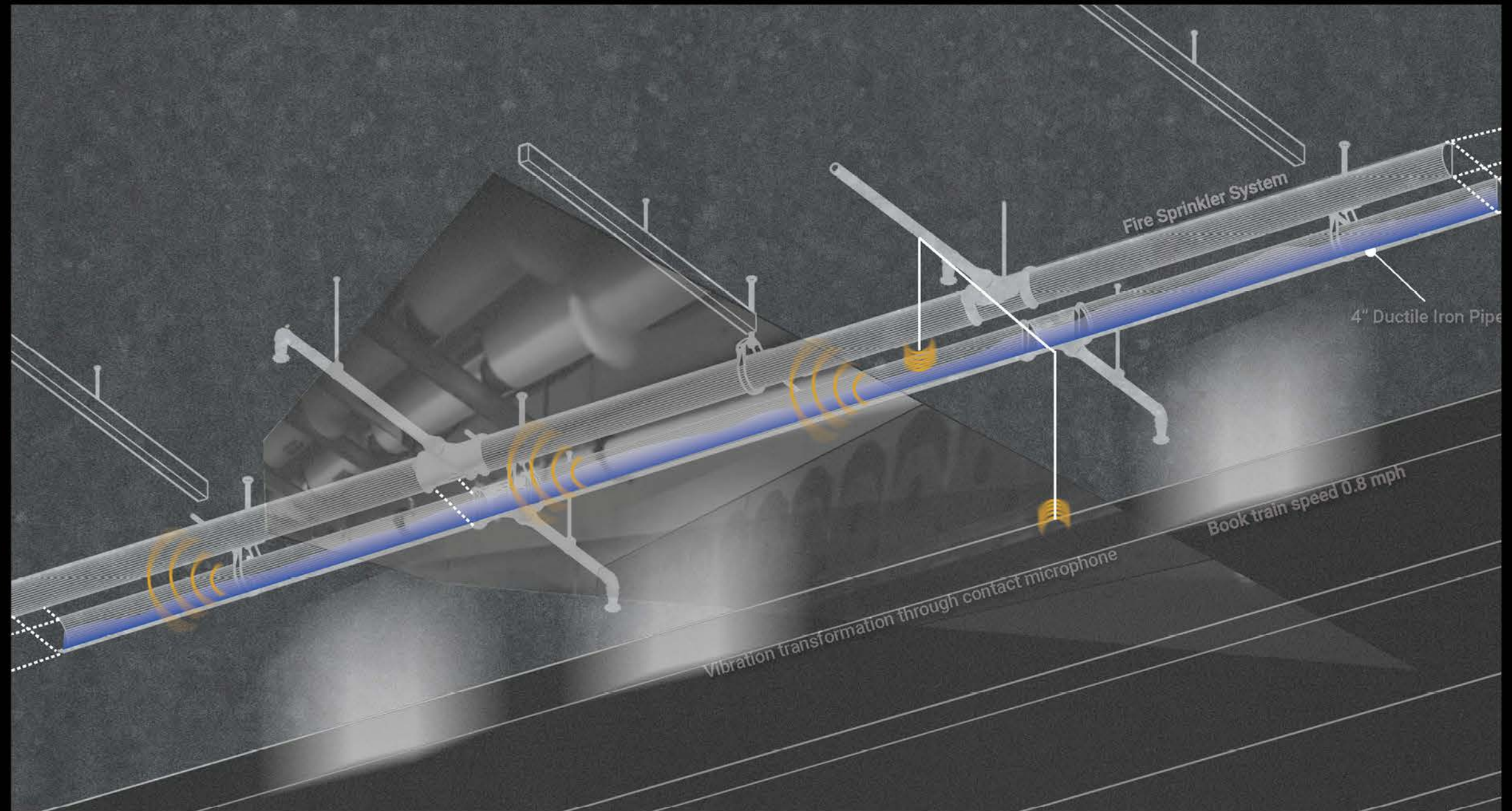
Bryant Park, transformed from a Potter's Field to a manicured public space, exemplifies shifting land valuations that dictate presence and absence. Using existing infrastructure like the book train conveyor and sprinkler system the interventions create a sonic dialogue that resists cycles of excavation and filling.

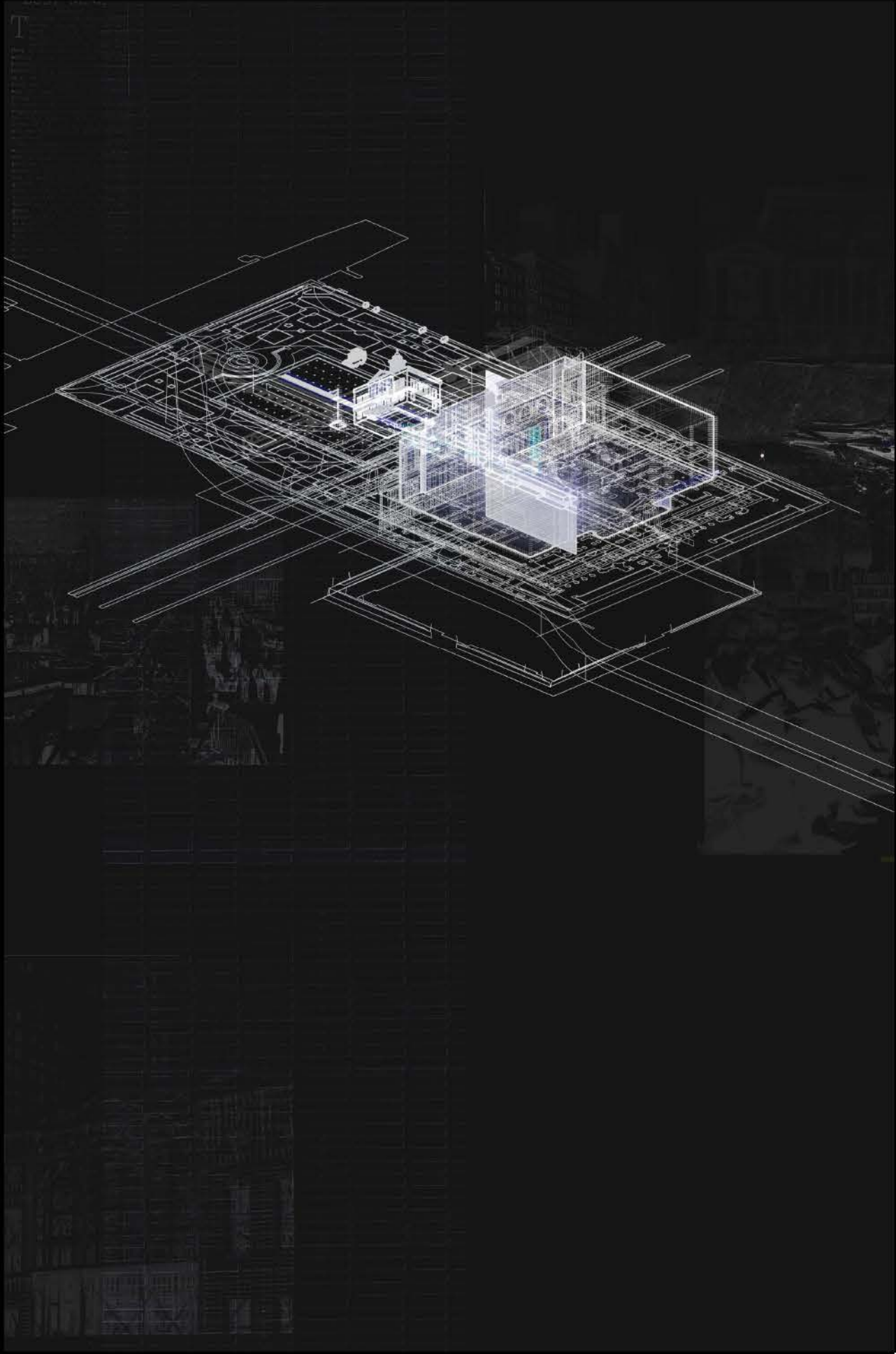
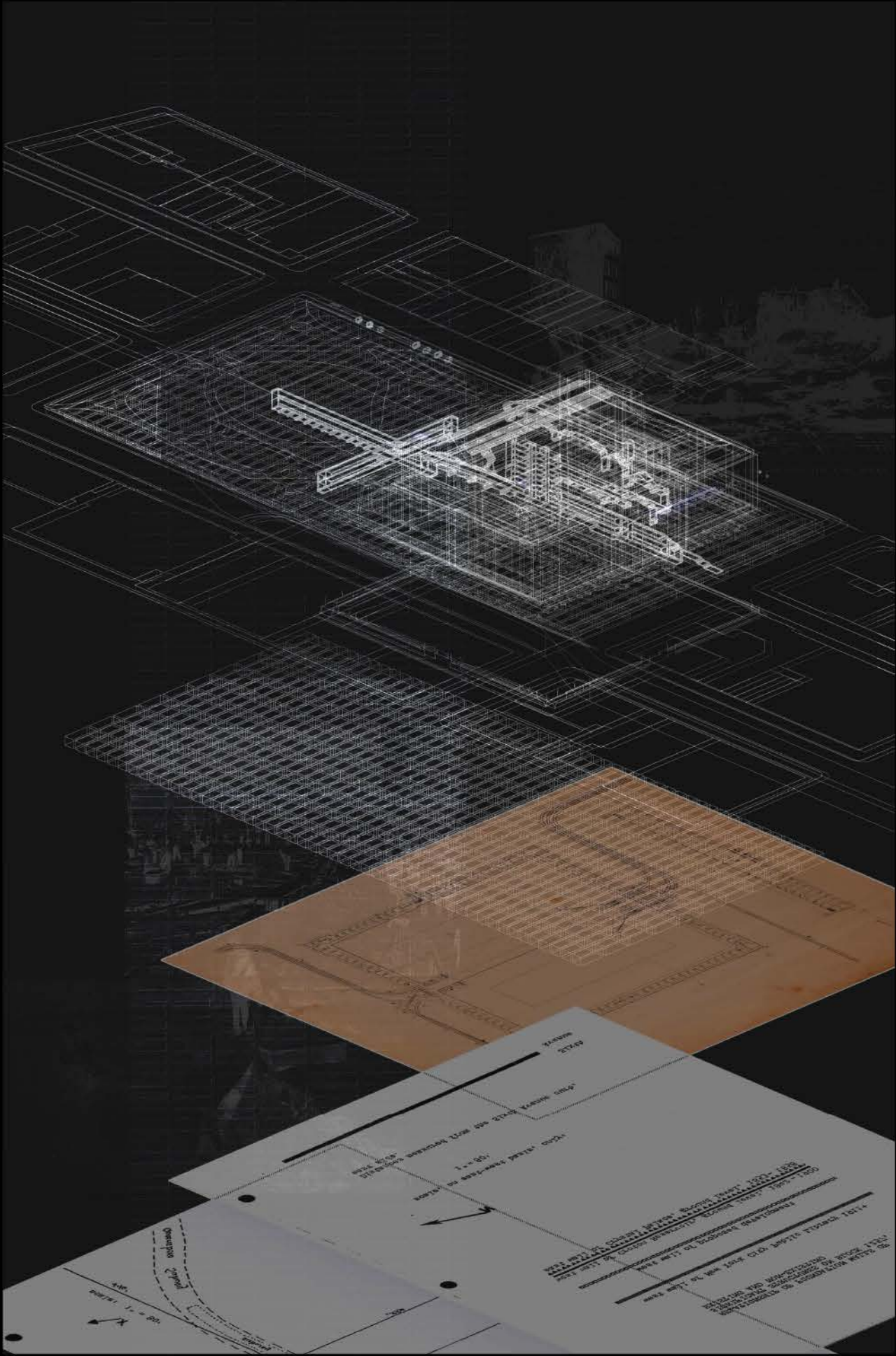
Sound becomes a performative agent, making buried histories audible and reimagining the park as an active site of memory.

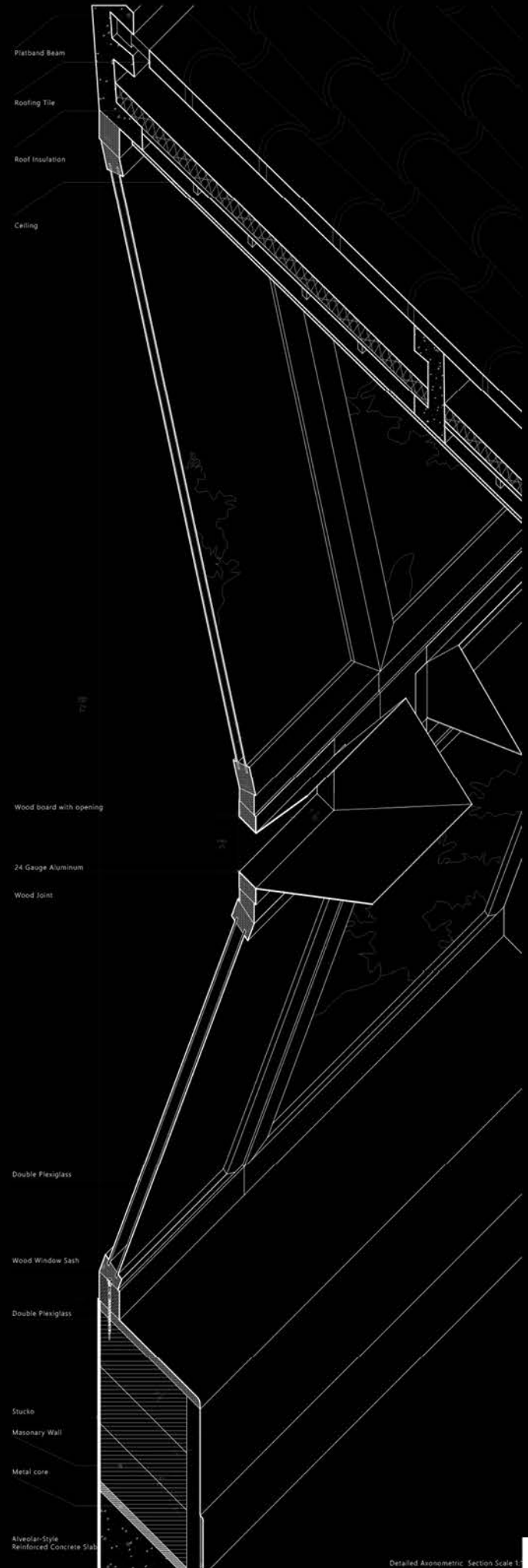
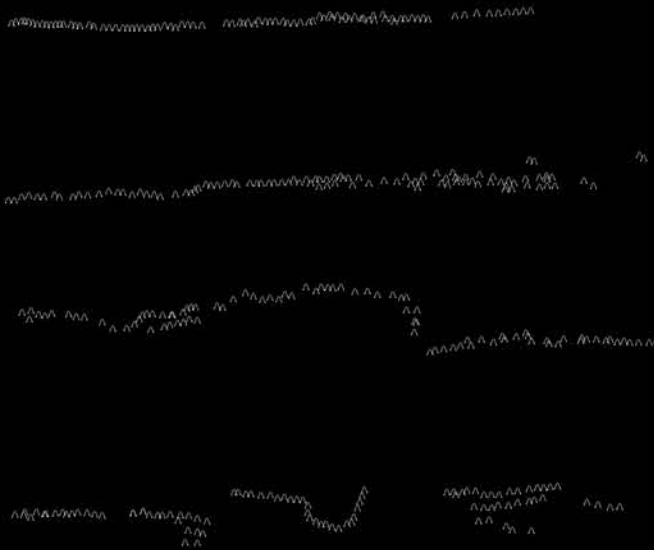
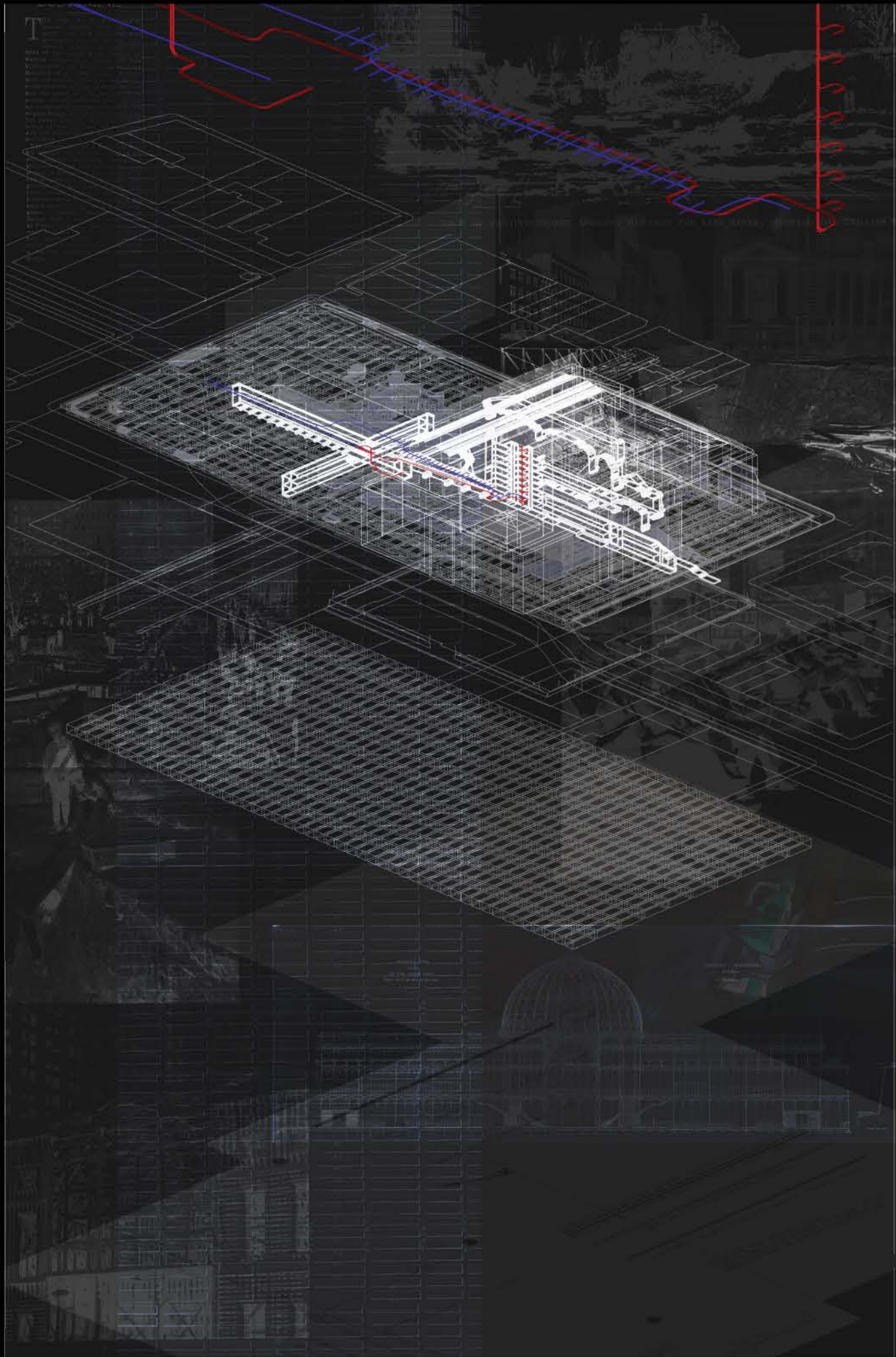












The Harvest of Sand & Sea

Feasting + Fasting
Fall 2024

Between Kuwait and New York

Critic
Prof. Ateya Khorakiwala

Al housh "frontyard" was where time seemed to stand still, especially on Fridays when my grandmother and I sat under the palm tree. As she grilled fish in the oil barrel, the fire crackled and the dry palm leaves hissed, filling the air with the scent of smoke and spices. Above us, the tree swayed gently, its rustling leaves mixing with the sounds around us.

Then, in the distance, the soothing call of the athan would rise, carrying the Islamic prayer through the air. The rhythmic, melodic voice felt like it was flickering flames and the scent of the grilling fish. It added a layer of calm to our quiet ritual, as the world outside seemed to pause for a moment in reflection. This mix of smells, sounds, and the serene call of the athan is etched in my memory—a blend of the sacred and the everyday.



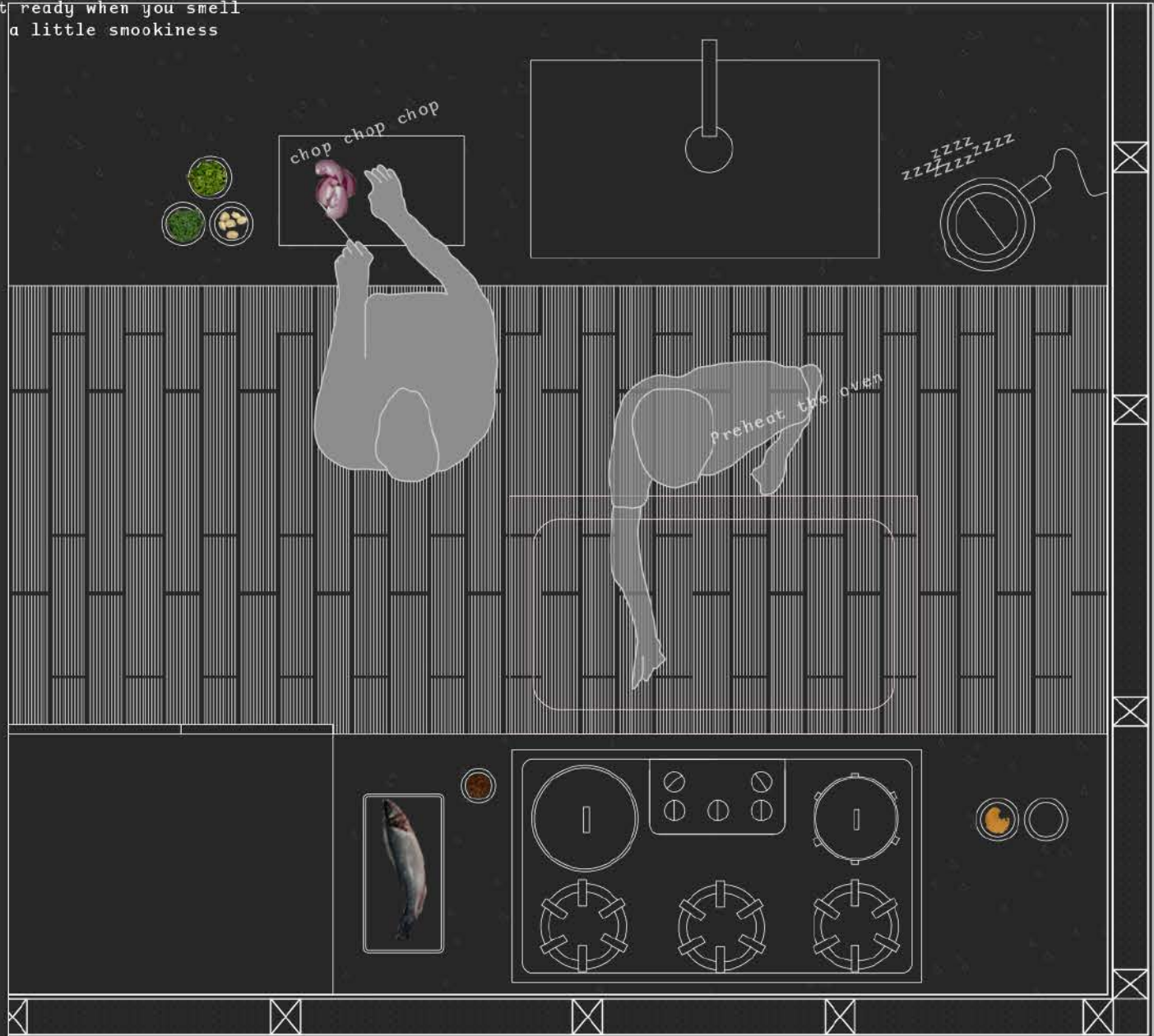


4. Cook it for 30 mins At 420 F and broil for 3 mins. You will know it ready when you smell a little smookiness

3. Stuff the green mix inside the fish

2. Rub the date mix over the fish

all 1. Rub the mixed spice all over the fish



● H-MART

● Kalustyans

INGREDIENTS



1 Whole Branzino fish
Cut from the back



1 Red Onion



5 Garlic Cloves



TBSP Ginger



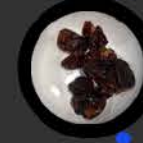
A Bunch of Cilantro



A Bunch of Dill



1 TS Dried Lime powder
1 TS Cilantro Powder
1 TS Black Pepper
1 TS Salt
1 TS Tumeric



2 TBSP IKHLAS DATE

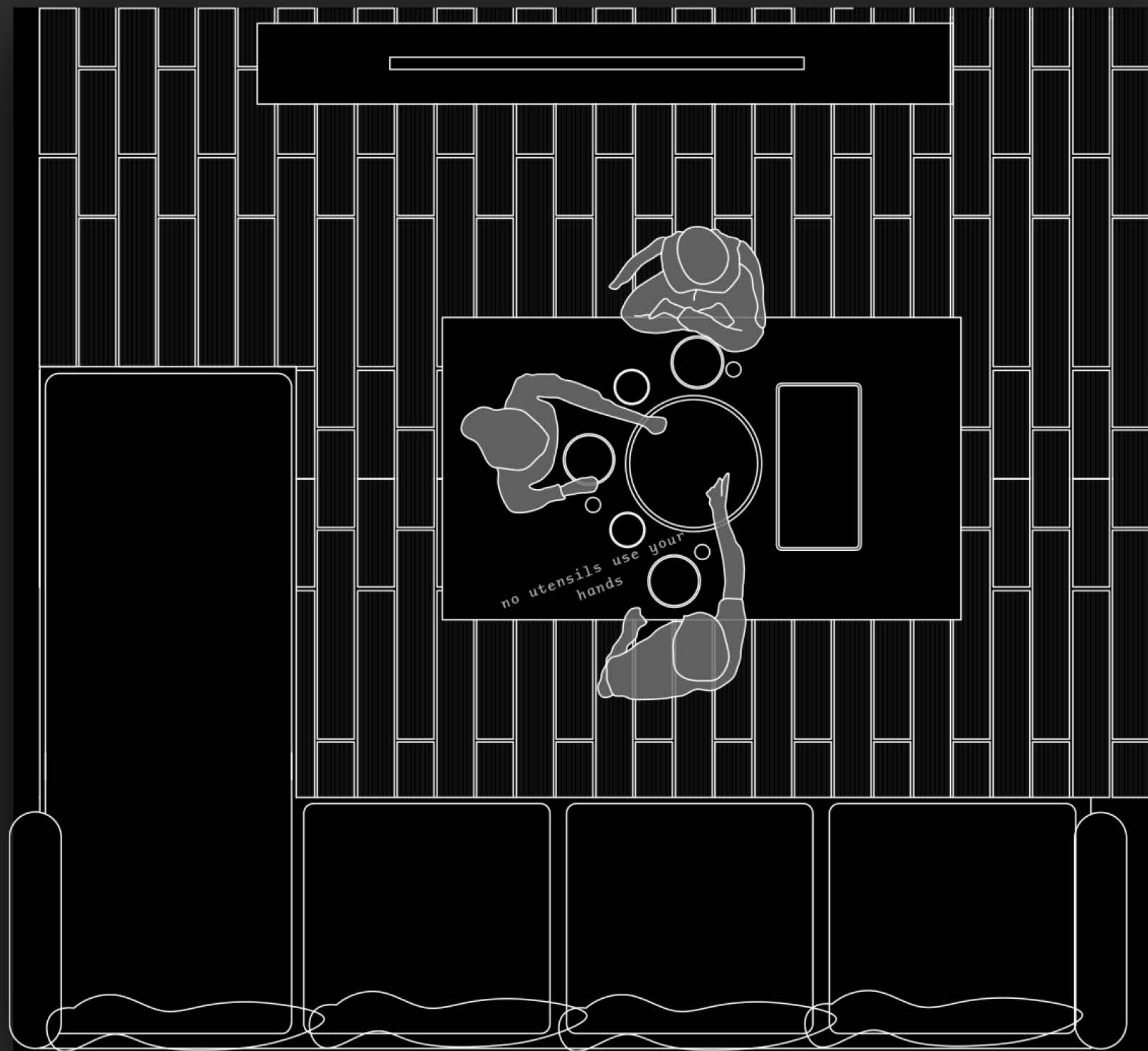


2 TBSP TAMARIND



4 TBSP Olive Oil





1. Larry Busbear, "Topologies : The Urban Utopia in France, 1960-1970," (Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 2007), page 87.

2. William Harris, "Cities in the Sky: Re-Evaluating Yona Friedman," (3AM Magazine, 2016)

3. Theodora Vardouli, "Architecture-by-yourself: Early studies in computer-aided participatory design," (Master Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2011), page 7.

4. Çelik, Zeynep, Urban Forms and Colonial Confrontations: Algiers Under French Rule (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997), page 130

Spatial City by Yona Friedman

Transscalarities
Summer 2024

Critics

Andres Jaque
Bart-Jan Polman
Malcolm Rio

Spatial City (1958) is an ideological proposition that aims to solve the housing crisis after the surge in housing demands by French architect Yona Friedman. Over Paris, the so-called "utopian" manifesto suspends as the starting point and then potentially could be adopted by other cities. "the spatial city was the physical context of a new humanity – mobile, free, and attuned to a totally new aesthetic landscape" The elevated grid of columns structure above an existing urban fabric reflects a pattern of the hierarchy of politics of light, community, and the colonial culture implications, which manifest in disconnect the natives from their tradition, in North African cities. For Friedman light signifies visibility, social interaction, food growth, safety, and well-being. In Spatial City, photons bring warmth, reviving the urban fabric after darkness through the nature of it's materiality. The design of the Spatial City, characterized by neutral, see-through infrastructure, contrasts with the megastructural visions of the Metabolists and Archigram. It claims to allow light to penetrate the materiality of the grid and the units and be equally distributed among users. However, the architectural representation reveals that while light might be disrupted among users, the existing urban fabric below might lack light in the city of lights. The new vertical layer imposes control over the "politics of light," creating shadows and modifying natural illumination patterns. This mechanical organism, exemplifies a type of architectural parasitism, metaphorically feeding on the existing urban fabric by taking the source of light without developing mutually beneficial connections. While Friedman believed his structure would distribute light equally, his design created a further hierarchy between the suspended structure and the existing condition.

The elevation of structures could lead to significant light obstruction for those living or working in lower levels or adjacent areas, perpetuating spatial injustice. The elevated nature of the Spatial City risks casting both literal and figurative shadows over parts of the city that are not elevated. This disparity could result in a 'light divide,' where access to natural and artificial light becomes a privilege rather than a right, further entrenching social divisions.

In Paris, the wealthiest residents historically lived on the lower floors, while the top floors, known as "Chambres de Bonne," were designated for domestic workers such as maids and wetnurses. The invention of the elevator made it possible to reversed this hierarchy, making the upper floors of a building more desirable to wealthier residents due to their distance away from pests and street noises. Yona Friedman's "Spatial City" concept incorporates individual residents into the assemblage of their own housing, introducing unpredictability in floor plans and overall organization of the units under the guise of democratization. However, this approach presents challenges such as architectural and urban fragmentation, straining public services and transportation networks, and potentially exacerbating socioeconomic disparities. Wealthier individuals can better modify their environments, creating personal utopias while contributing to a dystopian impact on the existing urban fabric, because of the preferred translucent material as that could be expensive for lower or middle class individuals. This phenomenon is evident in nowadays cities like New York City, where gentrification has displaced long-standing communities, as seen in Harlem, demolishing "old" buildings replaced with newer with claimed to be expensive material to increase the value, making Harlem locals unable to afford the rent. The constant change inherent in the Spatial City can cause instability and unpredictability, complicating long-term planning and potentially undermining community cohesion.



Figure 1: Conceptual collage of spatial city over the Seine River 1958, Paris, France.



Figure 3: Sectional perspective of Spatial City Above the Medina 1959, Medina, Tunisia

The implications of Friedman's vision extend to colonial contexts. Efforts by the French colonial power aimed to detach Algerians from their traditional housing and promote low-cost modern housing similar to that built for Europeans. This movement coincided with the wars of independence in Algeria and Tunisia during the 1950s and 1960s, leading to housing scarcity in Paris as colonizers returned to their homelands. Yona Friedman's sectional perspective is complicit in drawing a desire to deploy this ideological proposition into North African region as grands ensembles, a post war French product compromising resources and land in North Africa, particularly in Algeria and Tunisia. The continued introduction of "modern architecture" after the colonial period perpetuates a hierarchy that elevates one culture above another, dictates which people should live above others, and suggests that one form of architecture is superior to another. The concept of a spatial city incorporated another set of sociocultural criteria to maintain the separation of the two communities. Spatial City envisioned an elevated, transparent infrastructure to meet postwar housing demands. However, its design reinforces socio-spatial hierarchies and undermines existing urban fabric, resulting in politics of light inequalities and possible societal divisions. This utopian vision emphasizes the intricacies and unexpected repercussions of modern architectural interventions that affect community cohesiveness and urban planning.

AUTOPSY: IMAGES

Framing, Omission, Authorship

autopsy is not about visibility but about intention. It is a method for tracing the architecture of seeing—where the image is not just a record but a construction, a decision, a cut. To perform an image autopsy is to peel back the surface of the frame: to treat the edge as threshold, omission as authorship, and visibility as a charged terrain.

Framing becomes both method and material. It lingers in gesture, in scale, in resolution—embedded in the vertical tilt of a screen, the shadowed corner of a satellite view, the pause before capture. These traces, often naturalized, do not disappear; they organize experience, guiding the eye toward meaning.

Drawing from visual anthropology and spatial critique, this approach unsettles the neutrality of the image. It blurs the line between what is shown and what is structured to be seen. Like an algorithm adjusting light, or a lens narrowing focus, the frame intervenes—quietly, powerfully.

Through the lens of autopsy, the image becomes more than document. It becomes a diagram of power, of presence, of absence. Framing is not the background of perception—it is its architecture. To see clearly, we must first learn where the image was cut.

Re[Framing, Capturing, Shooting]

Complicit Images Studio
Summer 2024

New York, NY
Critic
Michiel Helbig
Corneel Canaerts

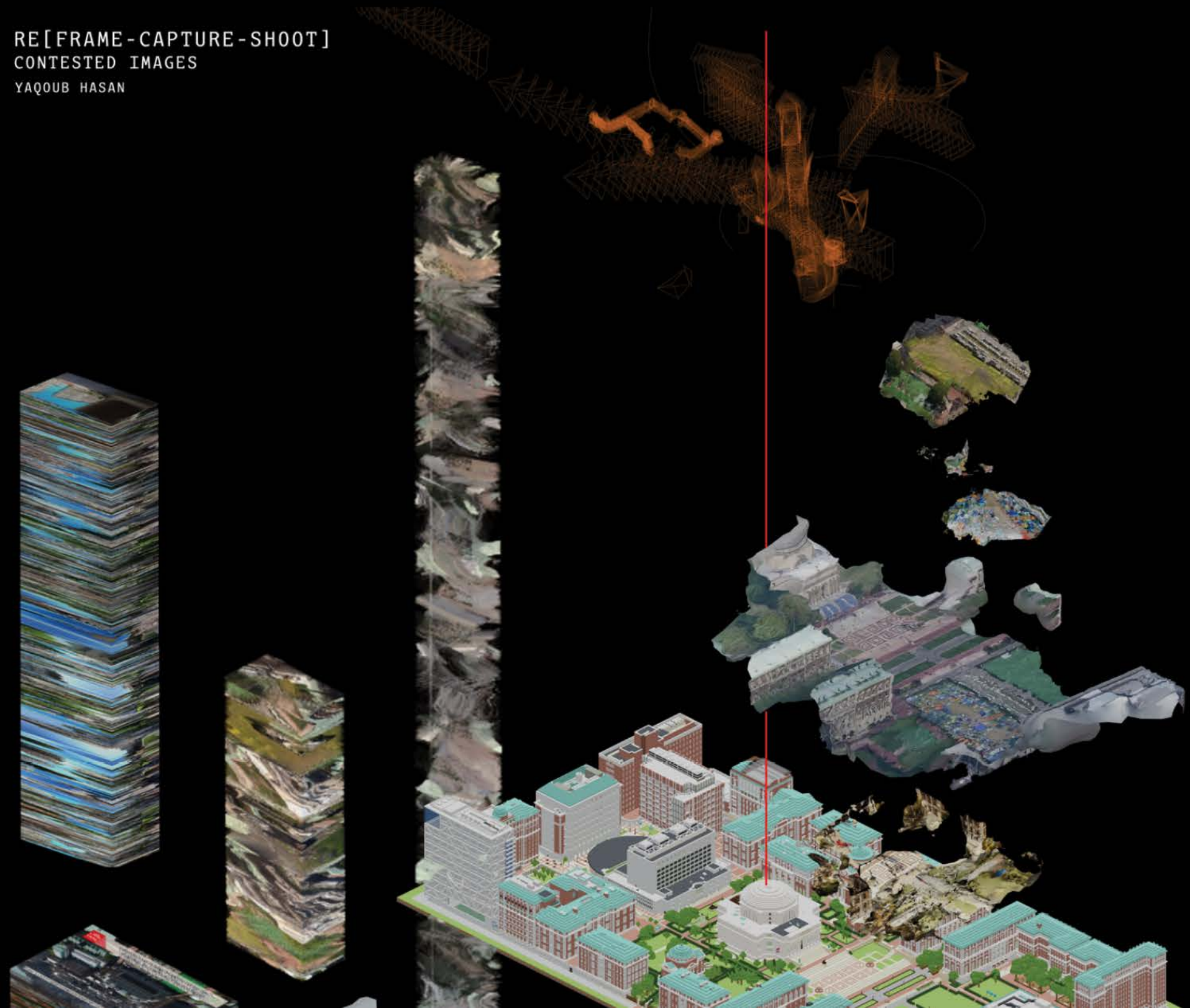
Framing is not simply about what is seen—it is about how seeing is structured. It is not the same as capturing. Capturing records; framing interprets. If capturing is a blink, framing is a wink—intentional, coded, and loaded with context.

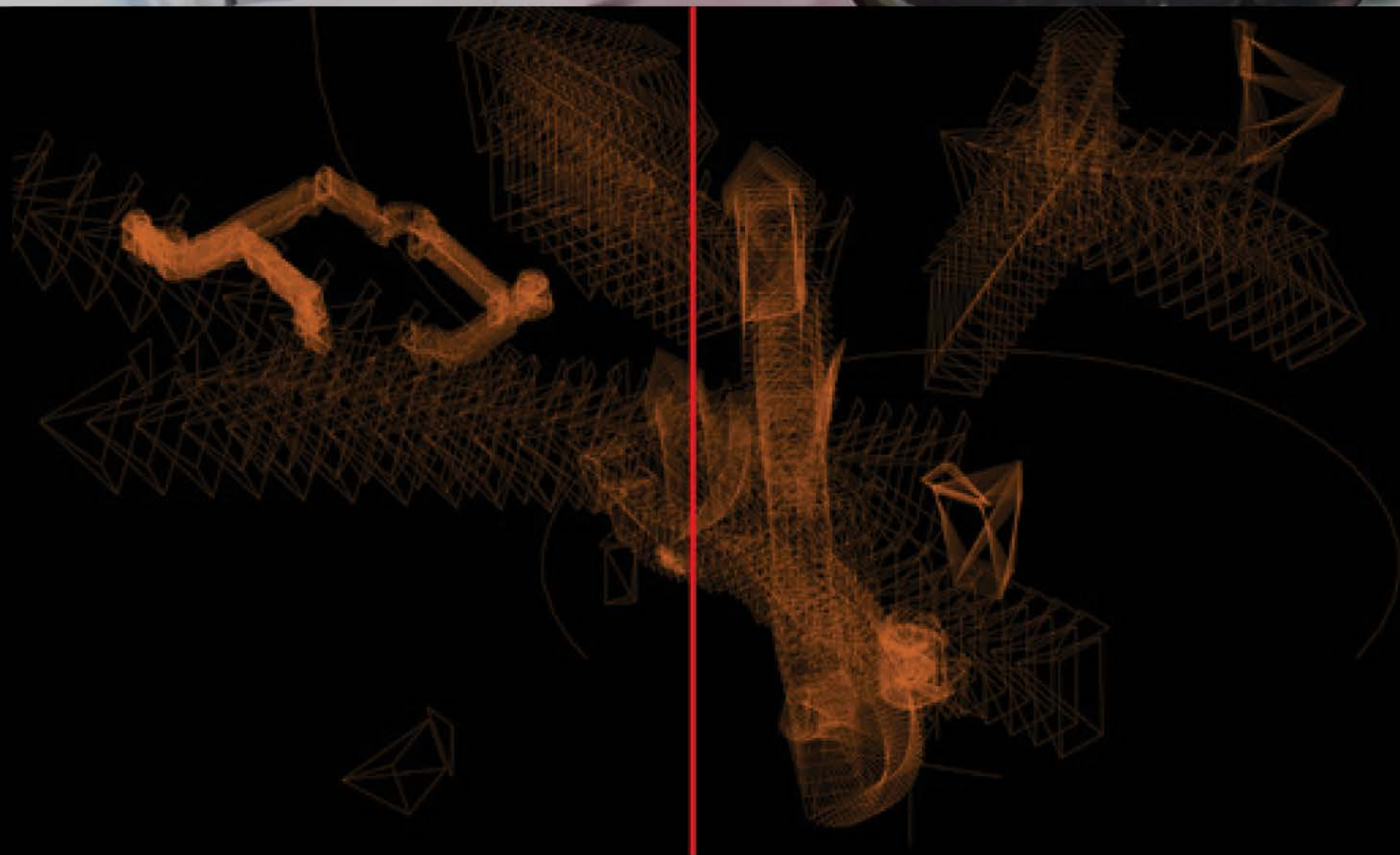
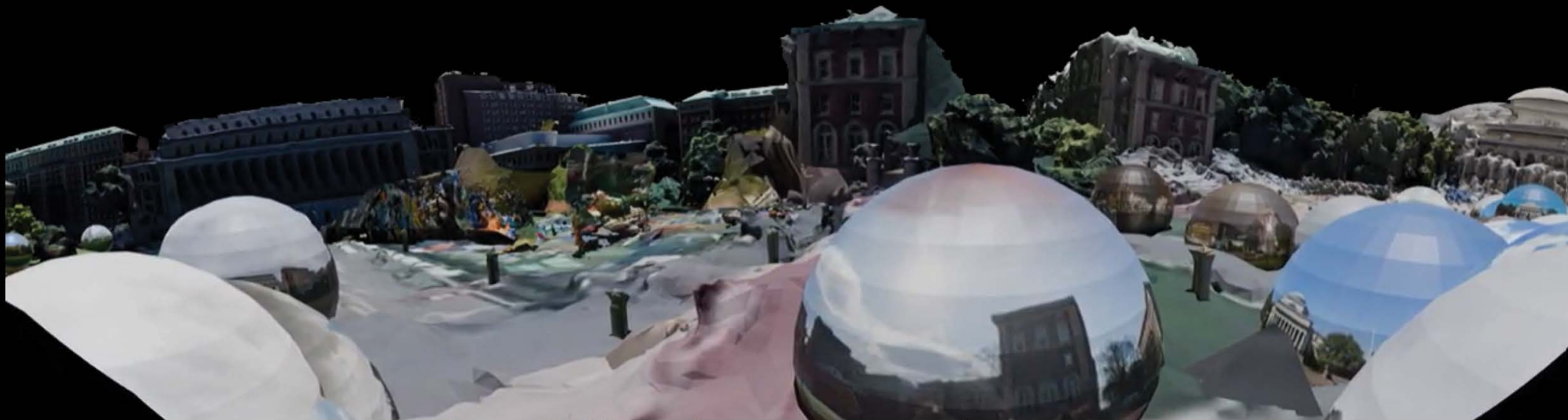
This studio investigates framing as an act of visual construction across technical, political, and affective dimensions. From camera lenses to clipping masks, body cams to propaganda posters, framing is never neutral. It determines what enters the field of view and what is left out. Framing renders meaning, organizes experience, and reflects power—whether through the vertical tilt of a Zoom screen, the orientation of a map, or the bias of an algorithm.

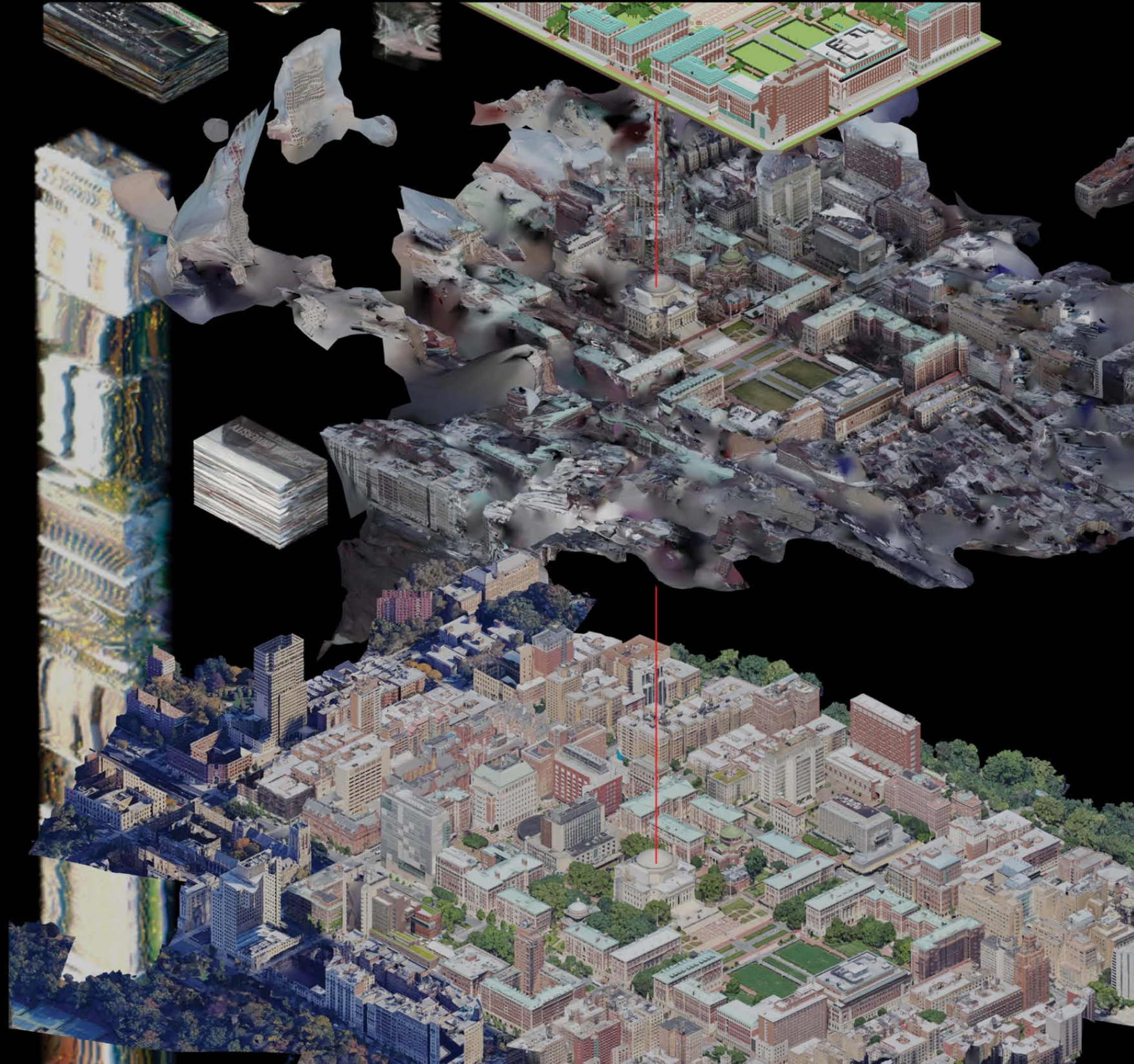
Guided by visual anthropology and media theory, the studio treats framing as a methodology of inquiry. Each frame is a decision: who frames, what is framed, and why. In a world saturated with images, framing becomes a form of authorship—a declaration of intent or omission.

Through collected images, fragments, and critical maps, the studio builds a layered fieldguide: one that reveals how scale, direction, resolution, and ideology contour perception. Framing is not the background to seeing—it is its architecture.

RE[FRAME-CAPTURE-SHOOT]
CONTESTED IMAGES
YAQOUB HASAN









Palimpsests of Memory: Negotiating Space

Interlaced Existence
Fall 2024

Gaza, Palestine

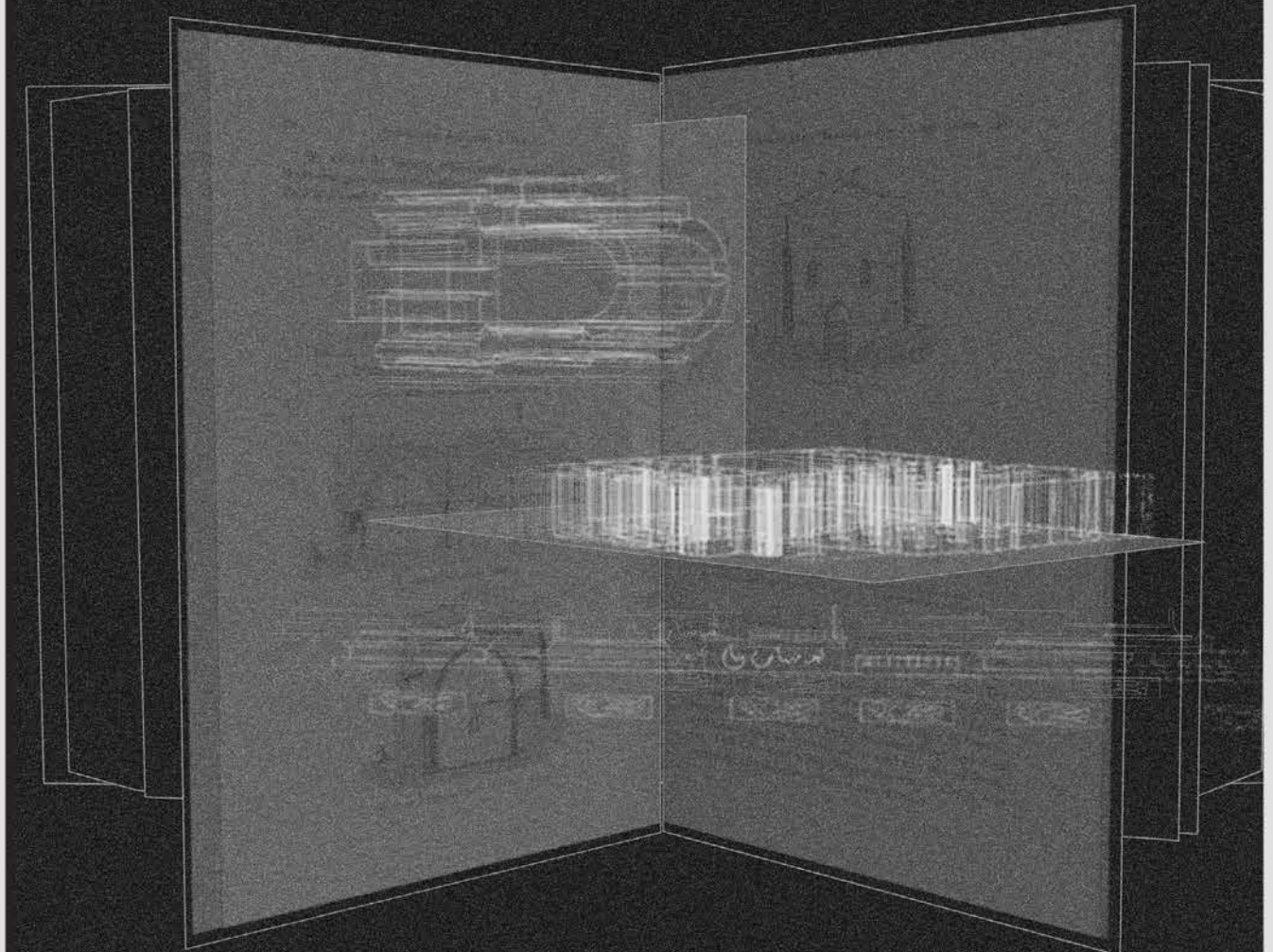
Critic
Karla Rothstein

Al-Zaitoon is not a ruin; it is a layered wound that breathes. This project treats its damaged sites—the Archive Building, the Graveyard, the Church of Saint Porphyrius, and the Omari Mosque—not as remnants of loss, but as living infrastructures of memory.

Drawing from Lefebvre, Derrida, and Benjamin, memory here is spatial, fractured, and ongoing. These sites do not just hold history—they perform it. Through oral rituals, grassroots repair, and imagined futures, the ruins resist erasure.

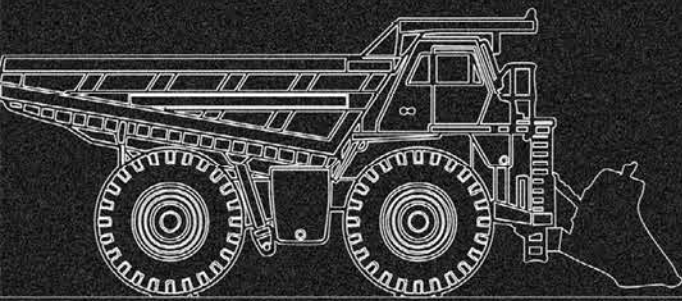
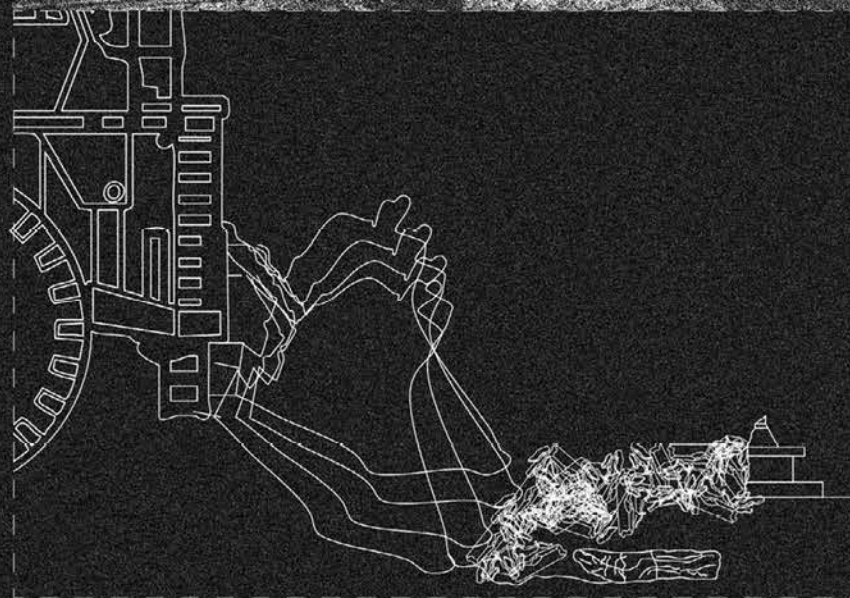
Al-Zaitoon is a palimpsest: scorched, rewritten, and still legible. To rebuild is not to conceal, but to reveal. In this terrain, architecture is asked not to restore order, but to remember—to carry what persists.

What if my memoryscape
were erased?
No—not erased entirely.
Puzzled debris,
fragments of where I
used to pray,
where I mourned my
parents,
where I learned the
stories of my city...



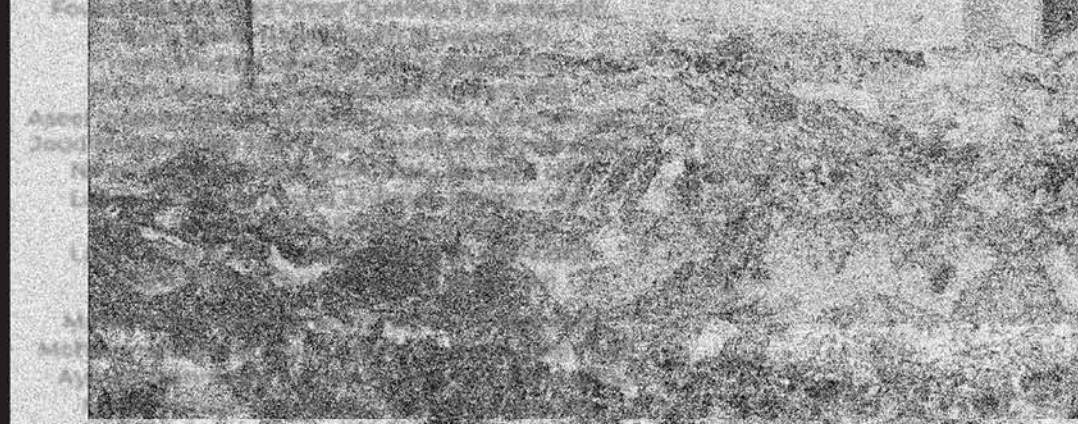
sheikh shabaan cemetery palestine square erased

In this place, life
and death embrace.
Tombstones bear
names that
weathered wars and
time.
I run my fingers
over them, tracing
stories,
and wonder—will
my name endure, or
be erased?



gaza's 150 years archive ashes

Olme Adel Zakaria Al-Faraj (8 years old)
Mohammed Mune Shafida Al-Ladaal (8 years old)
Areek Khaled Suhail Asbed (8 years old)
Hudhafa Thab Darwish Joudah (8 years old)
Mira Youssef Hadeb Obeid (8 years old)
Sulhaya Ahmed Hamad Al-Abrud (8 years old)
Yasmeen Ibrahim Saeed Abu Shamash (8 years old)
Lina Muhammad Ahmed Darwish (8 years old)
Noor Muhammad Youssef Abu Khodair (8 years old)
Chana Muhammad Saad Al-Karnaz (8 years old)
Sahar Nouran Sulaiman Habogush (8 years old)
Jael Mahmoud Jawad Kaseel (8 years old)
Fouad Youssef Hadeb Obeid (8 years old)



Abdullah Mohammed Al-Karnaz (8 years old)
Ula Youssef Mohammed Abu Khodair (8 years old)
Zahra Ahmed Salameh Abu Khodair (8 years old)
Karim Abu Al-Karnaz Kaseel (8 years old)
Syon Mousab Kaseel (8 years old)
Youssef Ayman Ahmed Al-Karnaz (8 years old)
Karim Hamad Kaseel (8 years old)
Saba Jael Al-Rahman Mohammed Kaseel (8 years old)
Gafel Maged Joudah Abu Khodair (8 years old)
Mohammed Qasab Salameh Kaseel (8 years old)
Mohammed Ehab Ziyad Ahmed (8 years old)
Mamad Ayman Samir Mousa (8 years old)
Diras Mohammed Ibrahim Abu Khodair (8 years old)
Hoda Mohammed Ahmed Kaseel (8 years old)
Tulayha Mohammed Fawzi Kaseel (8 years old)
Shamir Kaseel (8 years old)
Sahar Kaseel (8 years old)
Mohammed Kaseel (8 years old)



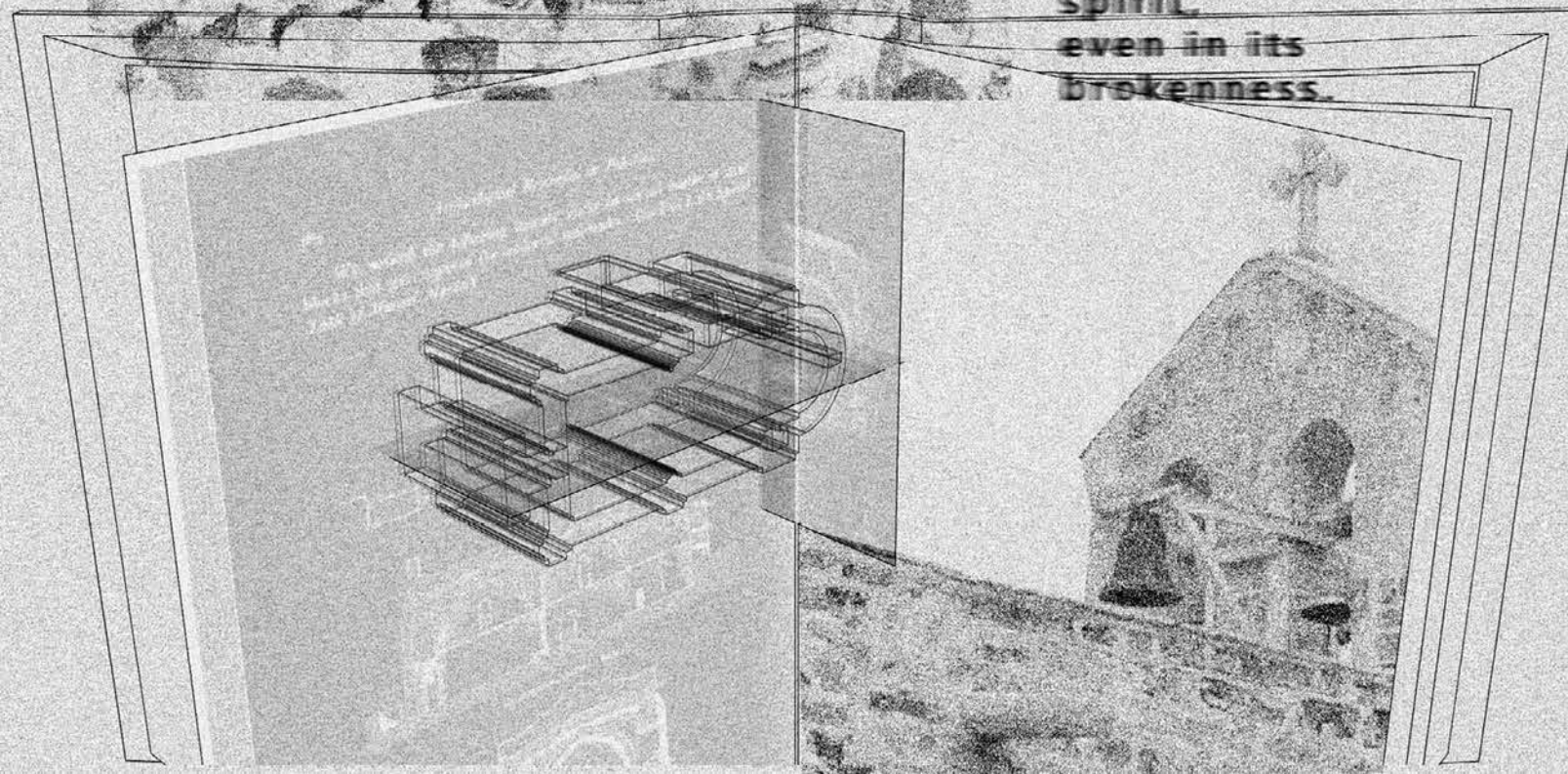
Hamza Wael Ahmed Al-Azal (3 years old)
Riyad Mohammed Riyad Tota (3 years old)
Ali Mohammed Zakaria Al-Azal (3 years old)
Ahmed Amjad Maged Abu Awida (3 years old)
Shaban Ahmed Shaban Halasa (3 years old)
Saif Al-Din Saif Abdulrahman Al-Arqan (3 years old)
Mohammed Omar Nafez Al-Choul (3 years old)
Baraa Taher Ammar Asbour (3 years old)
Omar Mohammed Khalil Abu Hamad (3 years old)

I search the ashes
for traces. A name,
a date, a face.
The archive
whispers, but its
voice is faint.
Memory lingers in
fragments—digitize
d, oral, spectral.
It refuses to
vanish, though it is
no longer whole.

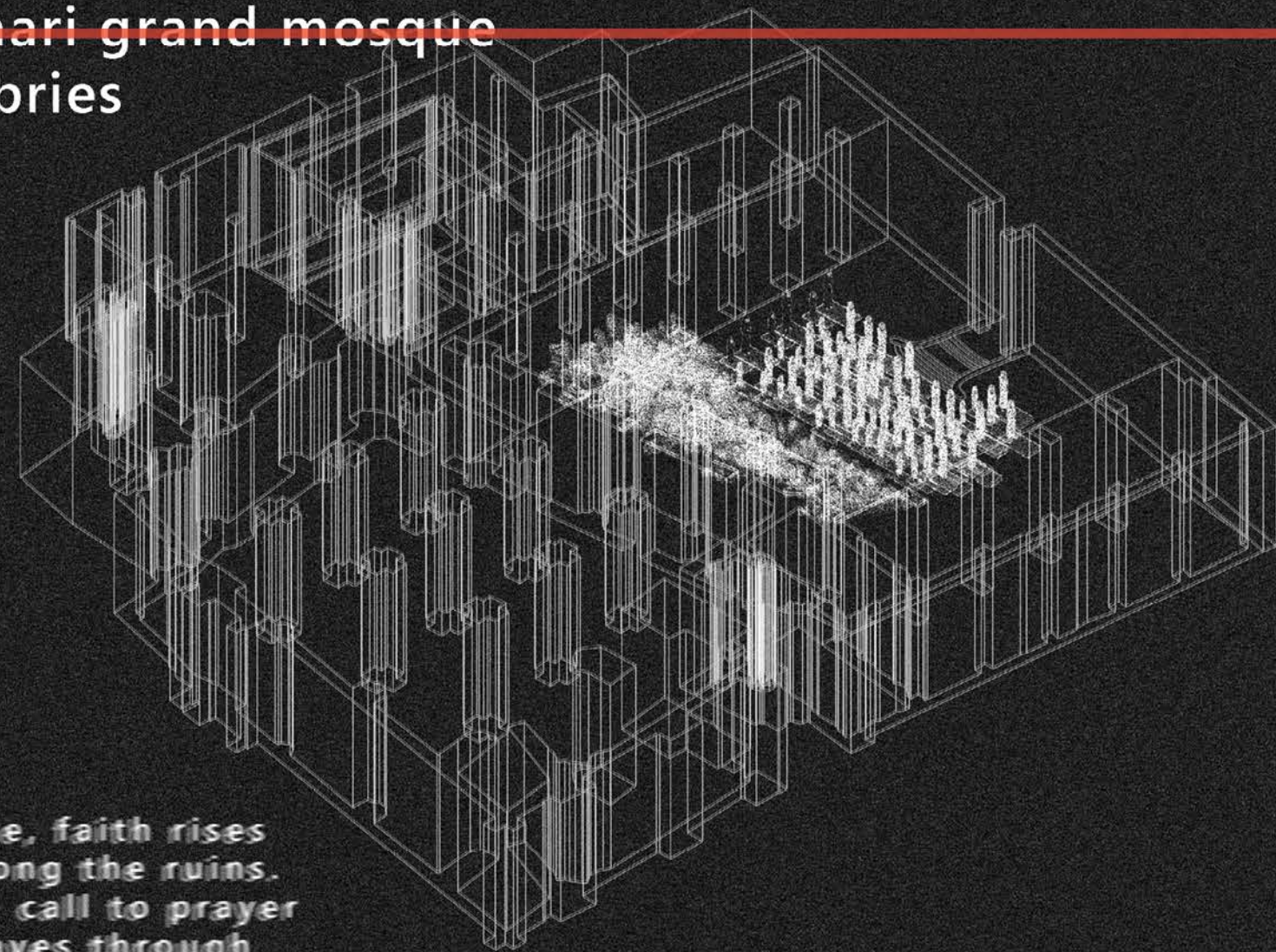
**saint porphyrius churchashes
destroyed**



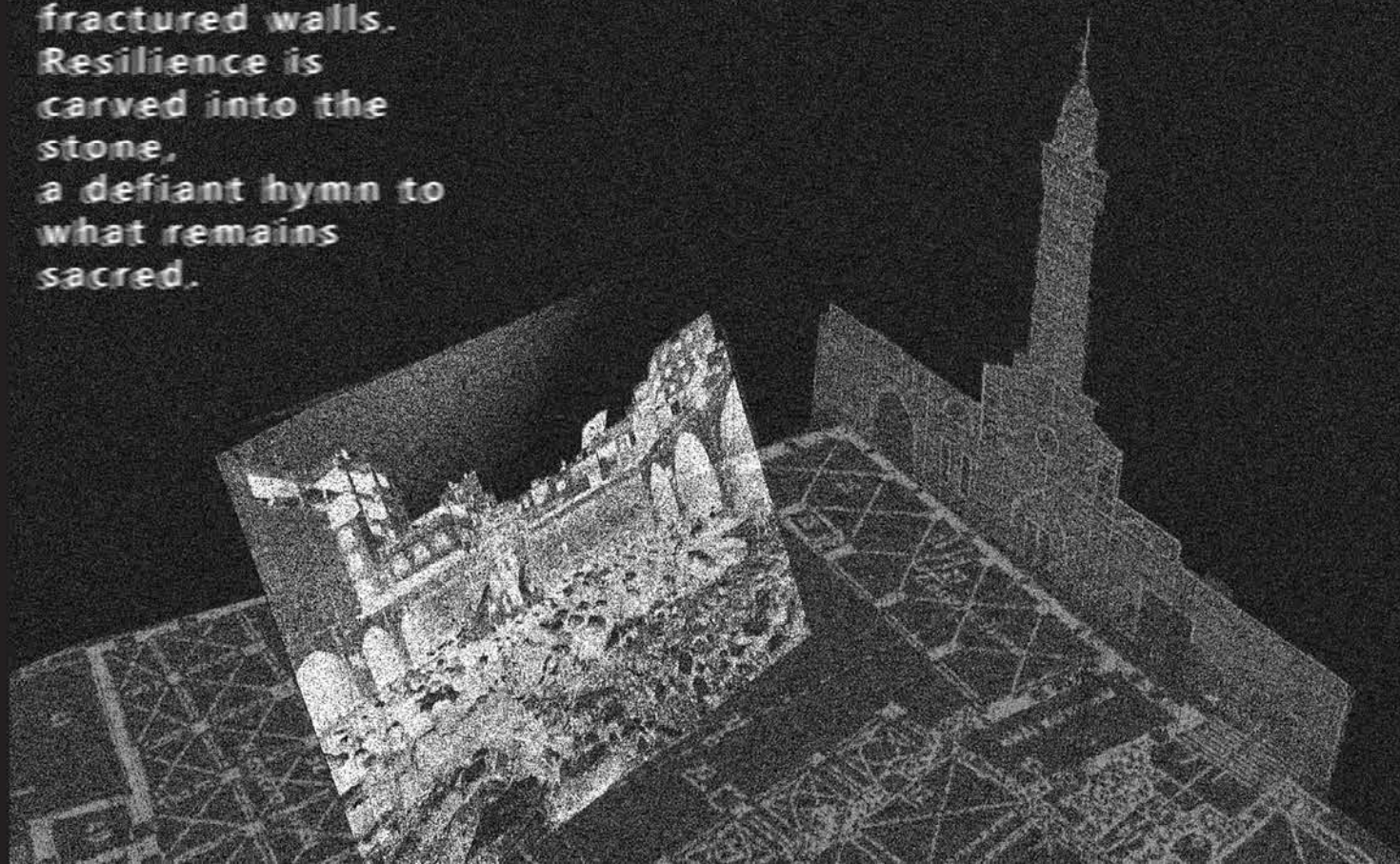
**The bells are silent
now, their echoes
held in memory.
But the light
dances, refracted
and fractured,
as if to say: this
place still holds its
spirit,
even in its
brokenness.**



**omari grand mosque
debrises**



**Here, faith rises
among the ruins.
The call to prayer
weaves through
fractured walls.
Resilience is
carved into the
stone,
a defiant hymn to
what remains
sacred.**



I search for
names—
of neighbors, of
loved ones, of
places lost.
But they blur,
multiply, slip
through my
hands.
Can I honor
memory when
the names
themselves are
fragile?



The whispers of
Al-Zaytoun call
us to listen.
To honor the
fragments, to
cradle the
wounds.
Memory is not
still; it moves, it
transforms.
And so, we
rebuild—
not to erase the
past,
but to carry its
voice into the
future

