Portfolio

Qizhen Chen Selected Work 2024 - 2025

> MS.AAD'25 Columbia University qc2350@columbia.edu +1 929 306 0996

Standing atop Arsenale's watchtower, gazing at the red-tiled rooftops, I was struck by Venice's enduring grandeur. Yet beneath its historic beauty, I noticed hidden voids—aging and abandoned, collapsing ancient buildings, like scars silently spreading, reflecting the city's fading vitality. These imbalances, subtle but persistent, diminish the once-confident character of this ancient city.

Cities like Nanjing, China, face similar challenges: chaotic, decaying shantytowns in urban centers and oppressive high-rise housing on the outskirts. Likewise, in New York, the polluted East River contrasts starkly with the thriving Manhattan skyline. Elsewhere, abandoned industrial sites scar the land. Though not always catastrophic, these scars disrupt urban harmony.

Faced with these imbalances, can we adopt an approach akin to acupuncture? Inspired by the principles of traditional Chinese medicine—which targets key points to restore systemic balance—I propose slowing the pace of architectural expansion and embracing a more targeted, systems-based approach to foster a sustainable and resilient future.

Drawing on Keller Easterling's concept of "dispositions of imbalance" from Extrastatecraft: The Power of Infrastructure Space, I envision architecture as a strategy for connection and reconciliation within existing environments—such as chaotic, high-density, low-income urban neighborhoods, or the friction between dense urbanization and ecological degradation.

Rather than merely expanding outward, architecture should aim to create intelligent systems that harmonize and activate the underlying processes of the built environment. These systems—encompassing living organisms, the physical environment, and human-made structures—should be designed and managed to maximize efficiency, resilience, and sustainability.

CONTENTS

01. "Deep Eye" Venice Boat Museum Ware-house Transformation

> **02. Floating Purifier** A Collaborative Ecosystem

03. "Cloud" The Outside Inflatable Pavilion Project

> 04. Matters of Identity Makergraph 2025

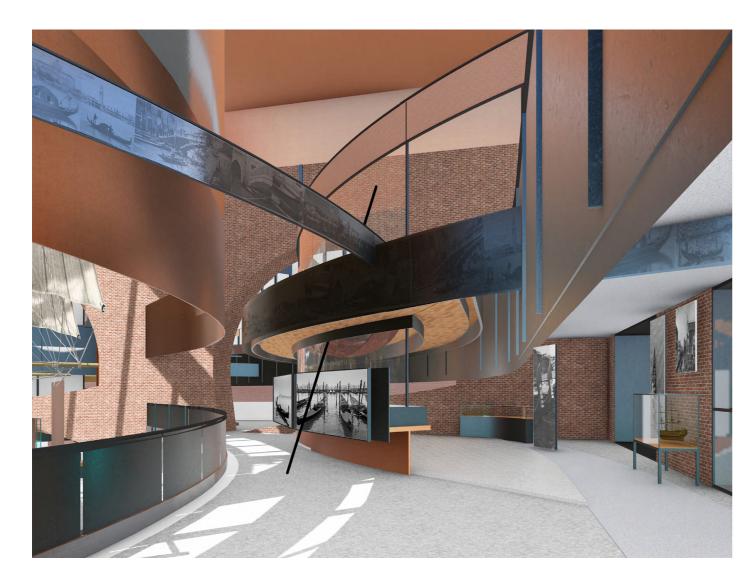
05. Foldable Furniture Partition 1:1 Crafting and Fabrication

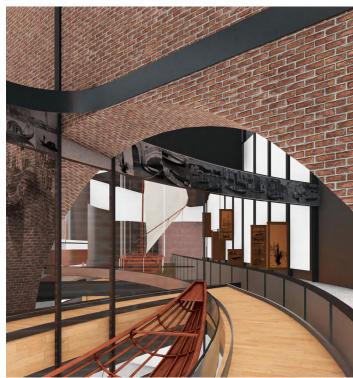
06. Coding for Special Practices Film Webpage Design

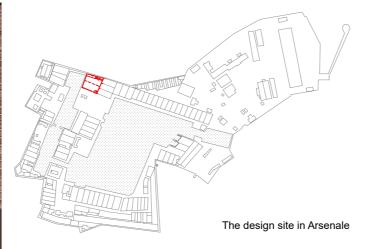


"Deep Eye" Venice Boat Museum - Ware-house Transformation

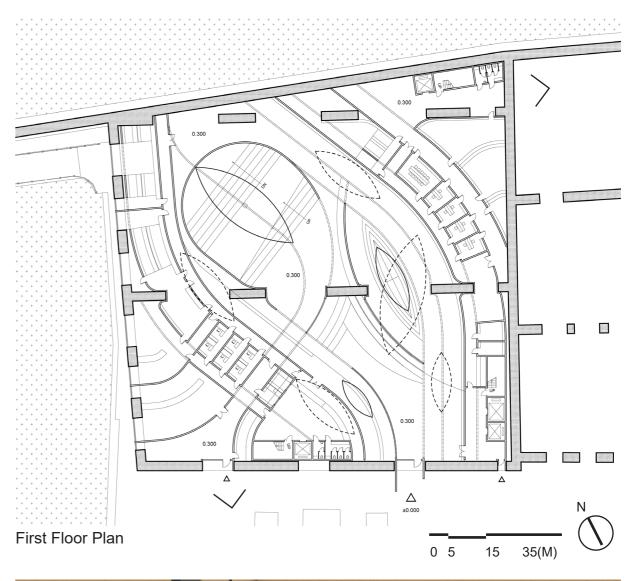
Individual Work, Fall 2024, Columbia University Joint ARCH/HP Advanced Studio Instructor: Prof. Jorge Otero-Pailos and Prof. Mark Rakatansky This project focuses on the Galaezze, two ruined warehouses in Arsenale. The aim is to transform these former warehouses into "aware-houses" — spaces that embody awareness of both their historically layered past and the future programs envisioned for them. Drawing inspiration from the artistic practices showcased during the Biennales, the adaptive reuse of these structures seeks to weave together the narratives of their entangled history with innovative uses for the surrounding land- and waterscapes. Through this transformation, the project will honor the Arsenale's heritage while proposing a dynamic vision for its future.





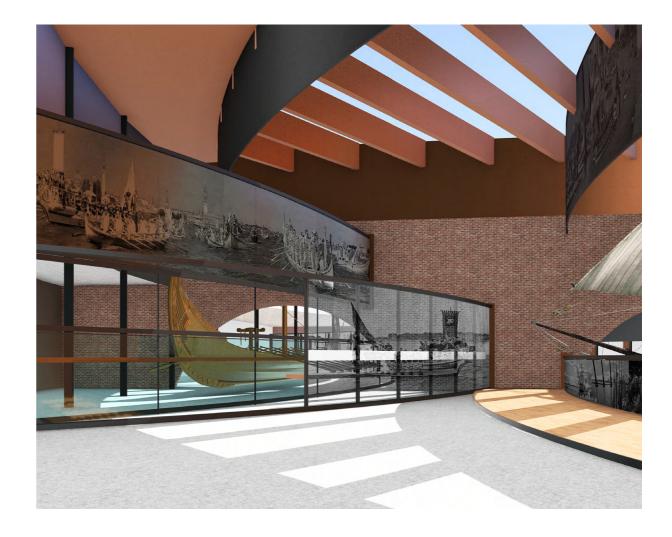


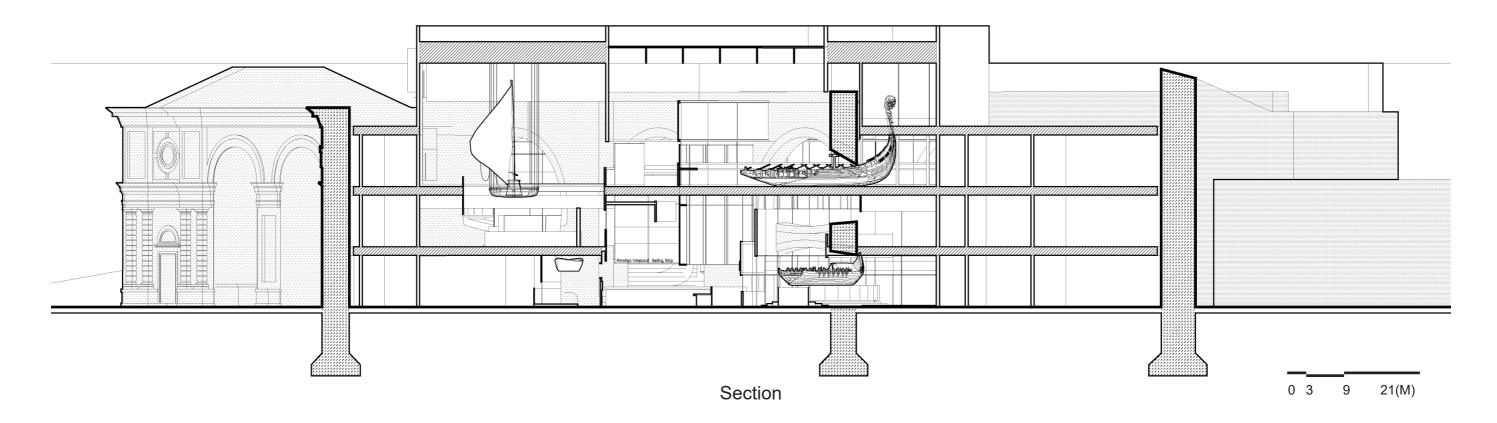
The Arsenale was the largest production center in Venice during the pre-industrial era, employing up to 2,000 workers per day during its peak periods. This vast complex of construction sites was dedicated to building the Serenissima fleets, serving as a powerful symbol of Venice's economic, political, and military dominance. Since 1980, the Arsenale has been repurposed as a primary exhibition venue for La Biennale, first hosting the 1st International Architecture Exhibition.

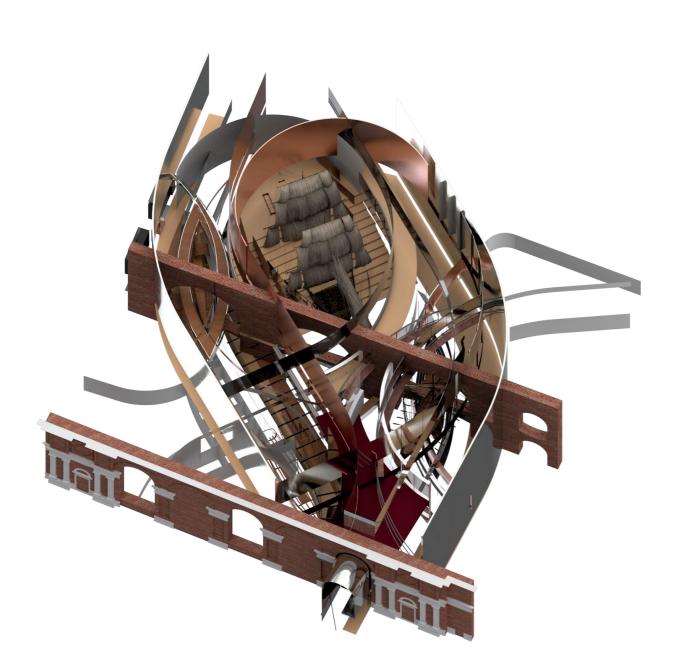


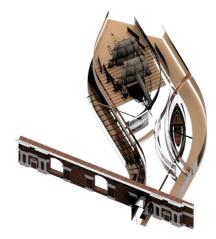












The Entrance



The Development of Sailboat

The Collaboration between Remained Walls and New Ones

The new wall flows intentionally intersect and interact with the building's remaining walls, creating moments of conflict, interweaving, and collaboration. Some walls pass directly through the gaps in the old walls, others are blocked and cut off, while some shift direction to adhere to the surfaces of the old walls, simultaneously acting as connecting structures. This interplay forms intricate and multifaceted connections between the new and the old.

As a result, the design emphasizes the articulation of these conflict points, sculpting them into key moments within the exhibition spaces. By reinforcing this collaborative relationship, the design generates unique and dynamic exhibition spaces that seem to naturally grow out of their context. These spaces harmonize with the exhibits, guiding visitors through a gradually unfolding and immersive experience.



The Long-distance Sailing Ship



The Doge's Boat



The Museum's Lobby



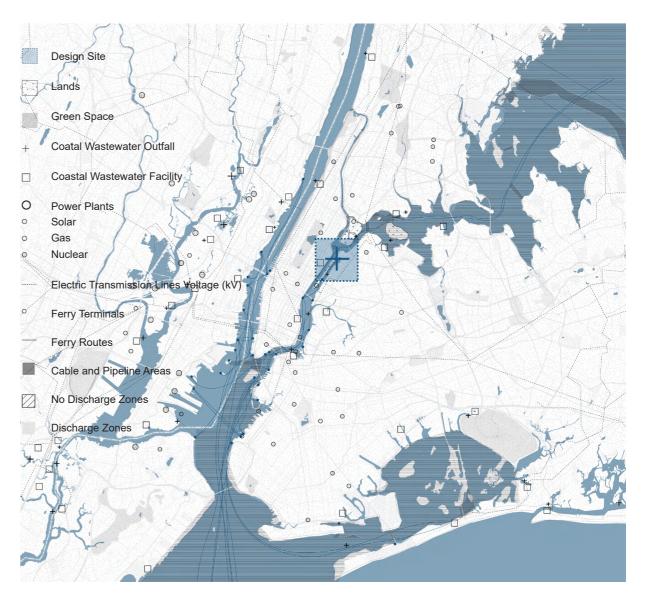
Nowaday's Doge's Boat



Floating Purifier - A Collaborative Ecosystem

Individual Work, Summer 2024, Columbia University Advanced Studio Instructor: Laura Gonzalez Fierro

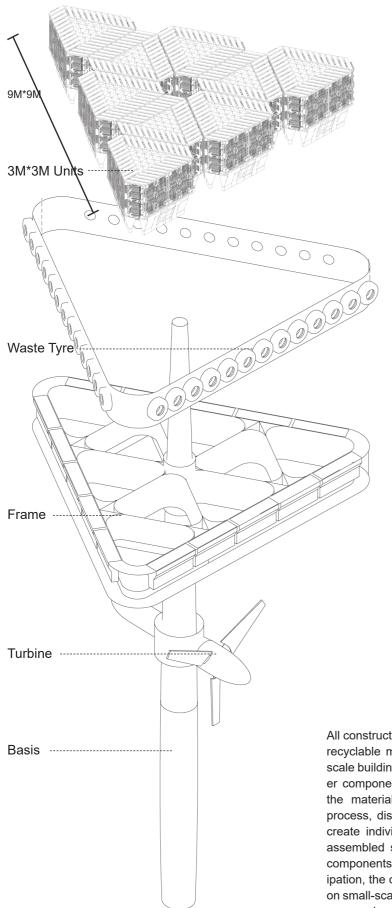
We aim to use simplified design to encourage the community to collect and utilize various types of recyclable waste from daily life as materials to create tidal energy devices. These devices will purify the water, extend green public spaces along the riverbanks, optimize energy distribution, connect aquatic and underwater life to form a new biosphere, and enhance the ecosystem's ability to purify and regulate itself, promoting biodiversity. The devices are versatile and can proliferate along the East River, with the potential to achieve sustainable power supply and ecological balance through broader community participation in the future.

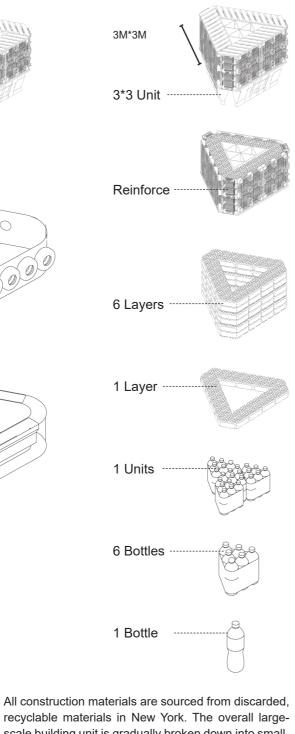


Analysis of New York's urban environment elements

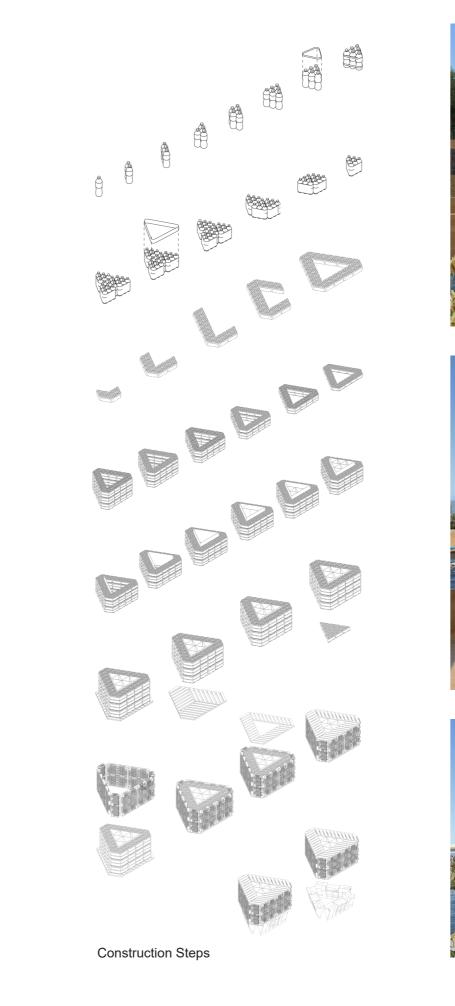
and natural gas. Pollution from industrial wastewater and combined sewer overflows has made the once-swimmable waters increasingly unusable. The relationship between people and the water has been disrupted.

New York needs further development of clean energy, as the power plants near our site still rely on oil





recyclable materials in New York. The overall largescale building unit is gradually broken down into smaller components, eventually approaching the scale of the materials themselves. During the construction process, discarded plastic bottles are first utilized to create individual units, which are then layered and assembled step by step to form larger architectural components. To better incorporate community participation, the design process at the initial stage focuses on small-scale construction modules. The construction process is simplified to make it more accessible and understandable for ordinary residents.

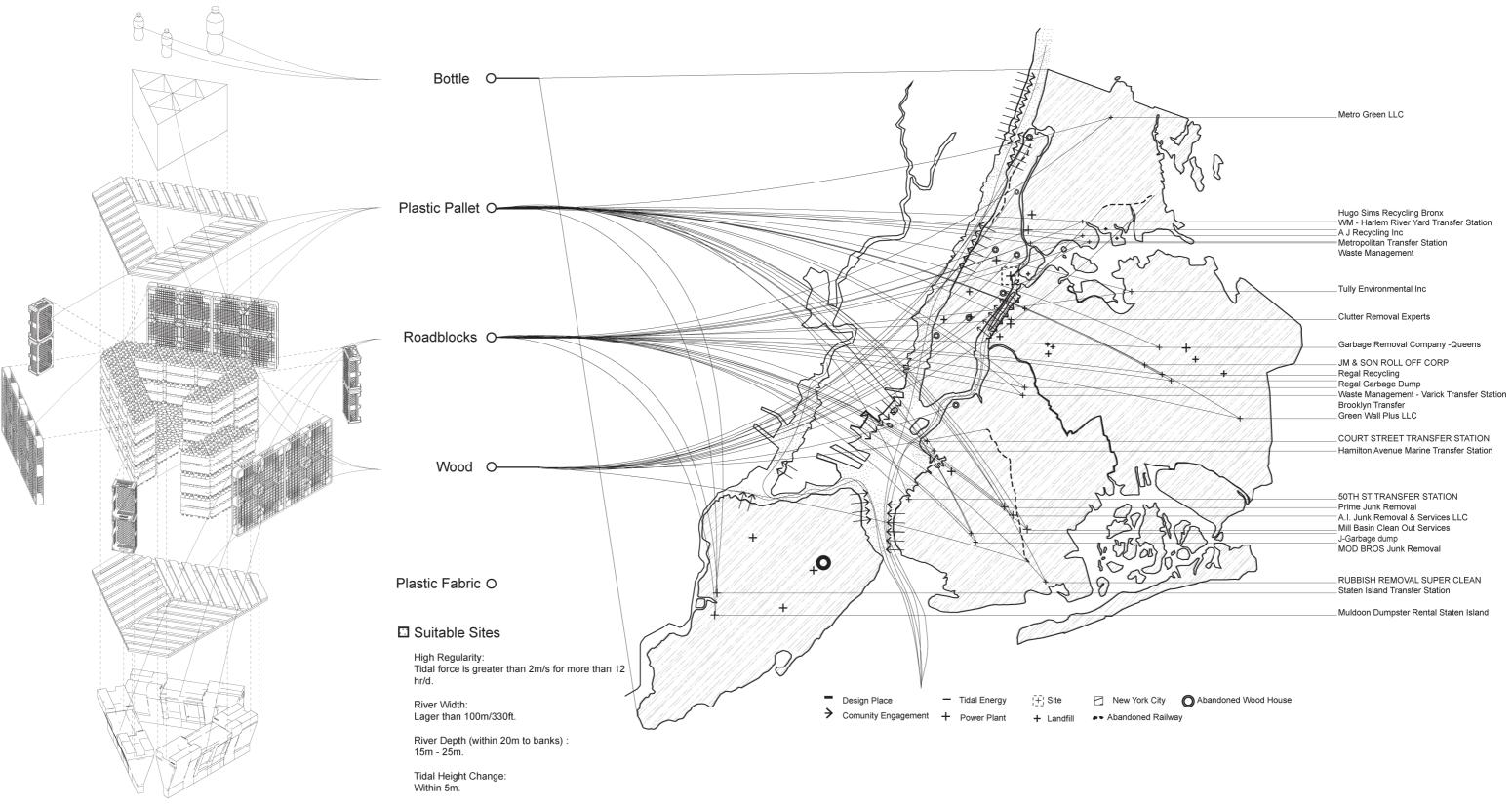








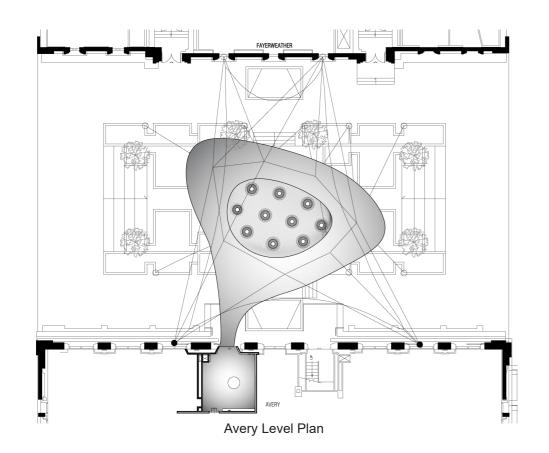


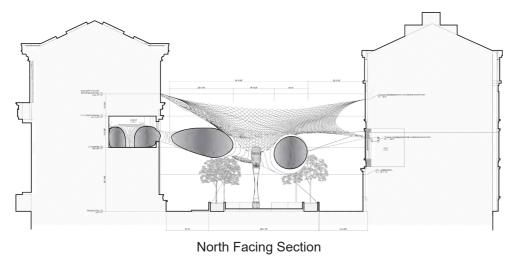


"Cloud" - The Outside Inflatable Pavilion Project

Group Work, Programming and Graphics Team, Fall 2024 Instructors: Laurie Hawkinson, Galia Solomonoff

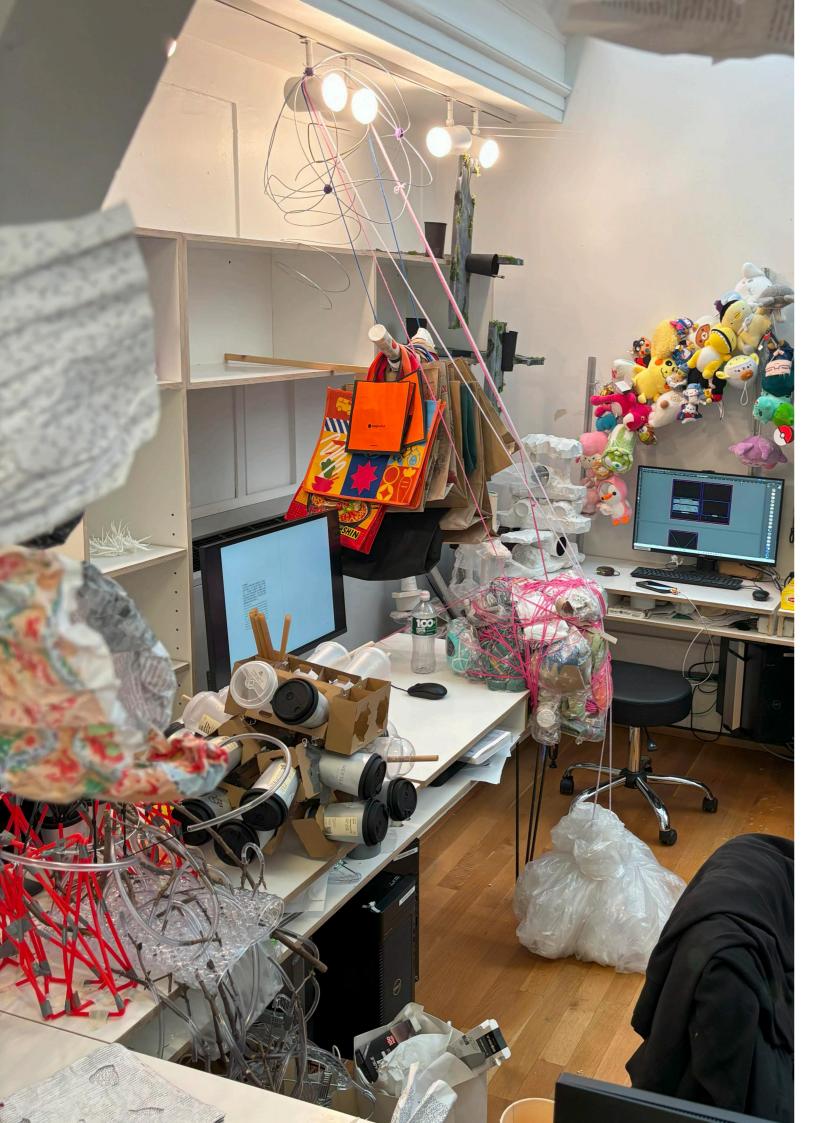
Cloud envisions a participatory experience that emphasizes the interconnectedness of peoples' actions in shared spaces. Stretched above the inflatable is a large net that positions seating within, which descends into the Plaza through the center, creating a device for people to modify and curate the space. Measuring 20 meters (66 feet) wide, and suspended by 25 cables, this floating inflatable reframes the relationship between Avery Hall and Avery Plaza, questioning notions of connectivity between interior and exterior spaces. Powered by four electric blowers, the metallic form expands from the 400-level window and classroom, inviting visitors inside its contemplative interior and challenging boundaries of conditioned space.

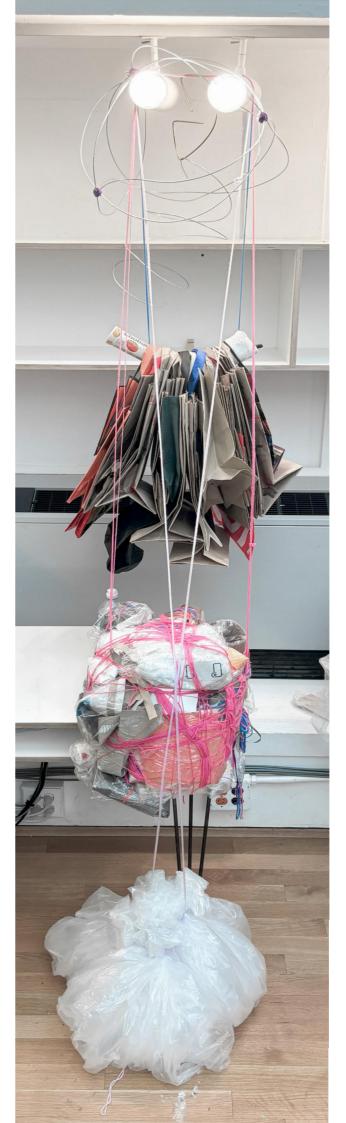












Matters of Identity

- Makergragh 2025

Individual Work, Architecture Studio VI, Spring 2025

Instructors: Ada Tolla, Giuseppe Lignano

Using the abstract translation of architectural elements—such as construction, structure, and form-to explore expressions of identity on an individual level. The process begins with collecting various materials from daily life and then establishing different structural organizations based on the properties of these materials to create objects. The four objects correspond to four distinct stages of life: starting from infancy, to the gradual exploration of the world, facing various challenges, and ultimately the realization of one's life dreams. Through the integration of materials, construction, humanistic reflection, and environmental context, the project becomes a personal exploration of identity, as well as a reflection on the past and the future.

Purity:

The initial stage of life is pure. By using soft, translucent plastic bags filled with air and tied to trap the air inside, a light, gentle, and pristine bud-like form is created—symbolizing potential waiting to bloom. Structurally, a single suspension point allows the air-filled bags to hang freely, swaying naturally in the air.

Trash Bags – 30 Gallon, 8 Micron (Equivalent), 30" x 37" Hand Knitting & Crochet Yarn – Purple, 100g (3.5oz)

*8 *1

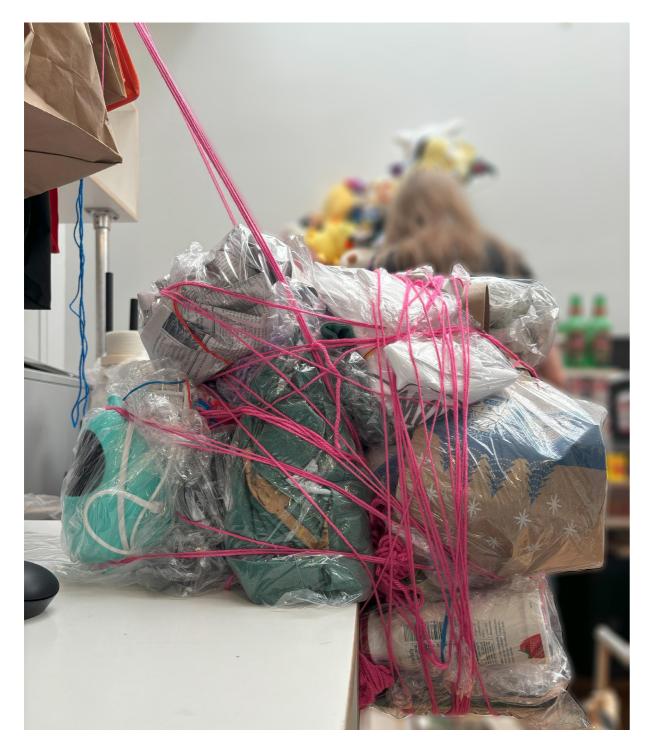




Vertical Plan



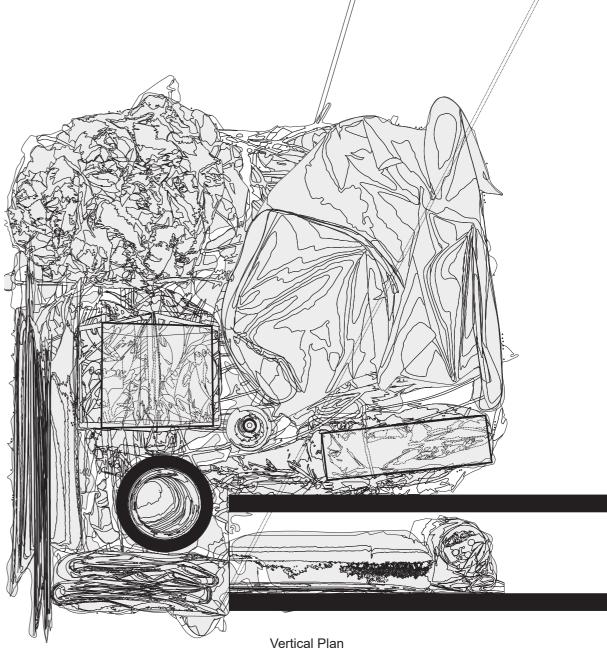




Fertility:

In the stage of exploring the world, we continuously observe and reflect on our surroundings. Through the transformation of different memories, we begin to form our own unique worldview. Transparent plas-tic bags are used as filters—each containing various objects. When viewed through the plastic, these objects appear blurred and distorted, symbolizing the fragmented and shifting nature of memory. By tying these memories together, we create interconnections that lead to deeper and more nuanced ways of thinking.

Rubber Bands	*50
Plastic Bag	*30
Pillowcase, Delivery Box, Kraft Paper, Beanie, Wheel, Nail, Plastic Cup	*1
Earphones, Paper, Plier, Balloon, Cardboard, Wadded-up Paper	*1
Metal Chain, Award Certificate, Pine Needle, Bottle	*1















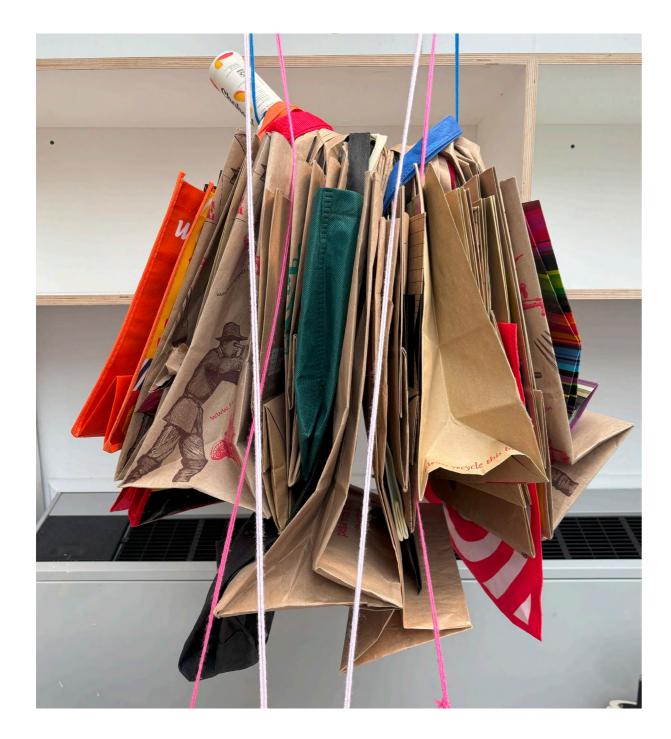
Item List

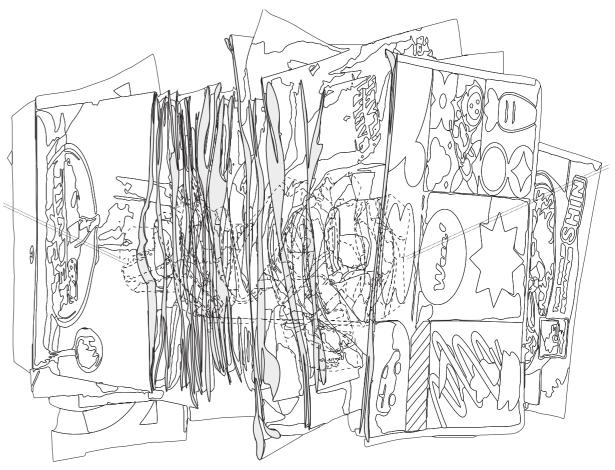


Multiplicity:

Different shopping bags from daily life are suspended and unfolded, arranged in an orderly horizontal sequence, each one leaning on the next. This composition reflects how, in life, we must adopt different strategies and approaches to navigate its various parts and take on different roles. In each role, we present a different version of ourselves. Through constant interaction and compromise with the world, we shape our identity—but every version remains a true part of who we are.

H Mark bag	*5
Trader Joe's bag	*4
Target bag	*3
Nike bag, Sunglass Hut bag, Addidas bag, T.J.Maxx bag, Weee bag, Whole Foods bag	*1
Marton Williams bag, Walmart bag, Costco bag, Patagonia bag, Arc'teryx bag	*1
MoMA (Museum of Modern Art) bag, Lululemon bag, The North Face bag	*1





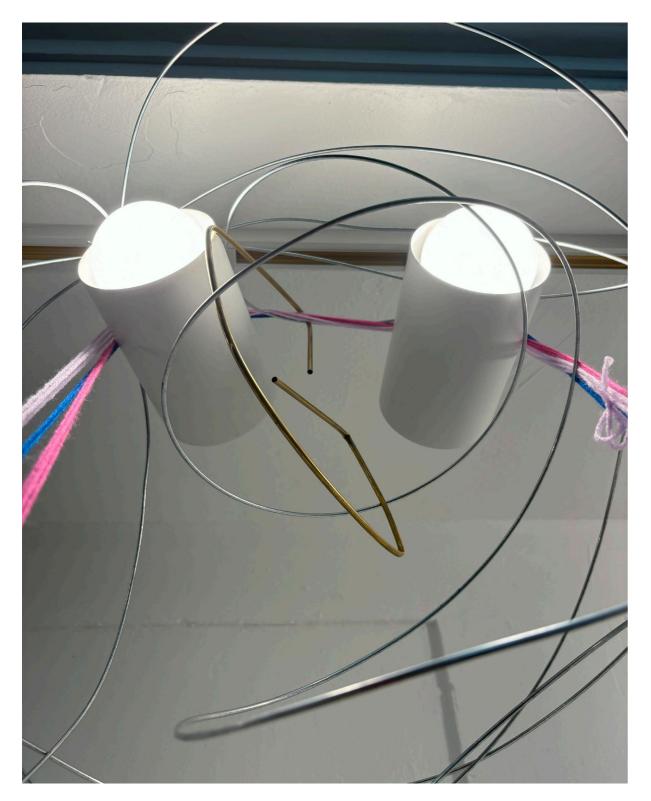
Horizontal Plan









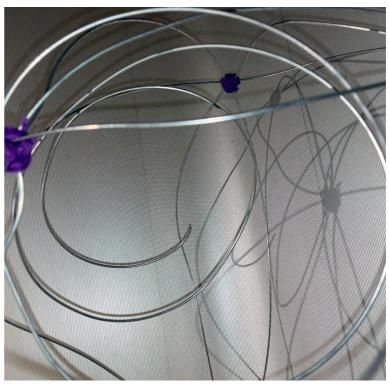


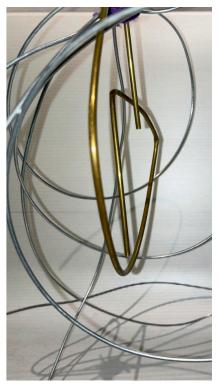
Luminosity:

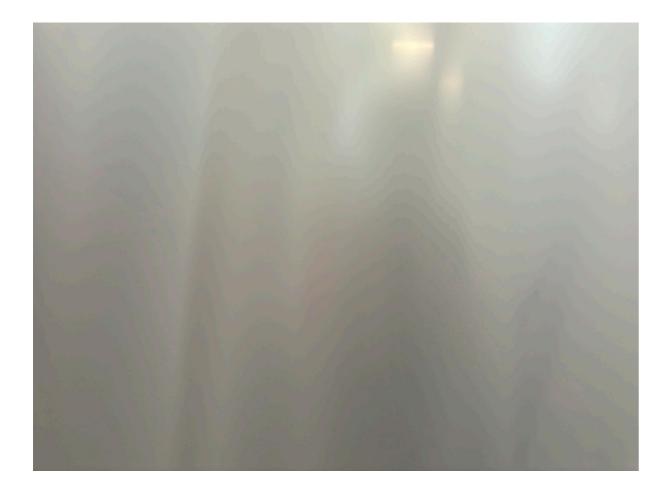
The final stage represents the realization of dreams—the highlight of life. By using reflective metal materials in combination with lighting, beams of light are created from different angles and scattered into various corners. This interplay of light symbolizes the culmination of one's journey, serving as the closing chapter of life's story.

Iron wire (dia. 5mm)	*2m
Iron wire (dia. 8mm)	*0.5m
Copper wire (dia. 10mm)	*0.3m

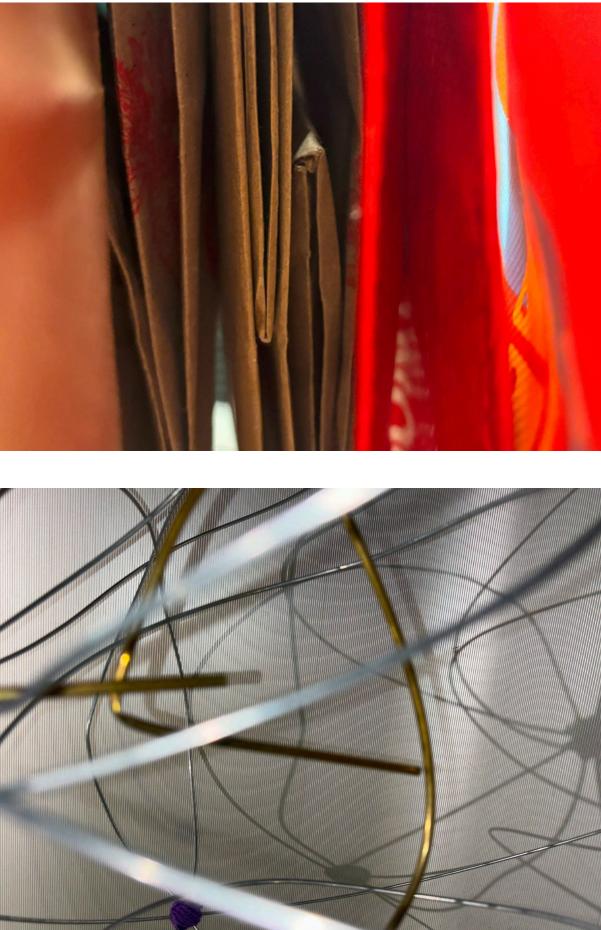


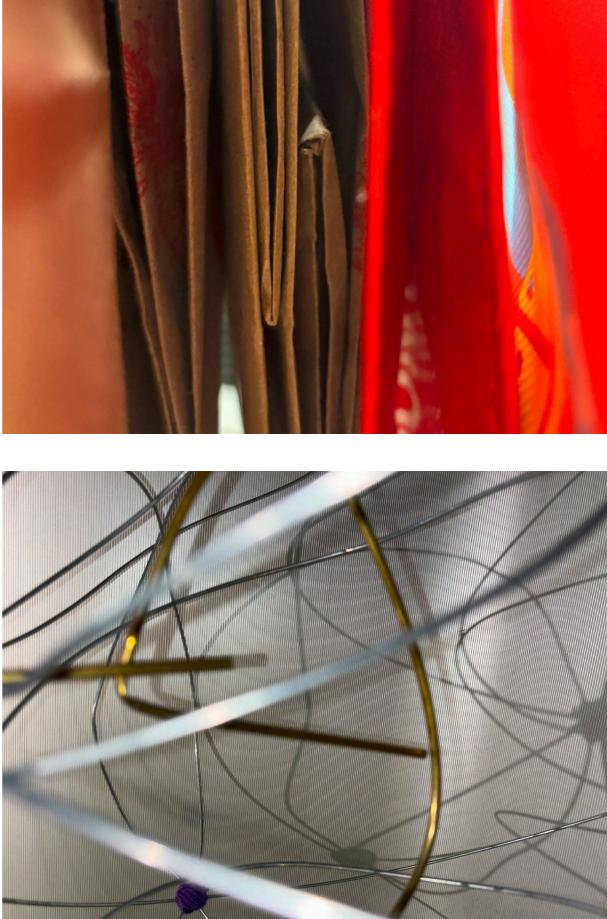














Foldable Furniture Partition

- 1:1 Crafting and Fabrication

Group Work, Design and Construction, Spring 2025

Instructors: Zachary Mulitauaopele

Designed for limited living spaces, this multifunctional foldable furniture partition integrates a desk, folding chair, bookshelf, and clothing rack. When unfolded, it serves both practical functions and spatial division, while remaining easy to fold and minimizing storage footprint. Hinges are used as the primary structural connectors, guiding both the construction and the formal design.



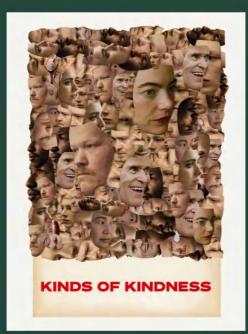




causing naymonu to me nobert,

stating Robert is "free now". Robert's life then falls apart. A prized smashed John McEnroe tennis racquet, given by Raymond as a gift, is taken from his house. In his despondence, Robert confesses to Sarah that Raymond paid doctors to supply abortifacients with the intention of unknowingly posing as miscarriages and ovarian issues; Sarah abandons him, quitting her job and disappearing. Desperate, Robert grovels to Raymond for another chance but is aggressively rebuffed. While trying to regain Raymond's respect, Robert meets Rita, a woman whose life Robert quickly discovers is also being controlled by Raymond. After Rita was also tasked with crashing into and killing R.M.F., she ends up in the hospital, with R.M.F. in critical condition. In a last-ditch effort, Robert kidnaps R.M.F., dumping him in the hospital valet drop-off, and

Kinds of kindness Emma Stone



Kinds of Kindness is a 2024 black comedy-drama anthology film directed by Yorgos Lanthimos from a screenplay he co-wrote with Efthimis Filippou. It stars Emma Stone, Jesse Plemons, Willem Dafoe, Margaret Qualley, Hong Chau, Joe Alwyn, Mamoudou Athie, and Hunter Schafer.

Kinds of Kindness had its world premiere at the 77th Cannes Film Festival on May 17, 2024, where Plemons won the Best Actor award. It was released theatrically in the United States by Searchlight Pictures on June 21, 2024, and in Ireland and the United Kingdom on June 28, 2024. It received generally positive reviews from critics and grossed \$16 million worldwide.

Coding for Special Practices - Film Webpage Design

Individual Work, Visual Studies & Computation, Fall 2024 Instructor: Celeste Layne Design an introductory promotional webpage themed around films using programming language. Implement looping animation effects that scroll through movie content introductions, while keeping the main theme and central image fixed in the center of the page. Ensure that the theme and film content introductions remain synchronized and interconnected during reading.

Police officer Daniel is mourning the disappearance of his wife Liz, a marine biologist who went missing at sea, when he receives news that she has been rescued in a helicopter piloted by R.M.F. Liz miraculously returns unharmed to Daniel, but many things about her are strange; her behavior and interests seem to be the opposite of how she was before, their pet cat acting aggressive towards her, and her feet no longer fit in her shoes, leading Daniel to become suspicious of her. Amid his paranoia about Liz, she tells Daniel she is pregnant. He orders her to leave and threatens arrest if she refuses. Daniel's paranoia escalates during a traffic stop, where he acts erratically, shoots a passenger in the hand and licks the wound. As a result, he is suspended from the police force and prescribed antipsychotics. Liz recounts to her father a