

# PORTFOLIO OF STUDIO WORK



SARAH BRUCE-EISEN  
COLUMBIA GSAPP  
M. ARCH CANDIDATE

# Fade to Black

“Fade to Black” delves into the complex tapestry of the transatlantic slave trade, the erasure of the ethnic and cultural identities of African slaves, and the emergence of Black American identity through the lens of provisional gardens. These gardens, born of resilience and resistance, serve as both material and emblematic spaces where memory is enshrined and narratives are cultivated. Reciprocally, these gardens cultivate us in return, shaping identity, community, and remembrance. Embedded within this exploration is my own personal archive, through which my familial origin in Mississippi mirrors the larger story of Black Americans reclaiming land and affirming identity. This project, in its conclusive arc, presents a new archive of memories; fabulations inspired by family photographs and oral histories.

RESEARCH & ARCHIVAL  
PROJECT  
ADV VI SPRING 24  
CRITICS PAULO TAVARES &  
MAX GOLDNER

*“...but most importantly, for our ancestors, they just allow us the opportunity to say we didn’t forget. Because forgetting is the true death.”*





*"In 1949, my grandfather Ray was 13 years old. He worked as a sharecropper picking cotton on a small scale plantation run by Bill Moss, on the property he owns today. In his private family garden, he and his brother would pick okra for their mom to cook."*



*"...A few years later he met my grandmother Dixie. They went to Shady Oaks High School, and senior year is when they got together. She was prom queen that year and he felt like the luckiest guy in the school."*



*"...In their early 20's my grandparents fled Mississippi and settled in Oakland, CA. There they raised my mom and her sisters as Catholic. My mom tells me stories of her being the problem child, always the loudest and roughest as she was the youngest and smallest."*



*"...On the morning of senior portrait day, my mom let my grandmother do her hair. She said she was annoyed and ready to be done with school so she could move to Los Angeles for college. During this time period in the late 70's the Black Panther Movement was flourishing in Oakland. My mom secretly supported the Panthers. My grandparents never spoke about them at all in the home."*



*"...After my mom and her sisters graduated high school and left home to begin their own lives, my grandparents left California and returned to Mississippi. They purchased the former Moss property where my grandfather used to sharecrop when he was 13 in an act of reclamation. They transformed this property, inverting its past history of exploitation and profit into a space of cultivation and sharing. My grandmother created a garden in the backyard where she grew enough greens to be shared with the neighbors."*



*"...I was 4 years old when my grandmother passed away, so I don't remember her really. But my cousin Steve remembers her pretty well. He remembers spending summers on the property, playing outside all day and fishing in the pond in the backyard."*



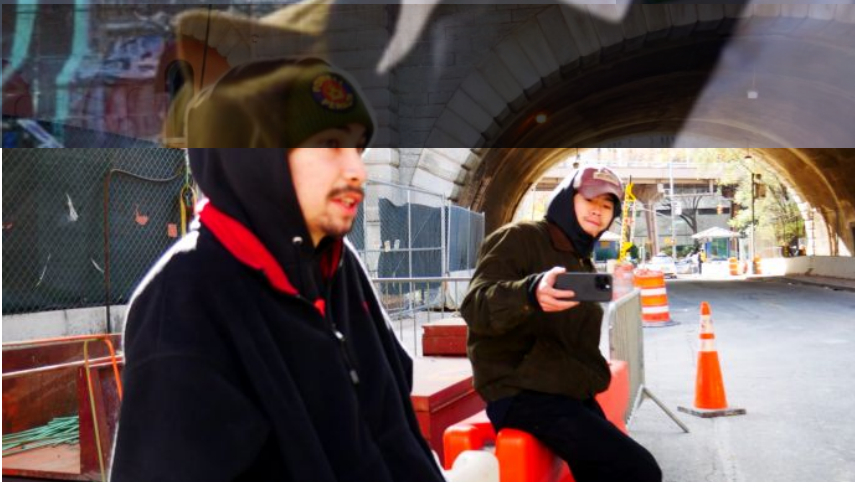
# Resolution of Contradictions: Finding Balance in Street Skating

*“Opposites are often mediated by a third term...In the cosmological schema, Earth mediates between the forces of the upper and under worlds...The idea of center reconciles the bipolar tendencies of the cardinal directions.” - Yi-Fu Tuan, TOPOPHILIA*

After a thorough reading of TOPOPHILIA by Yi-Fu Tuan, the subject matter recalled the conceptual roots of my Core III Housing Project which was based in understanding street skating. Street skating is not just a hobby or trivial practice, rather, it is a lifestyle. This project sought to further understand the relationship between the built environment and skaters, people who utilize architecture in a very specific and inverse manner.

CONCEPTUAL PROJECT,  
ARCHIVE &  
DOCUMENTARY FILM  
NEW YORK, NY/LOS  
ANGELES, CA  
ADV V FALL 23  
CRITIC YUSSEF AGBO OLA

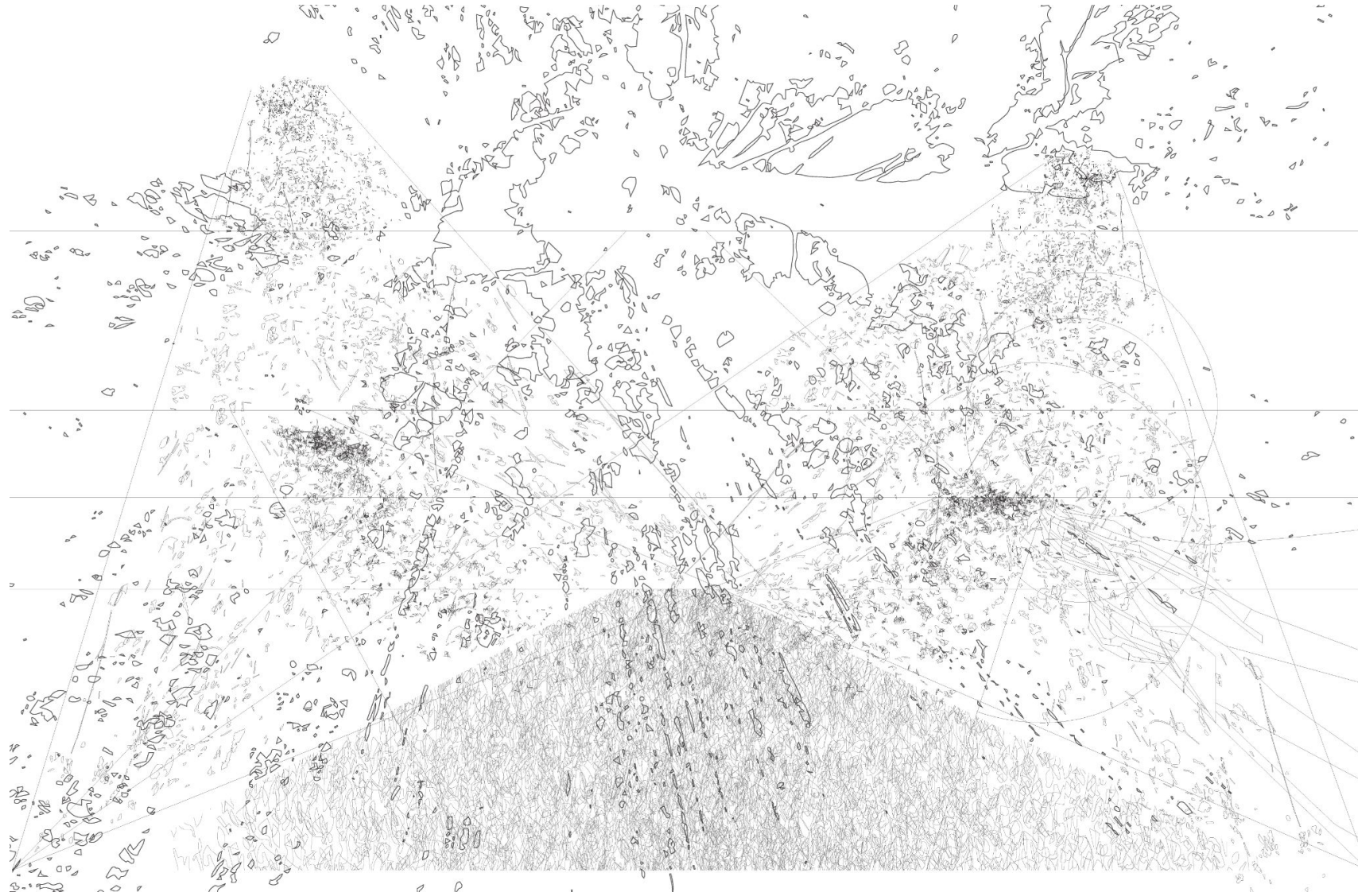




**DOCUMENTARY FILM LINK:**  
[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YrGkMfPmqrH524PKVXVTPzeSmde4RME2/view?usp=drive\\_link](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YrGkMfPmqrH524PKVXVTPzeSmde4RME2/view?usp=drive_link)

# Cultural Restoration: Combatting the System of Capitalism

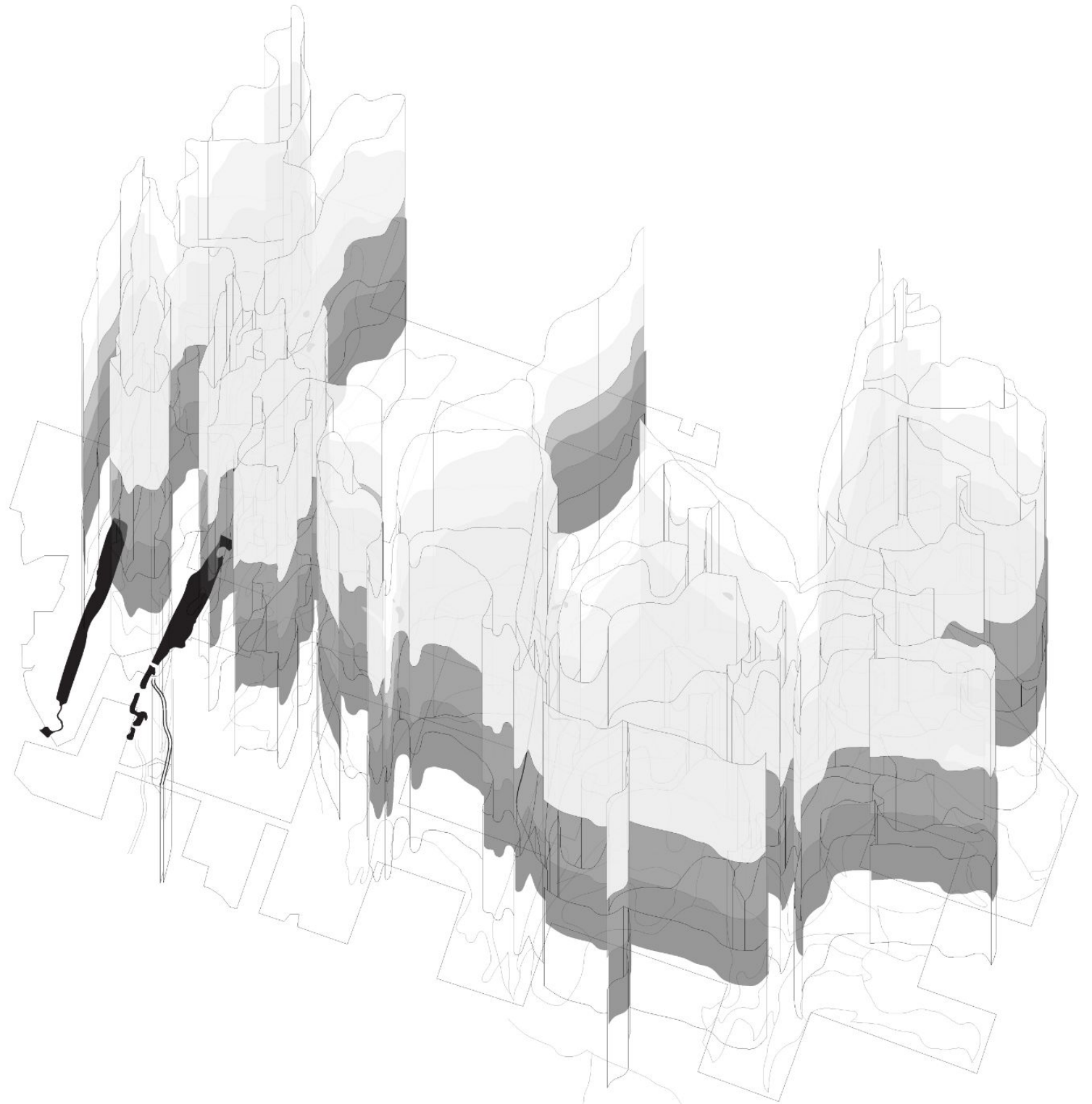
This project began with historical research, unpacking the cycle of capitalism as it affected the 11 hamlets displaced for the Ashokan Reservoir in the Hudson Valley. After discovering how the Indigenous Lenape people suffered from the same mechanism deployed in the 1600's and 1700's, this project responds to help restore community agricultural practices for a fissured and fractured dwindling population located in West Shokan, NY.



COMMUNITY PROJECT  
ASHOKAN RESERVOIR, NY  
ADV IV SPRING 23  
CRITIC ALESSANDRO  
ORSINI

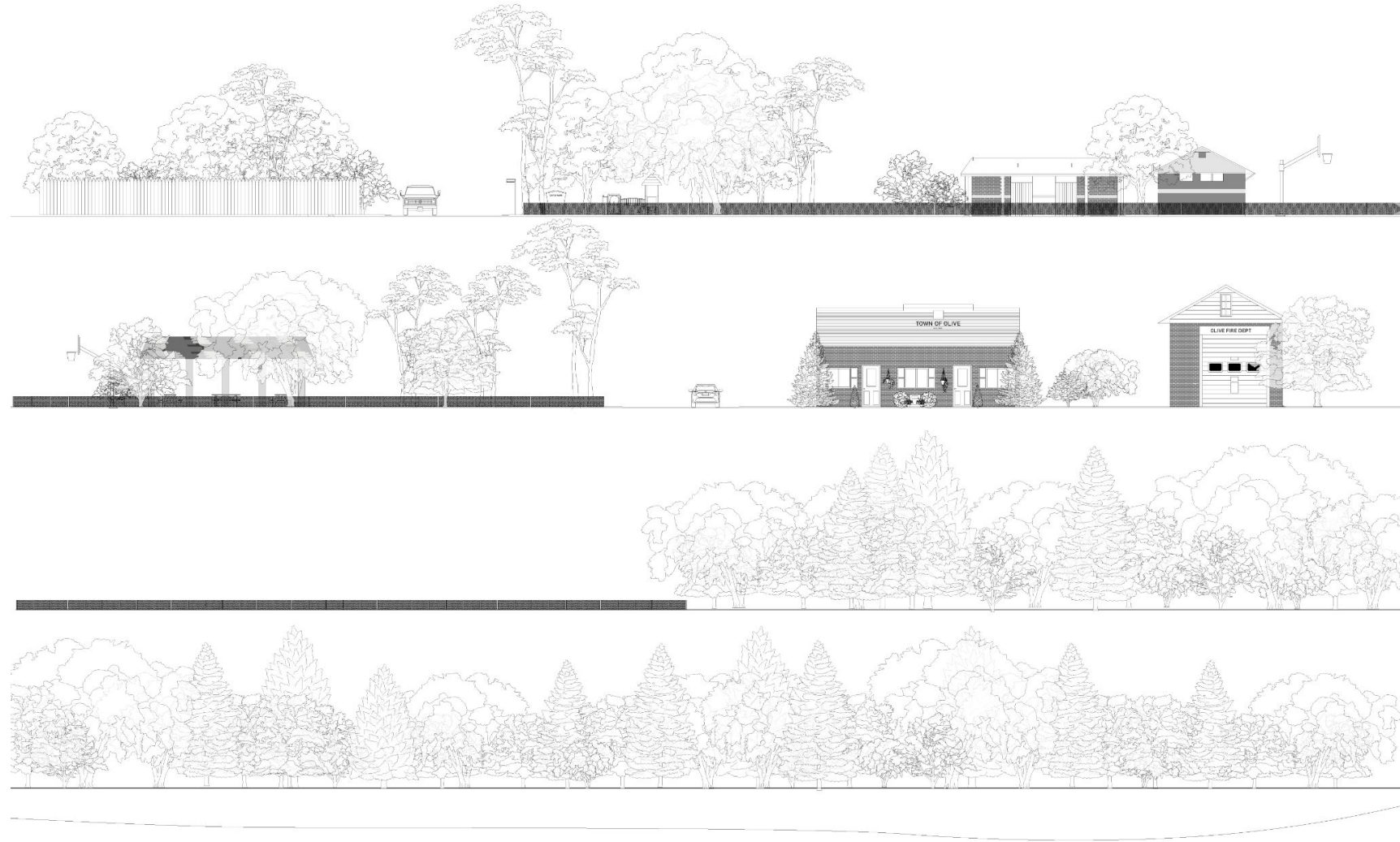
## Abstract Mapping: Trails of the Bluestone Wild Forest

After researching the remnants of the Lenape people in the area surrounding the Ashokan Reservoir, I discovered that most, if not all of the existing forest trails were established by the Indigenous. After they were forced off of the land by the Dutch and English, these trails were then appropriated for bluestone quarrying and distribution. Today they are federally protected and used for recreation.

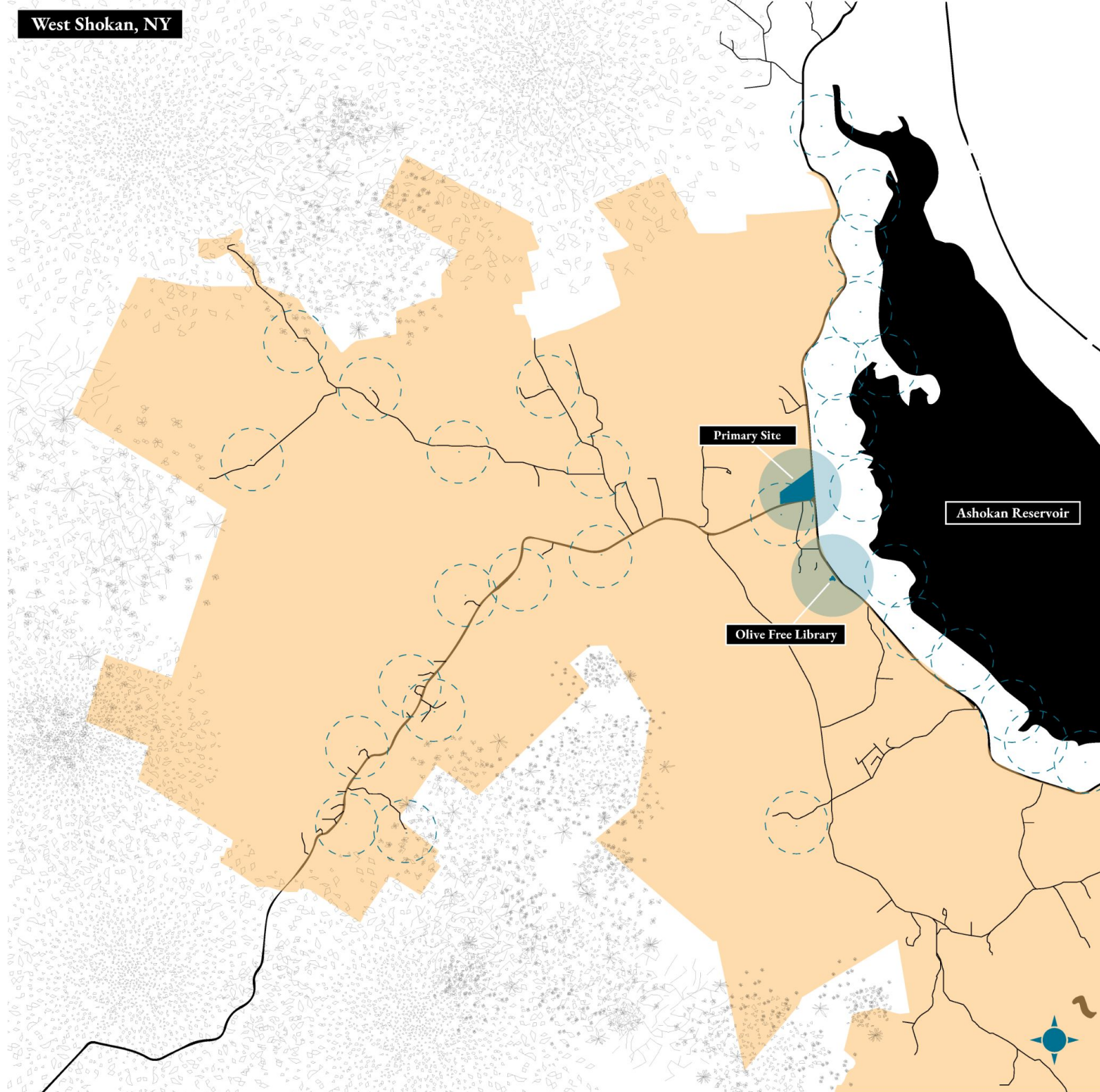


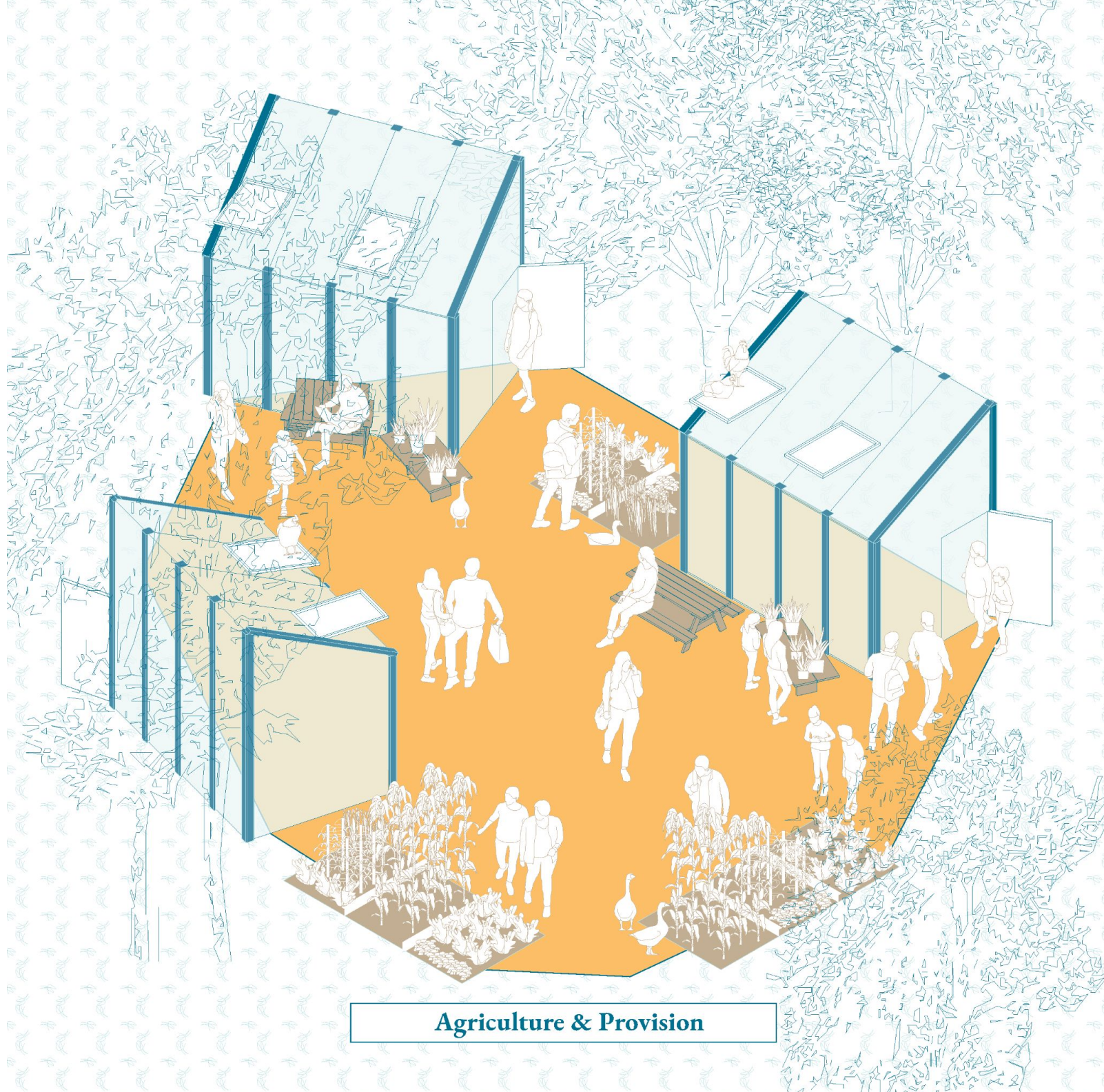
## Existing context: West Shokan, NY

West Shokan is a hamlet located along the perimeter of the Ashokan Reservoir. This community is one of the remaining hamlets that were originally displaced by the construction of the reservoir by the NY state government through Eminent Domain. Since the displacement, this community has continued to suffer from the government's encroaching power. This has resulted in the erasure of many community resources such as schools, hospitals, clinics, community centers and farmland.

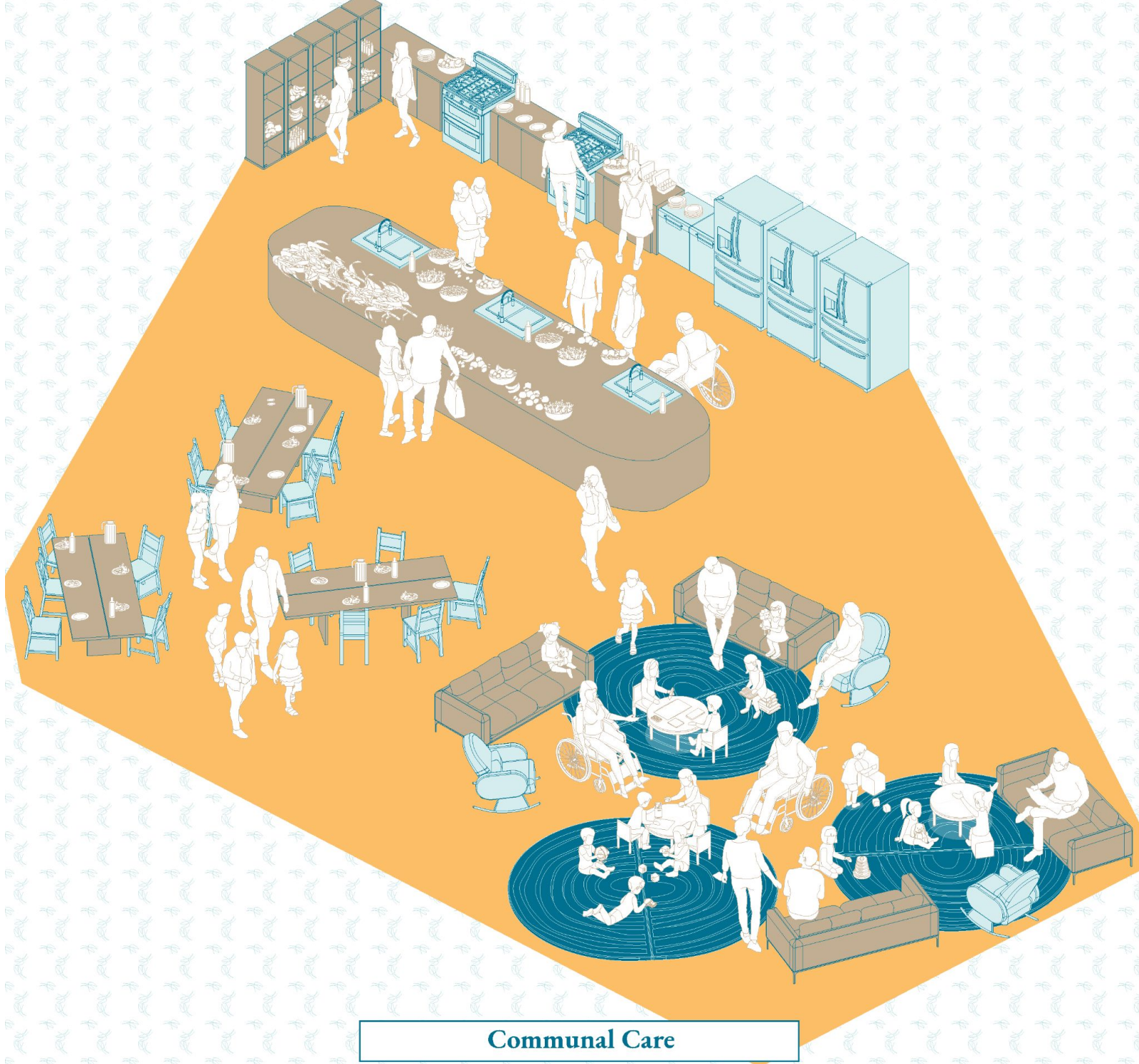


Narrative Map

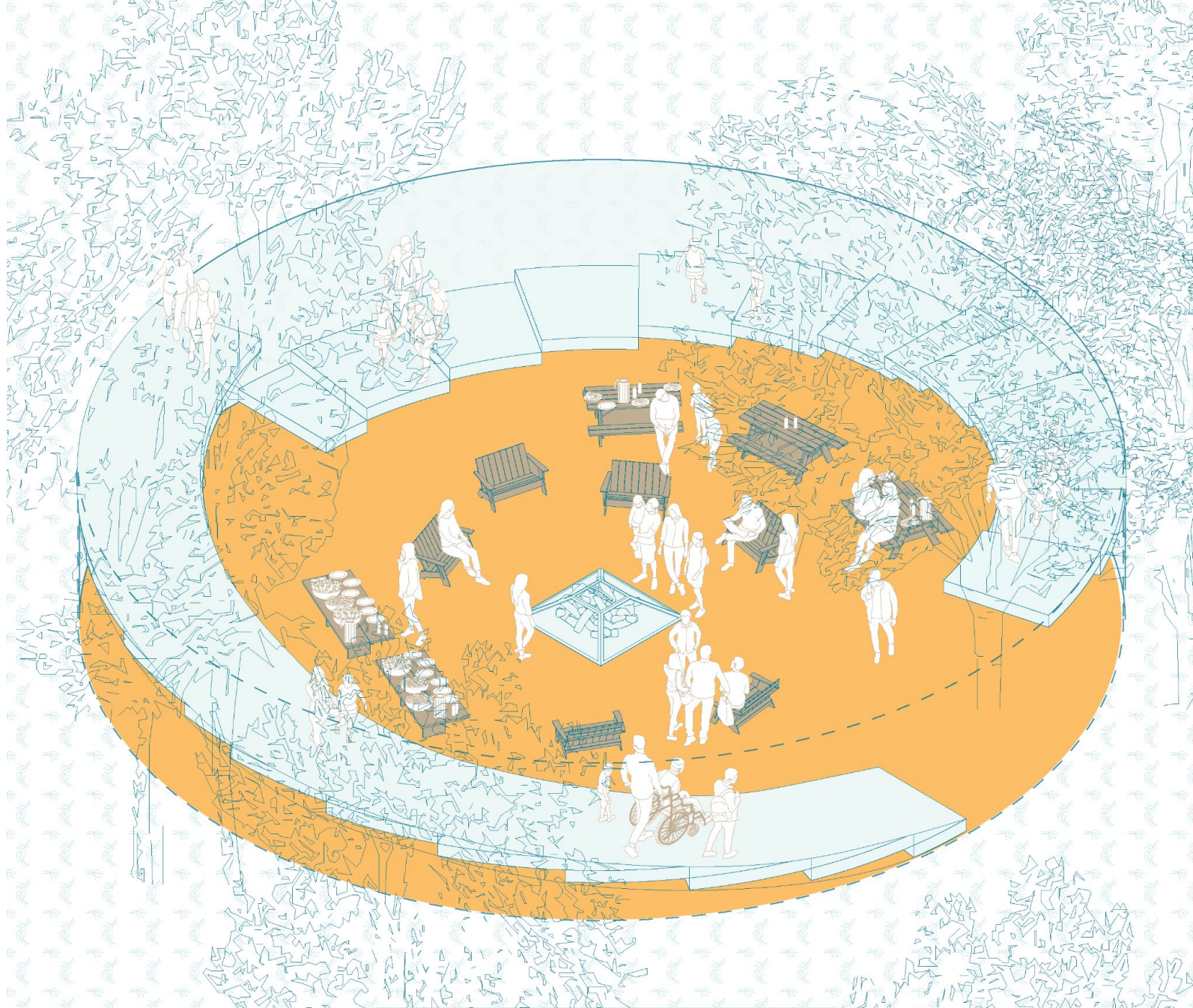




**Agriculture & Provision**



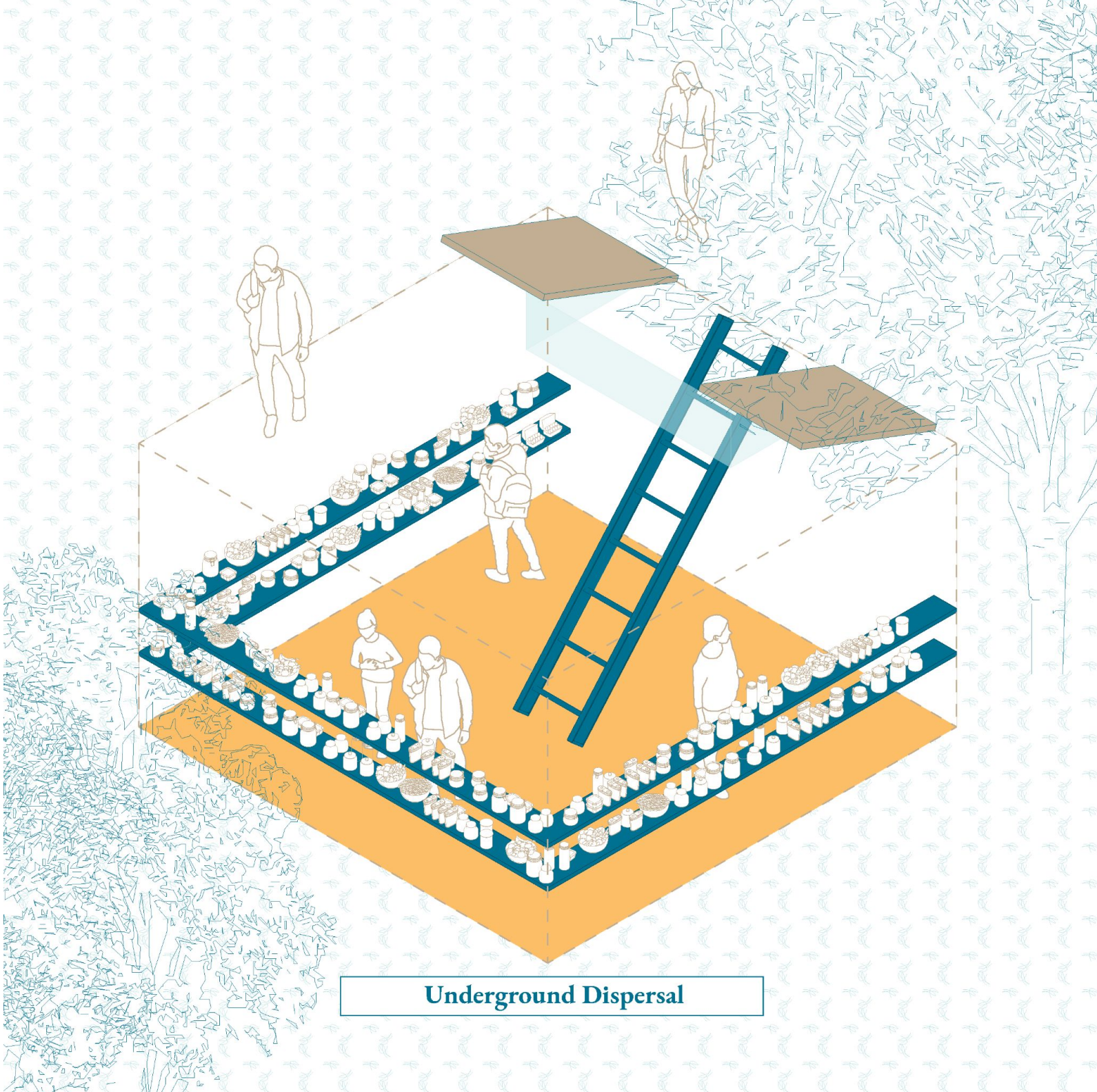




Unity



**Spirituality & Nature**

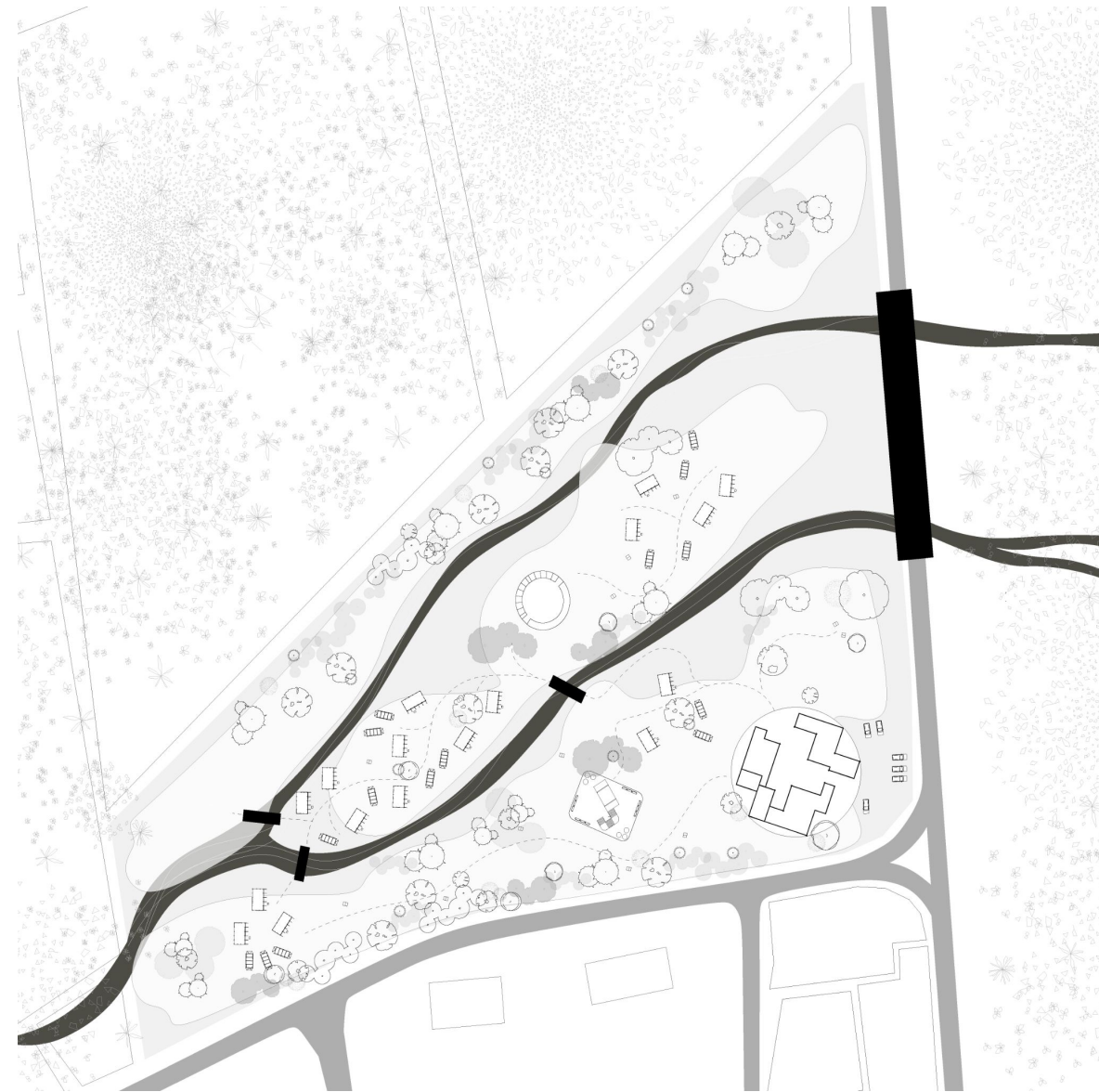


**Underground Dispersal**

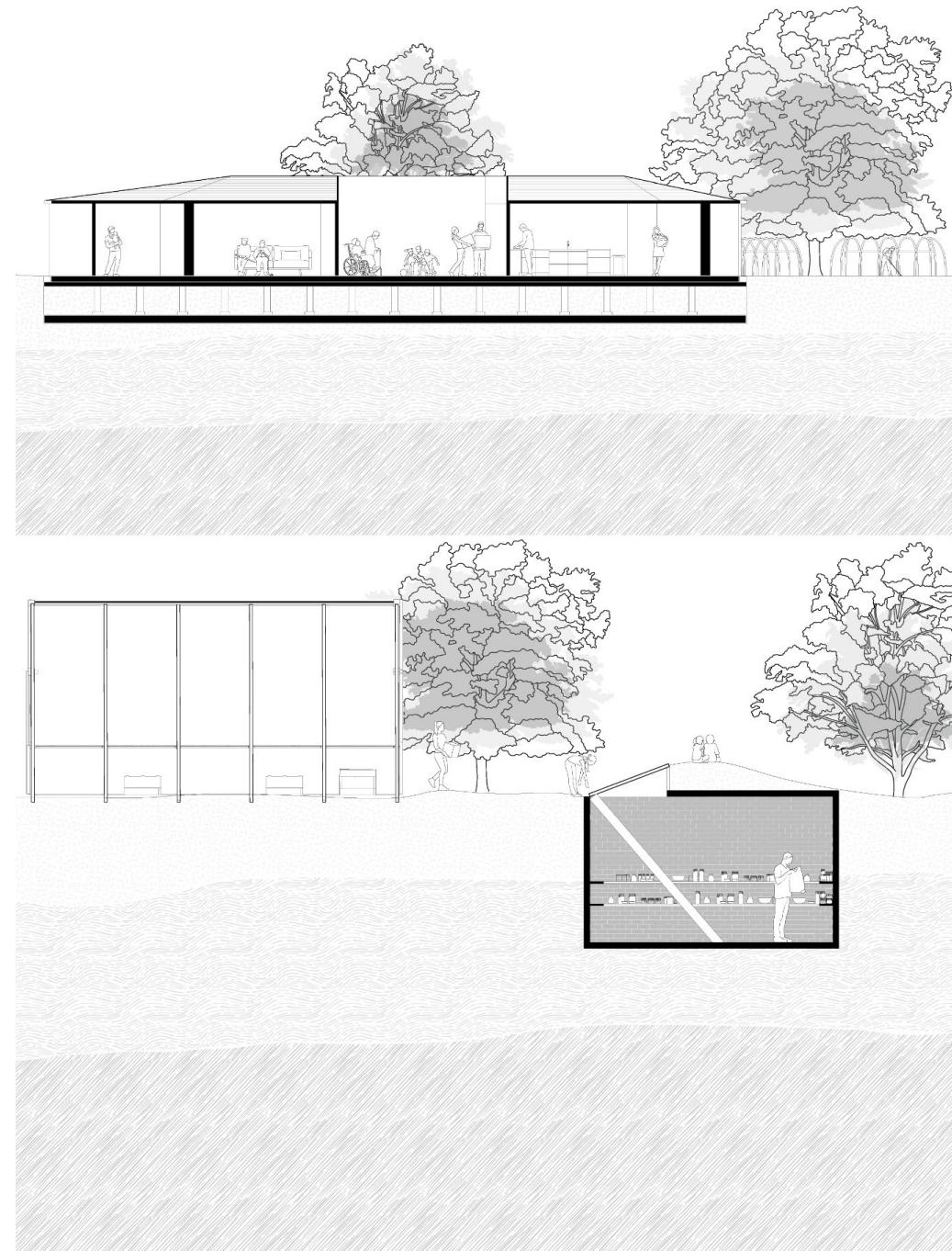


Narrative Collage

Site Plan



Layered Site Section



# The Misappropriation of Objects

or

*“Bring your own lampshade, because somewhere there’s a party”*

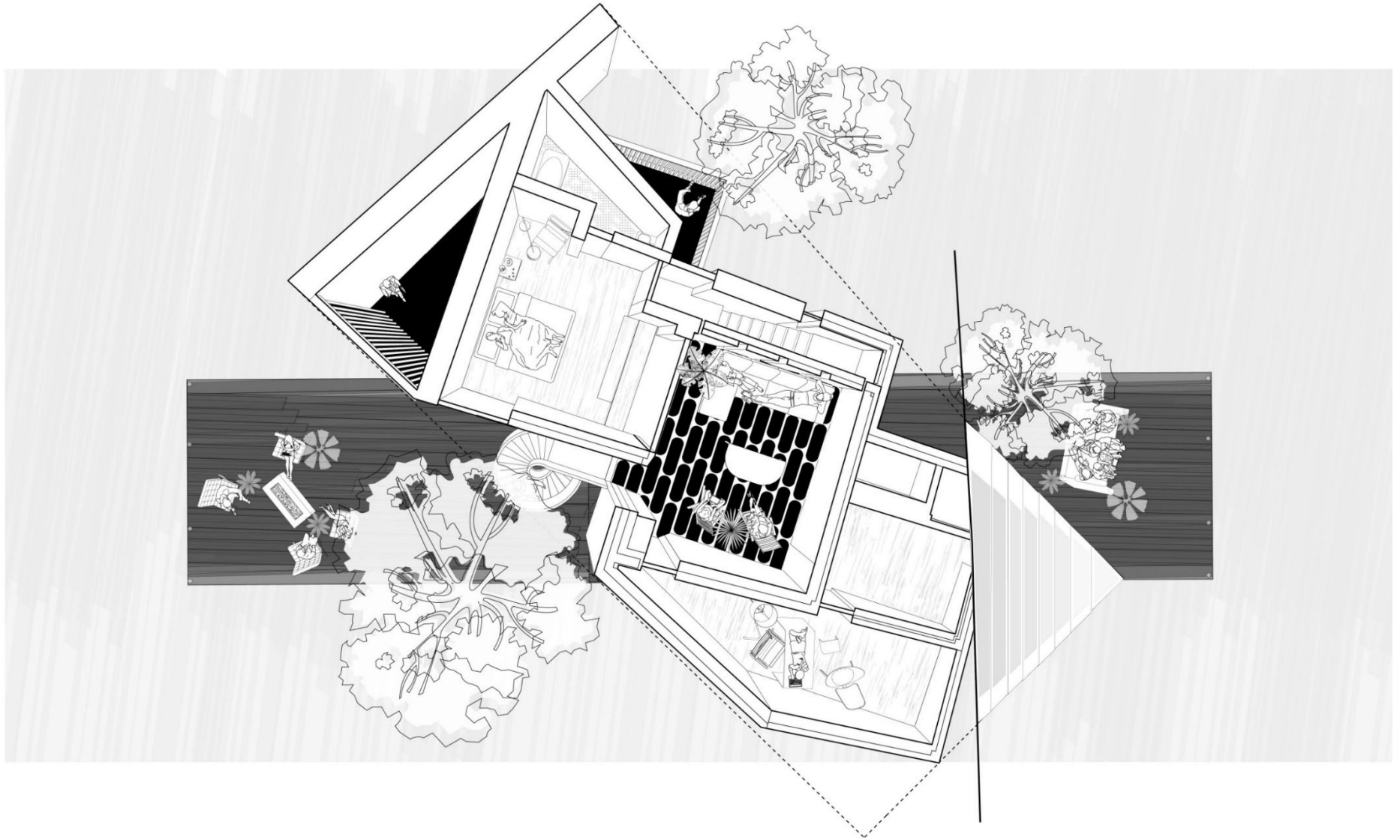
This project developed through the lens of inner city skating and skate culture. Skaters utilize the built environment in a very specific and unique manner, searching for opportunities subverting the intended use of architectural objects. Understanding this concept afforded the ability to scrutinize how non-skaters also use the built environment for unintended uses. These acts are inconspicuous and discreet, yet they are embodying a subtle form of social protest to a prescribed environment.

HOUSING PROJECT  
BRONX, NY  
CORE III FALL22  
CRITIC ESTEBAN DE  
BACKER





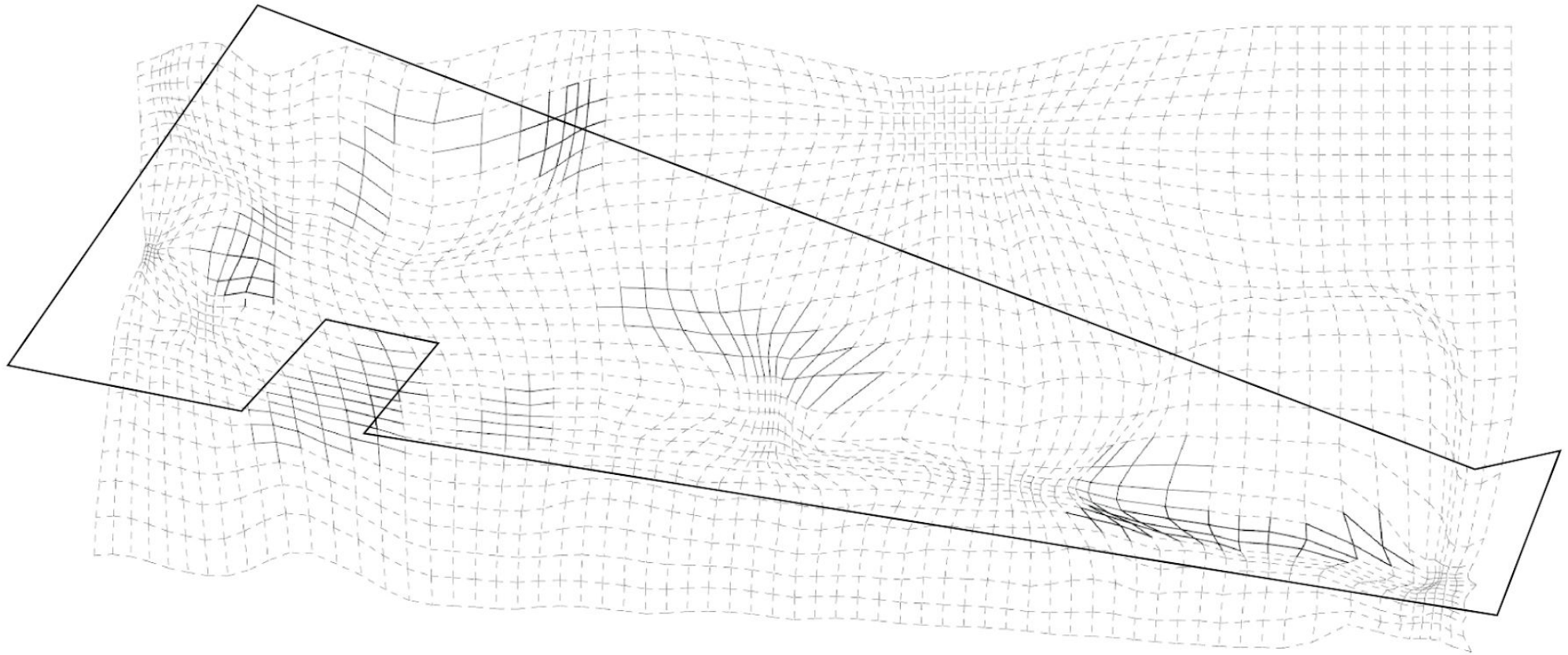
housing precedent : Slope House by Studio Eon



An analysis of a single-family home provided a framework to reimagine how the space could be used within the context of community dorm living. Private spaces and shared spaces are accessible and have a notion of interchangeability.



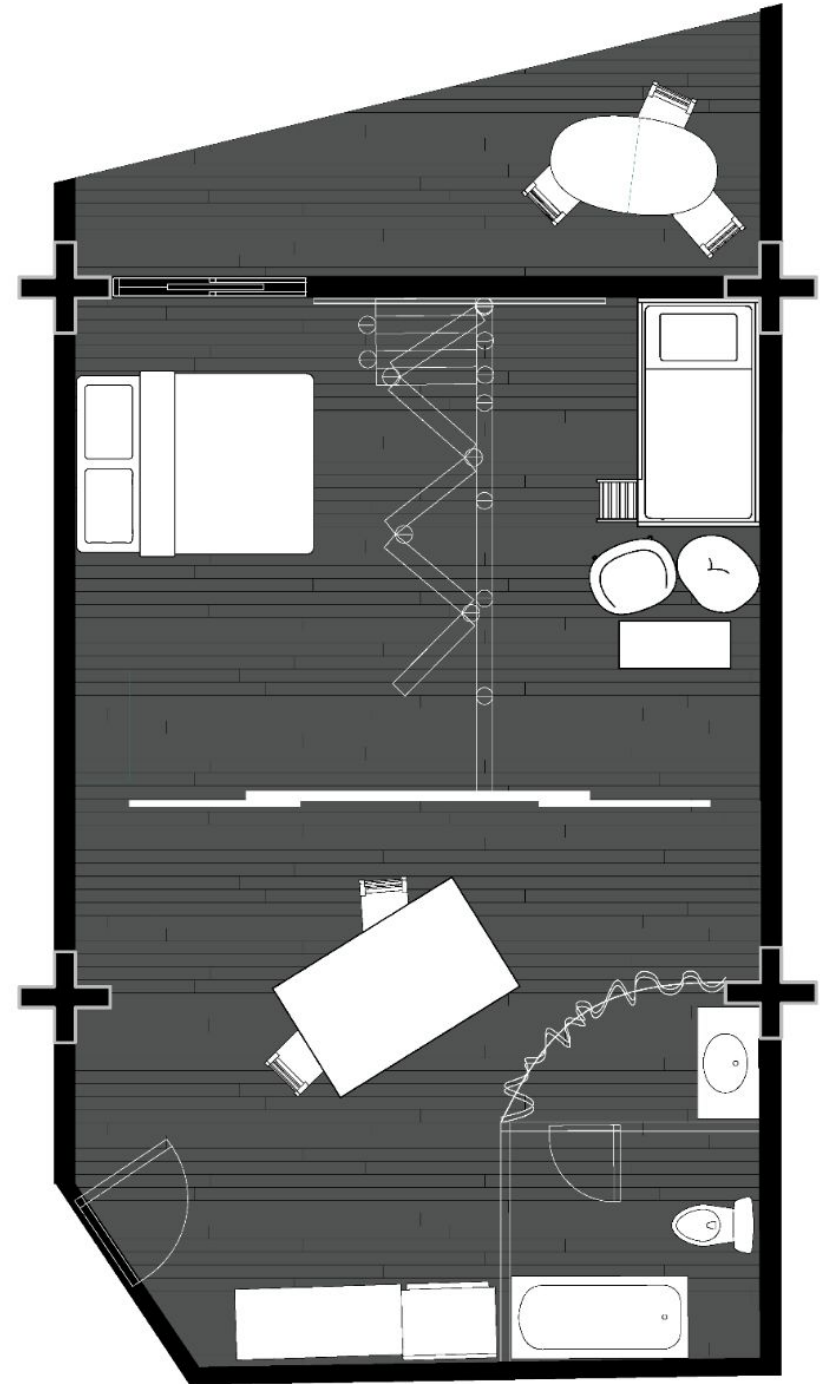
## program diagram: tension grid



As a combination of site analysis and a program diagram, an abstracted tension grid was developed. Each box is 20ftx20ft to establish a spacial framework on the site. Conceptually, areas that are more spaced out and deformed represent a more public nature, and areas where the grid is tightly squinched represent a more private nature. Areas with more shareability have heavier line weights.

## Unit Prototype

After determining building footprints and shared platform space, the private units were then delineated within the framework of the 20ftx20ft column grid. Less than 400 sqft determined a studio unit, 400 sqft – 600 sqft determined a one-bedroom unit and more than 600 sqft determined a two-bedroom unit. A key feature of the private units is the retractable door system, designed to give individuals the option to maximize shared space or privacy within the home.



## 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Plan



Each building footprint was cut according to the tension grid. Since the project centered shareability and self-determination along a gradient of public and private, the shared platforms within each building were established first. Then, private units were established according to leftover space and were constructed within the column grid.

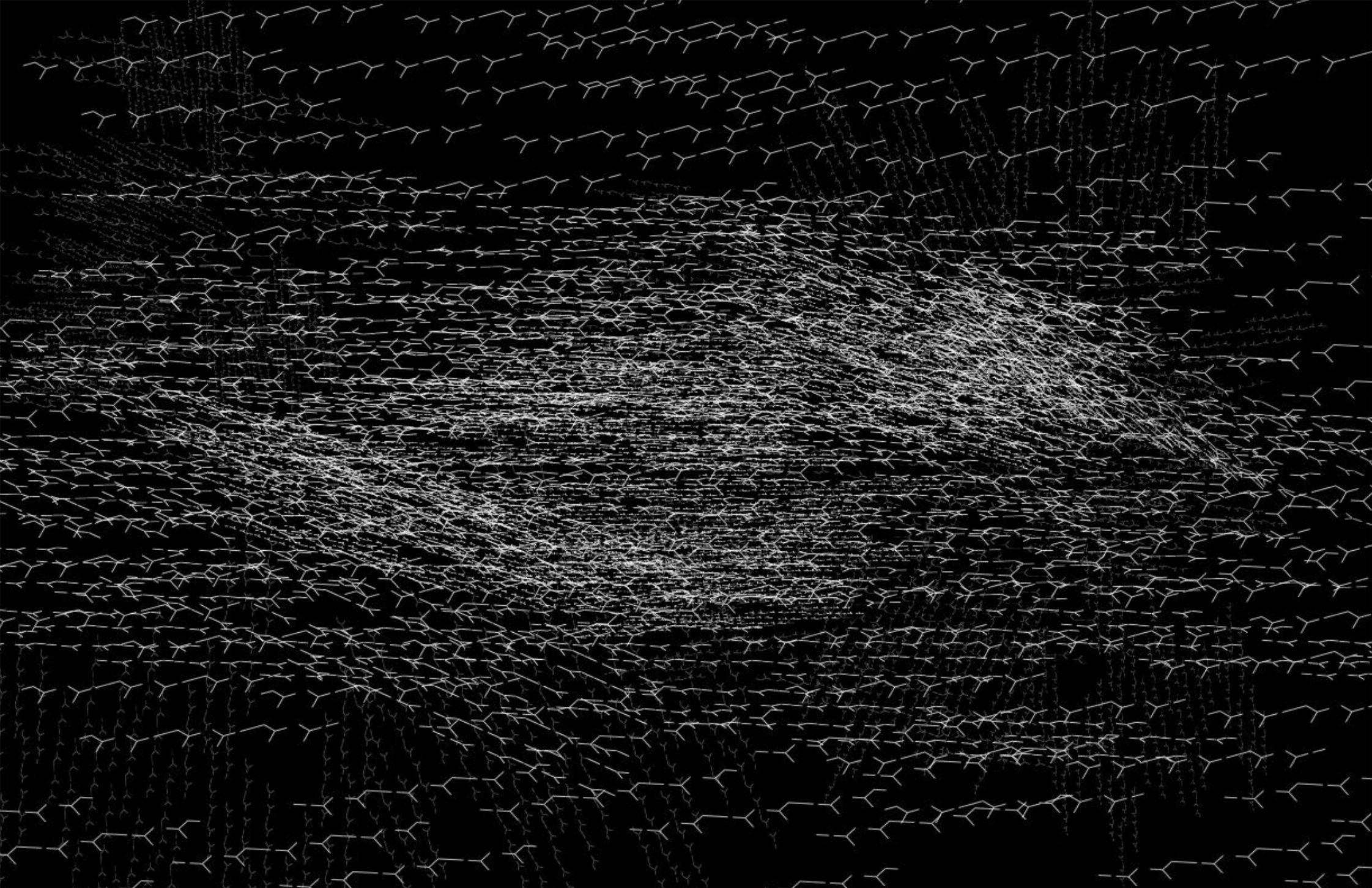


# The Metrics of Transformation

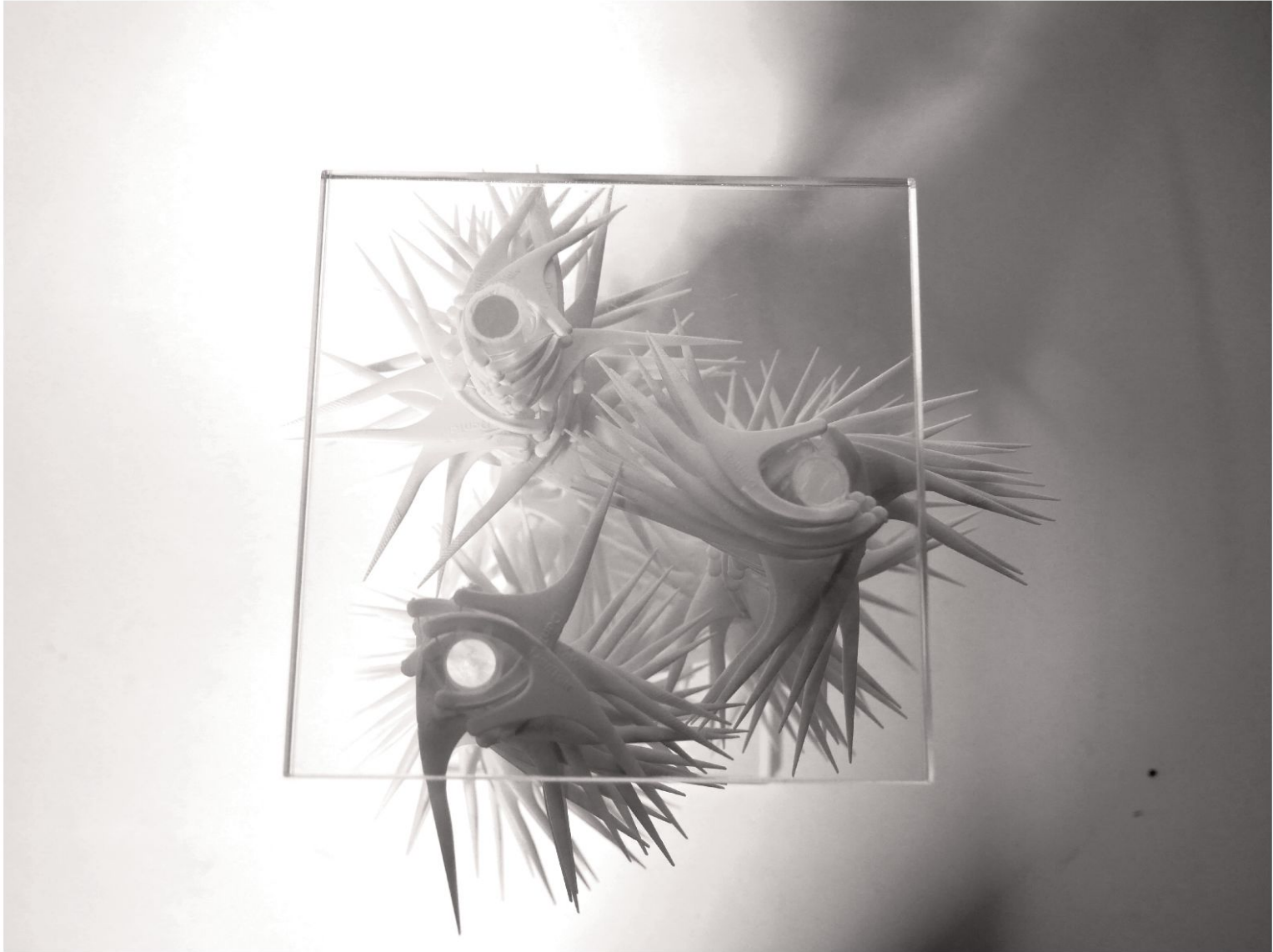
Through an exploration of childhood memories, this project focused on developing an architectural expression that fosters K-8 students and their capability for exponential growth. The idea of progressive aperture informed the circulation as well as the disjointed program blocks.

SCHOOL PROJECT  
LES, NY  
CORE II SPRING22  
CRITIC KARLA  
ROTHSTEIN

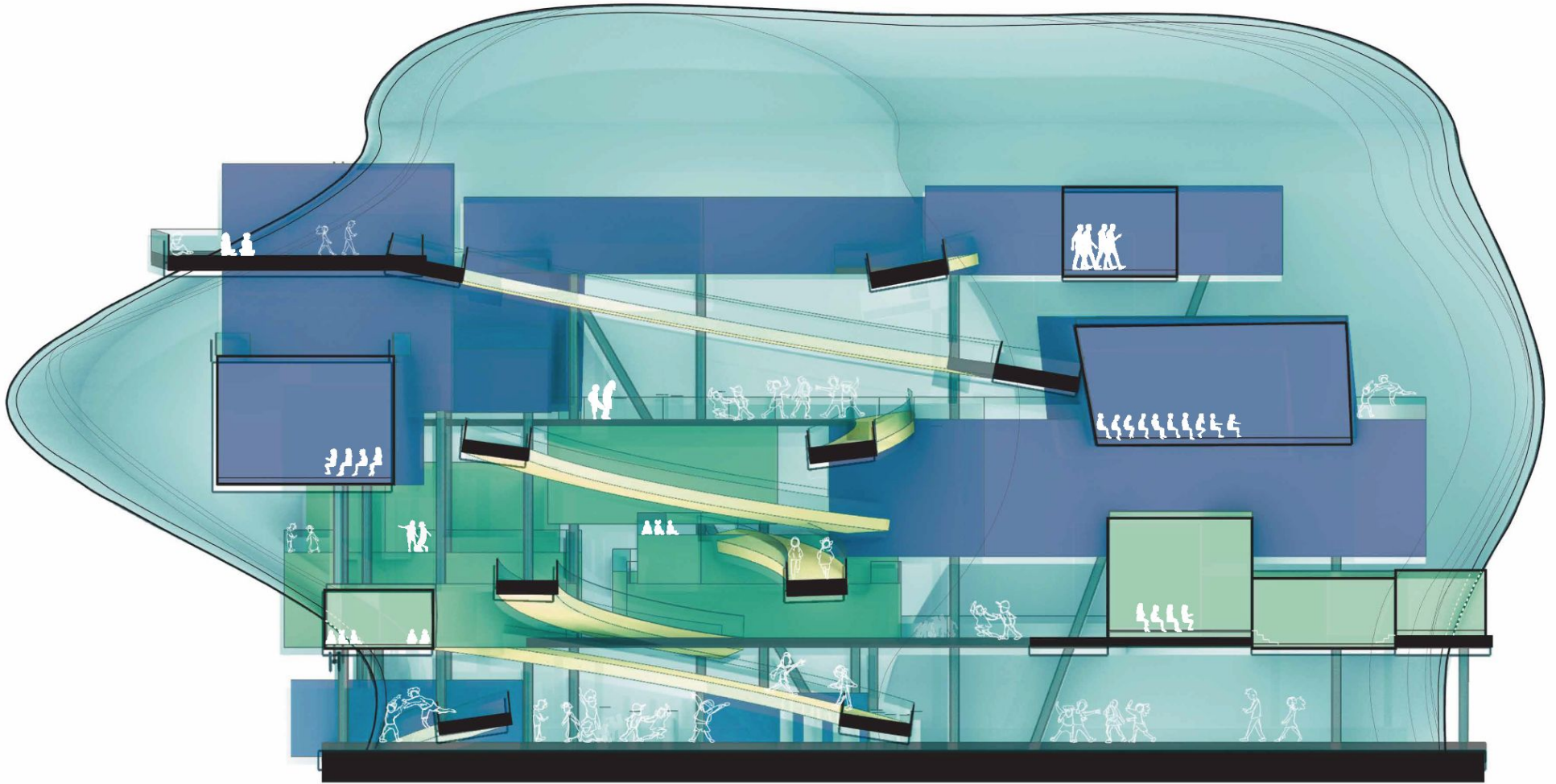




Abstract Drawing: Visualizing Exponential Growth

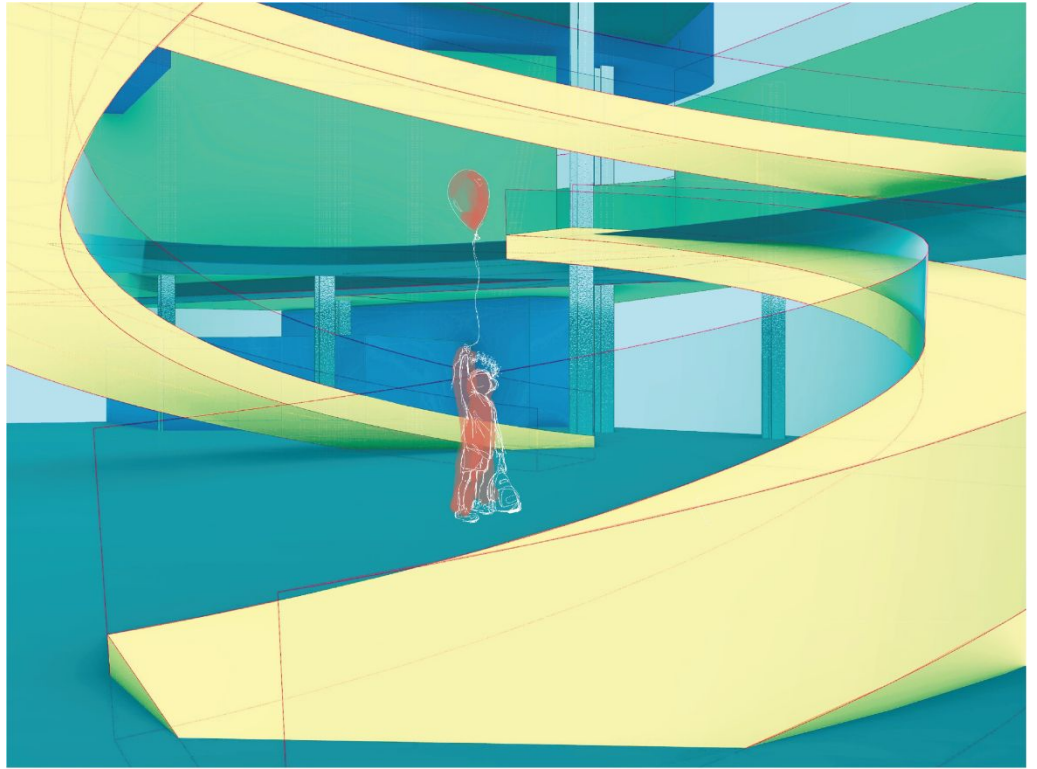
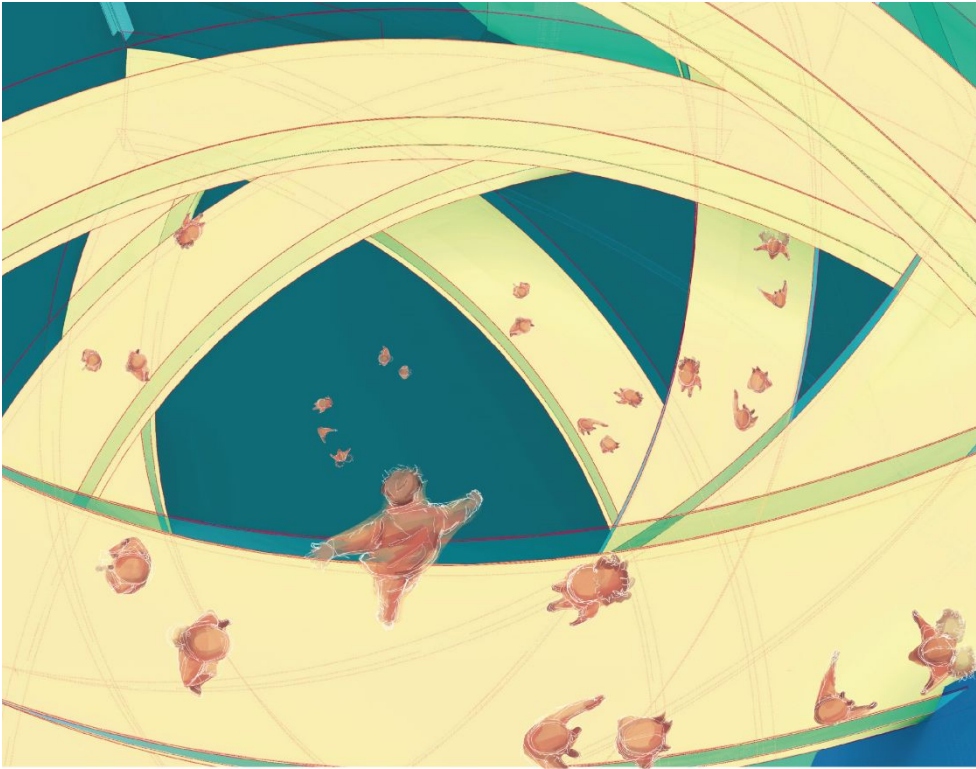


Concept Model



section



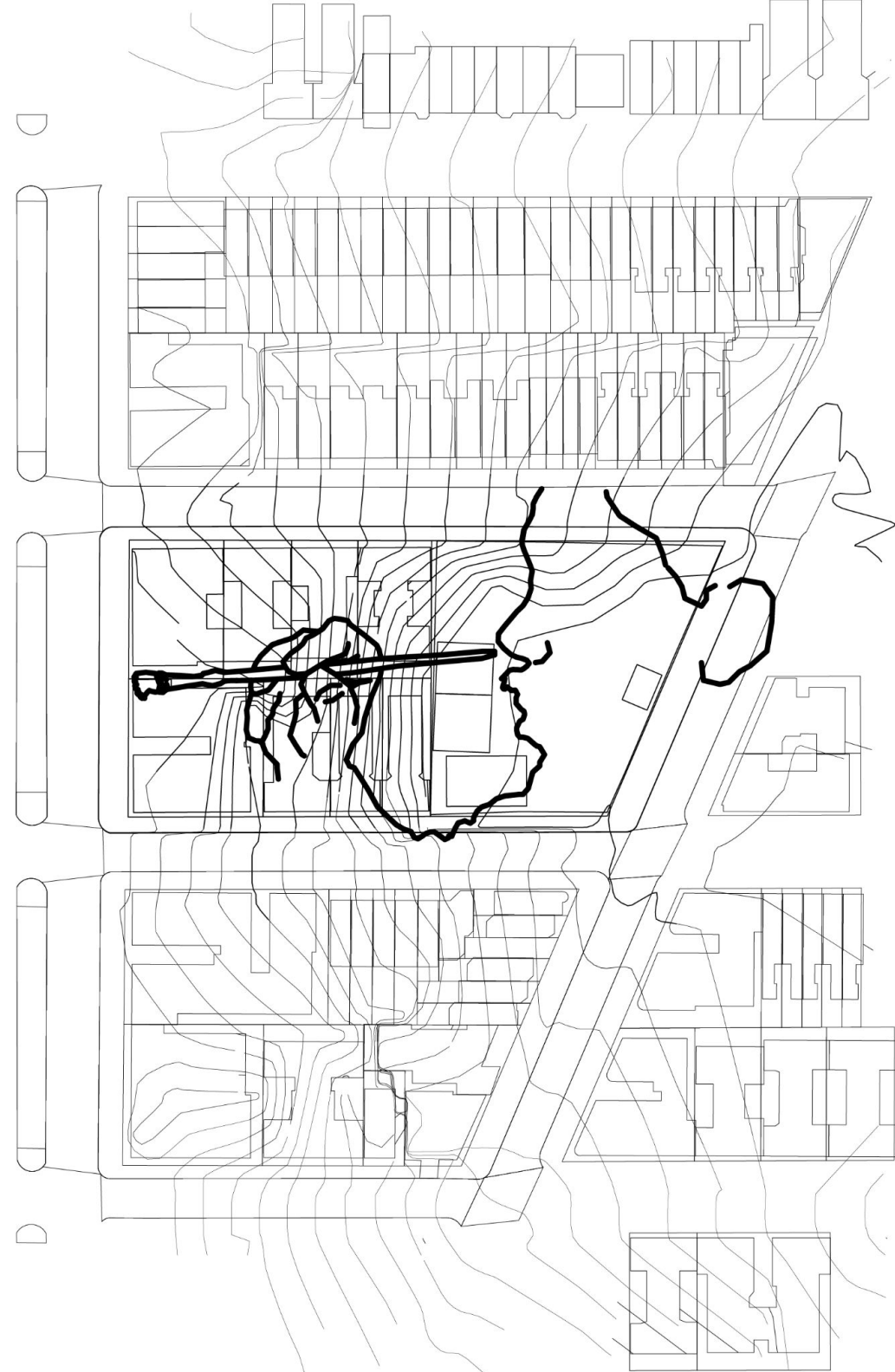


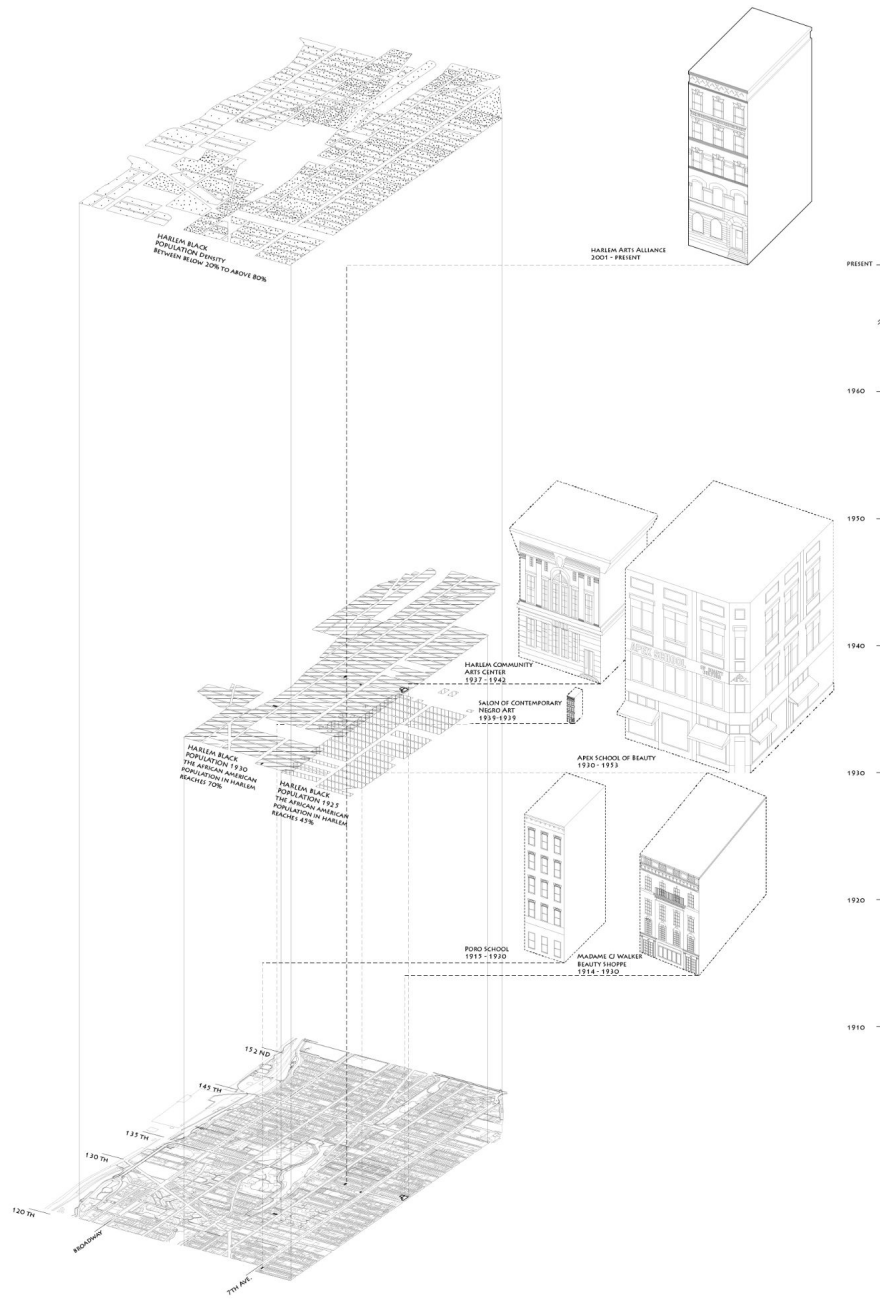
vignettes

# Duality of the Salon

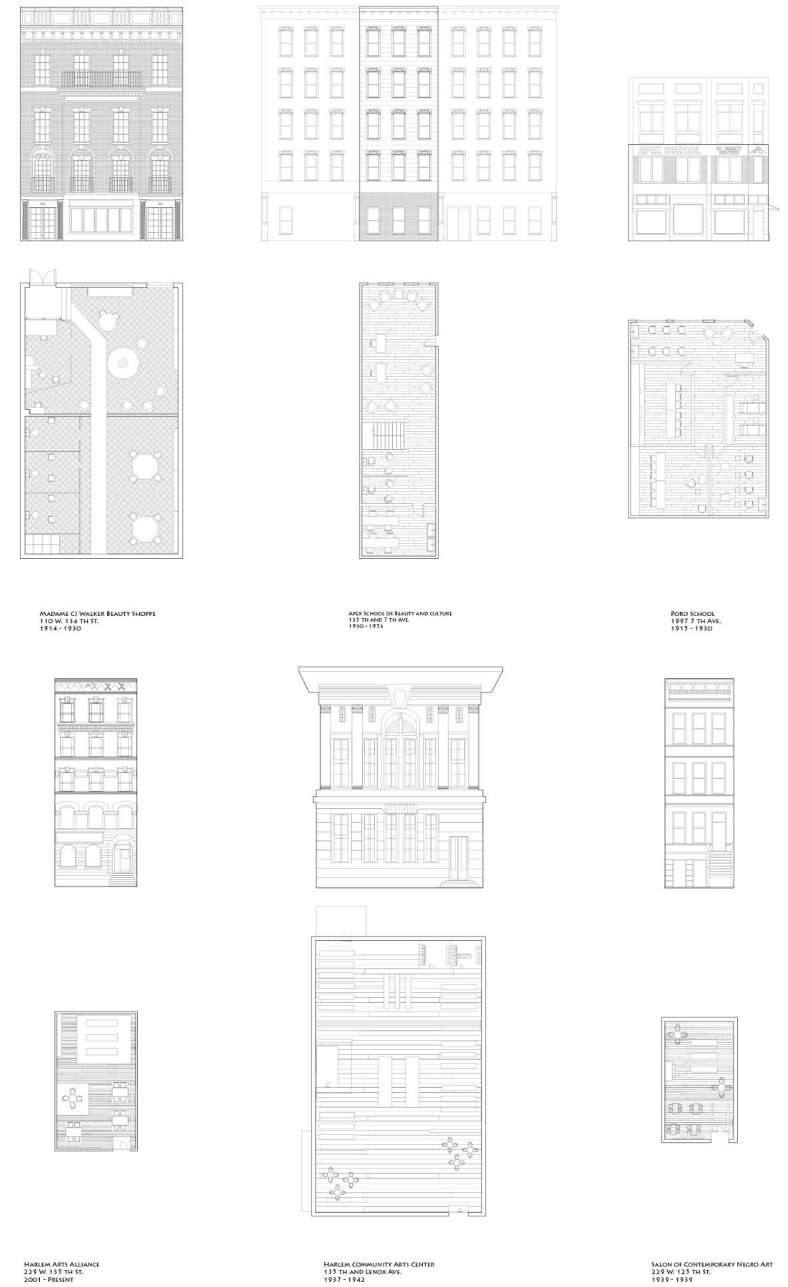
The concept of the project addresses the duality of the salon; a place for self-care and a place for gathering and exhibition. During the semester, I have been consistently re-evaluating the project and its intention; who exactly is the salon for and who are the people that characterize it? I believe it is important to consider these questions, because architecture is not characterized by the architects who design looking from the outside in. Based on historical and cultural research of salons and visual arts spaces that existed and disappeared over time in Harlem/Hamilton Heights, my project aims to intervene directly addressing the duality of permanence and impermanence, visibility and invisibility, and then translate these studies into the morphology and materiality of the salon and the structures that compose it. The salon exists with an intentionality as an open community space as well as a series of private spaces. As a structure that is built in an interstitial space between apartment buildings, visibility and invisibility addressed through materiality should not only consider the privacy of the residents in its form, but also encourage a dialogue, interaction and participation as constantly evolving acts of co-creation in the program of the salon.

COMMUNITY PROJECT  
HARLEM, NY  
CORE I FALL 21  
CRITIC ALESSANDRO  
ORSINI

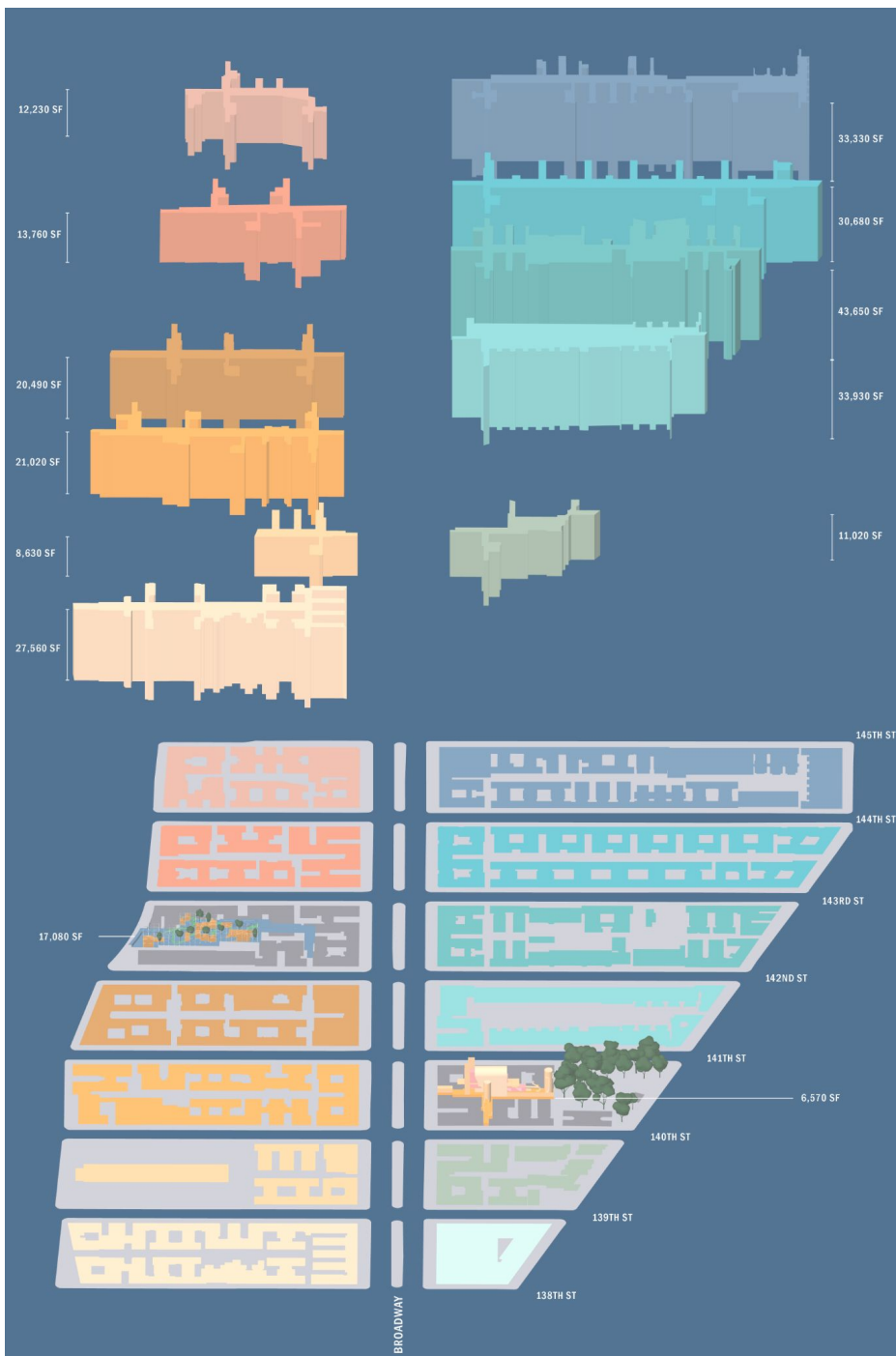




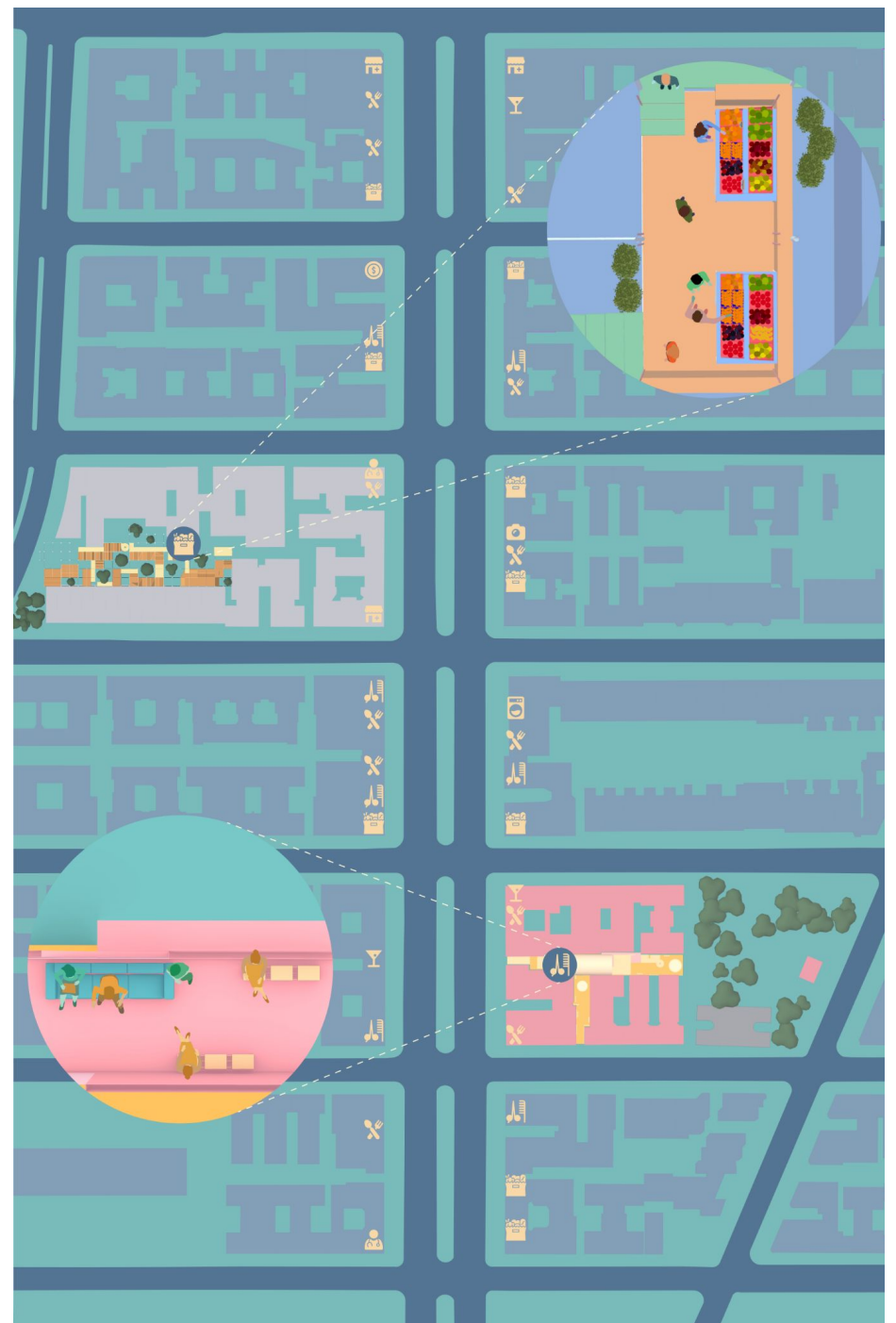
existing context axon (with partner Erisa Nakamura)



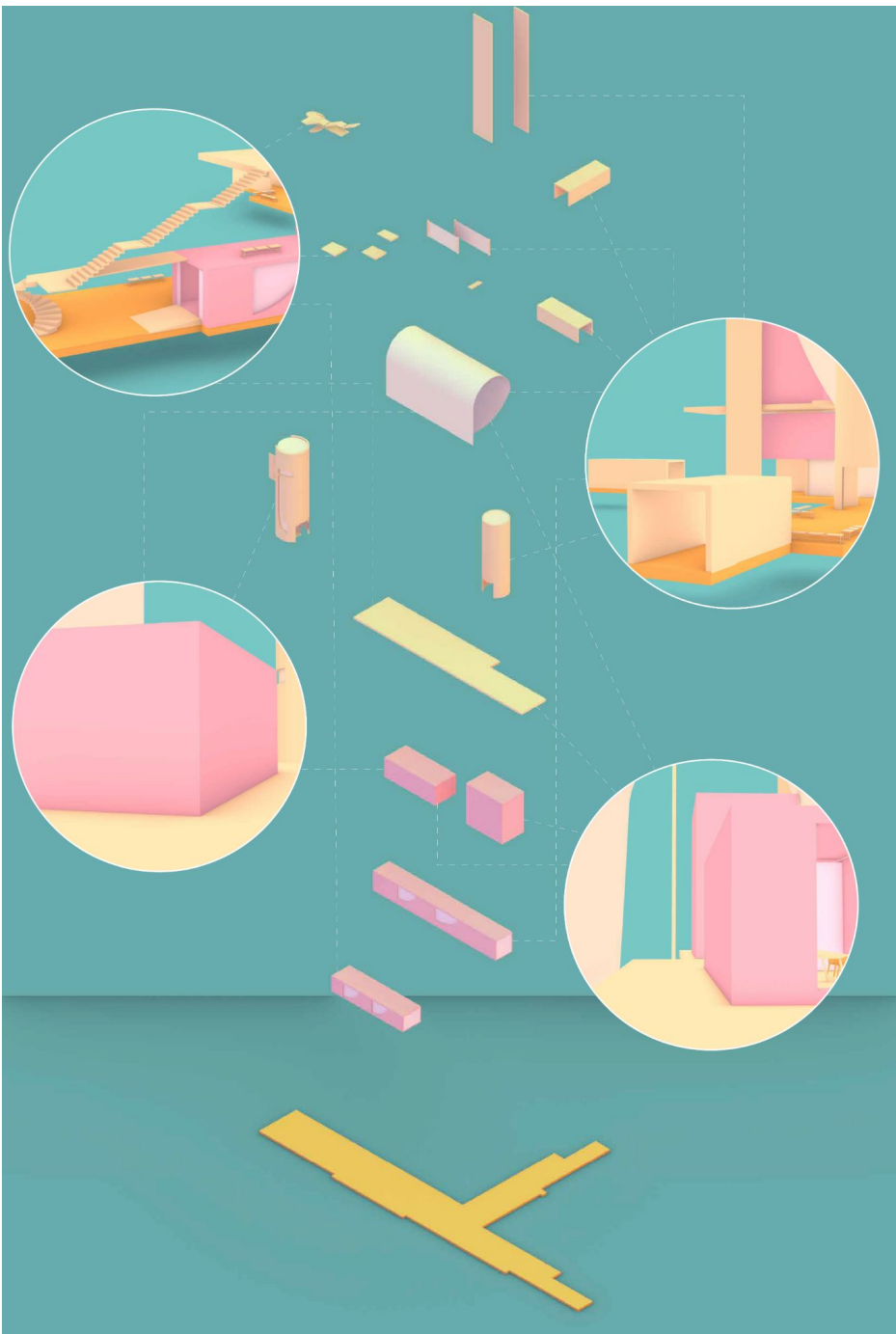
existing context elevations and floor plans (with partner Erisa Nakamura)



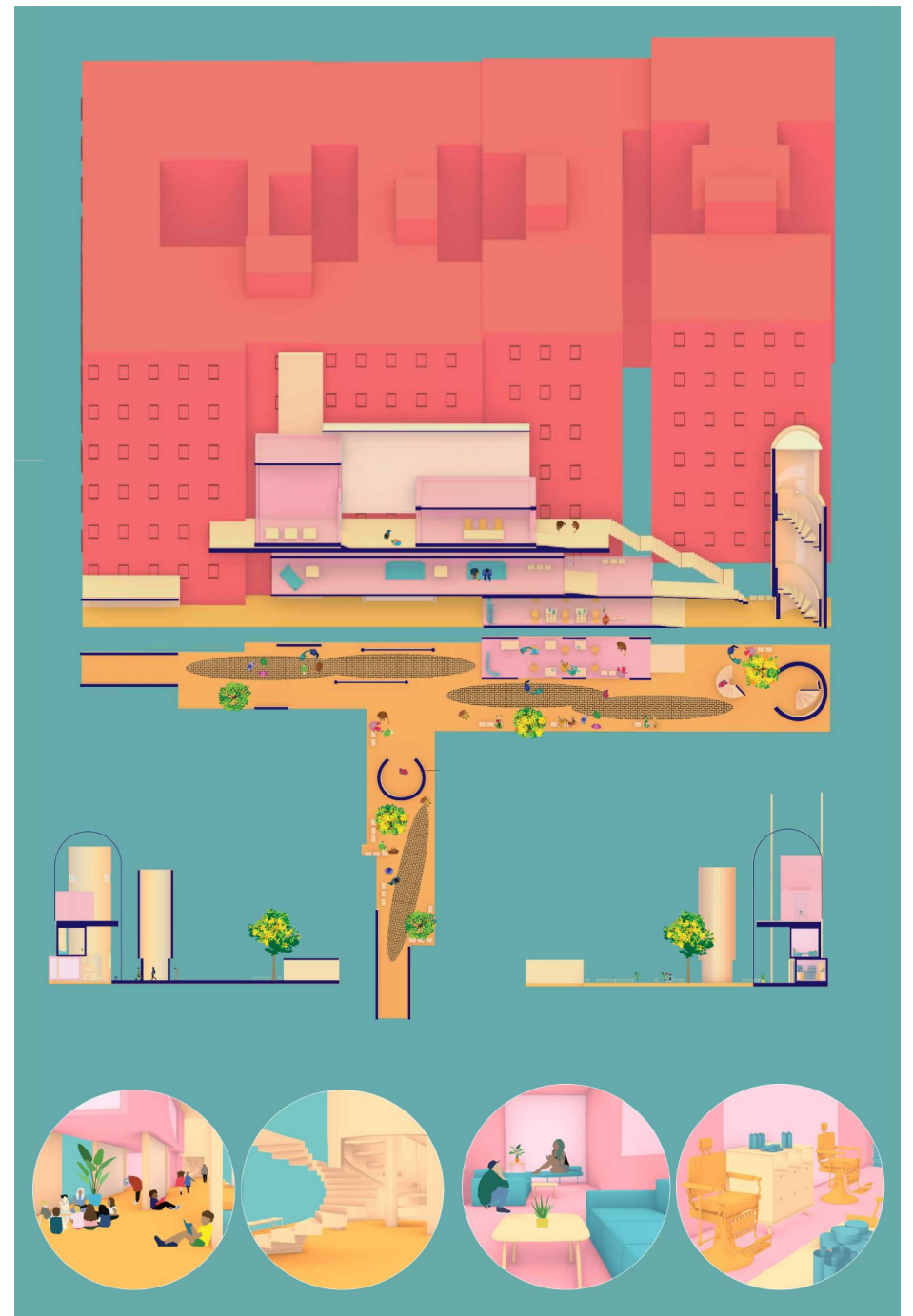
interstitial spaces with interventions (with partner Erisa Nakamura)



plans with project interventions (with partner Erisa Nakamura)



exploded axon



oblique section, north & south sections,  
vignettes