

INFRAS TRUC TURES OF CARE

Karla Marie Dominguez R. MSAAD
2025-2026

I came to New York to learn how to make great architecture. At first, I thought architecture was mainly about buildings, form, and control. But throughout this year, that understanding slowly began to change. I became more interested in process, atmosphere, and the invisible conditions that shape infrastructures.

Over time, architecture started feeling less rigid and more connected to people, environments, and everyday life. Infrastructures of Care brings together those explorations and reflects the way my understanding of architecture evolved throughout this year.

INDEX

64

FESTIVAL OF CARE

Advanced Studio VI

Spring 2026

18

LETTING GO...

Arguments

Summer 2025

52

CURVE $\neq$ FEMININE

Transcalarities and Graphic Design

Summer 2025, Spring 2026

06

FUGITIVE ECOLOGIES

Advanced Studio IV

Summer 2025

24

KNOWLEDGE CAPSULE

Advanced Studio V

Fall 2025

Fugitive Ecologies

Advanced Studio IV, Summer 2025

Professor: Nerea Calvillo

Author: Karla Dominguez, Shipeng Xue, Khalid Abunayyan



TODAY

Departement of Sanitation Facility



Gansevoort Beach



Seagull on top of posts



Outdoors Activities



Swimming is not allowed!



IN THE PAST

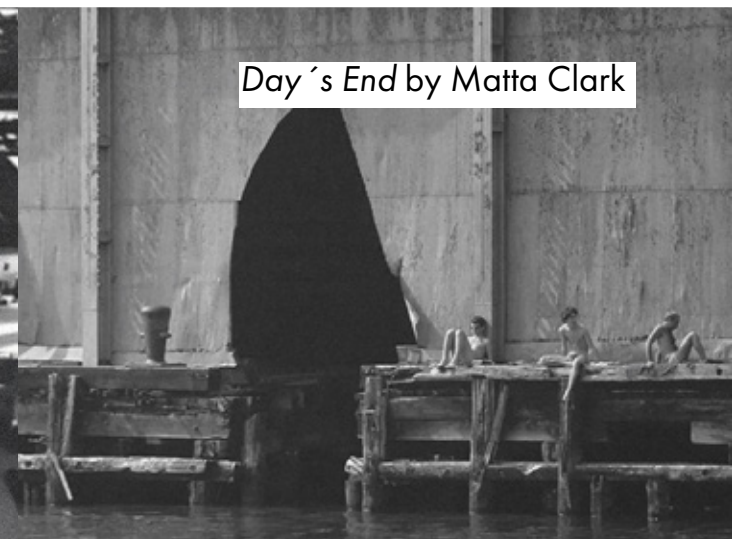
West Washington Market



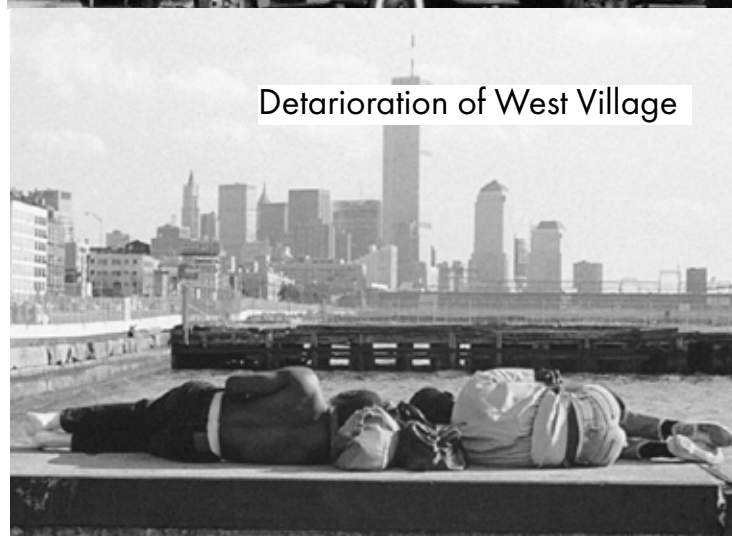
Aerial View Incinerator



Day's End by Matta Clark



Detarioration of West Village



Trans Fighting for their Rights



LAYERS OF ERASURE

In this collage, we see seagulls moving across the site and leaving guano behind, a powerful fertilizer.

Over time, factories turned into luxury housing, markets into incinerators, and industry into leisure.

Gansevoort was once a place where queer communities gathered, found freedom, and took space. Later, redevelopment transformed it into an expensive neighborhood, changing who could be there and how the site is experienced.

Our strategy for the project is to work through palimpsest, allowing forgotten functions and lived experiences to resurface. Even when something is erased, it never fully disappears it stays in the ground, in memory, and in the way the site continues to grow.





REFUSAL 2025

We begin with refusal.
A refusal to groom and
control the land.

The Gansevoort Peninsula is
no longer maintained.
It is left to go wild.

Seagulls are fed.
A net of steel cables and
aluminum is built, not to trap,
but to gather.
Guano falls, accumulates,
and slowly turns into rich
soil.

We refuse visibility.
No open views.
No clear sightlines.
What grows here remains
hidden.

We refuse to forget.
The incinerator is gone, but
its ghost is traced into the
soil.
Memory returns as residue,
not ruin.
No burning. No smoke.
Only growth unseen.



FUGITIVITY 2075

Fifty years have passed.

We begin with a fugitive ecology, quiet and slow. Then comes the Fourth of July.

While fireworks explode above, movement slips in below. Small cracks are drilled into the ground. From those cracks, weeds rise.

Others arrive by boat, slipping beneath Little Island where no one sees. They build decks. Mark posts with glowing signs.

They are not visitors. They are returning. Claiming what was once theirs.



GHOST 2125

We begin with a ghost.
Not one that haunts, but one
that hides.

The structure swells into a
soft mountain, blocking the
skyline.
No one watches from
above.
Visibility disappears.

Fog rolls in, not to clean,
but to rust the bones of
Hammond's structure.
To cover the nudism.
Which is everywhere.

This is where fugitive
ecologies rise.
Discreet. Hidden.
Claimed by the discarded
queer community.

Now everything grows:

Weeds
Queer communities
Soil and air

This is what was thrown
away.
And it refuses to stay buried.

Letting Go...

Arguments, Summer 2025

Professor: Shane Reiner - Roth

Author: Karla Dominguez





LETTING GO...

In architecture we tend to think of good design as being in control. Control of form, Of people. Of meaning. Of outcome. But what if the most intriguing instances of architecture occur from letting go?



This booklet is a story of four assemblies that illustrated to me how architecture can become more responsive, humane and ethical when we allow ourselves to be less in control. It starts with form and bodies, then perception and finishes on global entanglements.



Each chapter builds on the last, a domino effect that it has on me seeing how to shape architecture in an ever further different and interwoven way.

SPREADS

Let Go of Illusion

Lesson 4

The final assembly Cheng and Zhan spoke of the fallacy we labor under that design is all powerful, particularly when it comes to nature.

"Here, water is portrayed as a multifaceted force: a source of life, a disruptor, a tool of displacement, and a connector of distant lands."

Cheng, J., & Zhan, C., *Storefront.nyc*

The indoor waterfall at the Australian airport Jewel in Singapore has been constructed in such a way as to replicate a natural environment. The water and electricity to power it come from far-off hydroelectric dams, leading to the displacement of several communities. Nature represented is therefore an intentionally made and maintained nature, with some parts of it purposely arranged or hidden as part of the intervention.



Connecting all the points, the system, the interaction, and the perception is simply a global entanglement of pure control. By ignoring the established points, we are not building ethically: we are thinking that there are not different ecologies happening at the same time. We must let go of these thoughts to make architecture more interwoven.

Let Go of Meaning

Lesson 3

By the time I got to Michael Young's assembly, I was hungry to hear, **what if ambiguity is a strength of design?**

Young says architecture is a field of entanglements: materialized in meaning, aesthetics and labor. He speaks of "hyperhomogeneity" when everything comes to feel the same, and we no longer notice the world around us. Instead of fighting against that, he proposes to design with it.

Michael Young talked about Chinese cities saying they reflect sleek lines of clean repetition, but that at their core, everything is deeply shaped by invisible systems (migrant labor, political will). Franco Trubiano's recent reminds me Youngs thoughts. Trubiano's guidebook (WBYA [Who Builds Your Architecture]) shows the invisible labor exploitation of global architecture. That iconic stadium or tower? It may even have been constructed by migrants living under brutal conditions. These buildings are not minimal at all. They are over saturated with the hidden complexity that Youngs argue we must confront.



If we can't give meaning to a clear shape; perhaps it is the invisibility of that which should be made visible.

So, I will let go again, this time of needing architecture to mean something clean or simple. Let it be weird, hard and real.

Let Go of the User

Lesson 2

Although Allen taught me to let go of a building, Farahi also suggested I should **release an essential idea that people would behave** like we want them to, in those buildings.

Her practice focuses on wearables which enter activities of gaze, emotion and power. The architecture reacts.

"Farahi's work focuses on fostering empathetic relationships between the human body and its surrounding environment."

Behnaz Farahi, Cornell AAP.

The "Caress of the Gaze" cape, wearable 3D-printed design it is a great example of let go of the User. The cloth moves based on which direction you look, might appealing to male gaze resistance consciousness. It is like the space pushes back. Farshi showed me users are not passive. They change the architecture. Sound design is not behavior, but rather a manifestation of the behavior in motion.



This expanded on previews idea: not control form and also not people.

Let Go of Form

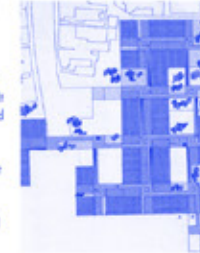
Lesson 1

Stan Allens notion of "field conditions" caught my mind with a new way to design. He says you shouldn't draw one big perfect shape, but instead focus on creating systems: building blocks, rules and relationships.

"His 1997 essay 'From Object to Field' is a call to embrace the real in all its messiness and unpredictability."

Stan Allen, Harvard GSD.

Le Corbusier's Venice Hospital Project is an idea that reflects losing control of form on architecture. Le Corbusier basically reconfigure and grow the infrastructure of the hospital. It is like a tiny bunch of cells instead of a big immobile building. It was never more than an idea, but it seeded the knowledge that buildings could be fluid, they are not meant to be stagnant structures. They can change and grow.



This is the first lesson in letting go: Stop trying to control every inch. Make a system and let it be alive.

Letting go...

In architecture we tend to think of good design as being in control. Control of form. Of people. Of meaning. Of outcome. But what if the most intriguing instances of architecture occur from letting go?

This booklet is a story of four assemblies that illustrated to me how architecture can become more responsive, humane and ethical when we allow ourselves to be less in control. It starts with form and bodies, then perception and finishes on global entanglements.

Each chapter builds on the last, a domino effect that it has on me seeing how to shape architecture in an ever further different and interwoven way.



Letting go...

What four assemblies taught me about control and the unexpected beauty of losing it.

Vivie Dimmock

What four assen...



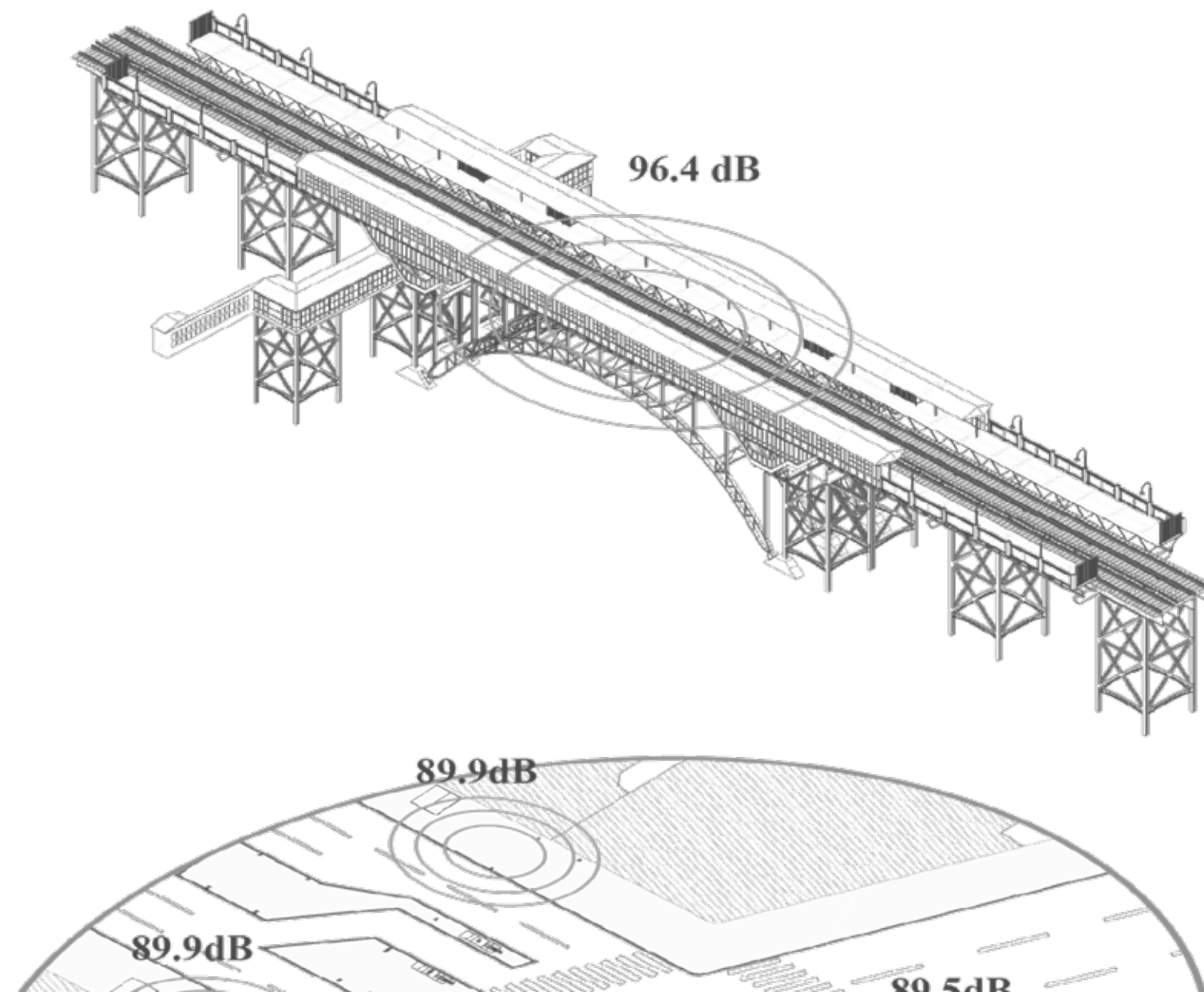
Knowledge Capsule

Architecture that listens,
transforms, and teaches.

Advanced Studio V, Fall 2025

Professor: Mario Gooden

Author: Karla Dominguez



1



Water showed me that knowledge is not static, knowledge is a relationship.

2



Air taught me that knowledge must move.

3



Earth taught me that knowledge is not stored, it is constantly reshaped.

HYPOTHESIS

Knowledge only exists in the present.



It's the liminal moment where past experiences and future possibilities meet and transform each other.

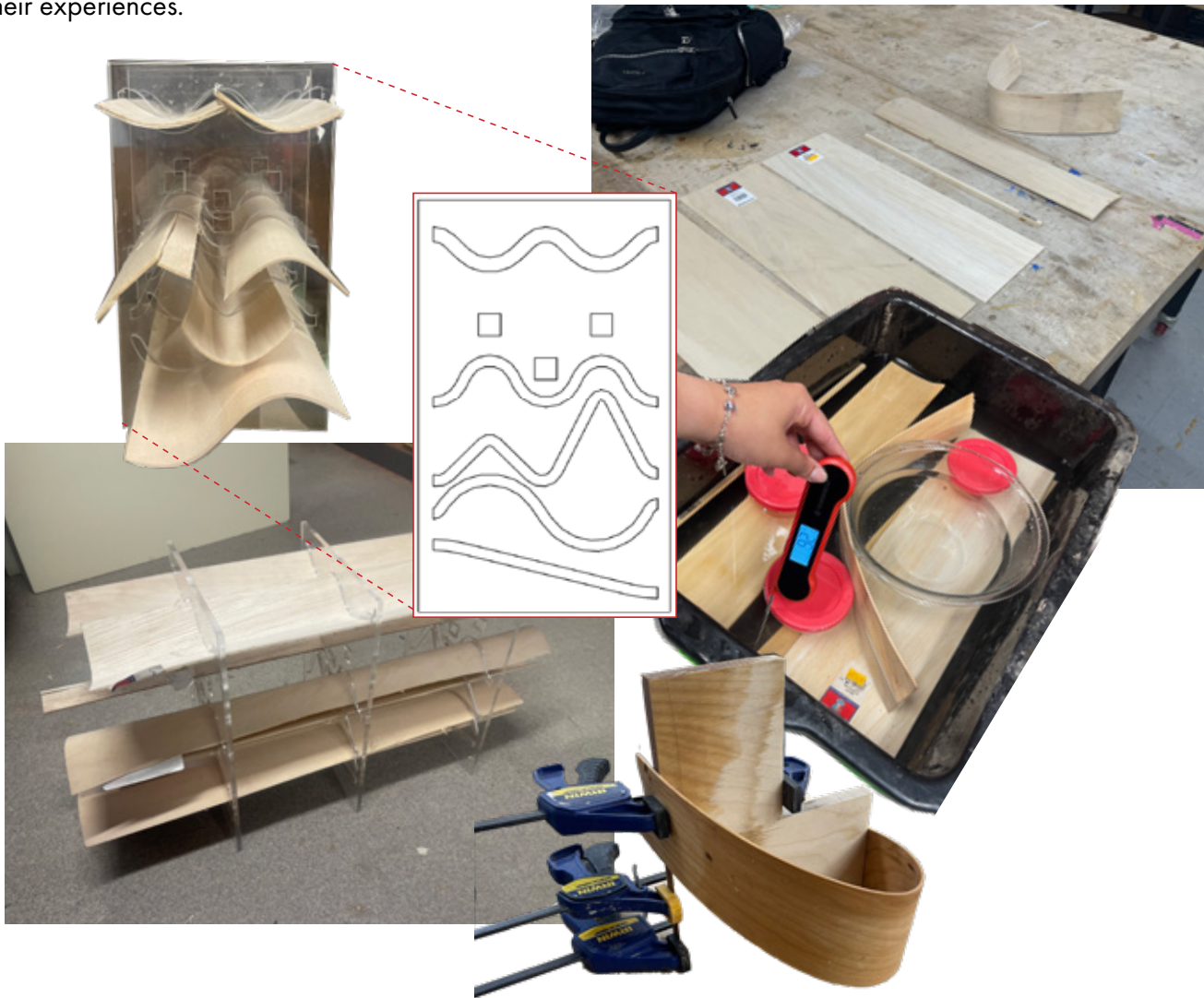
COPPER MELTING

Copper taught me the limits of relations, some bodies cannot meet directly without causing harm.



WOOD BENDING

Wood taught me that materials are living records of their experiences.



THESIS

The way the body learns is physical.

We learn through contact, pressure, breath, movement, and change.

Architecture creates knowledge when it works with the conditions the body feels today.

KNOWLEDGE BOX

This thesis inspired my first prototype: **The Knowledge Box.**

It is a small wooden window that connects the inside with the outside.

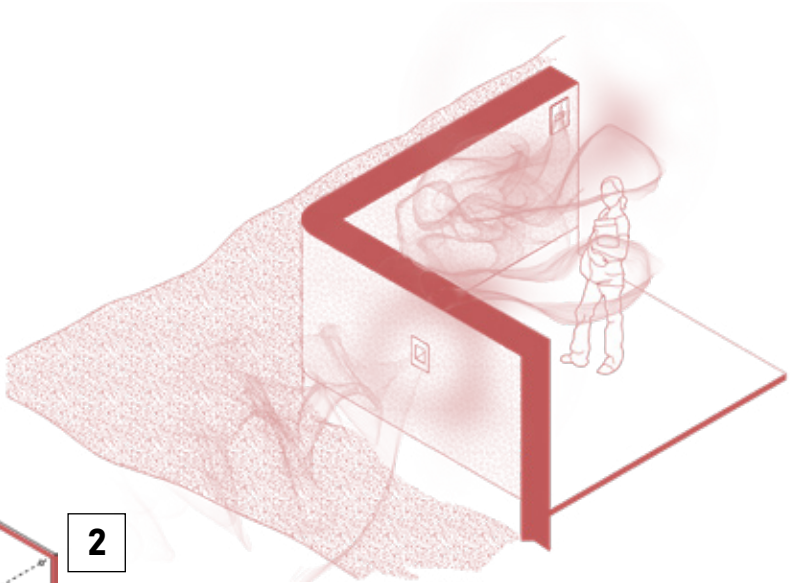
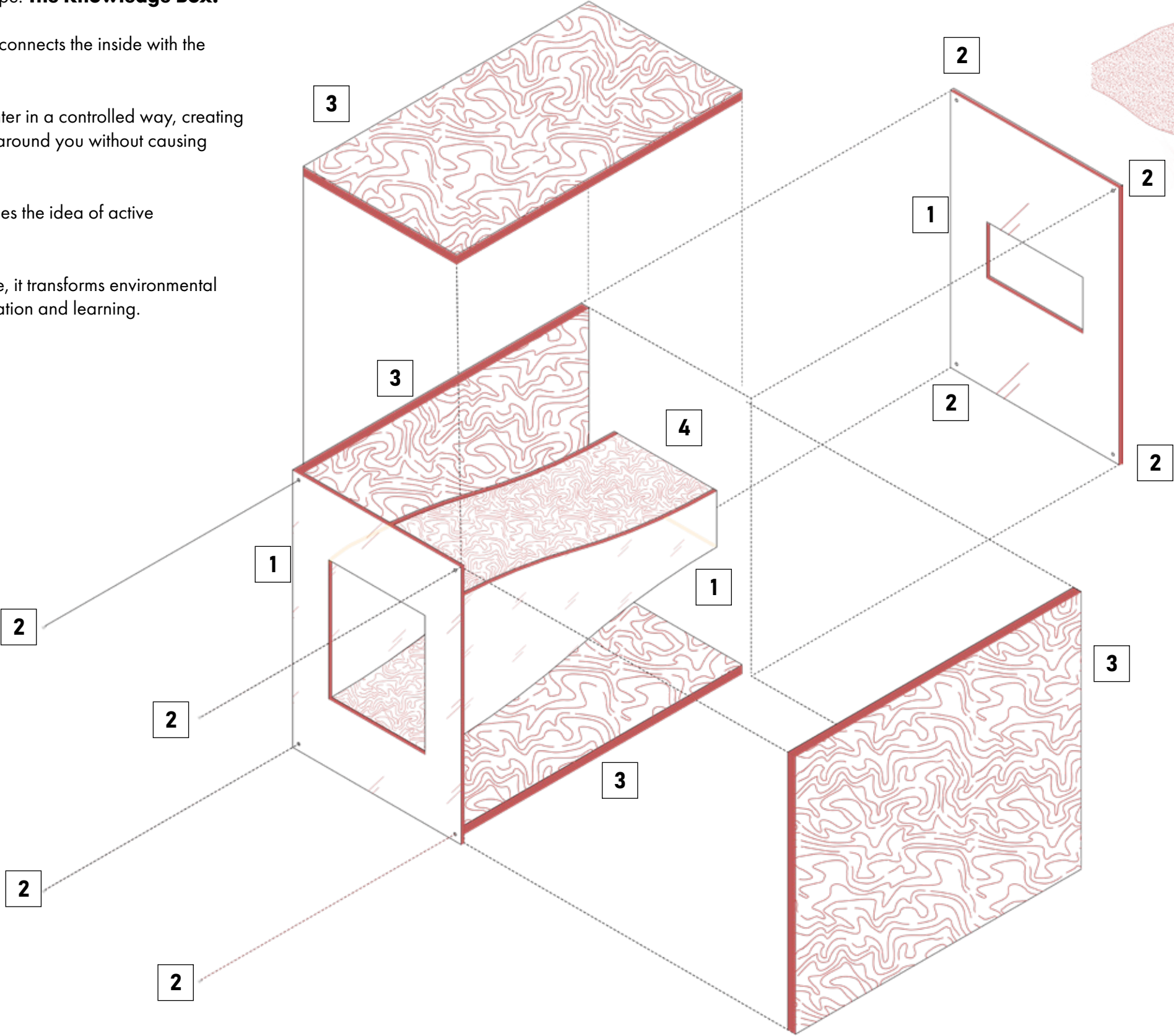
It allows air, sound and light to enter in a controlled way, creating awareness of what is happening around you without causing harm.

It is a simple device, but it embodies the idea of active remembering and imagining.

Acting as a window to knowledge, it transforms environmental sensation into awareness, observation and learning.

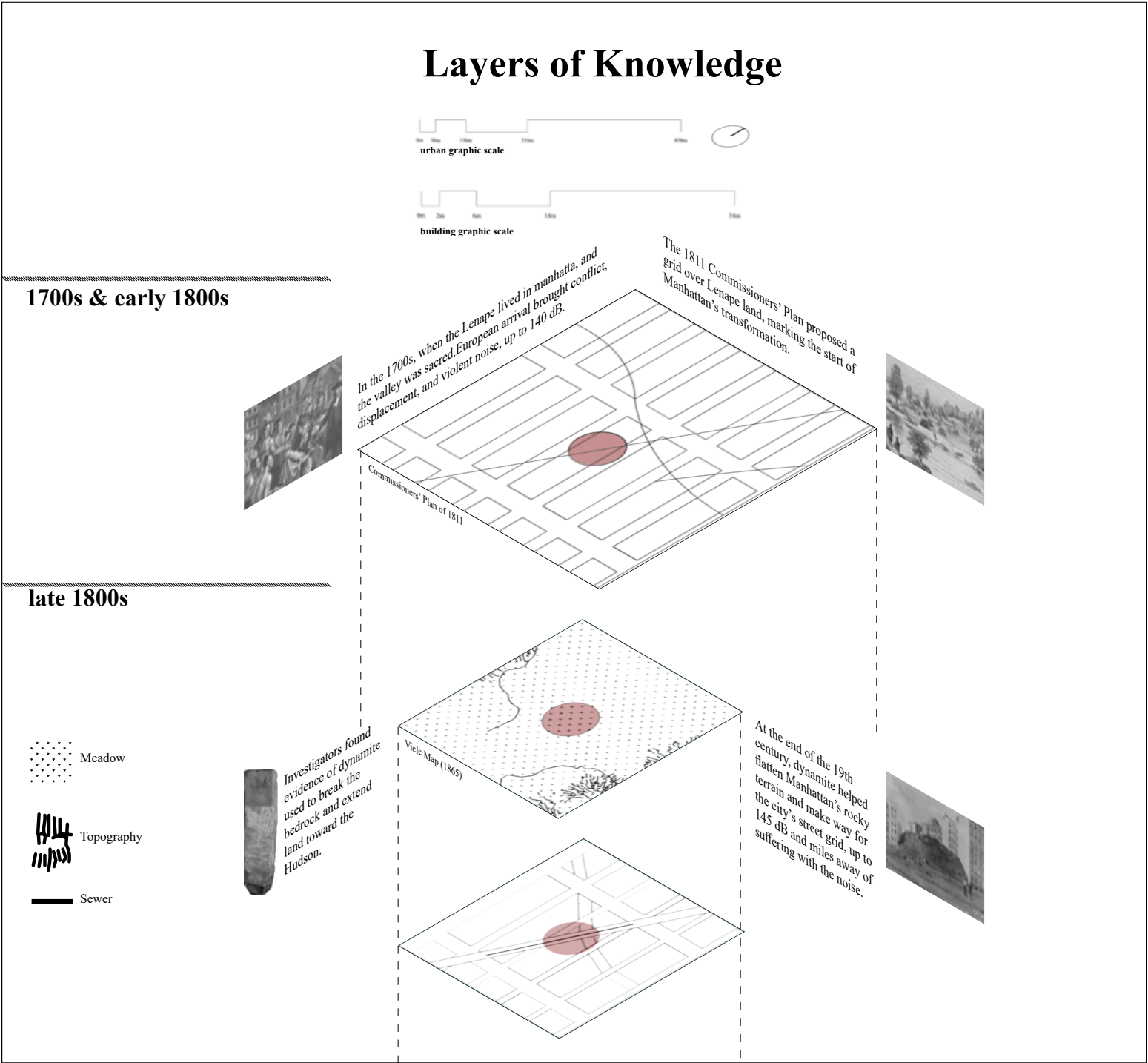
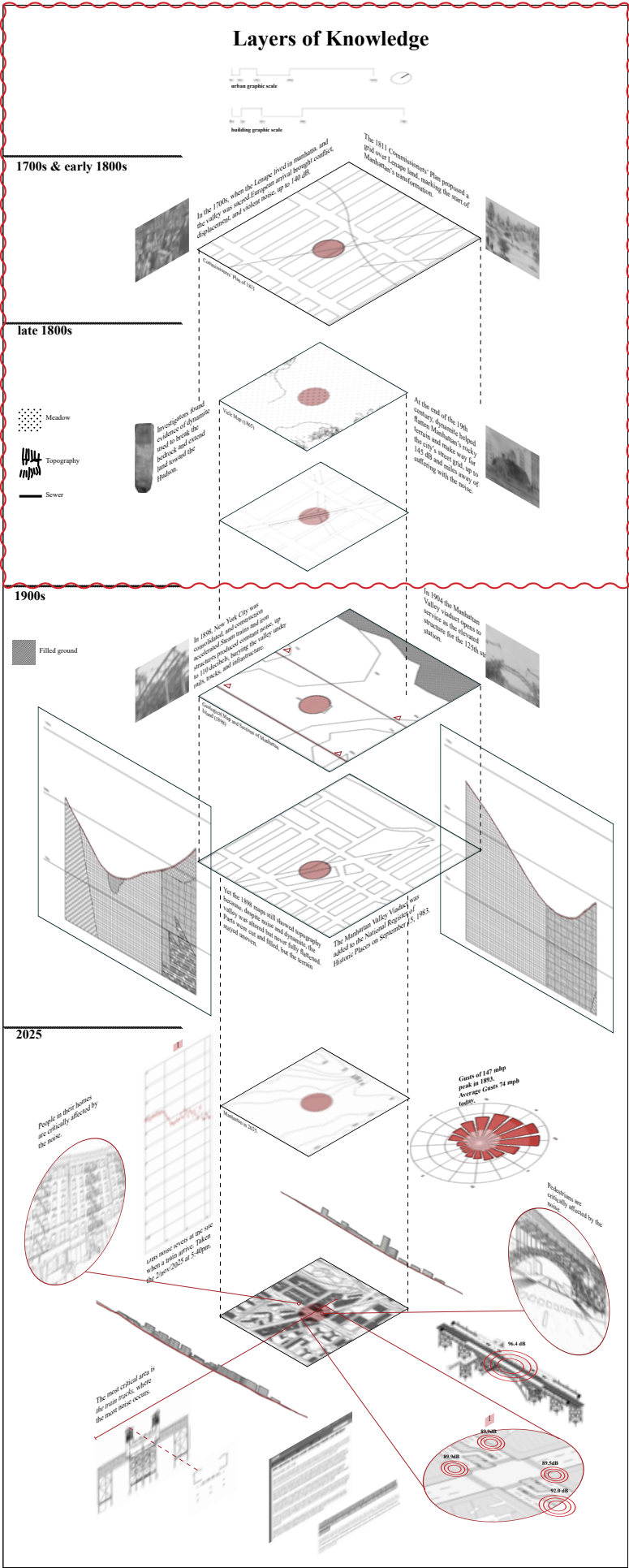
MATERIALS

- 1. Transparent Acrylic
- 2. Iron Screws
- 3. 1" Wood
- 4. 1/16" Wood



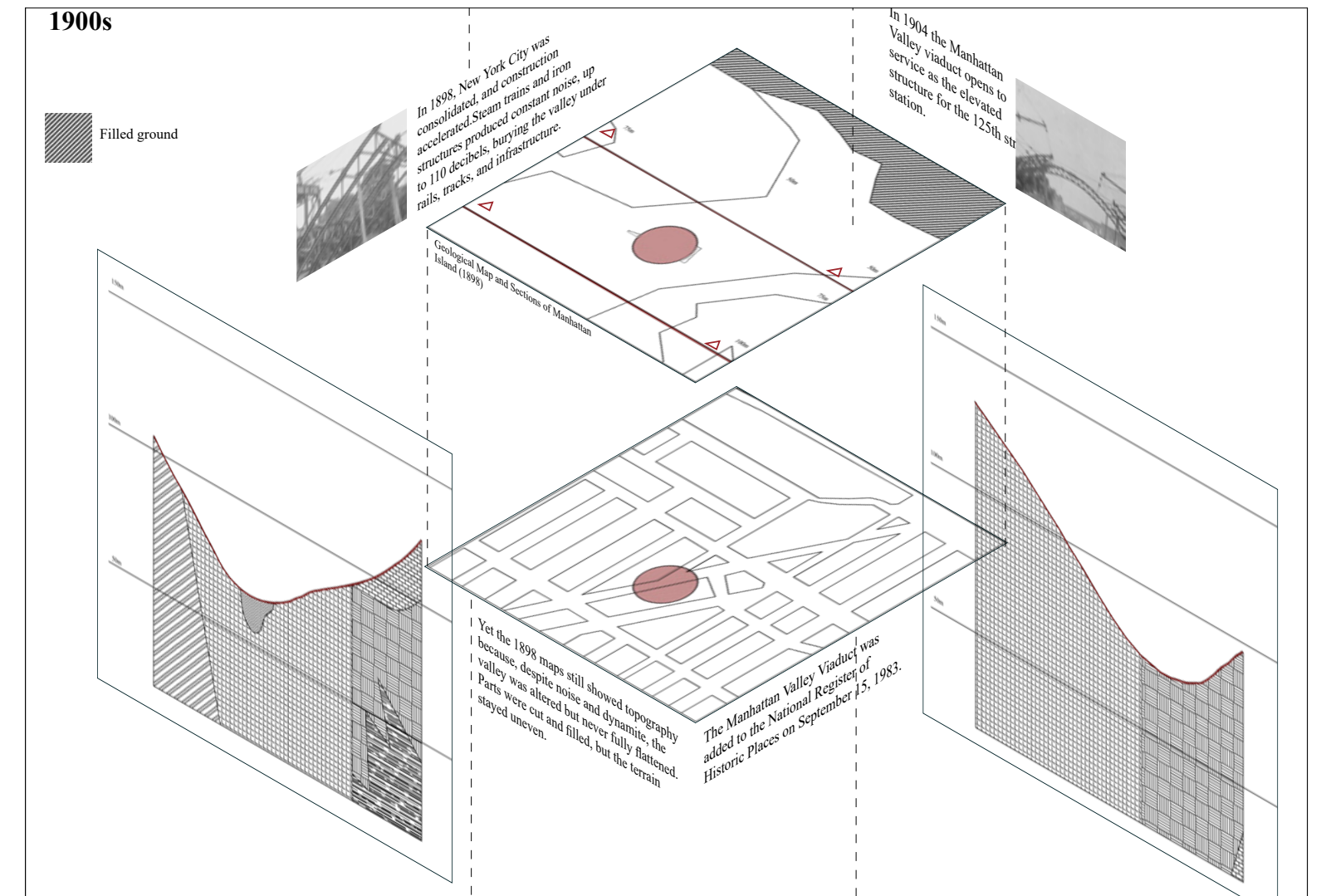
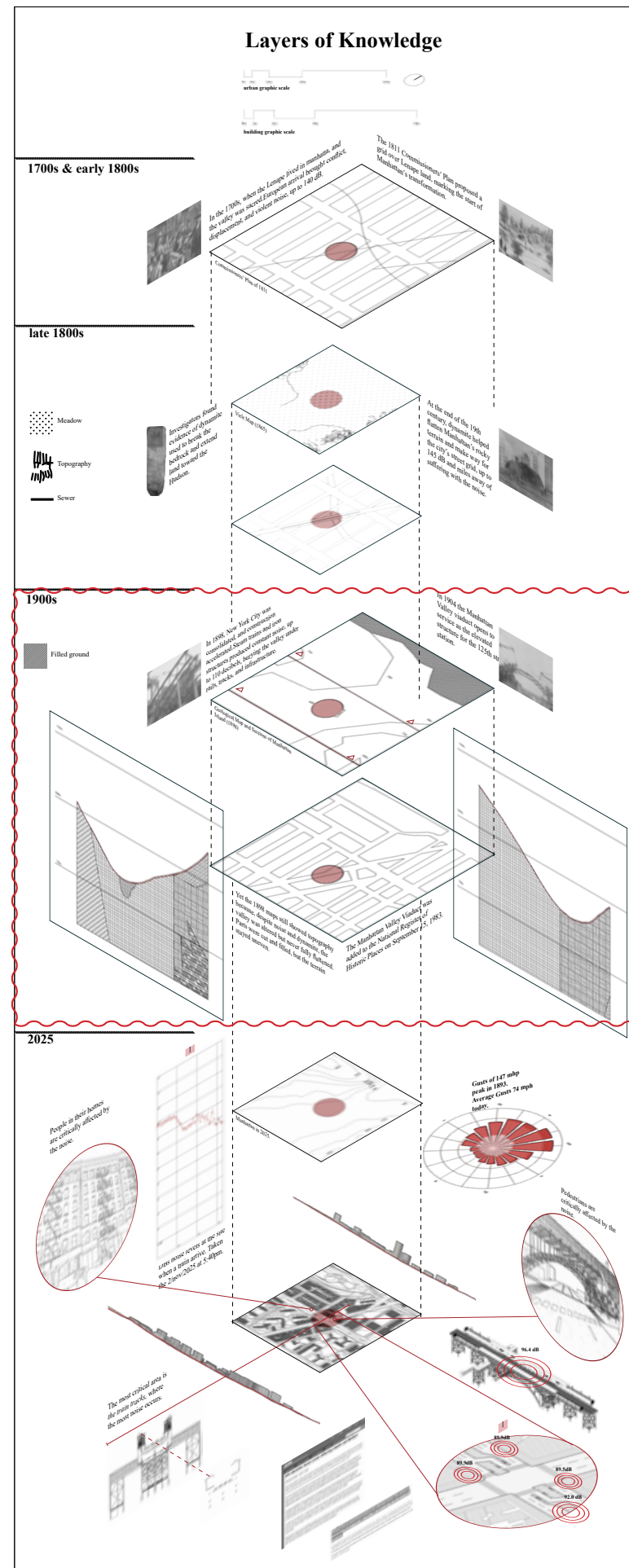
FORENSIC
ANALYSIS

This is the forensic analysis.
The investigation follows a
timeline, and the red dot on
the map marks the exact
point of intervention.



The forensic analysis reveals centuries of interventions that reshaped this valley—violence, explosions, construction, and constant noise.

The forensic analysis reveals centuries of interventions that reshaped this valley—violence, explosions, construction, and constant noise.



From this, I identified two main issues:

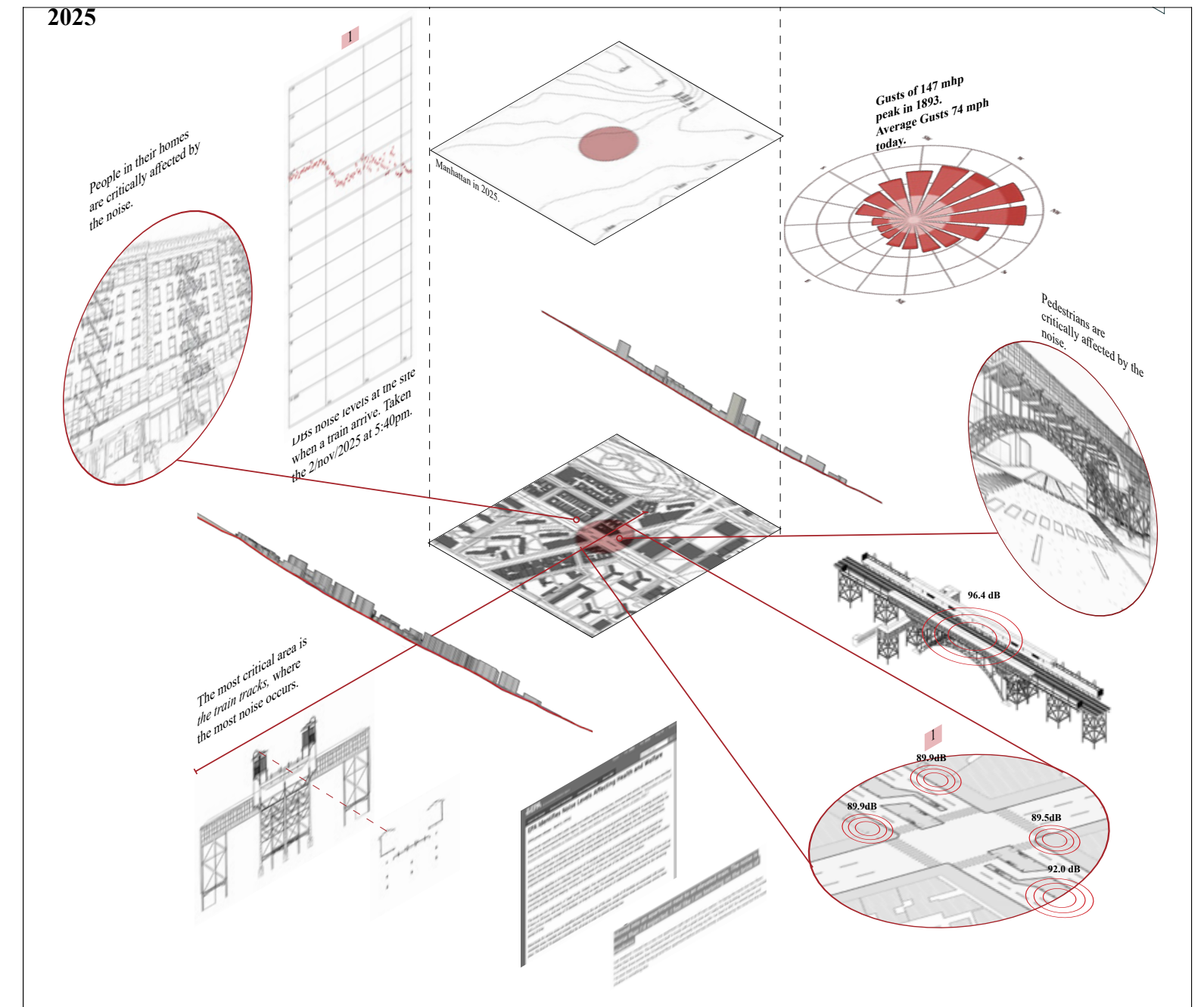
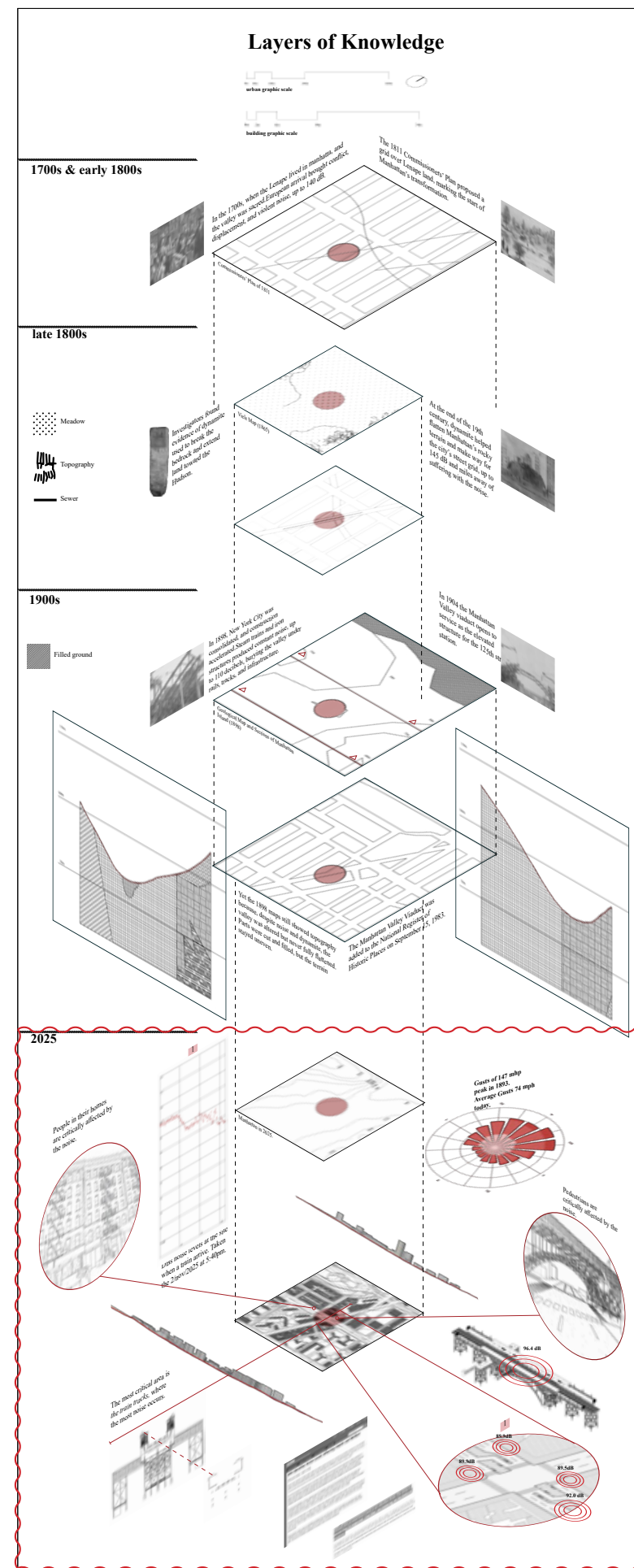
Issue #1: Obsolescence
Old infrastructures continue
to affect the health and
experience of pedestrians.

Issue #2: Temporal Memory
The past survives in traces—
sacred, industrial, and
violent.

Architecture must learn to listen to these silent residues without becoming trapped by them.

The Manhattan Valley railroad is one of these traces.

It should not be erased, but transformed through care.



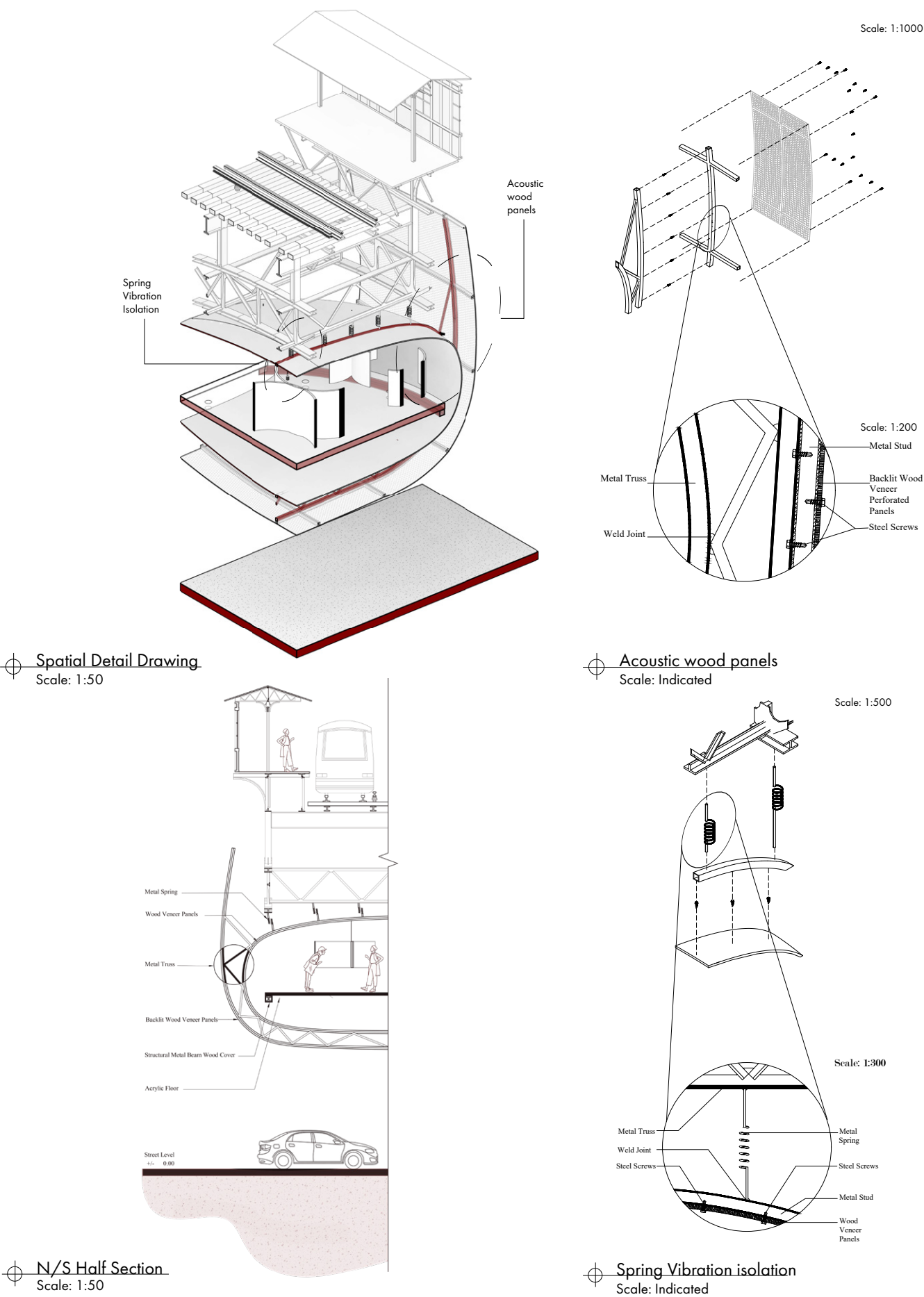
ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS



Site Plan
No Scale

Sound-absorbing materials

- Grass Porous acoustic clay Hemp-clay Earth (soil)

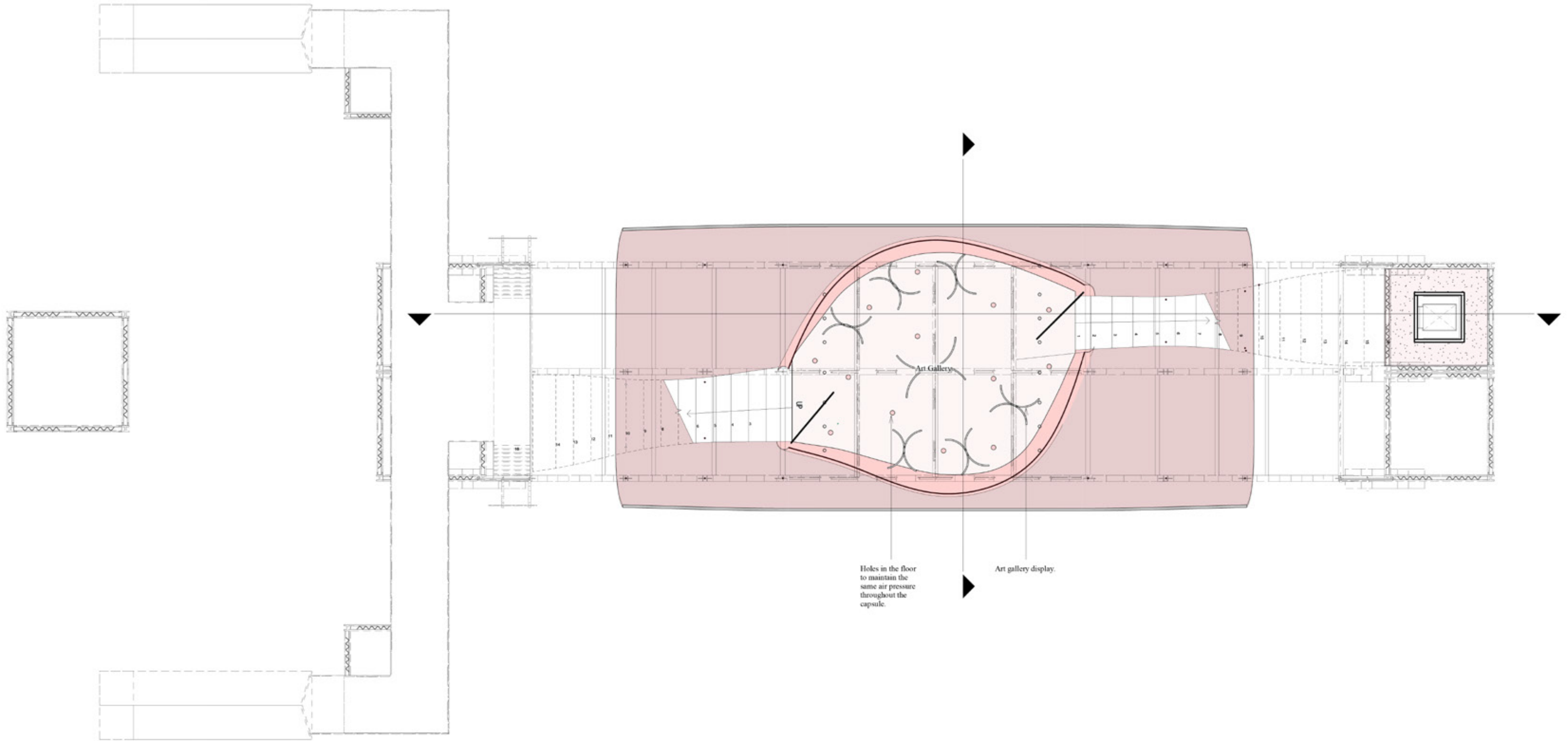


Spatial Detail Drawing
Scale: 1:50

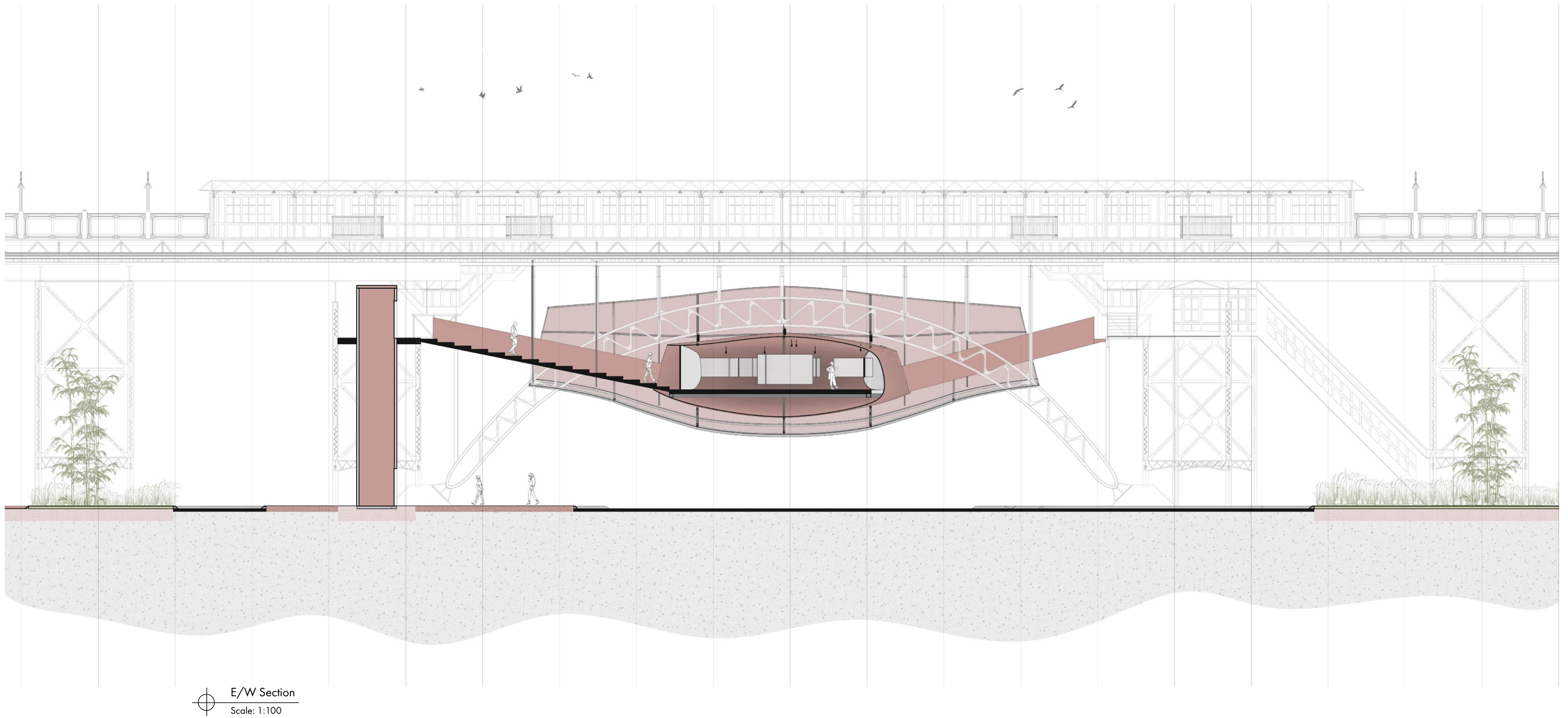
Acoustic wood panels
Scale: Indicated

N/S Half Section
Scale: 1:50

Spring Vibration isolation
Scale: Indicated




 Floor Plan
 Scale: 1:100



We have the elevator, which is similar to the Knowledge Box. It works as an acoustic box. It is covered with wood and acrylic, which are materials that help absorb sound, as you can see here. This elevator takes you to the zero point, where the noise levels will be at its lowest.

The skin panels are made of perforated backlit wood veneer. They allow the strong wind in that area to pass through while protecting both the capsule and the pedestrians going to the art gallery.

Because the panels are backlit, they do not make the space dark, but keep the environment bright and clear. Is as well acoustic for both pedestrian in the streets and the ones going to the gallery.

The Capsule, a suspended wooden gallery beneath the viaduct acts as a living interface between the outside world and inner awareness.

When the door closes, the Capsule becomes still, creating a moment of reflection where sound/music and experience settle into knowledge/music.

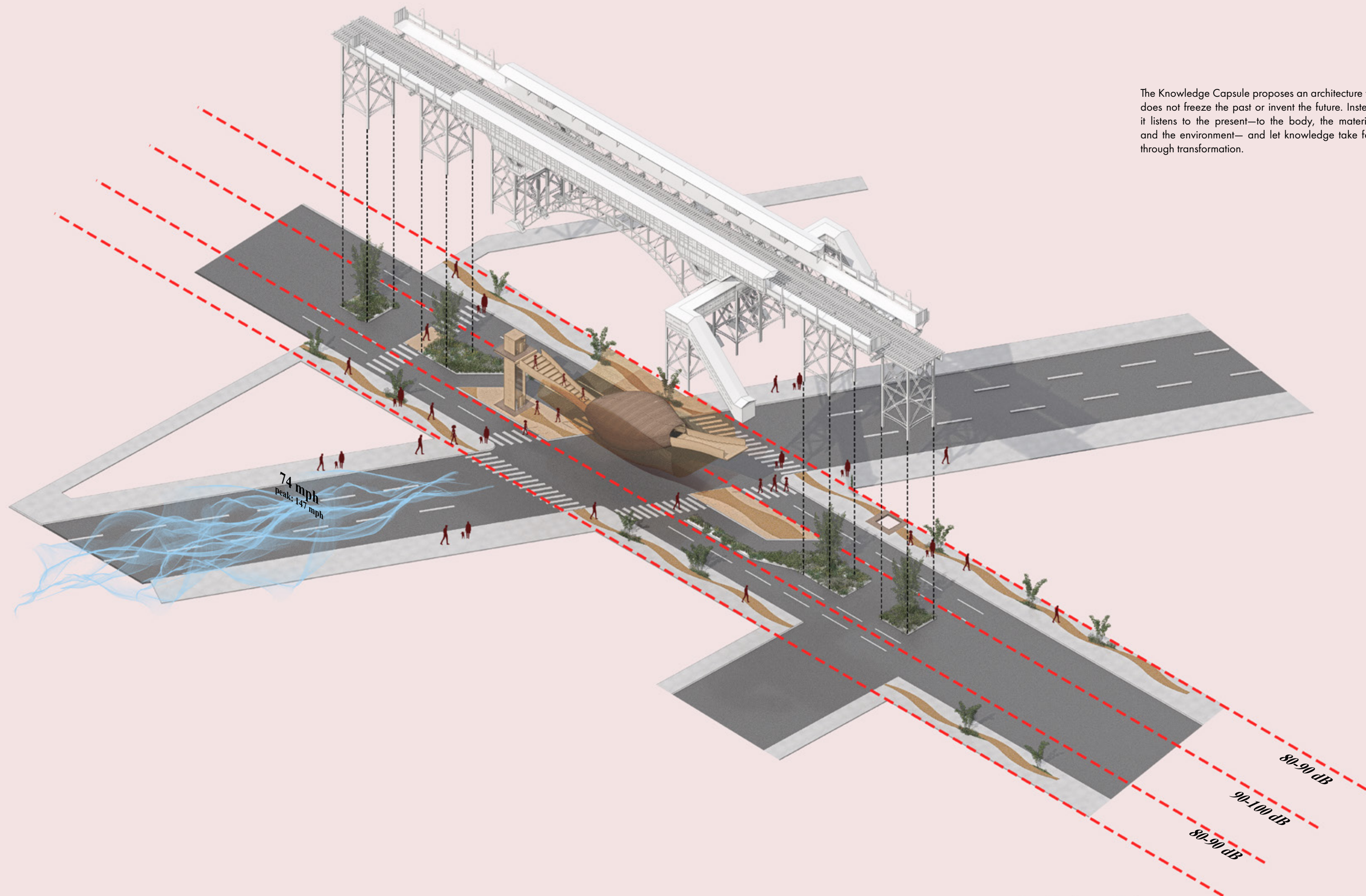
Inside, visitors experience a curated atmosphere shaped by the controlled decibel levels of passing trains.

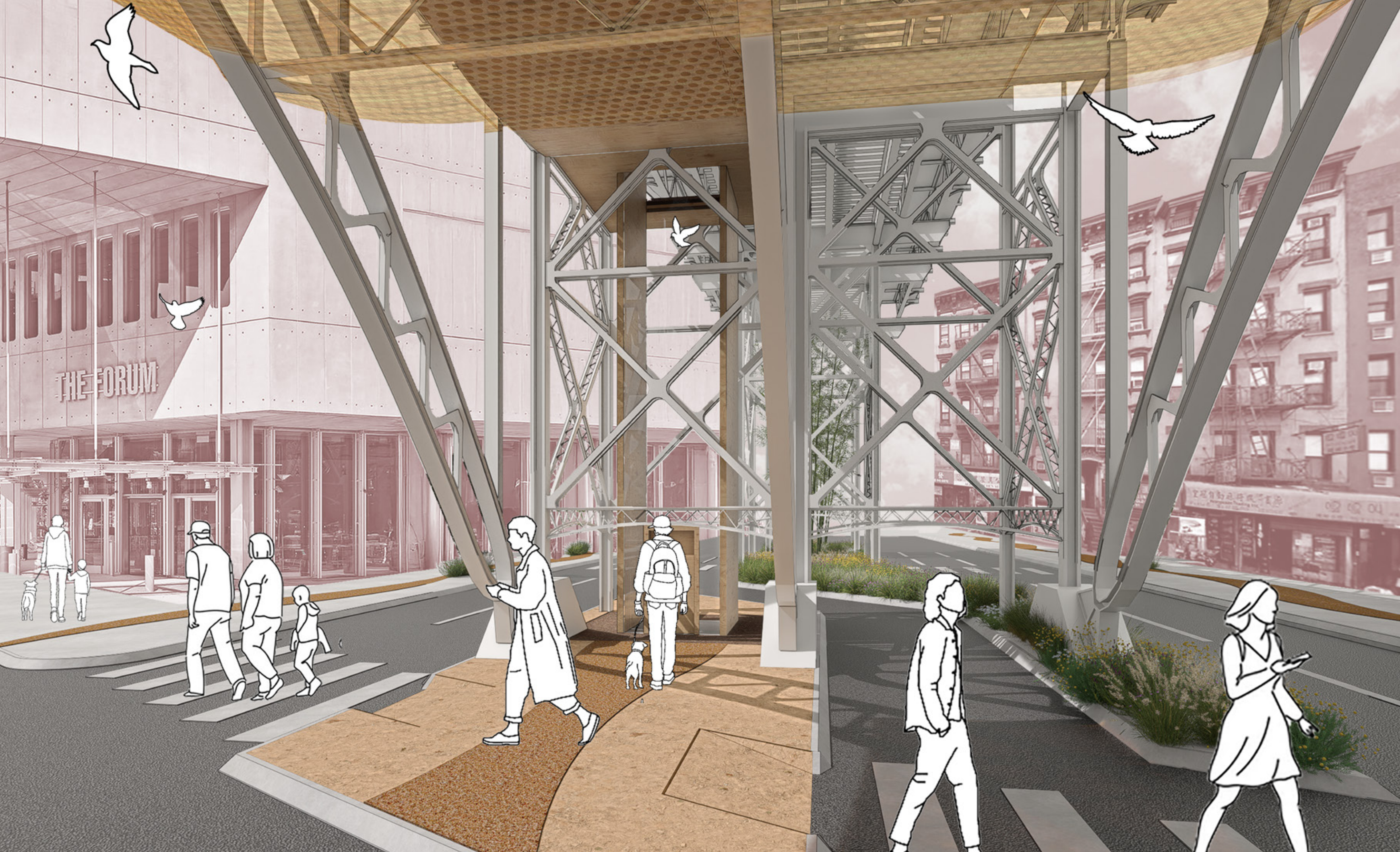
Manhattan Valley carries a long history of noise and pollution—a history of violence carried through sound.

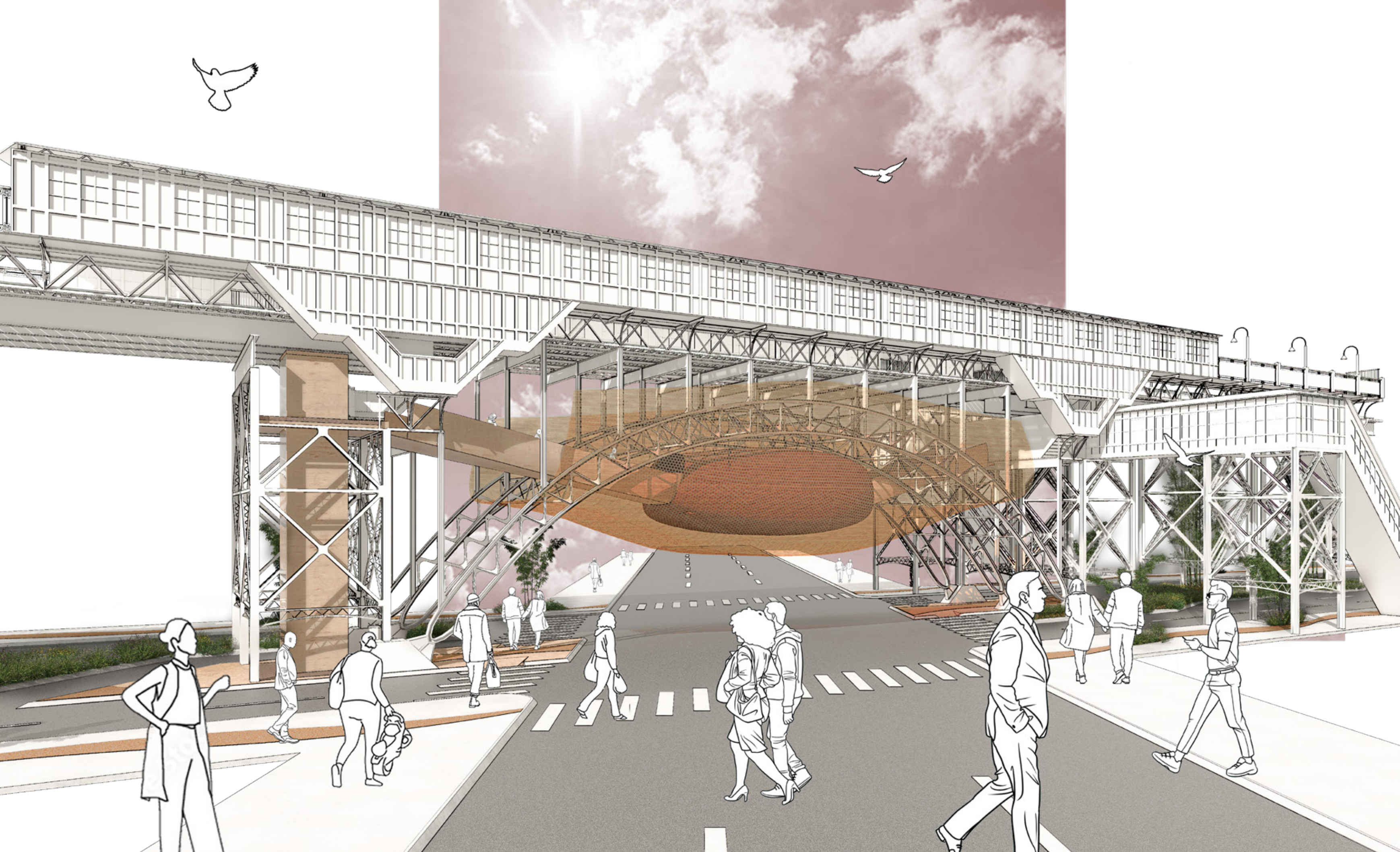
The Capsule acknowledges that story by transforming it into something that teaches and cares.

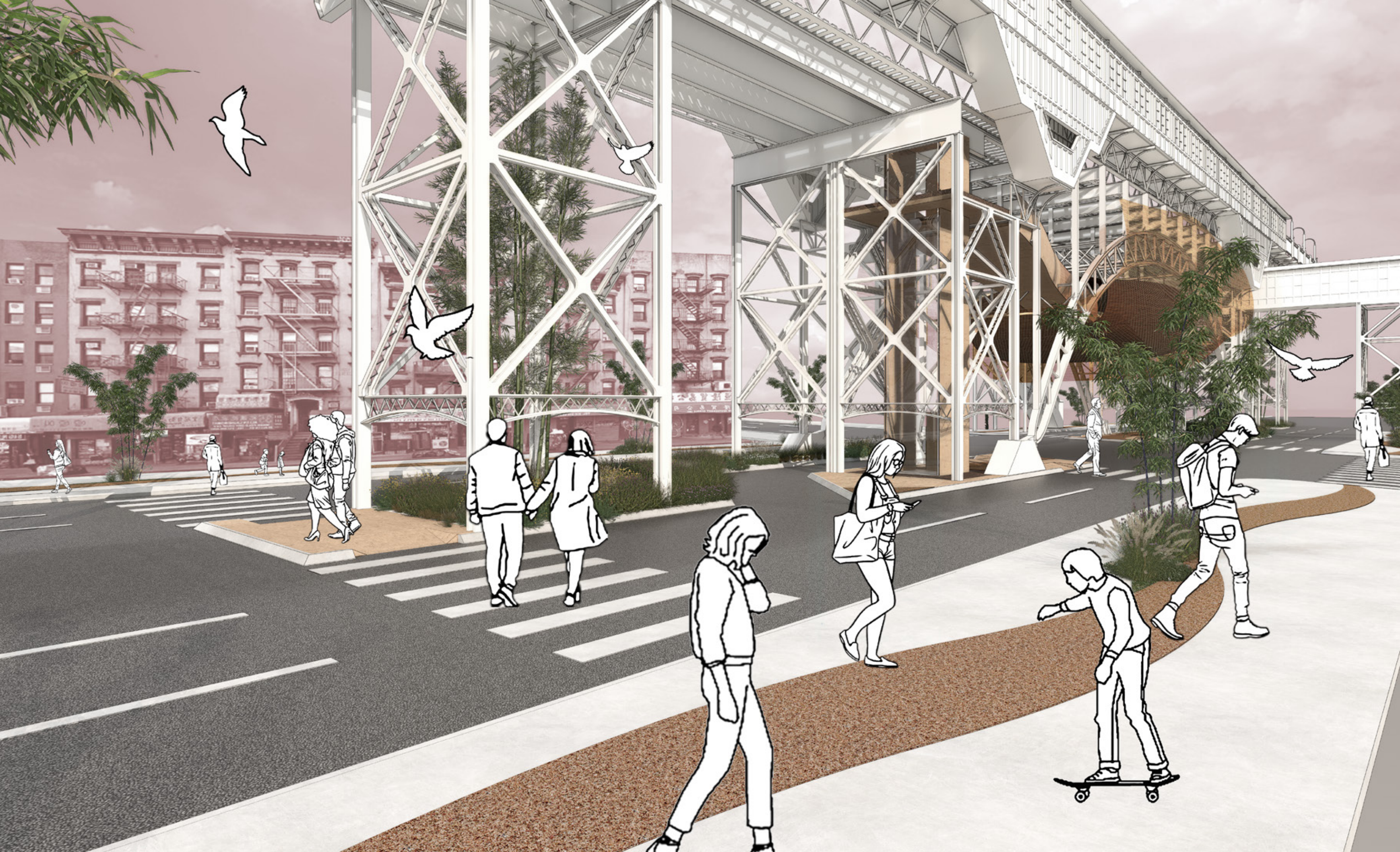
Vibrations of the resonance box of the guitar have been studied by means of the modal analysis technique.

The Knowledge Capsule proposes an architecture that does not freeze the past or invent the future. Instead, it listens to the present—to the body, the materials, and the environment— and let knowledge take form through transformation.











Challenging the status quo of curves equals feminine in architecture

Transculturalities, Summer 2025

GAP I: Design & Typography, Spring 2026

Professor: Lucia Galaretto, Yoonjai Choi

Author: Karla Dominguez



Manifesto: “A boring, ‘masculine’ layout built to debunk the myth of ‘feminine’ curves”

Challenging the *Status Quo* of Curves Equals Feminine in Architecture

“Simple information about the power of curves and the women in architecture.”

VOL. CLXIX... No. 58,703 ©2026 Columbia University NEW YORK, SUNDAY, MAY 05, 2026 \$15.00

INTRODUCTION.

Architecture is often seen through gendered lenses, linking femininity to curved forms—as renown Brazilian architect Oscar Niemeyer famously did. However, women’s rights activist Dr. Rebecca Gompert defies this point by challenging the form in architecture with her project Women’s on Waves. This project expresses femininity in architecture through purpose rather than shape. Similarly, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky challenged the point of view of domestic roles with the Frankfurt Kitchen, using design to question a women’s role at home.

This research paper argues that curves are not directly linked to female form, as the American psychoanalyst Erik Homburger Erikson stated they are. By questioning the point of view equating female to curves, it is possible to discover that architecture can redefine design by purpose rather than shape, challenging political roles as feminism and female social roles. The reason the designer has chosen to

make the creation can express the feminine.

Through this document, my intention is to turn the page around and look at architecture as the idea that form and volume aren’t the only ways to assign gender to architecture; through its purpose, we can address gender topics. Political themes like feminism and gender roles in society are discussed later, and all are directly related to the feminine gender through architecture.

CURVES EQUALS FEMININE.

Brazilian modernist architect Oscar Niemeyer, strongly believed in creating architectural curves resembling naked female bodies. He is a male from 1950s who used to get exalted by women curvilinear body. The following quote reinforces this idea:

“I am not attracted to straight angles or the straight line, hard and inflexible, created by man. I am attracted to free-flowing, sensual curves. The curves that I find ... is on the body

of the beloved woman.”¹

The following image (Fig. 1) shows an original sketch of Niemeyer’s Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói. This particular sketch seems very schematic and has the naked body of a woman laying down in the foreground. Her silhouette is presented in a continuous stroke that follows the outline of her back and arm. The sketch shows possibly the first intentions of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói as well as curved silhouettes of mountains far behind. The composition of the sketch seems to present the idea of a play between the female figure and the building, as if both ideas share the same curved morphology. One of the buttocks of the woman lying in front is identical to what appears to be the museum. However, in this case, the museum is upside down, contrasting with the straight horizontal line of the floor, perhaps to emphasize the morphological contrast.

After some years, Oscar

1. Rethinking the Future, “King Vs the Queen of Curves (Oscar Niemeyer Vs Zaha Hadid),” Rethinking Future, accessed July 20, 2025, <https://www.re-thinkingthefuture.com/know-your-architects/a11688-king-vs-the-queen-of-curves-oscar-niemeyer-vs-zaha-hadid/>

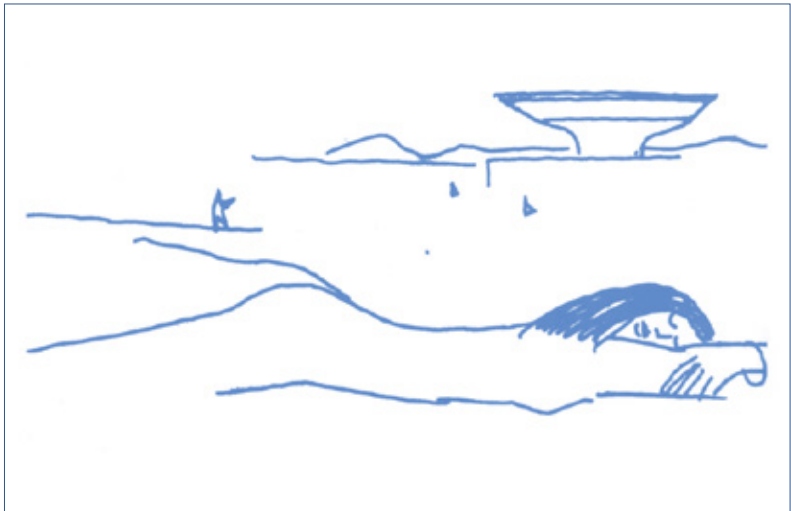


Figure 1: Sketches Oscar Niemeyer of MAC Niterói (Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói) Source: Rethinking the Future, "King Vs the Queen of Curves (Oscar Niemeyer Vs Zaha Hadid)," Rethinking Future, accessed July 20, 2025, Source: <https://www.rethinkingthefuture.com/known-your-architects/a11688-king-vs-the-queen-of-curves-oscar-niemeyer-vs-zaha-hadid/>.

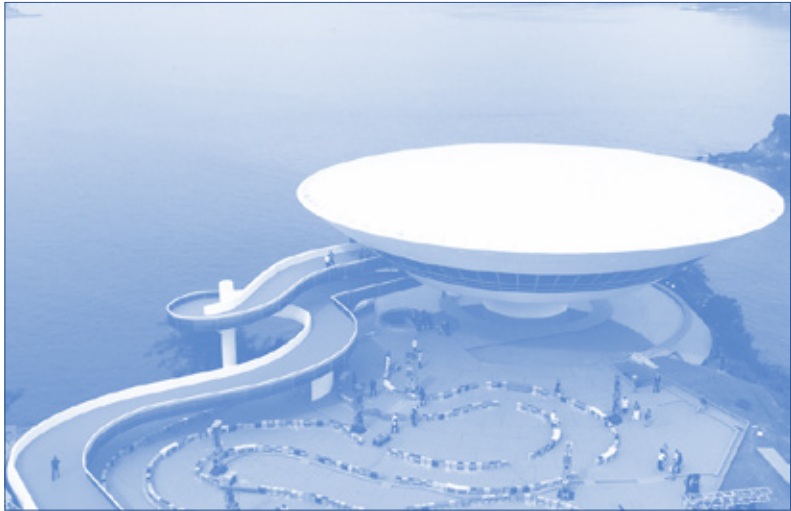


Figure 2: Free-flowing sensual curves of MAC Niterói (Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói) Source: "MAC-Niterói," Null Society, May 9, 2025, accessed July 20, 2025, <https://www.nullsociety.co/encyclopedia/mac-niteroi>

Niemeyer finally could realize the museum. In the following image (Fig. 2) today's photograph of the Museu de Arte Contemporânea de Niterói in Brazil. The photograph shows a real finalized building with the curve of the women. The

visual experience of the red color accent reminds the viewer of a women's leg extended, welcoming men to enter to her atmosphere. The main body of the building (circular upside-down dome) is like the breast of the women. From the

previews sketch shown to the real building pictures, both images share the same connection between curves & female morphology.

Niemeyer did not create the concept of curves depicting feminine aesthetics, it reflects a larger cultural construction. In 1951, German American psychoanalyst Erik Erikson carried out a study in which he recruited 150 girls and boys to test their ways of thinking through design. The findings understand how architecture helped me internalize the topic of gender where curves equal feminine. His research demonstrates that, in their drawings, there was a culturally and socially constructed tendency: girls looked for security, enclosed forms and interior spaces, while boys drew many open spaces, high towers and long streets. Erikson concluded that spatial perception plays an important role in the construction reflected by sexual morphology.² The results demonstrated how social stereotypes influenced how we see gender in architecture.

Gender in architecture is not only a feeling that a well-known architect used in his design concepts but is a cultural construction of thoughts that

2. Report, Tbs. "Understanding the Gender Implications of Architecture." The Business Standard, May 28, 2024. Accessed July 13, 2025. <https://www.tbsnews.net/features/habitat/t-gender-implications-architecture-862421>.

have grown between the passes of the years. Oscar Niemeyer was victim of the cultural construction stating where men's equals straight and women equals curves.

GENDER BEYOND FORM CHALLENGING POLITICAL ROLES.

How can architecture be seen through the gender lens but not through female form but through purpose challenging political roles? Women on Waves, a project by Dutch physician and women's rights activist Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, challenges traditional ideas about what makes architecture feminine. The architecture she designs is not curved or decorated in a 1950s mindset labeled as feminine in the curved shape sense. No curvilinear structure, not even a simple one. Instead, the architecture of Gomperts which is a ship. It is interesting because it is a ship, not a building. The architecture of this ship³ seems oxidated, not safe and has a long open deck. The interiors are straightforward in terms of walls and furniture. There's no sense of Horror Vacui, which in Latin means overcrowded or full of details and curve elements.

3. Hans Hollein, "Everything Is Architecture," Design Manifestos, May 26, 2020, <https://designmanifestos.org/hans-hollein-everything-is-architecture/>.



Figure 3: The Women on Waves ship. Source: "Interview with Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, Founder of Women on Waves and Women on Web," Women on Web, 2025, accessed July 10, 2025, <https://www.womenonweb.org/en/page/20348/interview-with-dr.-rebecca-gomperts-founder-of-women-on-waves-and>.



Figure 4: The Women on Waves ship docked off the coast of Ireland (2001), where abortion was then illegal. The ship's presence created both media attention and legal ambiguity, turning the architecture into a symbol of resistance. Source: "Interview with Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, Founder of Women on Waves and Women on Web," Women on Web, 2025, accessed July 10, 2025, <https://www.womenonweb.org/en/page/20348/interview-with-dr.-rebecca-gomperts-founder-of-women-on-waves-and>.

This architecture offers abortion services on board in countries where this right is illegal. The ship navigates into international waters, where it is possible to practice the medical services of abortion with abortion pills. Women with less economical resources have access to this dignified right. In this way, Gomperts saves lives by making safe proce-

dures and preventing complicated medical issues. This architecture is feminine because of what it does: it reclaims restricted territory by turning international waters into an act of female bodies autonomy.

Dr. Rebecca Gomperts argues in an interview done by Geena and Hazal the following:

“Women on Waves made news worldwide, abortion was front page news everywhere!”⁴

The ship not only worked as an architectural medium to generate justice and bring women abortion rights in places where there is no right, but it also generated tension in the mass media as you can read in the quote above. It as well delivered the message of liberty and women rights to the world. The following photo (Fig. 4) shows how the grand opening of The Women on Waves Ship in 2001 generated a great deal of attention and noise in the media.

The Women on Waves project reimagines architecture as a tool for generating political tension in favor to feminine rights rather than a visual expression of gender. Women on Waves goes beyond form.

GENDER BEYOND FORM CHALLENGING FEMALE SOCIAL ROLES.

How can architecture be seen through the gender lens, not through female form but through purpose challenging female social roles? Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky's Frankfurt Kitchen is often remembered as a model of efficiency, according to IDEO's design researcher Nadia Surtees, but its deeper meaning impact lies in how it reimagined the roles of women in the home.⁵

The following image (Fig. 5) shows the Frankfurt Kitchen technical plans. It is compact (3.44m long by 1.90m deep). The sink, work surface, and stove are in a “U” shape so that there's little walking involved. There are cabinets above and below just where you'll need to store utensils, pots, and spices. It also includes a folding ironing board next to the sink, which folds down to save space. It shows modularity, no decoration, no curved lines, and industrialized design.

Fig. 6 shows the person's waist level, the countertop sits slightly lower than standard. By comparing the height to the work surface, you can see it

measures 80cm from the floor, precisely the minimum recommended according to Neufert's standards for a functional kitchen countertop. It tells me that the design of the Frankfurt kitchen was intentionally designed to have everything to its minimum dimensions. This makes me think that to grab something from the opposite side of the kitchen it is not necessary to walk many steps to get there. When everything is close and compact, it is easier, efficient and faster to work in this kitchen.

Surtees grandmother, Ruth Kandel, was alive during the launch of the Frankfurt Kitchen in the 1920s, where at the time women were told their place was “Kirche, Küche, Kinder” (church, kitchen, children). Kandel loved contributing to the world outside of her home as a lawyer and social worker. Frankfurt Kitchen didn't liberate women by taking them out of the kitchen, instead it allowed that housework is and should be treated as a skilled and valuable work worthy of good and purposeful design. The Frankfurt Kitchen was radical in the sense that it also challenged these dominant, limiting and antiquated ideals

4. “Interview With Dr. Rebecca Gomperts, Founder of Women on Waves and Women on Web,” Women on Web, 2025, accessed July 10, 2025, <https://www.womenonweb.org/en/page/20348/interview-with-dr-rebecca-gomperts-founder-of-women-on-waves-and>.

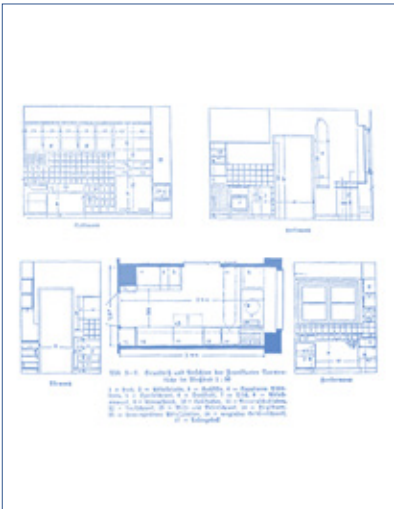


Figure 5: The Frankfurt Kitchen (1926), designed by Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky. The compact, factory-inspired layout emphasized efficiency. Source: Hidden Architecture, “Frankfurt Kitchen - Hidden Architecture,” Hidden Architecture, March 18, 2019, accessed July 17, 2025, <https://hiddenarchitecture.net/frankfurt-kitchen/>.



Figure 6: A visitor to the exhibition the Frankfurt Kitchen. Source: Nadia Surtees, “The Kitchen Designer Who Helped Women Get Out of the Kitchen,” IDEO, March 2018, accessed July 20, 2025, <https://www.ideo.com/journal/the-kitchen-designer-who-helped-women-get-out-of-the-kitchen>.

of gender expectations, by offering a new vision feminine empowerment to make chores

go faster to open time to do anything else.⁶

By treating kitchen chores as a fast and efficient process, like in an industry line of process factory, where the design becomes sleek and, in a way, straight to the point, it pushes back against the old idea of femininity of softness and curves. And it turned the kitchen into a workspace challenging assumption of expressing gender roles only through form but through purpose. Frankfurt Kitchen goes beyond form challenging female social roles.

CONCLUSION.

This essay has argued that curves and straight lines in architecture are not deep-rooted gendered. Instead, our assumptions about “feminine” forms are cultural constructs that ignore the deeper political, social, and functional meanings of space. Oscar Niemeyer, a Brazilian architect active in the 1950s, is known for designs such as the Niterói Museum of Contemporary Art, which features curved shapes inspired by the female form. On the other hand, Dr. Rebecca Gomperts founder of Women on Waves project shows how architecture can be used as a feminist tool, not through its

shape but through its purpose and disruption of legal and social boundaries. Similarly, Margarete Schütte-Lihotzky with the Frankfurt Kitchen challenged traditional ideas about domestic femininity by treating the kitchen as a site of respectful work, saving working hours to women so they could do something different than church, kitchen, children.

By looking beyond, the surface of form and questioning the gendered assumptions placed on architecture, we begin to see that the meaning in design is not shaped by gender, it is shaped by intention, context, and the ability to challenge the status quo.

5. Surtees, Nadia. “The Kitchen Designer Who Helped Women Get Out of the Kitchen.” IDEO, March 2018. Accessed July 20, 2025. <https://www.ideo.com/journal/the-kitchen-designer-who-helped-women-get-out-of-the-kitchen>.

6. Nadia Surtees, “The Kitchen Designer Who Helped Women Get Out of the Kitchen,” IDEO, March 2018, accessed July 20, 2025, <https://www.ideo.com/journal/the-kitchen-designer-who-helped-women-get-out-of-the-kitchen>.

COMPLEXITY IS A MATTER OF ENGINEERING, NOT GENDER.



“People used to think women did not have enough logic. Well, that is absolute nonsense... Mathematics, for me, was like drawing. We would play with math problems just as we would play with pens and paper. My architecture is based on that logic.” — Zaha Hadid

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GEOMETRY HAS NO GENDER



“The arch is a pure mathematical form. The catenary curve is a shape of absolute structural logic and pure compression... it seemed to me to be the only shape that had the power to represent the spirit of the western pioneers.” — Eero Saarinen.

NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCEMENT

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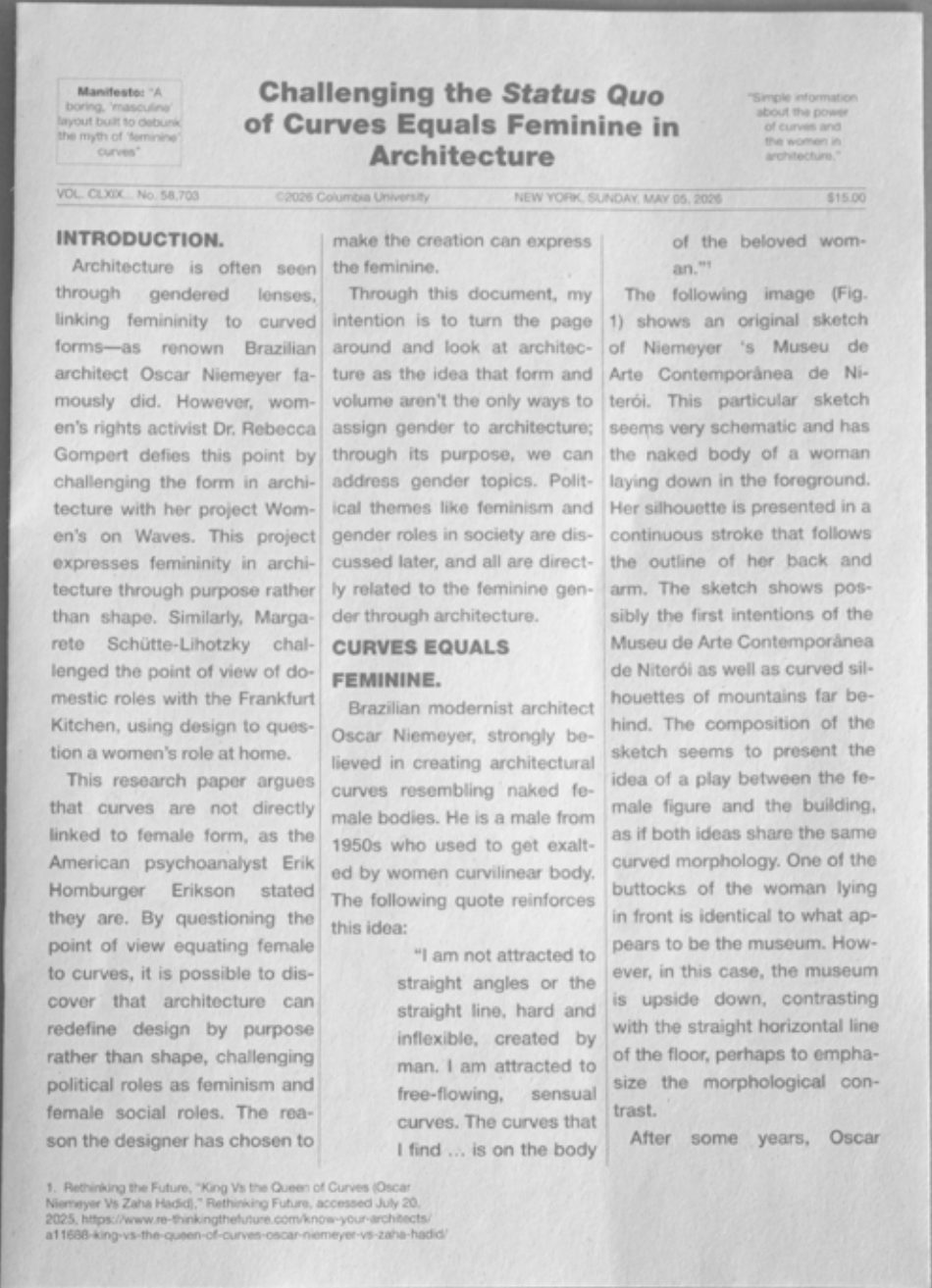
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C O L O P H O N
This document, titled Challenging the Status Quo of Curves Equals Feminine in Architecture, was designed, edited and written by Karla Dominguez. Produced at Columbia University, New York, Spring 2026. Typeset entirely in Helvetica Neue. Archive No. 01 — Geometry Has No Gender.





Festival of Care

Advanced Studio VI, Spring 2026

Professor: Jayden Ali, Chloe Munkenbeck

Author: Karla Dominguez

DOCUMENTING EVERYDAY CARE

The photographs included in this collage were taken by me along Nagle Avenue inside Dominican-owned businesses in Washington Heights, New York. I documented workers and everyday interactions within these spaces as part of my research process. While a

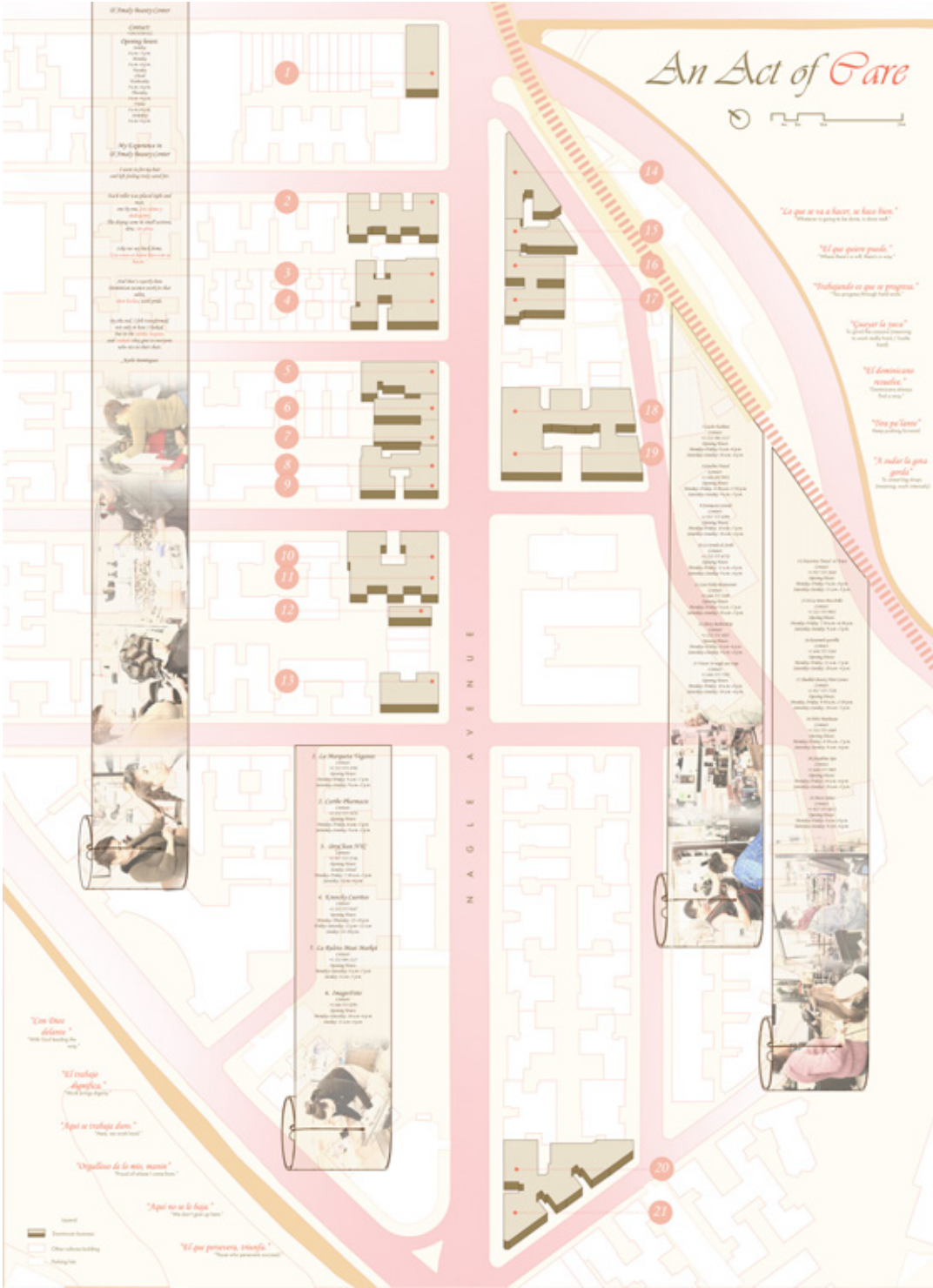
few people preferred not to be photographed, most were welcoming and open to participating. Their kindness and generosity reflect the atmosphere of trust, attention, and care that exists within these businesses and that this project seeks to extend into public space.



AN ACT OF CARE

This poster maps and catalogs Dominican-owned businesses located along Nagle Avenue in Washington Heights, New York. It includes business names, addresses, and contact information as a way of connecting visitors to the local Dominican community and encouraging cultural exchange through everyday spaces of care. The poster also incorporates common Spanish phrases

frequently heard within the Dominican diaspora in Washington Heights, translated into English to make these expressions accessible to a broader audience. Through language, mapping, and local networks, the poster highlights the social atmosphere and cultural identity embedded within the avenue.



COLLAGE

This collage represents the mood, atmosphere, and materiality of the proposal. The photographs of people were taken by me inside Dominican-owned businesses along Nagle Avenue in Washington Heights, New York. The images capture everyday moments of care expressed through kindness, attention, conversation, and hospitality. In these spaces, the interaction between worker and client goes beyond a simple transaction; it becomes a social exchange grounded in presence and trust. The collage highlights these everyday practices of Dominican care and explores how they can extend from the interior of local businesses into shared public space.



ROLO TAPESTRY

This wall tapestry is mounted on burlap fabric and combines linen textile, dye sublimation printing, and sewn hair extensions. The photographs, taken by me inside Dominican-owned businesses along Nagle Avenue in Washington Heights, were dye-sublimated onto linen and presented as hanging strips over the burlap surface. The hanging pieces reference rolled hair extensions commonly found in Dominican beauty salons, one of

the most emblematic spaces documented during my fieldwork. The overall composition is inspired by an abstracted reading of the urban geometry of Nagle Avenue and Washington Heights. Through texture, materiality, and photography, the tapestry explores everyday Dominican practices of care as a spatial and cultural experience.



ROLO LAMP

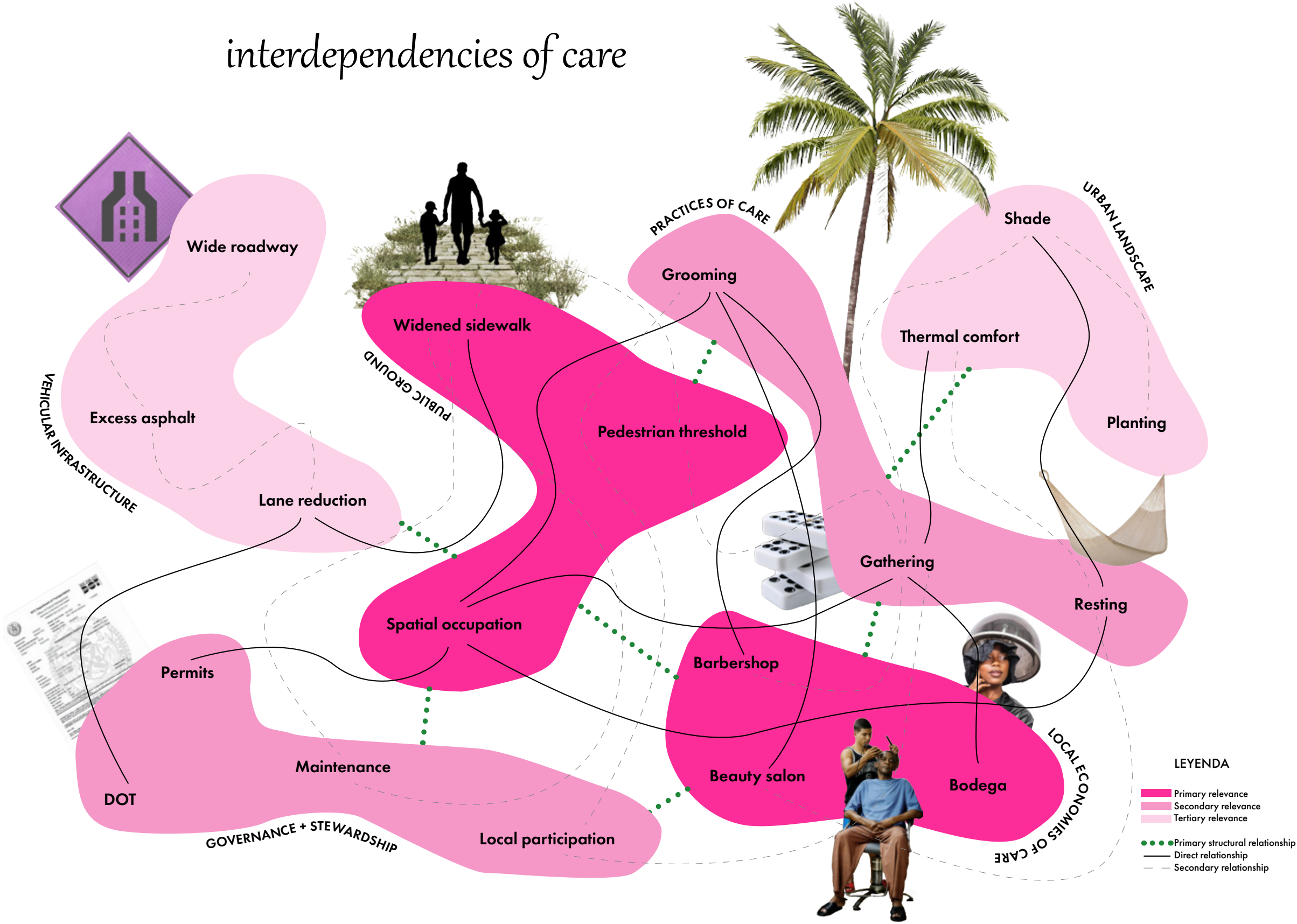
Rolo Lamp represents a second interaction of Dominican care on Nagle Avenue. Using the same dye sublimation technique as The Wall Tapestry, the photographs were rolled and layered to form the lamp's hair-like surface, referencing the hair rollers commonly found in Dominican beauty salons.

When illuminated, the hanging textile "hair" glows softly, symbolizing how Dominican care radiates warmth, attention, and kindness into the community. The lamp structure is wrapped in burlap fabric to continue the same Caribbean material language and tactile aesthetic explored throughout the project.



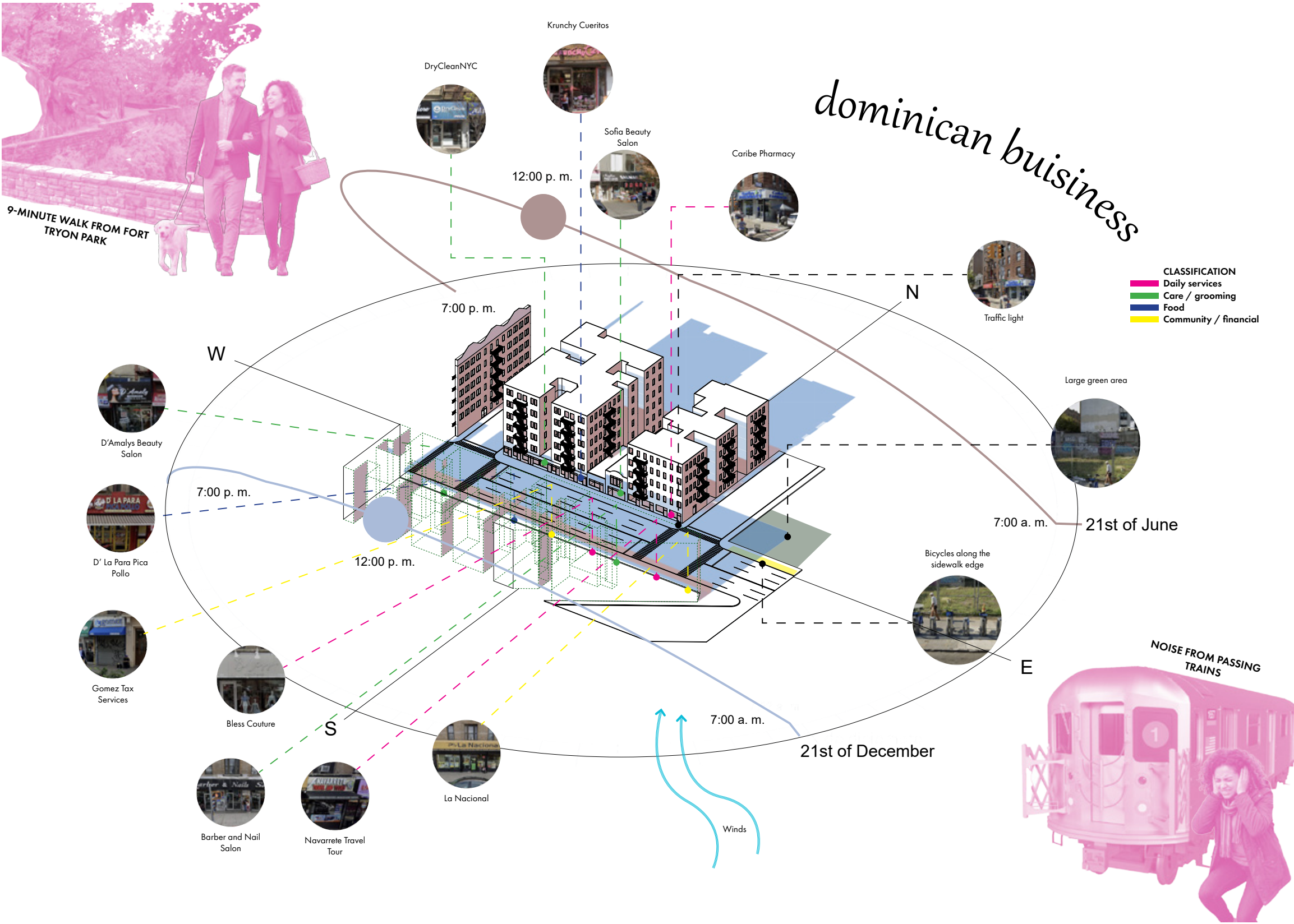
INTERDEPENDENCY
DIAGRAM

The interdependency diagram shows how care operates as a spatial, social, and institutional system. By reducing vehicular space and expanding the sidewalk, new public ground is created for Dominican practices of care such as grooming, gathering, and resting. The diagram maps the relationships between street infrastructure, local businesses, landscape, and governance, showing how each element depends on and supports the others.



SITE ANALYSIS

I developed a site analysis diagram mapping the Dominican businesses located along Noble Avenue. The businesses were classified by typology through a color-coded system. In addition, I analyzed environmental conditions including wind patterns, noise levels, spatial proximities, and the solar path, particularly in relation to the shadows projected onto the street throughout the day.





Resting

Quiet and shaded area for relaxation. People can sit, lie down, or rest in hammocks, offering a calm escape from the noise and movement of the street.

Care/Grooming

Space dedicated to personal care activities such as hair washing, braiding, and barbering. It extends indoor care practices into the street, creating moments of trust, conversation, and cultural exchange.

Gathering

Active social space centered around domino games, conversation, and music. It reflects Dominican street culture, where people gather, interact, and spend time together.

Legend

- 1. Domino Area
- 2. Hair Drying & Barber Area
- 3. Hair Washing Area
- 4. Hammock Resting Zone

FRAME #1

It rains on Nagle Avenue.

The street is narrow and empty.
People pass quickly, without looking at each other.

Nothing stays.



FRAME #2

Sometime later, the street begins to change.
The sidewalk expands.
Stone replaces asphalt.
Structures rise along the edge. Quiet.
Waiting.
Juan arrives first.
He owns a small barbershop nearby.
Inside, care has always been part of his work —
in conversation, in time, in trust.
Today, he steps outside.
Around him, others begin to activate the space.
Chairs appear. Tables. Shade.
A woman sits with rollers in her hair.
Someone plays dominoes.
The sound of the pieces
draws people closer.
Conversations begin.
The street feels slower.
A woman passes by.
She is not from here.
This time, she stops.
Someone offers her a seat.
She hesitates. Then sits.
A conversation begins.
What was once a place to pass through
becomes a place to stay.
Care moves between people —
through small gestures,
through presence,
through time shared together.
The boundary between inside and outside
disappears.
The street becomes a shared living room.



FRAME#3

By sunset, the atmosphere shifts.
Music fills the space.
The same people who were sitting
are now standing.
Then dancing.
The woman stands at the edge.
Juan walks toward her.
A red rose in his hand.
He offers it.
Then his hand.
She laughs, unsure.
He shows her the steps.
Slowly, they move together.
What was unfamiliar
becomes close.
What was distance
becomes rhythm.
By the end of the day,
she is no longer passing by.
She is part of it.
The street quiets down.
But something remains.
A way of being together —
where care is shared,
visible,
and alive.



Looking back at this portfolio feels strange. I can see almost an entire year of my life inside these pages. Projects, conversations, failures, materials, and long nights trying to understand what architecture could actually be.

I still remember when Nerea Calvillo said that the role of the architect is to create the conditions for ideas to happen. That sentence stayed with me throughout the year. Jayden Ali and Chloe made me realize that infrastructures are not only buildings, but systems that organize relationships, encounters, movement, and care. And Mario Gooden constantly brought the attention back to materiality, to the idea that meaning can exist in the smallest detail, texture, or interaction.

Now, at the end of this portfolio, I realize that many of these projects were searching for the same thing without me fully noticing it at the time. Not perfection, not control, not fixed answers — but ways of making space for ideas to unfold naturally.

