

Five Things (and a Series of Comments on Liberal Space, the Demise of the Square, and Alternatives for its Substitution)

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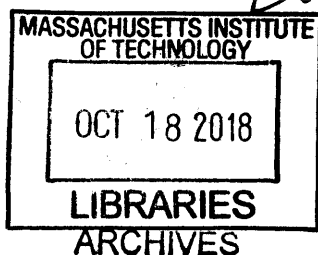
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Five Things (and a Series of Coments on Liberal Space, the Demise of the Square, and Thingly Alternatives for its Substitution).

By Sergio Galaz-García

Submitted to the Department of Architecture on August 10th, 2018, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Architecture.

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ABSTRACT

Few histories have defined contemporary cities as much as liberalism' betrayal of public space. In this history, few chapters have been as regrettable as the castration of the public square.

When it was only a fragile project, liberalism was nursed by the rich and diverse social life of public places. The square was a quintessential symbol of this condition: a place open socially and physically, a stage for regulated flirtation and proscribed desires, a dwelling for market activities and political discussion. A space, in sum, pregnant with the possibilities to recognize (practically if not consciously), the link between formal politics –that of the crown, the congress and the ballot, and the more pervasive register of the political –the inherent power dynamics governing everyday human experience.

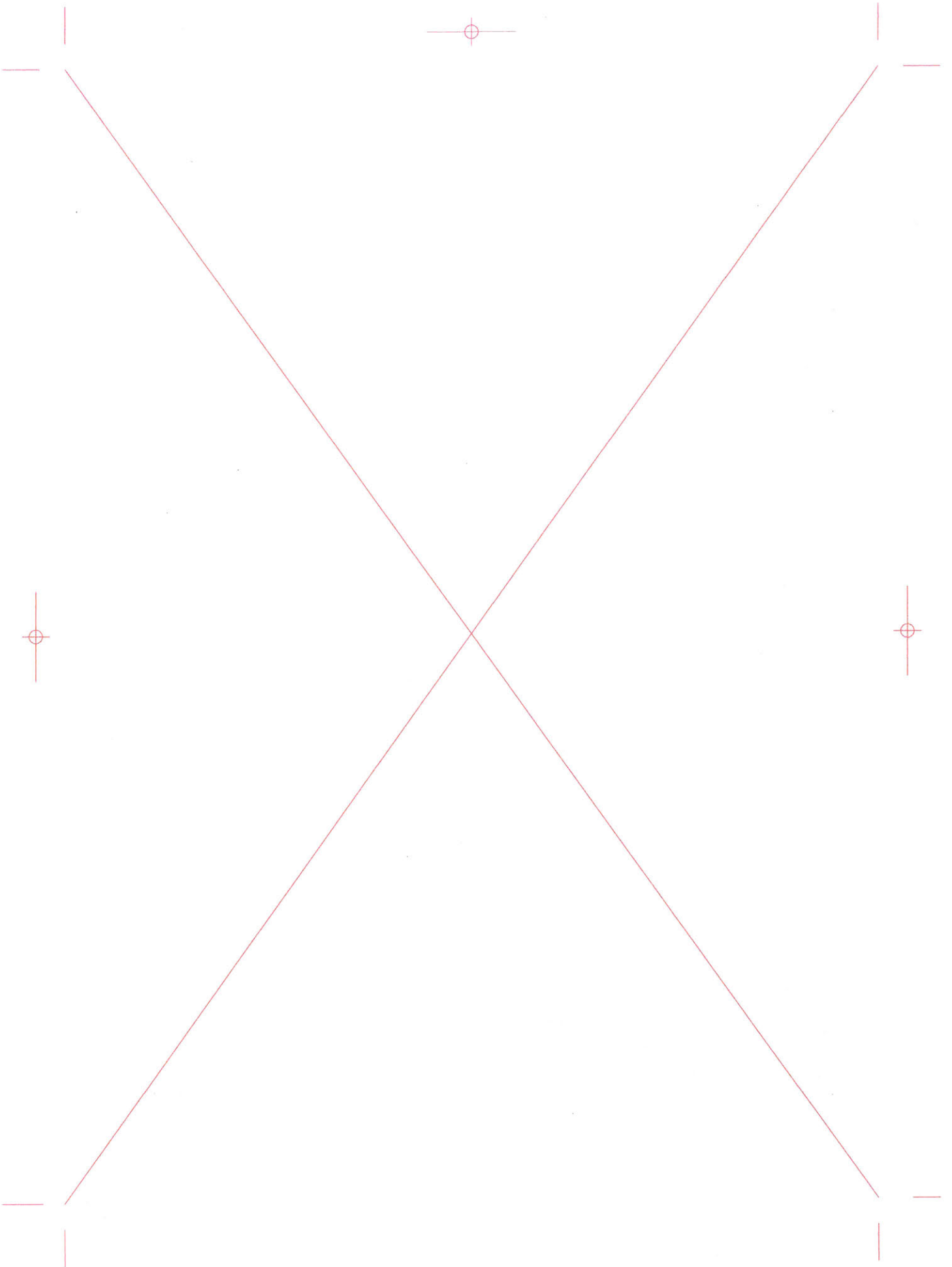
After liberal hegemony, the square has been fattened and stupefied, and its programmatic independence compromised by its use as an open-air frame for official buildings, condemned to glorify officials from the same political regime that betrayed it. The social and plurality of squares has disappeared, and is nowhere to be found in the new areas with which liberalism has stuffed the public sphere:

shards that are just as accessible as they are socially barren, and consumption zones subservient to a bland, pre-packaged and consumable forms of diversity.

Against this backdrop, this thesis experiments with conceptual designs of public sociability spaces in five different coordinates of the representative democratic world: São Paulo (Brazil), Tixtla (Mexico), Hénin-Beaumont (France), Madrid, (Spain), and Sanford (United States). Each of this cities carries an emblematic place emblematic of contemporary public homogenization processes that was chosen as the specific site of these efforts.

The resulting proposals do not aspire to become self-referential objects, but relational things. Their projectivity seeks to be completed via their friction between their physicality and the programmatic imagination of those choosing to become present in them, be them political activists, teenage lovers, or Mormon preachers.

In sum, they aspire to become instigators of discussions related to the role that architecture can play for a form of social imagination anchored in the recognition of otherness rather than of social singularity.



[TITLE]

Five Things

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comments on
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for its substitution.


- Acknowledgments -

An individual achievement is always a communal manufacture, and this thesis –the culmination of the architectural adventure I embarked upon four years ago, is no exception.


This thesis would not have been possible without the trust, intelligence and intellectual empathy of Joel Lamere, Roi Salgueiro and Timothy Hyde, the members of my thesis committee. I am grateful for the commitment and trust and consistently sharp feedback that Professor Hyde gave to to my thesis, given his limited time availability when it was being produced. I am also in debt to constant support, motivation and intellectual empathy I received from Roi Salgueiro all throughout the thesis making processes, but perhaps more importantly, in the classrooms and in our meetings outside them. For Professor Lamere, this was true from the first day that I entered MIT.

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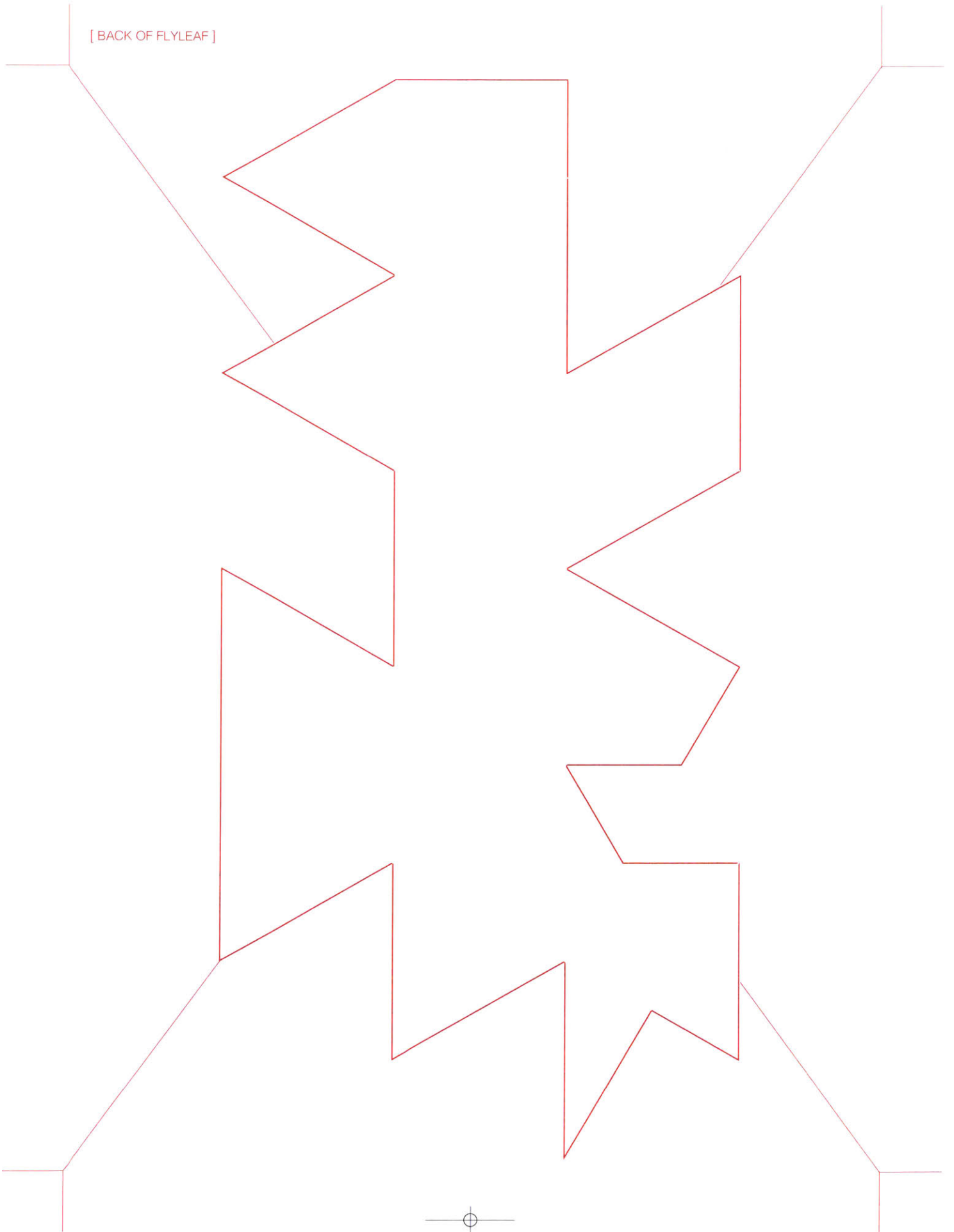
The life advise, support and sheer love I received from Adrien DeGeorges, Guillermo Toral, Ricardo Rivera, Tania Islas, Austin Smith and Tyler Swingle was also fundamental in the past four years. I am happy and priveleged to count them as my friends.

Last but not least, this Thesis is a testimony to the permanent and ubreakable and support I have received from Edith and Fernando, my parents, through the projects with which I have decided to make my life meaningul. I will be in debt to them for making them possible in every possible way.

To all of you, thank you.



[BACK OF FLYLEAF]



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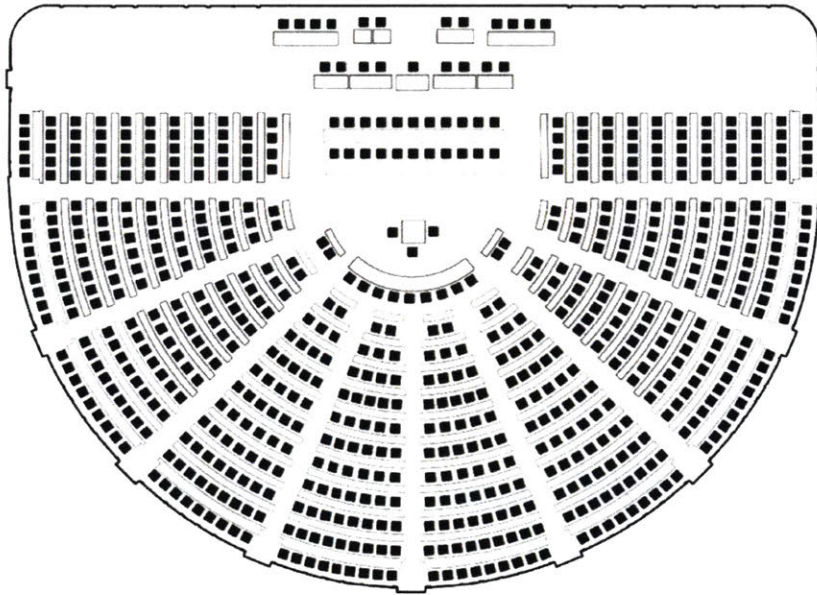


[1]

**A series of comments
on liberal space, the
demise of the square,
and thingly
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substitution.**

[1]
Autistic
Liberalism

Never since the 1930's had liberal democracies been immersed in a crisis of representation as deep as the one corroding them now. In the last years, the pact of political accountability that had mediated between representative democracies and the citizens it is supposed to relate has started to break. From Argentina to Greece and from Mexico to the US, and through the ballot, protests, or silent acts of political retreat, bourgeois polities have become increasingly incapable —or unwilling, to address the conditions, anxieties and demands of its population, be it in the laws they enact, the institutions they apply, and the rituals they perform [1]. Dismissive of the historical capacity of current times to achieve an augmented form of democratic reality —a direct a continuous way accountability made possible by the digital communication revolution, political liberalism insists in sponsoring a political reality characterized at its core by the way it segments rhythms of political involvement across its constituents: on the one hand, it asks an episodic, arms-length rapport with rank-and-file citizens, reduced to the act of being occasional ballot casters. On the other, it encourages a permanent consultations with investors, corporations and political bosses —entities whose factual power has skyrocketed during late capitalism but are nowhere to be found as legitimate political players in the handbooks of liberal political theory. These bifurcated faiths in terms of political participation have made Western liberal states unable to address, incapable of recognizing, and largely responsible of the increasing social, economic and political inequality that has defined concrete reality in them since the last quarter of the twentieth century.



Politics

[2]

Bourgeois democracy does not represent the interests of the large demographic majority of its constituents –let alone whatever notion of “public will” there might still be imagined. In this regime, the world of *politics* –the professionalized world of power exertion unfolding in assemblies, ministries and congresses [2], has become a true floating signifier, an unencumbered register detached from (and imagined above) the *political* – the manifestation of power structures on the murky realm of the everyday, in places like bathrooms, sidewalks and markets [3].

Foucault 1979

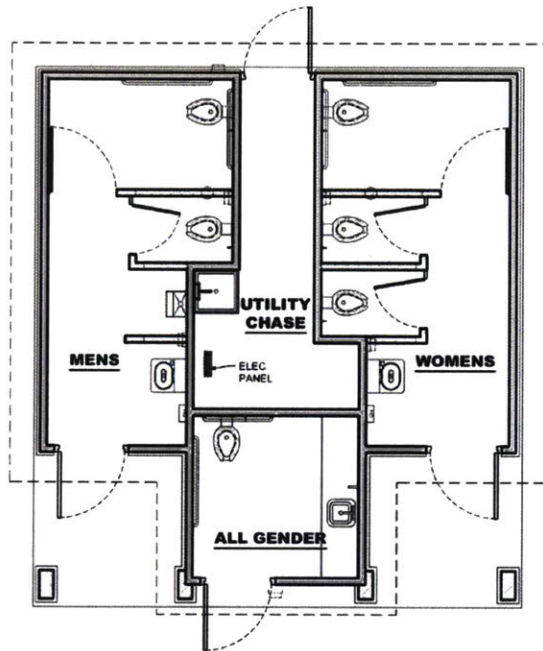
Butler 1990

The crisis of representation in liberalism should not be understood only as strictly political. It must be conceived as *topopolitical*. Liberalism’s failure to represent anything other than itself in its physically abstract institutions and processes also guides the concrete reality of the public space it produces –the unrestricted territories where you, I and millions of people interact mainly as reciprocal strangers. Not that this means, of course, that liberal space is only populated by suit-and tie-bankers, or Tesla-loving start-up managers. Liberalism is indeed genuinely interested in encouraging diversity –the diversity of the many ways in which personhood can be hijacked and morphed into a helpful agent for its reproduction. The market, after all, thrives in diversity: through the promotion of stylistic, performative and identitary differentiations, corporations can fractally segment everyday consumption into crisp, ready-to-wear palettes of choice that satisfy, if only for a moment, their insatiable thirst for economic benefits. Liberal notions of “choice” and “diversity” are a Trojan horse that ultimately seeks to consolidate a social consensus centered in monetary notions of personal worth, where human interactions become valuable through the commensurable metrics of stars, money and likes. Behind liberal elites’ acts of seduction towards non-normative identities lies a crusade for social homogenization promised in the

Monfje 2005

Gramsci 1971





The Political

[3]

most selfish register of a social interaction: that of transactional relationships. For all other approximations to sociability, liberalism procures, at its best, the disdain of indifference, and at its worse, the excretion of intolerance.

Debord 1969

For if, despite the much lip service that diversity receives, who can imagine an act of protest at the mall not leading to an arrest and a mug shot at a detention center? Who has not witnessed a homeless being ask to leave the tables of fast food chains, the corporate wealth of which is predicated on the poverty of the former? For who has seen a black body ravaged by centuries of formal and factual exclusion interact in a café with a white subject without the mediation of a dollar bill? Who has ever witnessed black, white and brown folks interact in terraces without having to resort to consumption to avoid discussing their life experience as bio- and sociopolitical entities, electing to perform instead ahistorical, commodifiable identities for the sake of caramel Machiatto sociability?

Berkeley police under fire for publishing anti-fascist activists' names and photos



Homeless man kicked out of McDonald's after customer buys him food



E pluribus unum, indeed: variety without heterogeneity. The topological imagination of liberalism resembles a Möbius stripe, alchemically equating otherness with compliant sameness. It seeks to naturalize inequalities, sterilize social interactions and inhibit *social assemblage* –practices, performances and customs that allow the production of situated moments of experiences of togetherness –a form of social imagination anchored in the recognition of otherness rather than of social singularity.



Lee Friedlander, 2001

The time has come to recognize that democratic lands have been ravaged by the plague of liberal space, a territory made of sharp boundaries and obedient objects, of exodus and nomadism, of barren domesticity and private publicity: a space that evaporates politics and represses the political.



Koolhaas 2001

Make no mistake: the spatial front that liberalism has opened in its war on difference should not be understood as metaphorical. It has produced true and tangible casualties in the public tissues of their communities. The most appalling of these losses might be, for the architectural pedigree and the historically close ties that its victim had for the development of liberalism, that of the public square.

[II]

The square,
betrayed:
a drama in
five acts

A brief (and hence, necessarily unnuanced) discussion of the way in the ideal-types of the squares have transitioned in the period between their birth and their present from *bole* to *room* to *hall* to *atrium* to *buffer* might suffice to chart the square's demise under liberalism, which would not be sensationalistic to describe as an act of social castration.

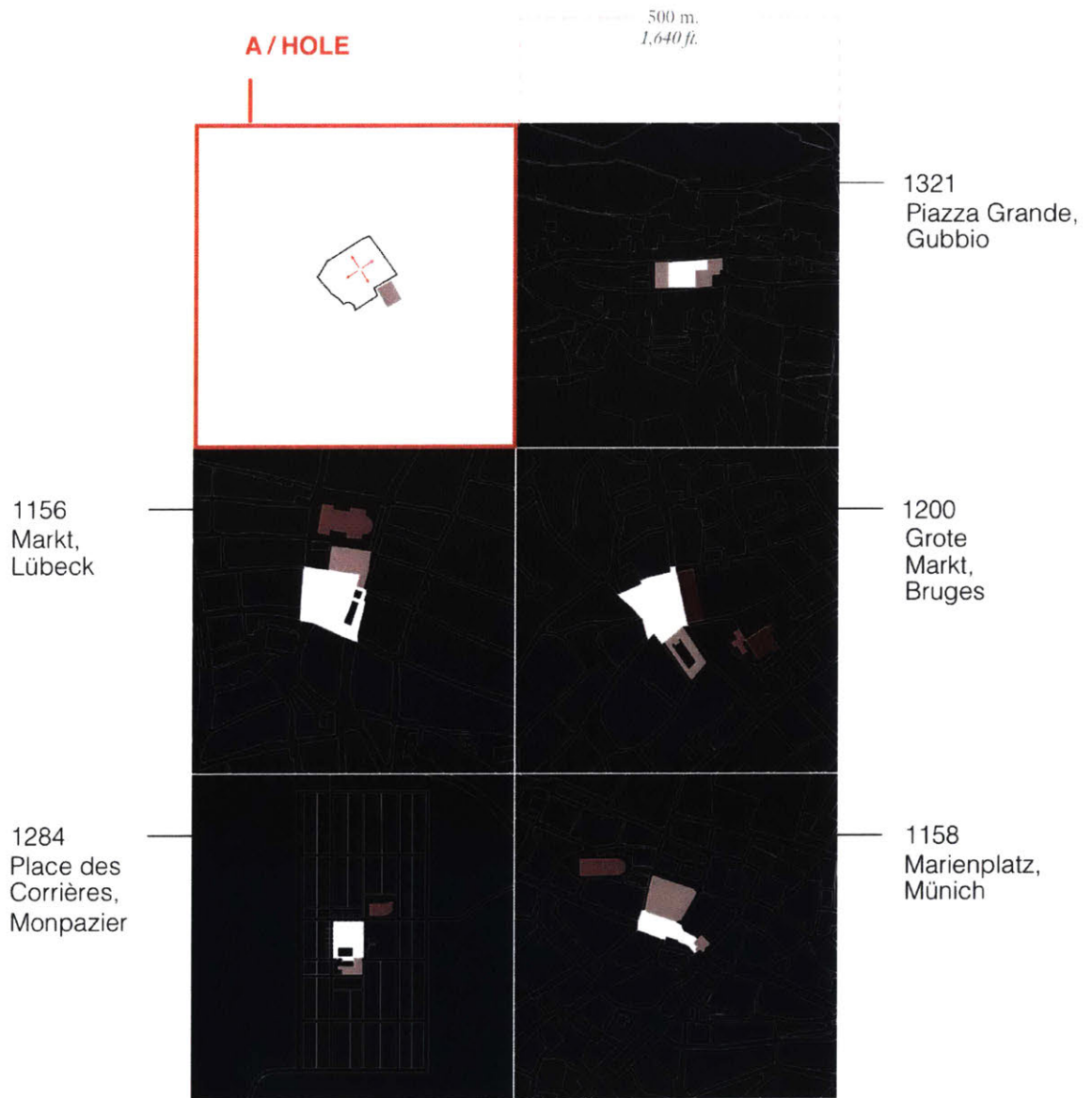
Hole *

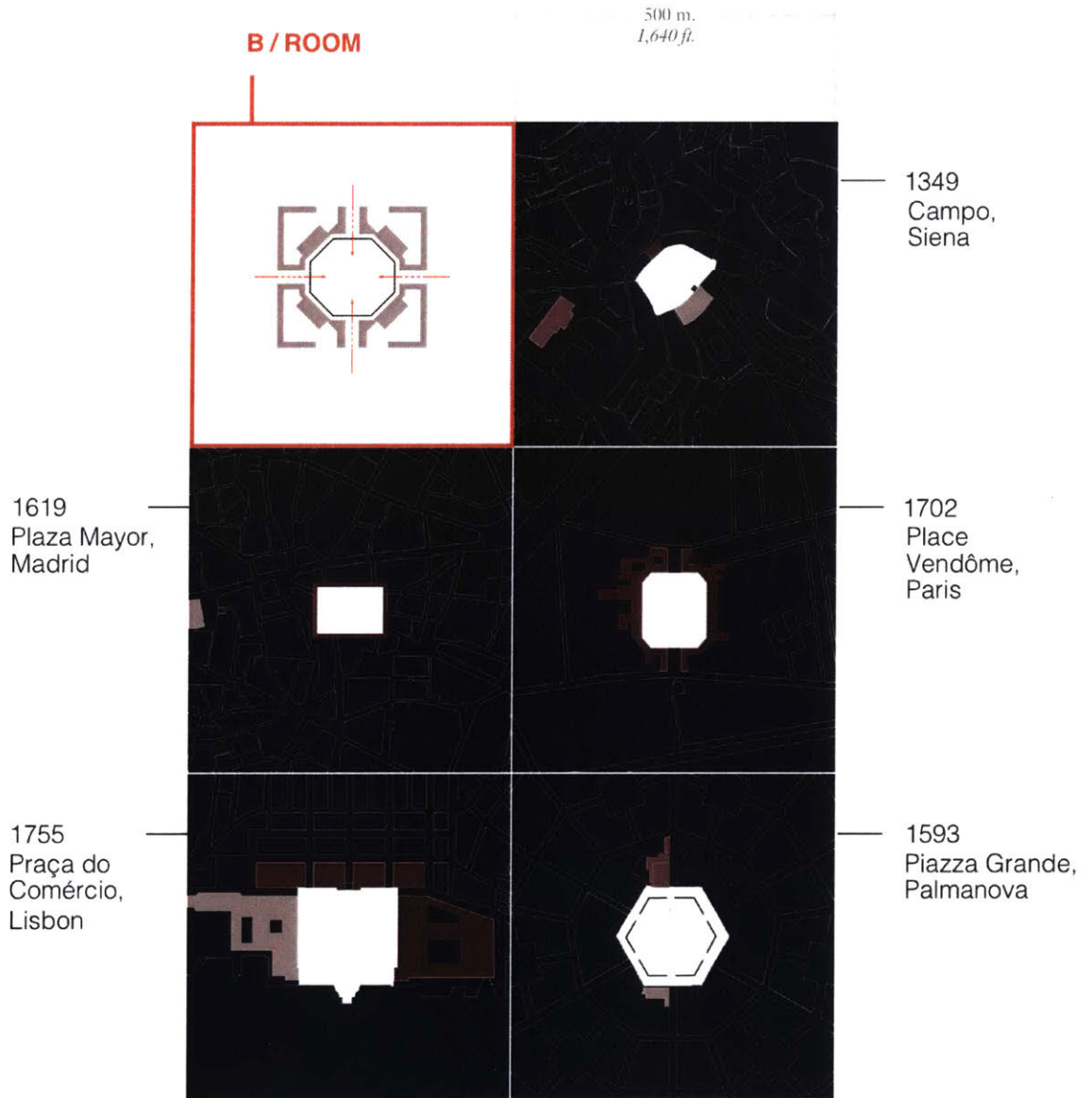
Public squares should not be thought of as lost paradises of frictionless democratic intimacy as they were never that in the first place. The square appears in medieval Western cities not as a square, but as an irregular *bole* protected from the cramped quarters of the burg by commercial necessity [4]. As a matter of fact, squares emerge hand in hand with the sedentarization of the trade outposts around which many European cities developed after antiquity. In fact, the medieval connection between market and square was so close that it managed to leave a linguistic trace in the Netherlands and Northern Germany,—both of them regions that held one of the densest urban networks in the Middle Ages. There, the word *markt* still refers as much to open commerce as to the plazas where these activities historically occurred.

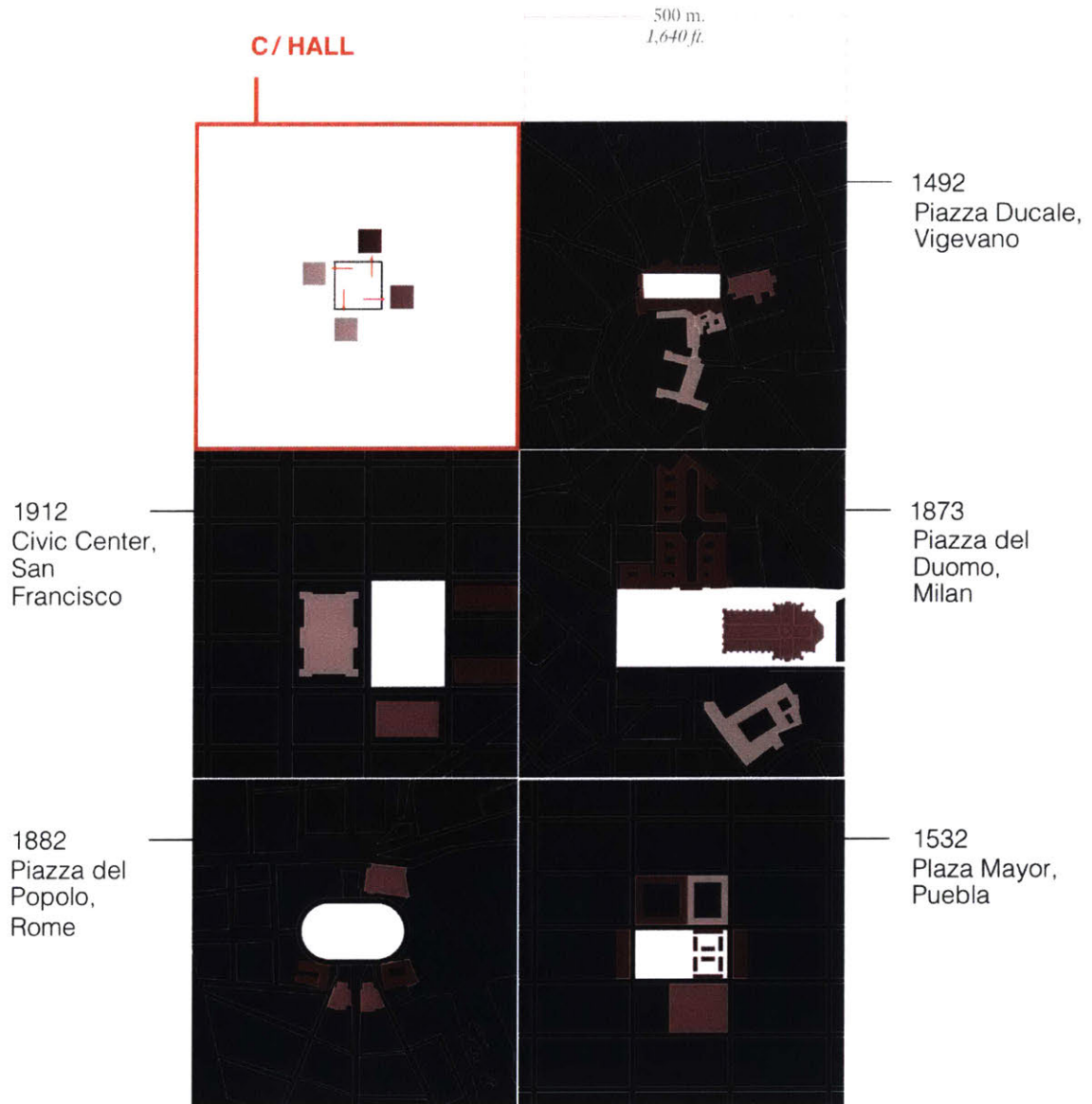
Webb 1990

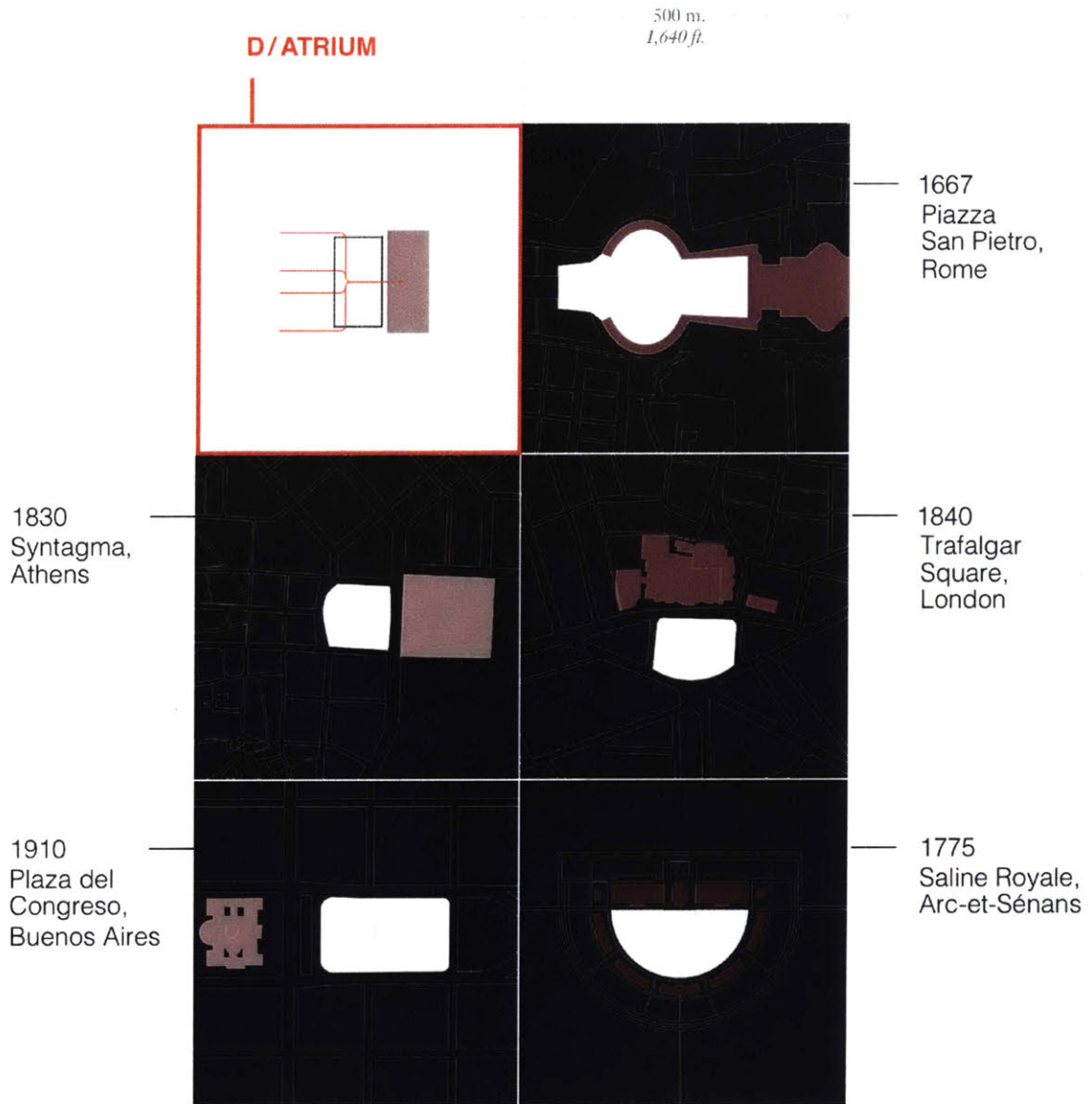
Geimster 2005

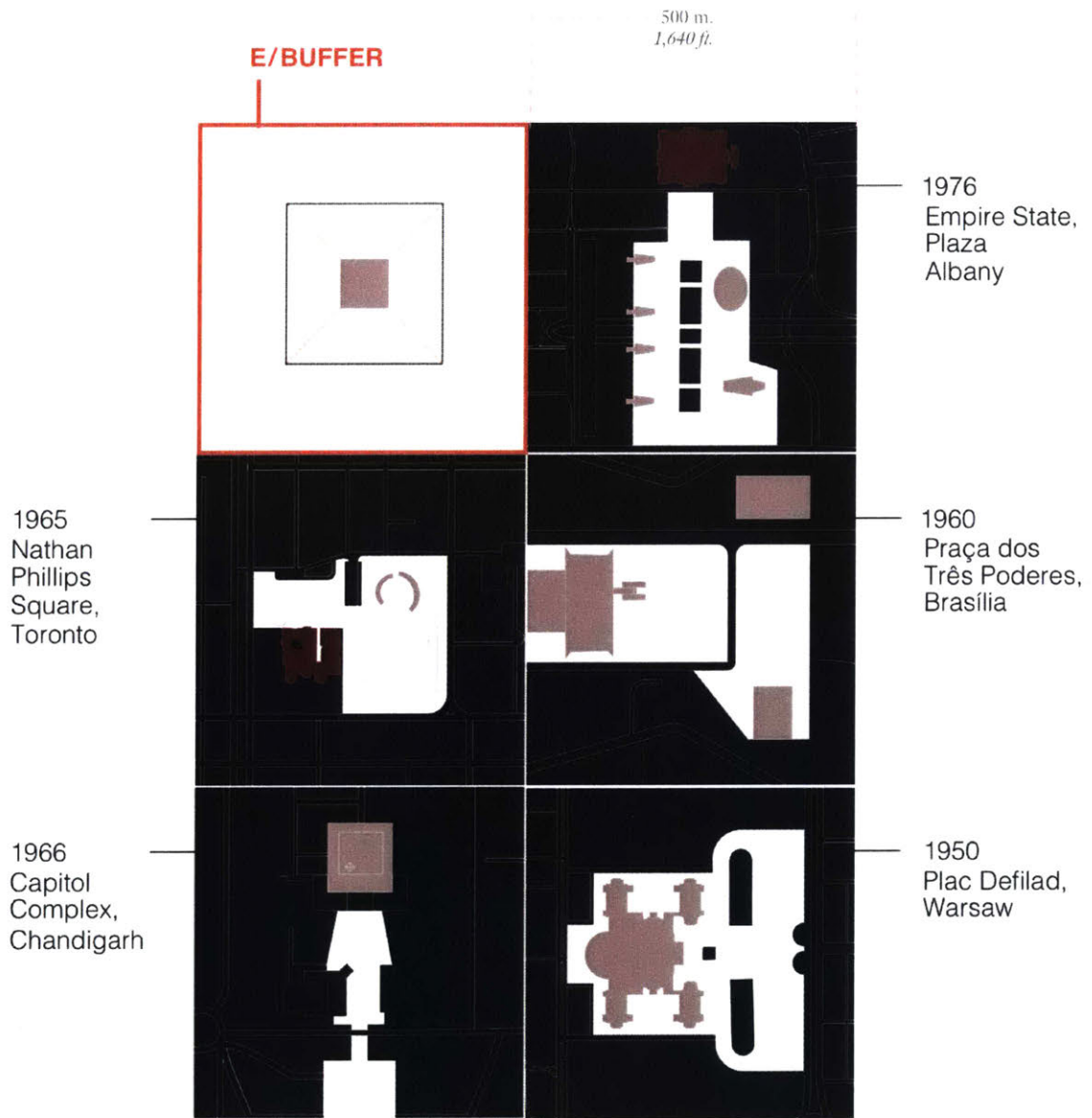
In cities whose social life unfolded through hierarchic and highly codified relationships, these commercial nodes (perhaps the first urban logistics infrastructure in the developed in post-antiquity),











For a classic discussions on the rapport between market and public opinion, see Smith 1776.

Habermas 1990

provided an alternative, material-based kind of human interaction, one that was relatively egalitarian and allowed a minimal degree of horizontal communication. Through the highly personalized acts of bargaining that should have characterized the art of buying and selling in the Middle Ages, it should not be surprising to imagine that the first openly visible acts of public deliberation may have emerged as a by-product of commodity interchange in squares. This environment provided the breeding ground for the development of something not too far from what we call now “public sphere”, where information would be exchanged, discussed and countered not only in relation to the specific products that were being sold, but to the larger political, economic and social issues that affected those interchanges.

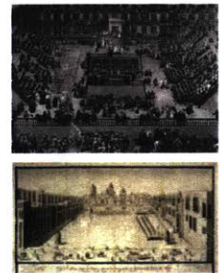
Dollinger 1970

With time, a certain number of features endowed these *markts*, so to speak, with a certain form of programmatic magnetism. Their public nature, central location, and spaciousness attracted the establishment of proprietary enclosed spaces for trade (most notably cloth halls and guild hoses) across its irregular boundaries. In these buildings, architecture was used not only for the satisfaction of practical commercial necessities, but as a medium to display the increasing power that wealthy merchants and guildsmen accumulated in commercial burghs. Further on, the primacy of the square as a commercial point also unleashed a process of political activation in it, which culminated with the construction of a city hall, a novel medieval typology dedicated to house in a permanently basis the burgh’s city councils, their main governing body. All in all, the many areas that started as open commercials at the beginning of the Middle Ages entered the 16th century as multiprogrammed spaces paired up with a major, architecturally punctuated focal building – a characteristic that would be one of the most constant features of squares in its evolution across modernity.

After feudalism and city-states gave room to state-centered forms of political organization, squares started to be regularly deployed in the numerous and lavish projects of urban that increasingly muscular power apparatuses effected in the cities they governed. Far from being irregular voids, these squares were mostly formal design projects aligned to two alternative forms: one that conceived it as a room, and another one considering it as a urban hall.

**
Room

A few decades before the glimpses of liberal doctrine started to make its debut in political theory, the *square-as-a-room* identified the square, for the first time in its history, as an explicit object of architectural projection. The square was given an design logic autonomous from its perimetral buildings: its boundaries were formalized and its internal elevation purposively defined, endowing them with a clearly defined idea of exteriority and interiority [5]. These veritable public chambers began to be used as formal stages for the production, display and consumption of spectacles of power deployment of power by state institutions –then in a process of vertiginous development, or as containers of a more nuanced kinds of social performance, those related to micro-ritual exchanges such as courting, social staging, and gossip making.



Foucault 1975

**
Hall

The *square-as-a-hall* lacks the formal ambition of its room counterpart, but it compensates this absence through its powerful programmatic complexity [6]. These squares maintain a formal regularity, but are stripped from any saying regarding their visual configuration, which is defined through the particular, mostly non-related elevations of the plurality of focal buildings that encircle it. Each of these foci carry a different programmatic orientation (this is most clearly visible in the *Plazas Mayores* of baroque towns founded by Spanish invaders in the American continent: by law, each of them is endowed with a Cathedral, a city hall, and a commercial

*Carlson 1989;
For the broader issue
of the development of
courtesy, see Elias
1939*



Smith 1955

Kinsbruner 2005

arcade). At the end, the concurrently and multiple programmatic logics that the square as a hall receives from this collection of buildings gives an ample space for autonomy, as it becomes a platform of brokerage between the competing social imaginations that border it.

Halls and rooms may have been born out of authoritarian imaginations, but it soon became clear they were not going to be a duteous offspring. Aside from privileged stages of self-aggrandizing state rituals, their capacity to engender congested forms of human co-presence also made them fertile spaces for other activities. These socially iridescent places could act equally and at the same time as a market, a flirting space or a leisure field –places ready to stage acts of commerce, sedition or seduction, to become a refuge for enclosure open for butchers and lawyers, prostitutes and ladies, soldiers and thieves. Squares became fertile ground for the public growth of a multiplicity of social worlds, practices and characters, becoming containers of promiscuous social contiguities that started to configure a public place comfortable with (while certainly not an advocate of) otherness. By doing so, squares became one of the stepping stones for the formation of the public atmospheres through which liberalism would organize its takeover of Western political institutions.

The social richness the square had in early modernity, however, started to recede once liberal electoral politics started to consolidate its monopoly over political legitimacy. Although in this period the square was intensely deployed in the urban tissue of cities, it did so through a transformed shape that would start to stripe it from a stage that began to take away its capacity to act as a placer for sociability and encounters with others.



∴
Atrium

During the nineteenth century, most new squares were deployed under the tutelage of a unique focal building, for which they performed the job an *atrium*: they organized circulation to and from a building that held a decisively modern program orientation: a museum, an administrative palace, a train station [7]. In comparison to the focal buildings associated with precedent square typologies, the ones related to atria became larger and large –especially along their vertical dimension. The square also began to expand, increasingly to a point that jeopardize its capacity to project a sense of internal boundaries within it. Indeed, the experiential identity of the nineteenth-century square is centrifugal rather than centripetal, becoming a bidimensional path that people traverse, rather than going to, as they approach or leave an area dominated by an enclosed building.

On the diffusion of the square as an urban technology, see Jean Louis Nicholas Durand's Précis (1809)



∴
Buffer

In the twentieth century the square continued its programmatic and architectural downfall, as it remorphed during postwar into a huge cavity gravitating around an equally immense, verticalized state or corporate building [8]. If the square-hall managed to retains to retain some urbanistic importance (if only as a circulation device), the square of late capitalism becomes only negative space, a void so oversized that is incapable of engendering any activity other than that of becoming the spatial bodyguard of the office precincts. Indeed, just like a personal guard, these squares prevent the city from interacting directly with these buildings. Like escorts, they increase their symbolic capital by making them more notorious, providing the air room they needed to become the perspectively dominant figures in its vicinities.



Bloated, barren, domesticated: such is the disfigured state that liberalism has bestowed the square upon [9,10]. Its deformation has been so deep indeed, that it is hard to find any spatial, programmatic, or conceptual



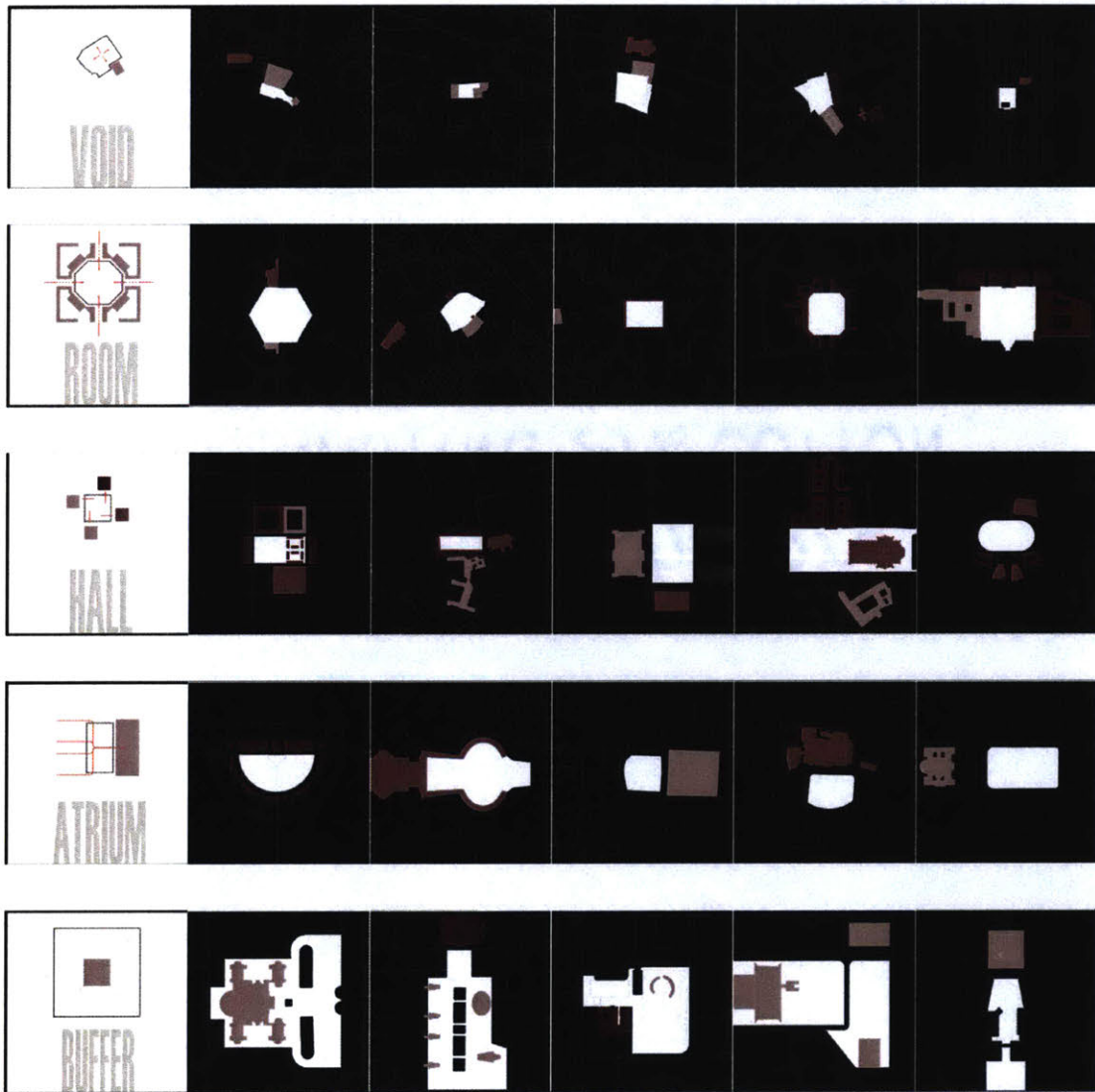
reminiscences between the contemporary projects we now call “squares” and the typologies that served as cradles for the emergence of liberal sociability. For the sake of honesty, we should start calling these space for what they really are: liberal buffers, public blank spaces [11,12].

[IV]

Reclaiming
dialectics
for public
space

Against this backdrop and the cloudy political ahead of us, it would be tempting to give up, write a number of eulogies to mourn the loss of public space as a place for exercising encounters with otherness, and indulge either in the masochistic pleasure of sensationalist apocalypticism or in the dull complacency of resigned realism. But we could also make a virtue out of necessity and channel architecture’s arrogant, naïf and optimistic imagination to produce experimentations leading to new typologies of public space capable of confronting, at least in the paper, the increasingly sterile public landscape of electoral democracies.

In my proposition, the strategy I propose to execute does not propose reviving old forms of square-ness. Cloning earlier typologies of square would do little to engage in a serious and imaginative way disciplinary and social contexts that alien to them, and would only recognize and sanction the lack of imagination with which current times have engaged with challenges specific to them. The best way to honor the legacy of the square is to use its strongest traits as departure points for the constitution of alternative architectural strategies aimed at the development of a kind of public space committed to foster public assemblage –one capable of picking up on the spatial intent of the square-as-a-room and a programmatic juxtaposition of the square-as-a-hall, and at the same time, able to detach itself from the tutelage that power institutions have historically excerpted over their constitution.

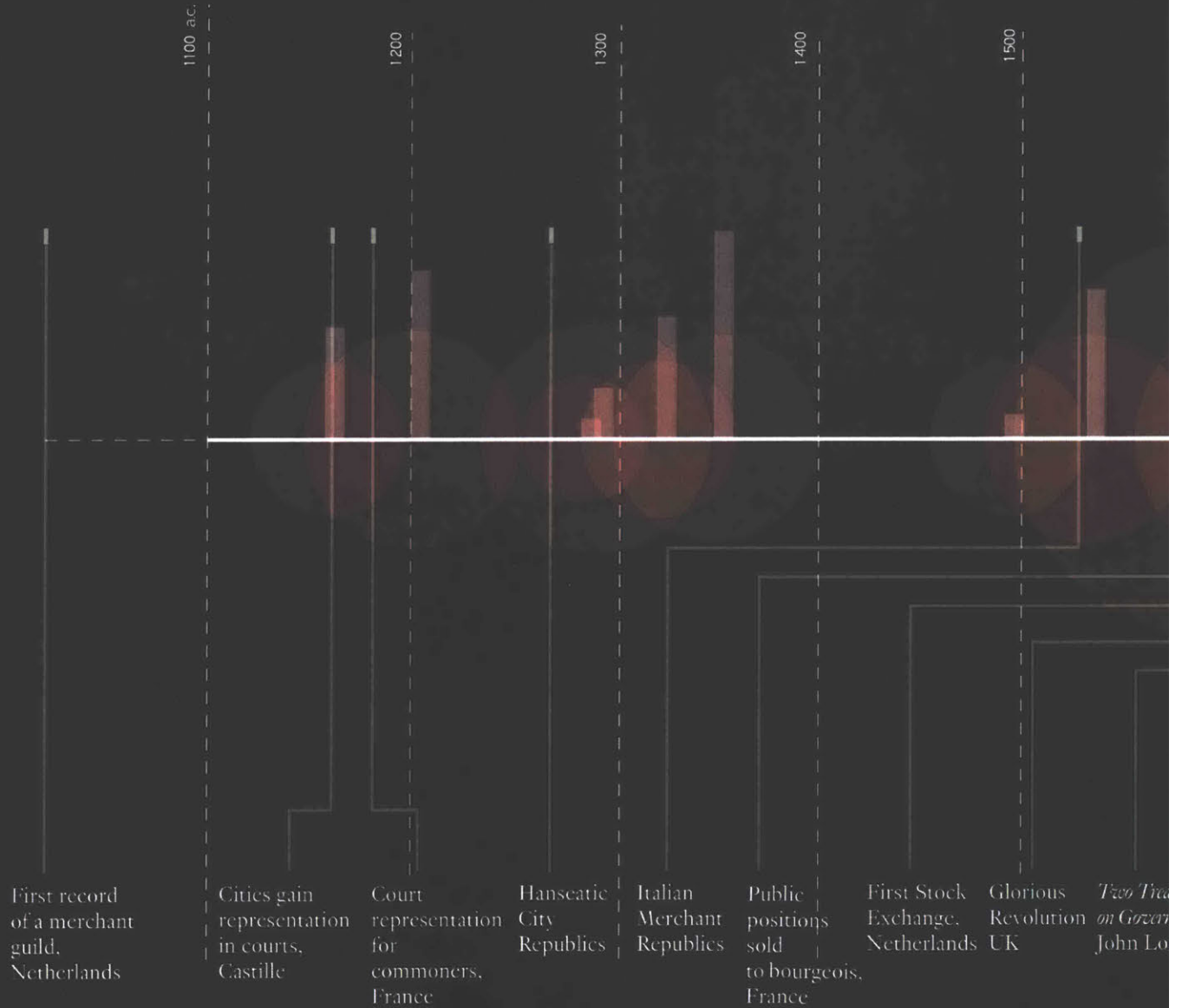


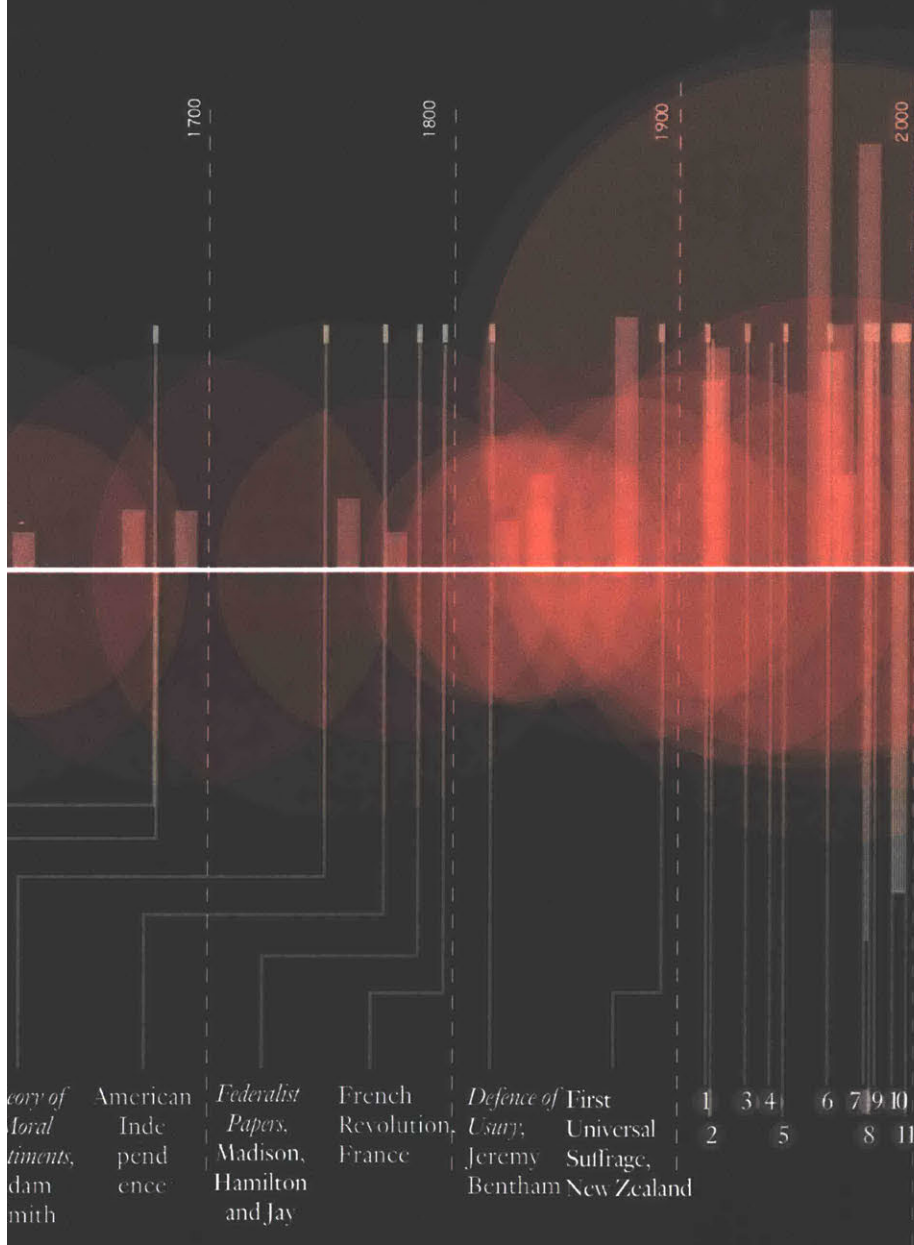


Area of selected squares

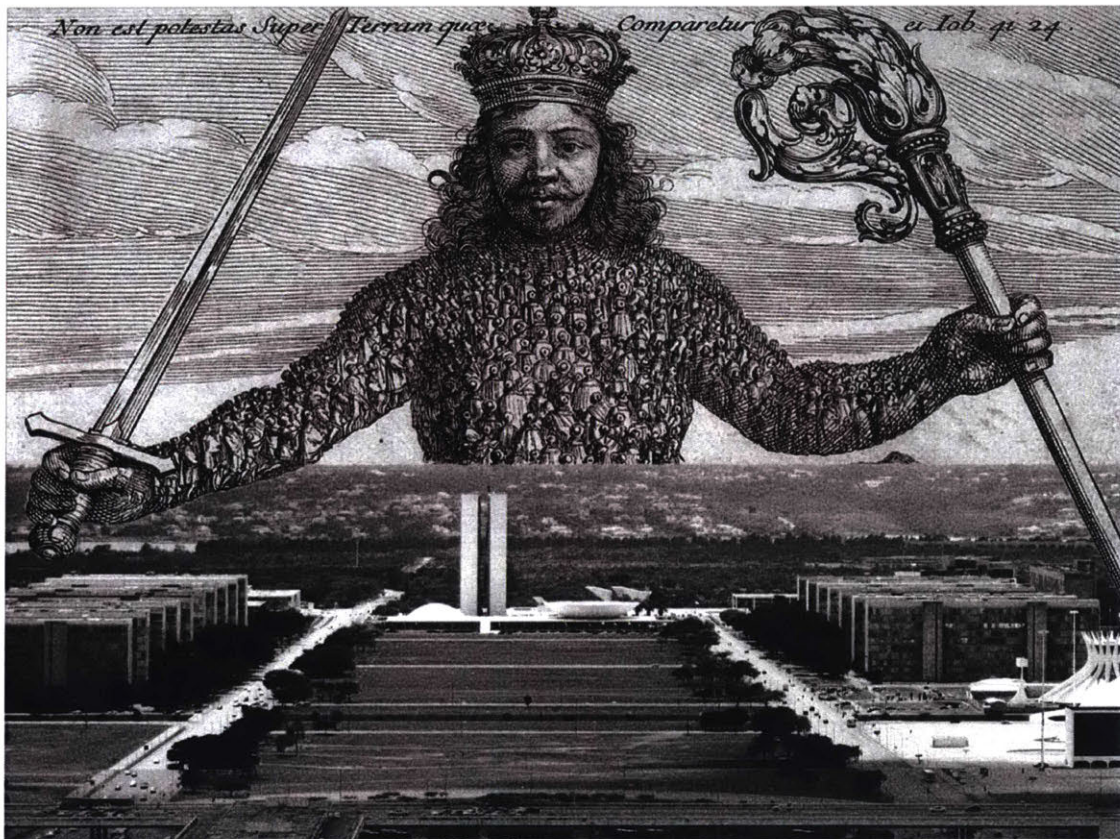
Height of focal square building

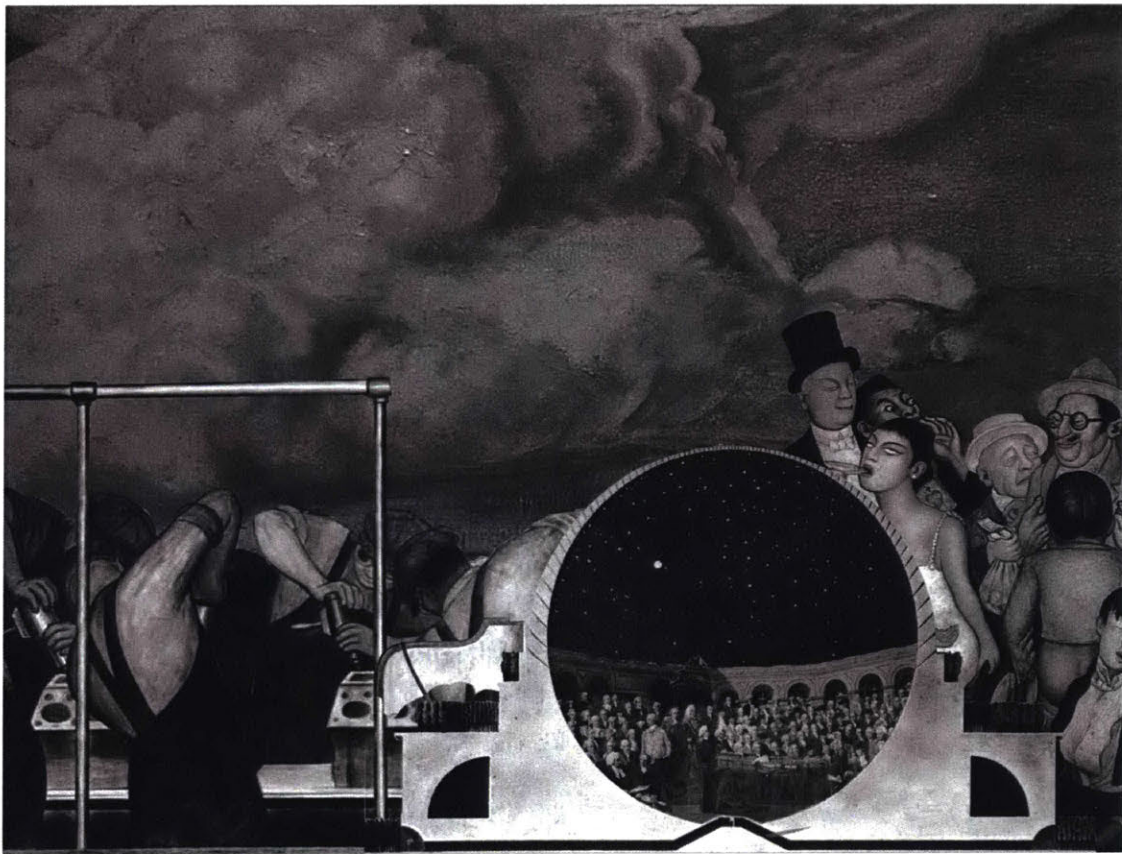
Milestone in liberalism's development





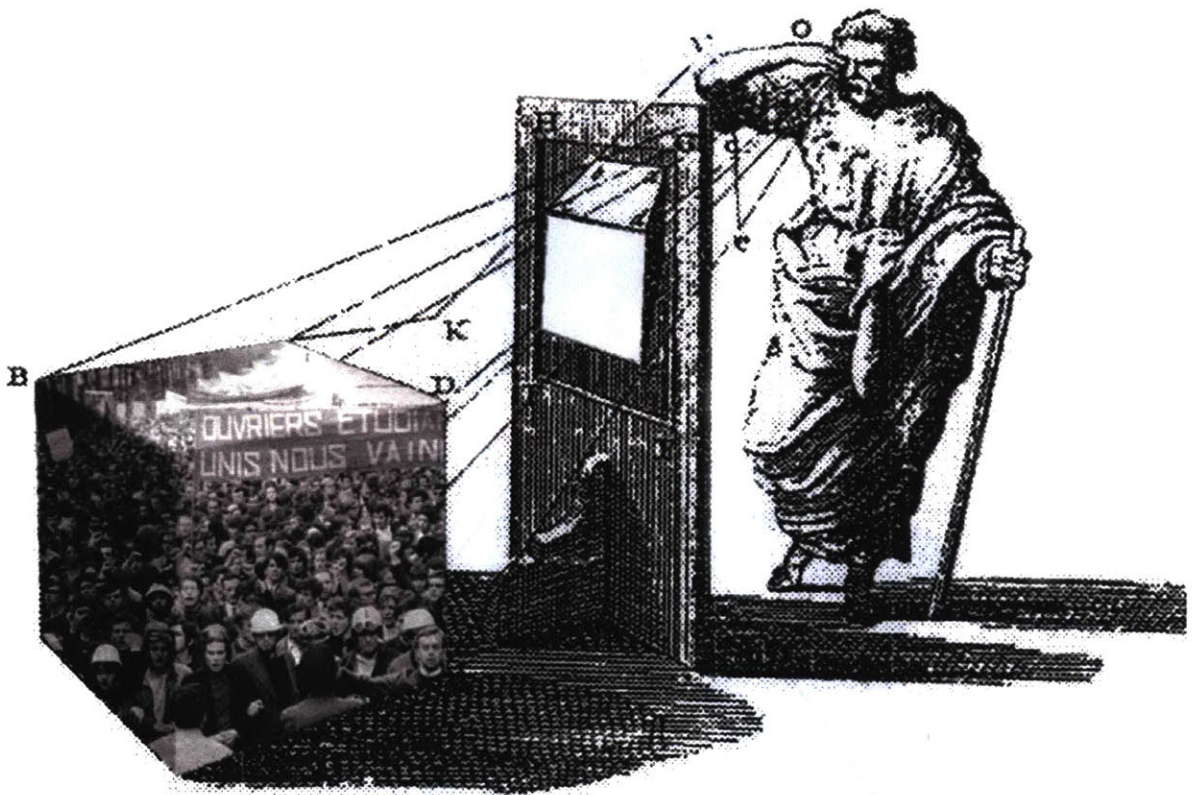
- 1 Liberal parties support fascist government, Italy
- 2 First Global Capitalist Crisis
- 3 Industrialists' tolerance of Nazi regime
- 4 WWII II Victory
- 5 McCarthy Senate Inquiries, US
- 6 Oil Crisis
- 7 Margaret Thatcher, Ronald Reagan
- 8 Washington Consensus
- 9 1st French socialist gov't switches to mkt-oriented policies
- 10 Fall of Berlin Wall
- 11 7 Nobel Prizes in a row for neoclassic economics



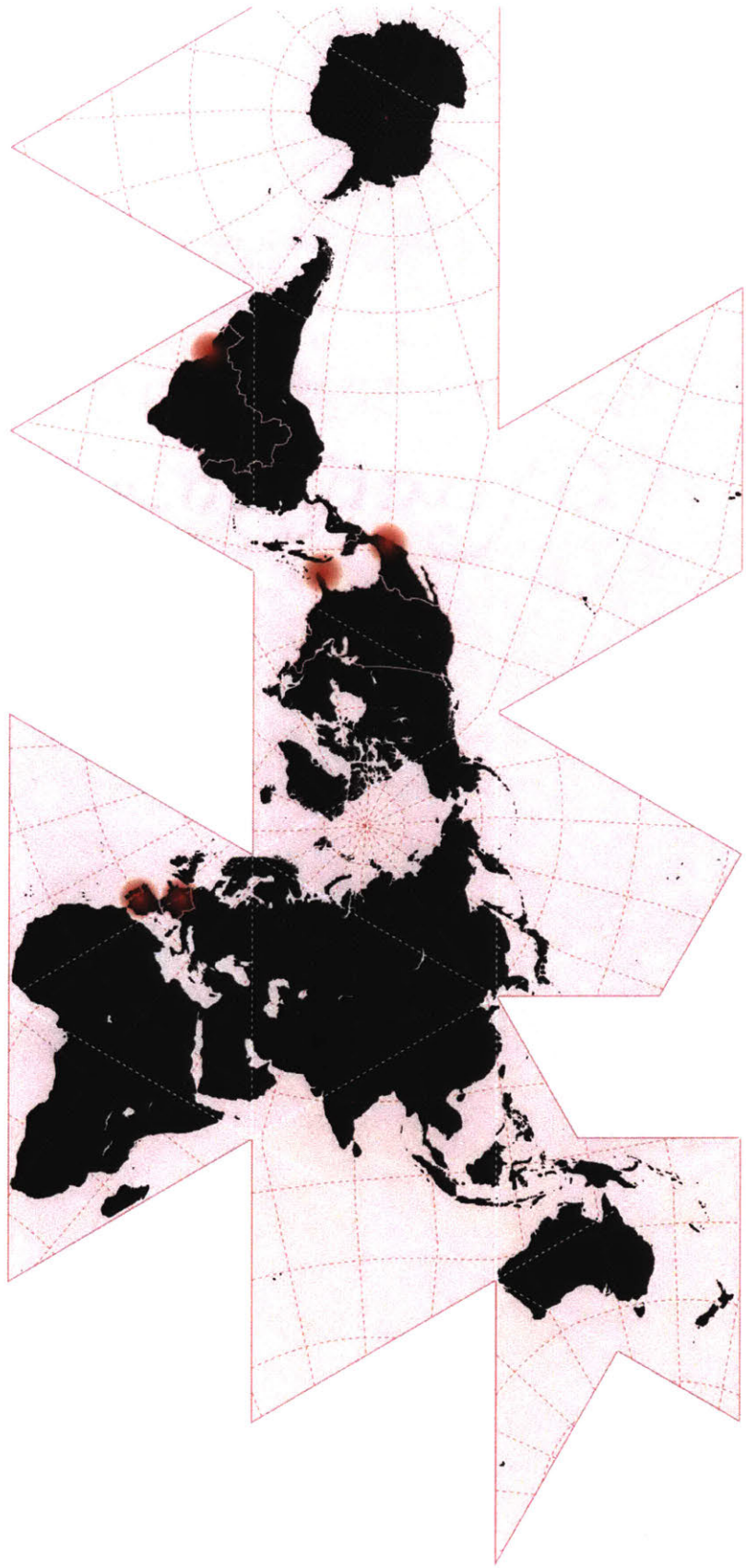


[VIII]
On the Tasks
Ahead

The following pages document some preliminary efforts to imagine such things, in five topopolitical faultlines with palpable connections to the desolate public space, waiting again for the comeback to otherness.



[2]



Five Things

Paraisópolis
/Morumbi

Ayotzinapa
Teacher's School

Samsonite
Factory

Cuatro
Torres

The Retreat
at Twin Lakes

SÃO PAULO

MORUMBI - PARAISÓPOLIS

**Paraisópolis/
Morumbi**
**São Paulo,
Brazil**



*
Condition

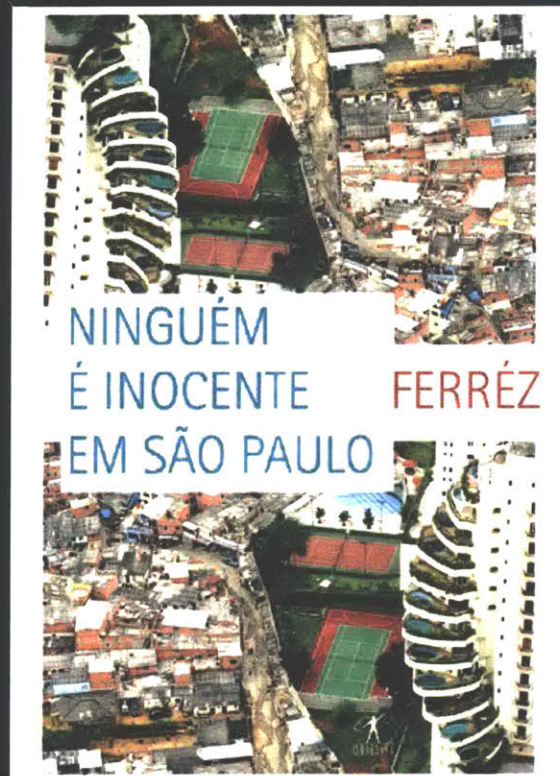
In 23-million people São Paulo –the largest metropolitan in the West, exclusionary practices are enacted through constitutive regulatory bias. Nowhere is this more evident than in the moments where the sinuous driveways of Morumbi, São Paulo’s wealthiest neighborhood, collide with the gridded layout of Paraisópolis, its largest favela.

Paraisópolis sits over a orthogonal street organization that aspired to be develop a middle-class neighborhood that never materialized. But due to the lack of services with which the developers urbanized the area, its blocks began to be colonized by unskilled rural migrants looking to establish their dwellings bear to the job opportunities that Morumbi created when its mansions started to occupy the Southern São Paulo southern hills during the fifties. From their outset, Morumbi and Paraisópolis held a symbiotic relationship: Morumbi would not have been built as expediently as it was without Paraisópolis, and Paraisópolis growth would have jeopardized without the Morumbi’s glitter.

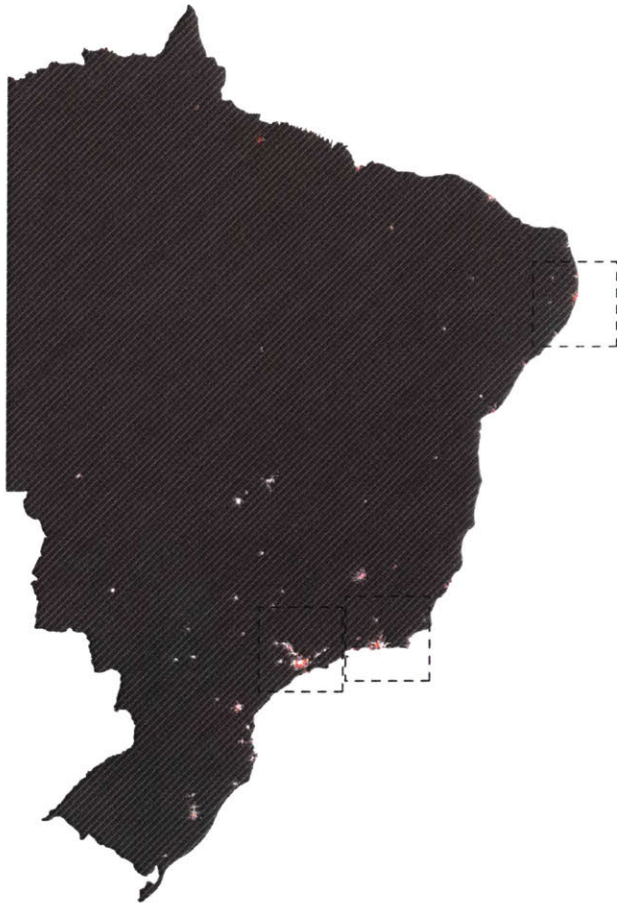
Legally speaking, however, the relationship between Paraisópolis and Morumbi is altogether unequal. The thirty-two thousand genteel dwellers of Morumbi enjoy not only property certitude, but legal protection over the luxurious suburban ecology they have designed through zoning laws that prevent further densification in the neighborhood. In contrast, the eighty-to-hundred thousand inhabitants of Paraisópolis not only lack tenure certainty over plots that no one but them decided to inhabitate. They also suffer from a chronic dearth of social and urban services that has become ossified with time by the city government’s incapacity from intervening in areas like Paraisópolis where the sacrosanct scripture liberal property has been ethically contested.



// [In Portuguese:
Nobody is innocent in São Paulo]



NINGUÉM
É INOCENTE FERRÉZ
EM SÃO PAULO



// Paraisópolis/Morumbi,
showing open spaces in pink





500 m.
1,640 ft.



**
Site

The project sits next to Praça Moacir Nicodemos, a small open space adjacent to a street bordered by a perimetral wall that acts as the symbolic frontier between Morumbi and Paraisópolis, and leading to another one that acts as the favela's main Northern access. This zone sits at the intersection regimes of sociability: the Northeast is inhabited by the secluded open hyperspaces of Morumbi mansions; the South has been colonized by residual hypospaces of Paraisópolis' cramped self-built homes, and in the Northwest lies a transitional zone between these two different regions, sprinkled by fragmentary favela blocks and a number of new condo towers.

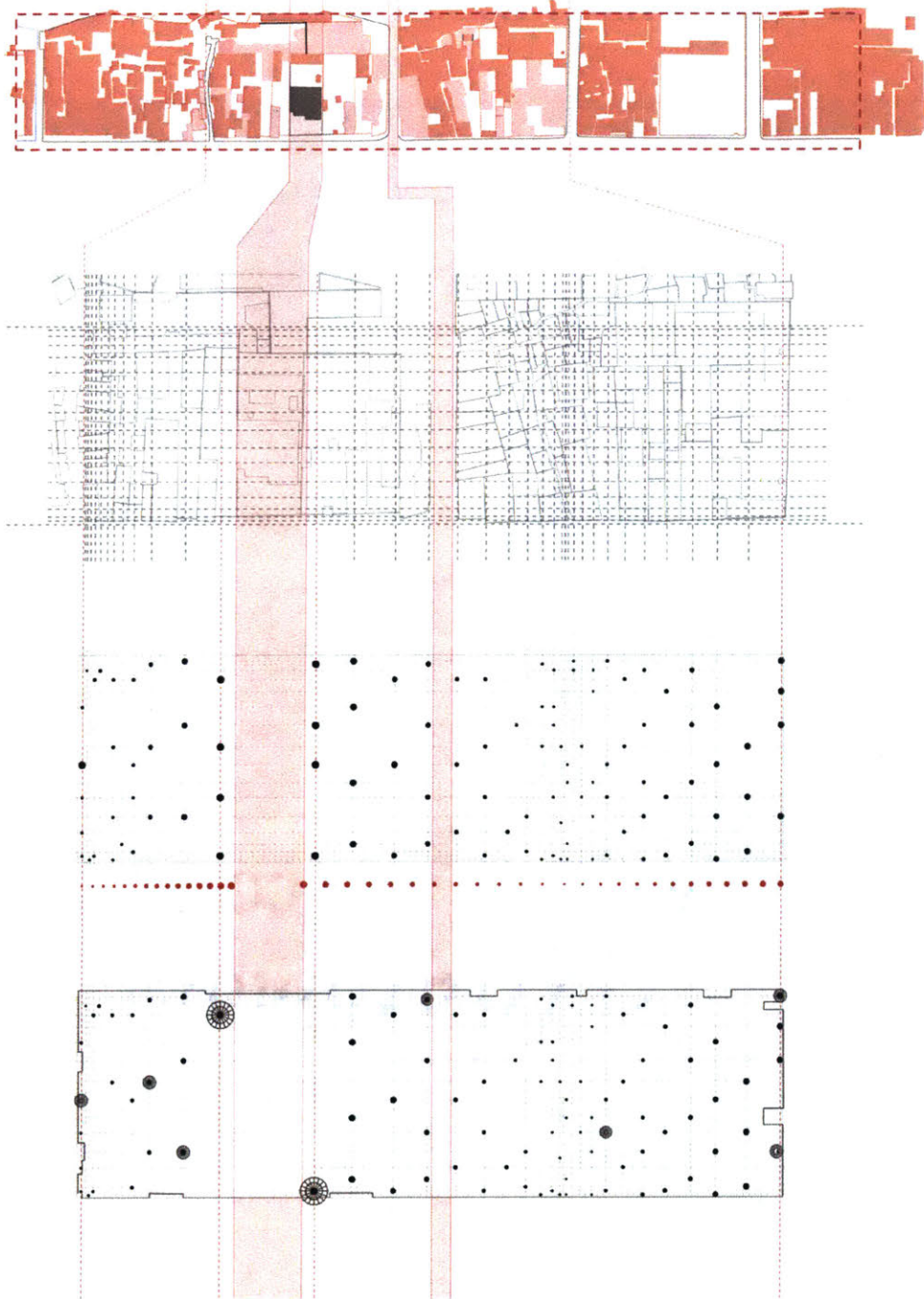


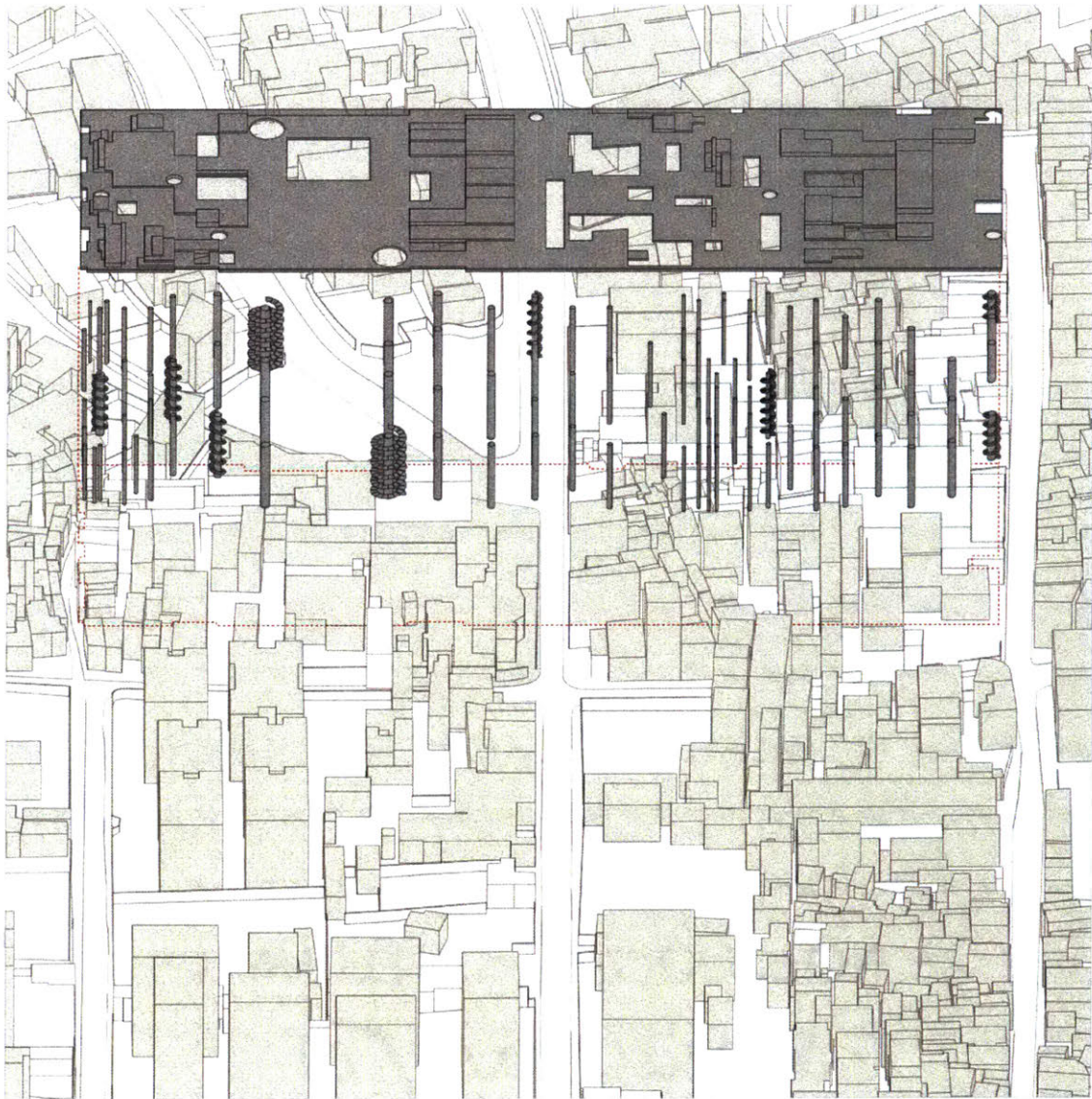
Project^{***}

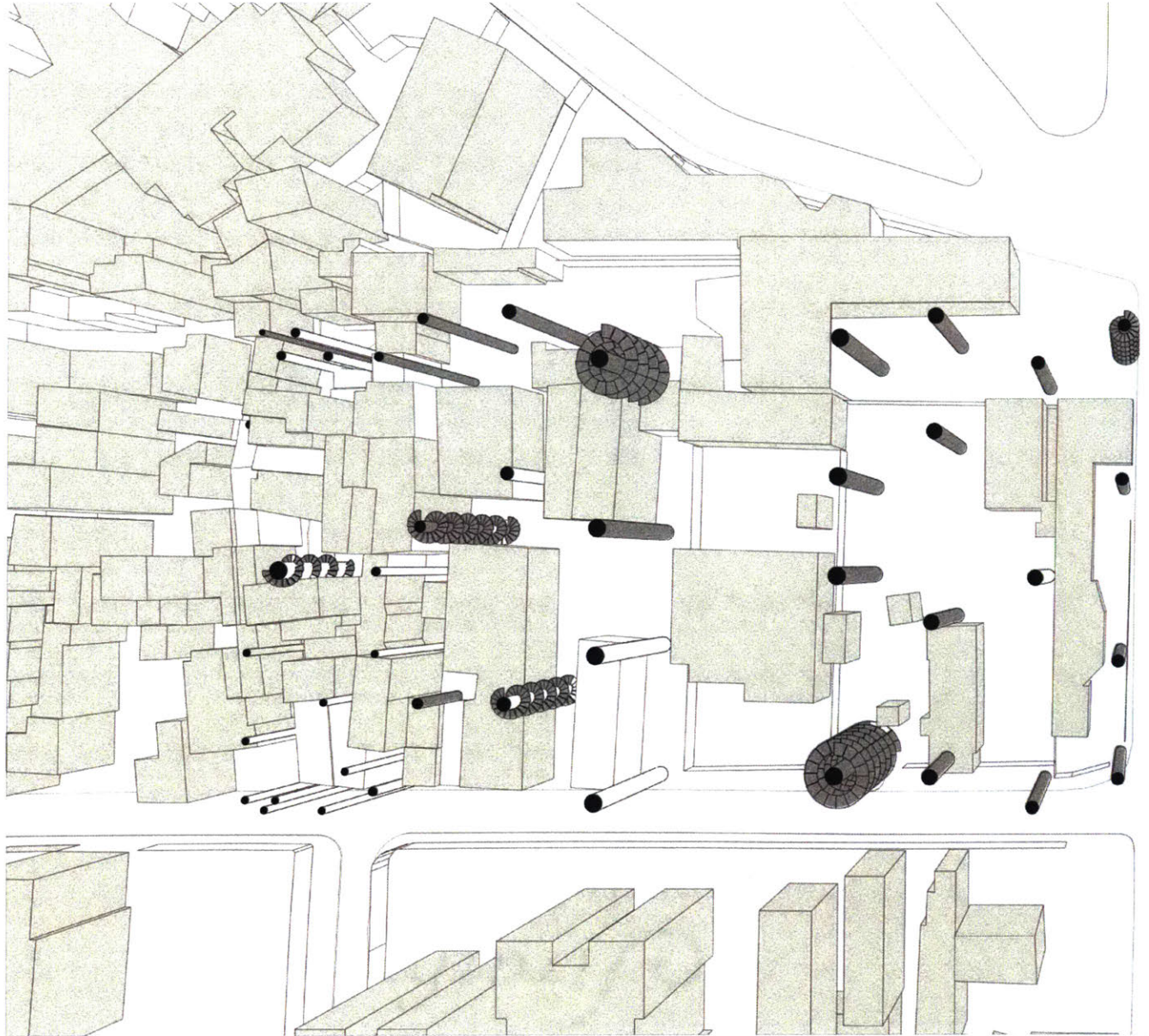
The project seeks to endow the area with a relatively large, non-imposing zone of public sociability capable of act as a place for spatial negotiation between favelas and Morumbi, establishing a more equalized form of communication between the rich street life of the former and the established rights of the latter over the clear fields they hoard. It does so by refusing to take part neither in the overprotection of property rights in Morumbi, nor in the invisibility of acquired rights for housing in Paraisópolis.

Instead of expropriated formally appropriated land or evicting socially owned soil, this public thing is not built *on*, but *over* both Paraisópolis and Morumbi. Taking that advantage of the lack of proprietary ownership of any of these communities over the air spaces above them, the plaza traverses from above the gully of Praça Moacir Nicodemos. Its support is achieved through the deployment of a column hypostyle sitting at clear spaces of favelized areas. The columns also structure access to this area through a number of stairs attached to its supporting columns.















[02TXT.BLANK]

TIXTLA

AYOTZINAPA TEACHER'S SCHOOL

**Ayotzinapa
Teacher's
School**

**Tixtla,
Mexico**



Condition

The liberal spaces also deploys a number of old fashioned strategies to reproduce unequal representation. Take Tixtla, for example –a twenty-thousand inhabitant community anchored in the highlands of Southern Mexico.

Tixtla is home to the Ayotzinapa teachers's school, a left-leaning college founded after the Mexican Revolution for the purpose of expanding primary education access in rural areas. In September 2014, forty of its students departed from the school to attend a rally commemorating a student massacre in Mexico City.

After an in the town of Iguala during their trip, the students never made it to rally –or back home. They are now formally classified by the Mexican government as “missing”, a formal euphemism that has allowed the state to omit their responsibility in the way in which students were detained, tortured and killed by a commando conformed local government security agents and drug sicarios -a grotesque mixture that is also likely to be the generator, in one way or another, of the ghostly community of more than 32,000 “disappeared” people in Mexico.

Most of them, like the Ayotzinapa students, pertain from regions far from the plateau where Mexico City's corporate world and upper middle class monopolize the public opinion of the country for which it serves as the capital, most of them come, like the Ayotzinapa students, in the rugged terrains of the Mexican hinterland, –places where citizenship is more precarious, more rural, poorer. Places, in a word, where active citizenship more disposable, especially if it dares to become politically demanding.



La Jornada

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FUNDADOR: CARLOS OCHOA DE LA ROSA

VIERNES 21 DE NOVIEMBRE DE 2014
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PAGO: 10 PESOS

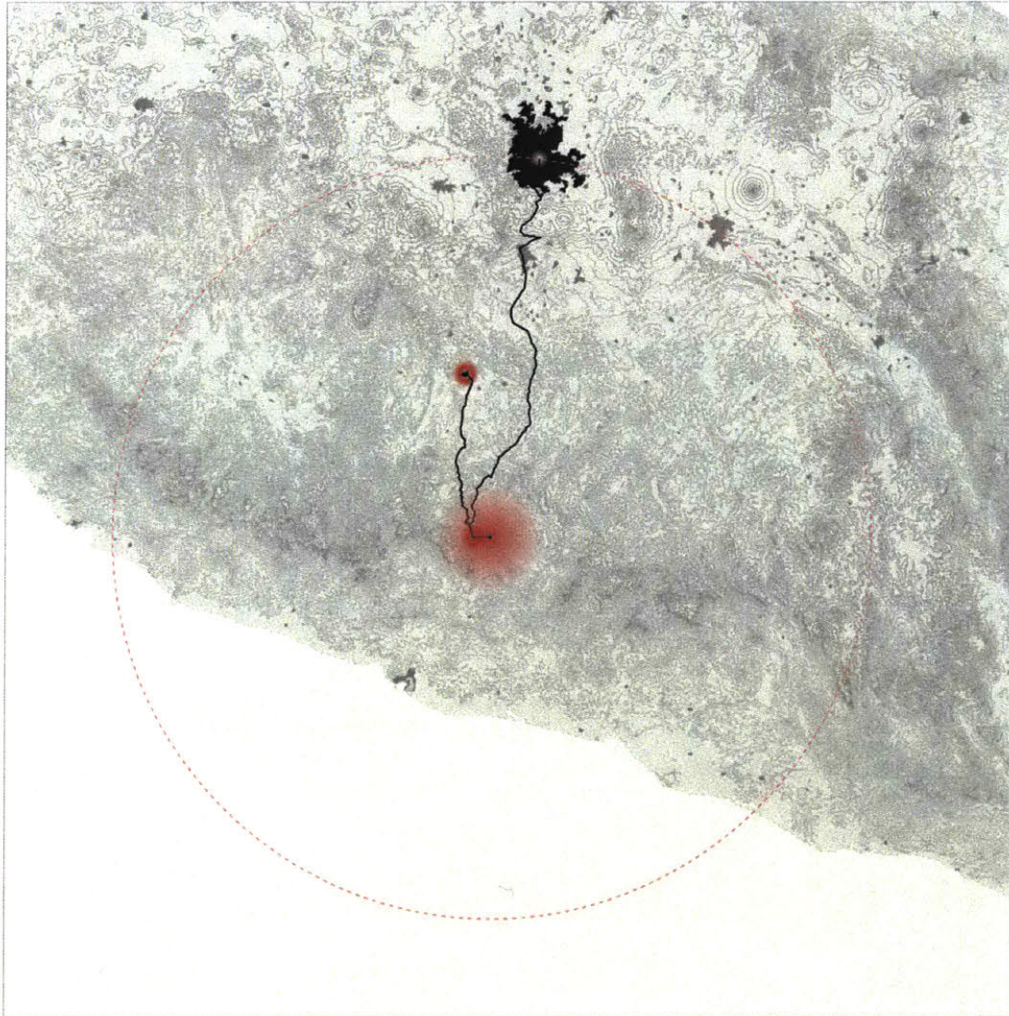
eron pacíficas la mayoría de marchas y paros de ayer por Ayotzinapa



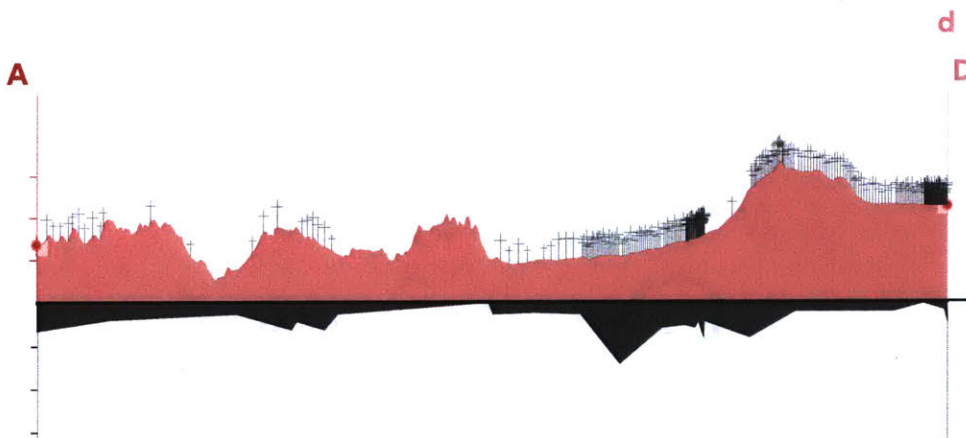
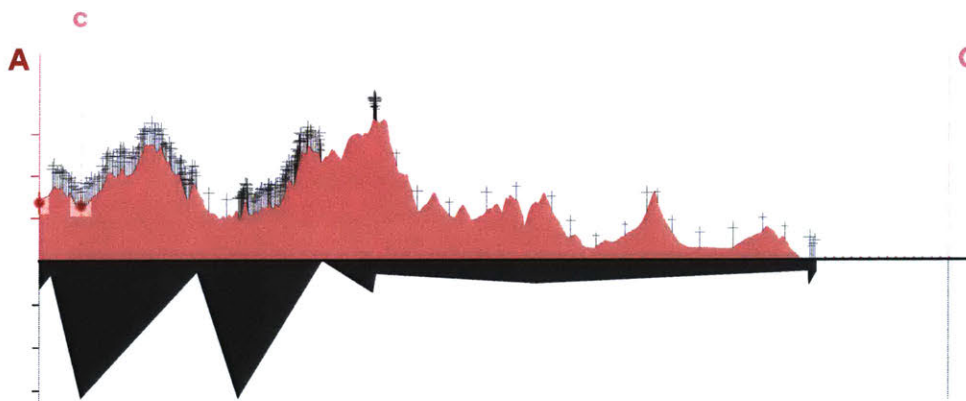
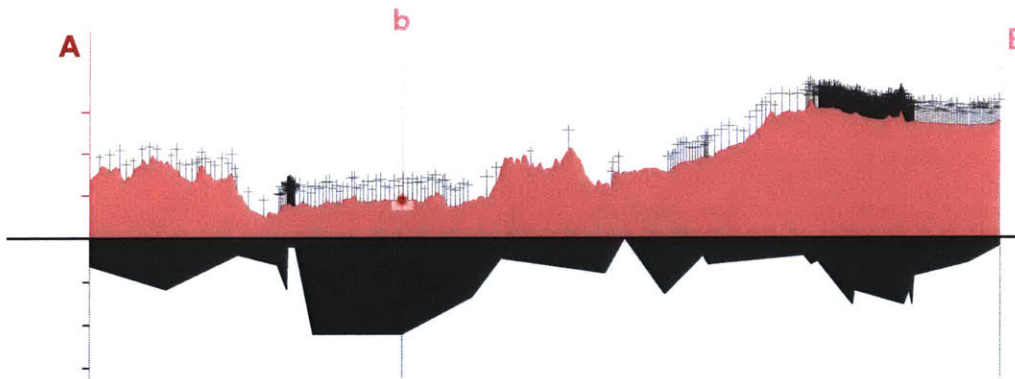
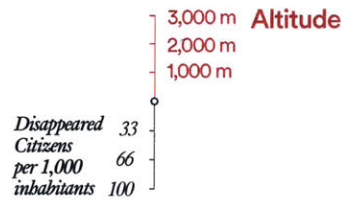
Fosas por todo el país: padres de los 43

- Multitudinario recibimiento en el DF a las tres caravanas
- En Zaragoza y el Zócalo grupos se enfrentan a la policía: 31 detenidos
- Existe rechazo general a la violencia
- **Peña: la demanda es que la ley se cumpla y se privilegie el orden**
- Sale en defensa de las fuerzas armadas
- Es vital la unión en México: Cierfuegos
- La inseguridad es problema de Estado, no de gobierno: Ejército
- "Actuaremos con firmeza si es necesario"

Miles de personas participaron en las tres marchas hacia el Zócalo en la capital mexicana. Ochoa por
Foto: Cristina Rodríguez



- A** *Ayotzinapa Teacher's School, Tixtla*
- B** *Disappearance Site, Iguala*
- C** *State Capitol, Chilpancingo*
- D** *Demonstration Site, Mexico City*





500 m.
1,640 ft.



Site**

The project sits in the piece of piedmont that lies between the road that connects Tixtla to the state capital of Chilpancingo and the Ayotzinapa teacher's school. Despite being located in a privileged access to the city, and the historic quality of the school, the plot is not urbanized and is currently covered in native vegetation, surrounded by scattered self-constructed houses, the Ayotzinapa School, and agricultural fields. It is largely devoid of formal or informal spaces of public interaction.

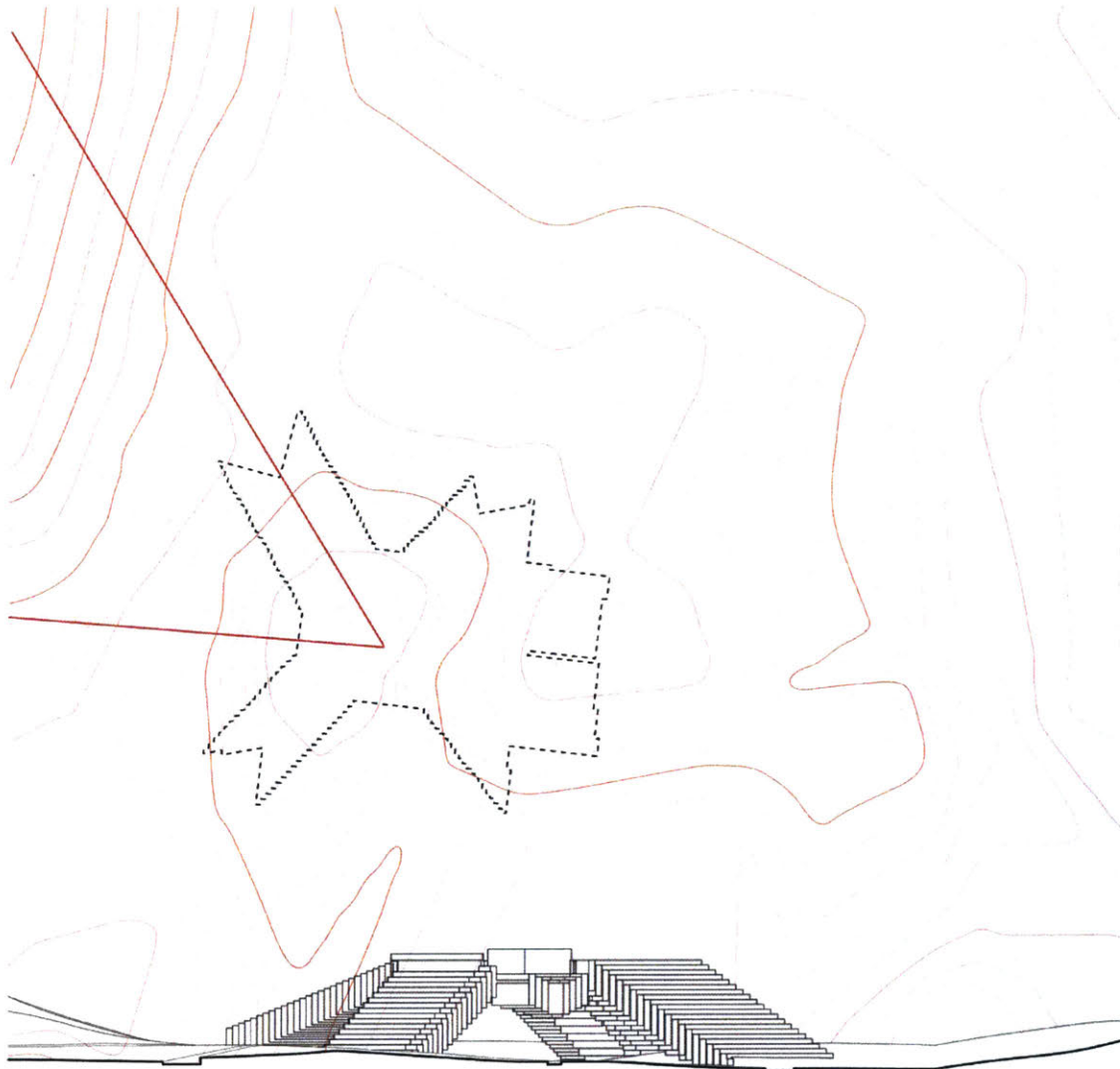


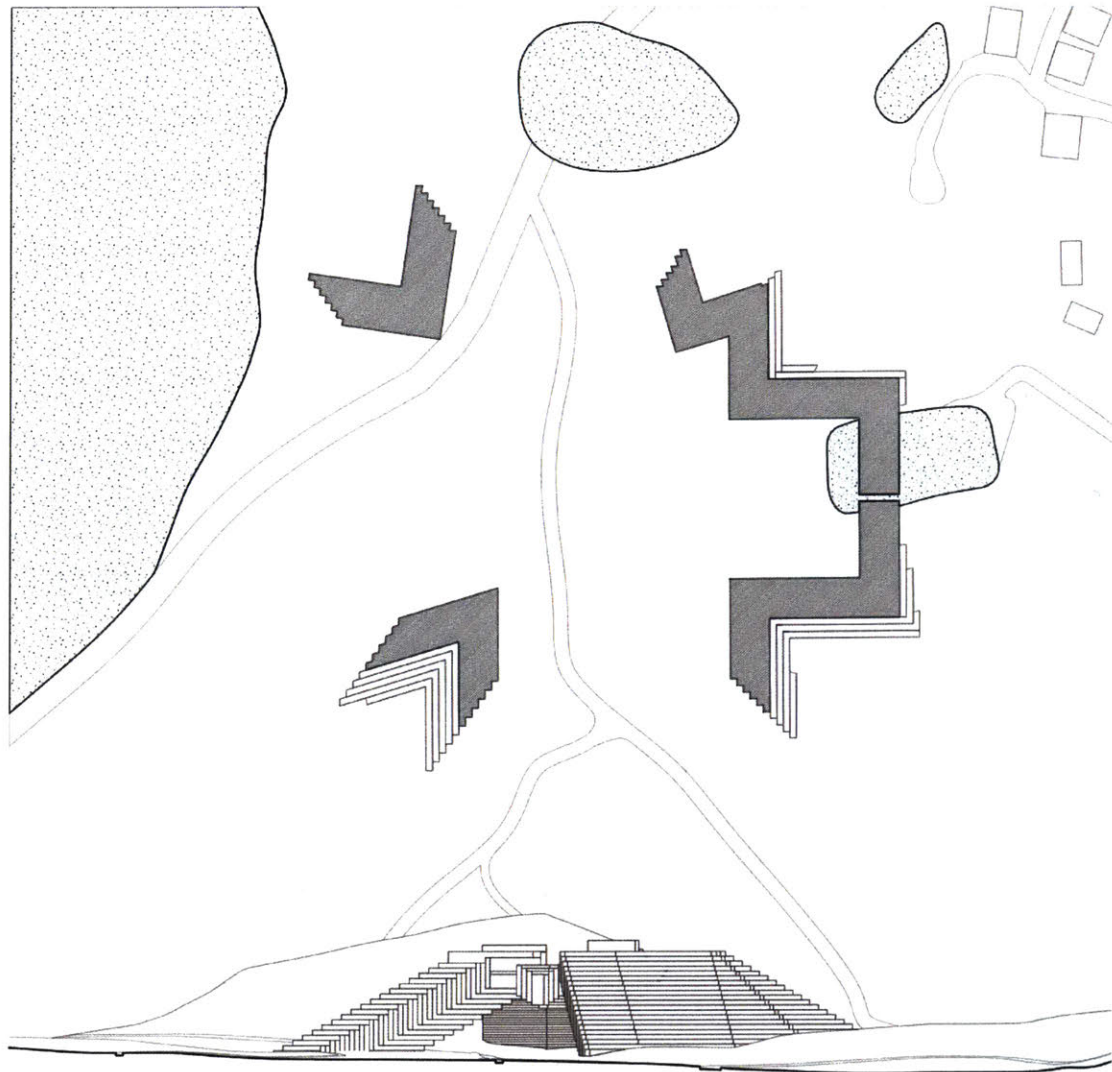


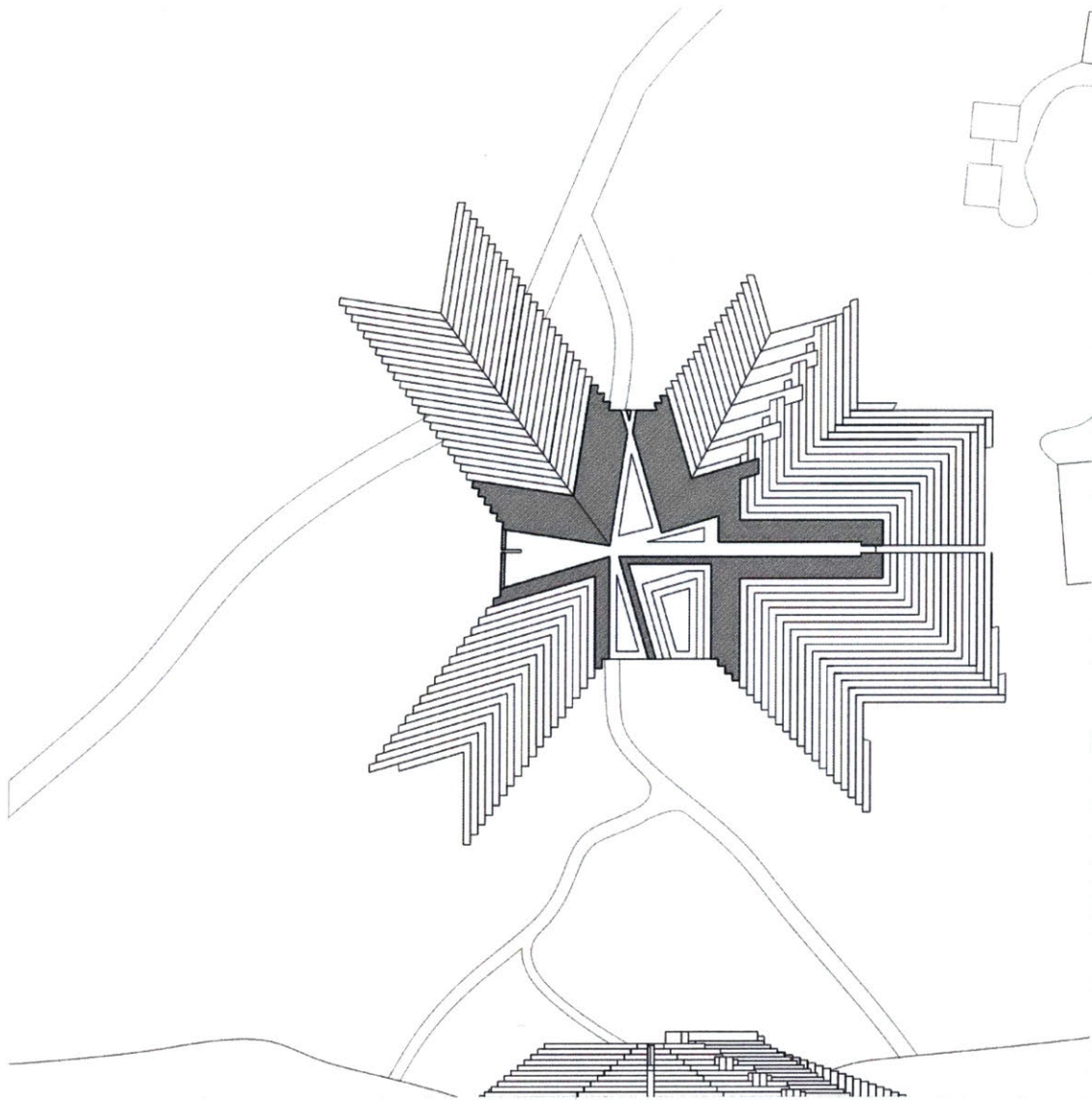
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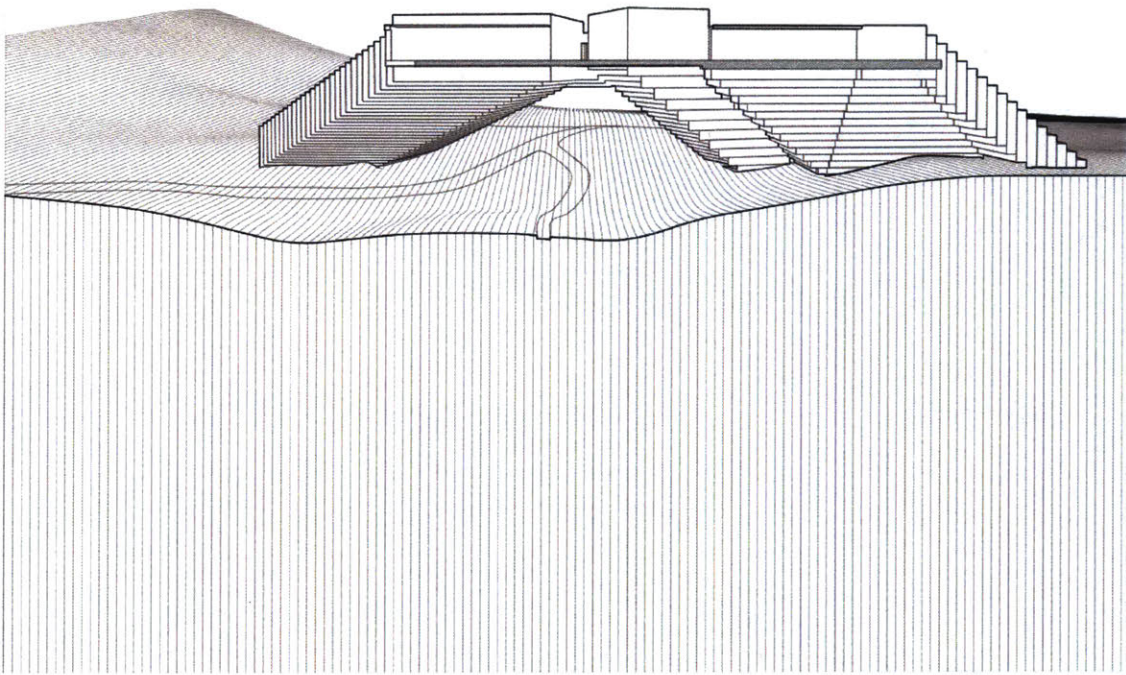
The project intervenes both at the local and the territorial level through the creation of a terraced mound between the Tixtla access and the Ayotzinapa teacher's school. This terraced structure culminates in an overground plaza that orients user's vistas towards the Ayotzinapa School and Mexico City, Iguala and Chilpancingo the three sites of power involved, by conscious or omission in the disappearance of the Ayotzinapa students.



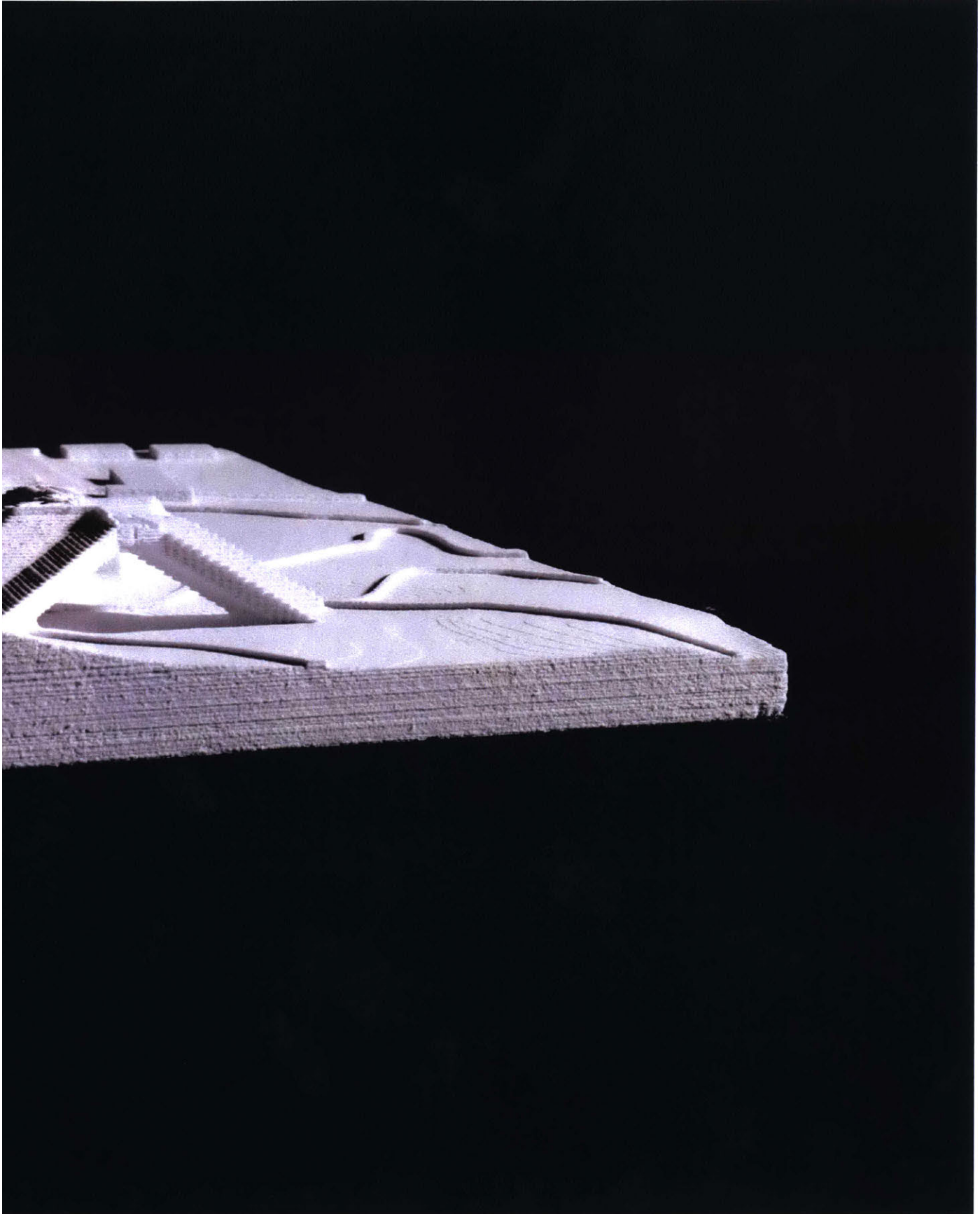


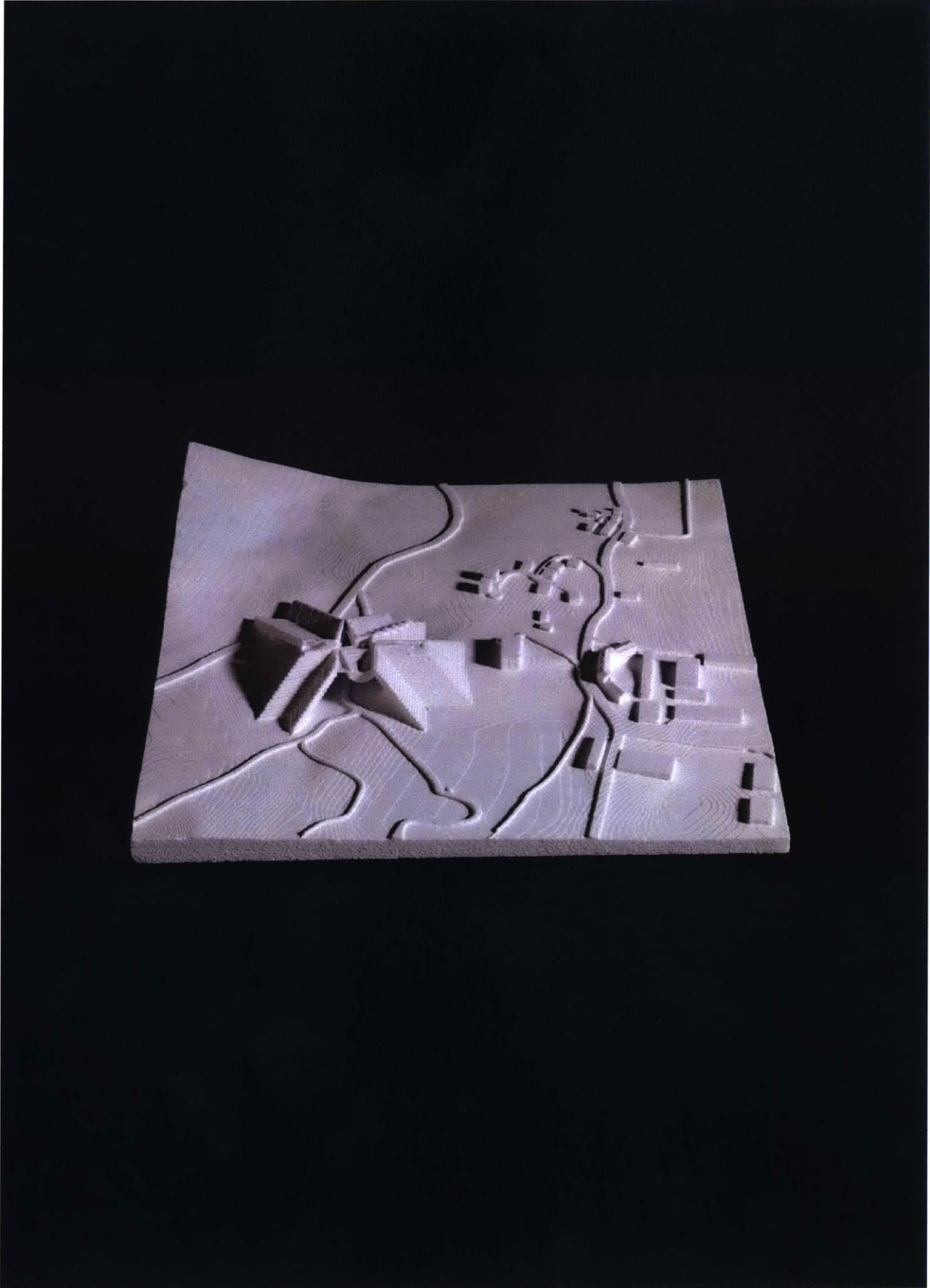


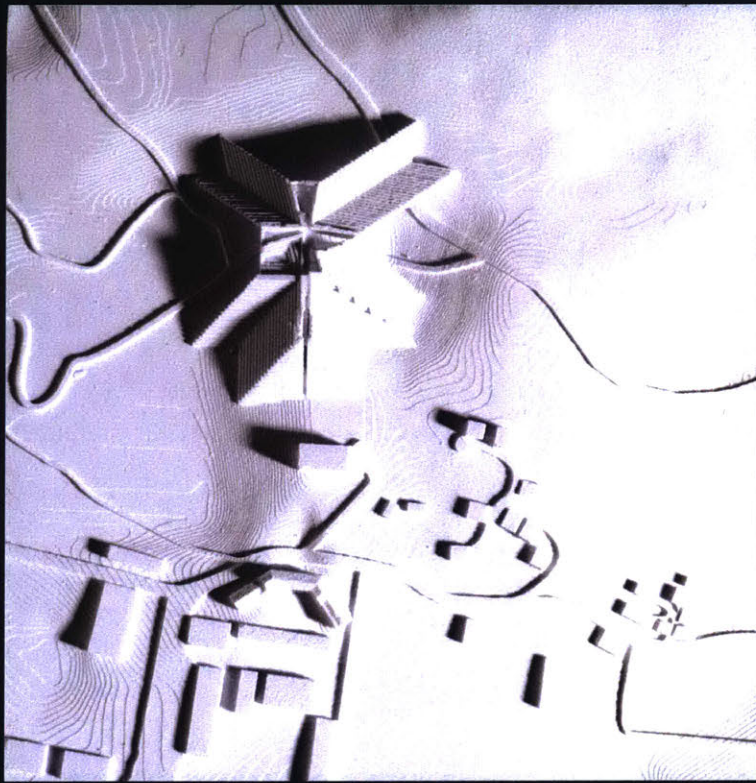












HÉNIN-BEAUMONT
SAMSONITE FACTORY

**Samsonite
Factory**
**Hénin-
Beaumont,
France**



Condition

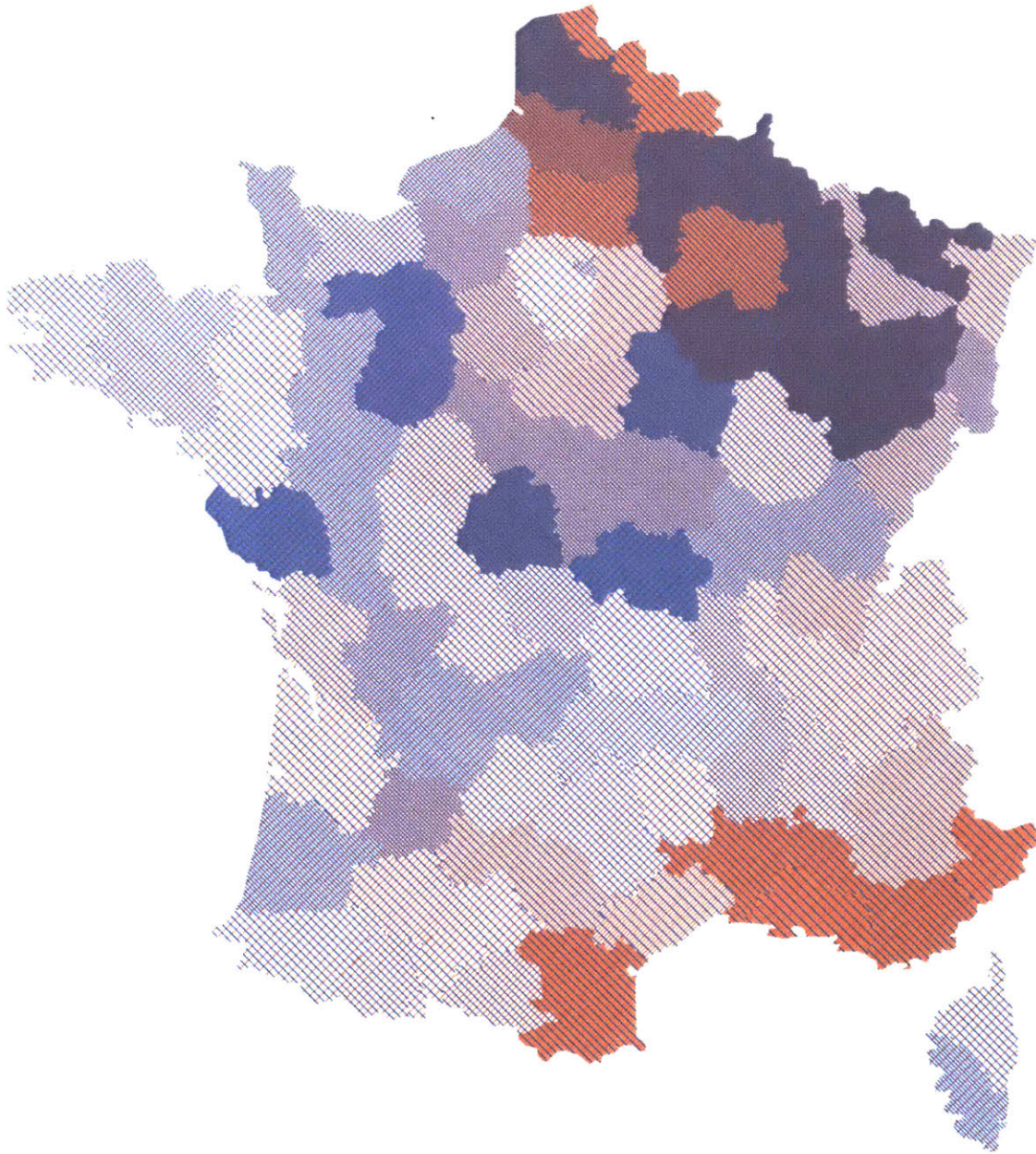
Other forms of dealing with uncomfortable identities relate to cooptation. Like a virus, they can be infiltrated, re-created and transformed into acolytes of the established order, as Hénin Beaumont demonstrates.

A small community from the French coal country ravaged by the effects of industrial delocalization, Hénin was run uninterruptedly by the left until 2014, when city politics started to become dominated by the Front National, the French franchise of European right-wing extremism. In the last presidential elections, Marine Le Pen, the Front National's head, received in Hénin 61.56% of votes in the second round of France's presidential elections.

A decade ago, it would have been difficult to refer to Hénin by any other appellation as a working class city. Now, however, it would be more accurate to describe it as a community of poor consumers. Blue-collar jobs have left, and factories have given room to junkspace that has extended the city size to much of its neighboring rural areas, well beyond its traditional postwar limits extended well beyond the city limits. The size of this expansion is as large as the whole area that the city occupied up until the eighties, having been completely covered by urban infrastructures that serves almost exclusively warehouses that are no longer dedicated to industrial storage, but to commodity consumption: Effectively, the last decade has morphed héninois workers into poor consumers, and has managed to connect them to the neoliberal order of things through the promotion and implantation of a newly-found addiction for acquisition.











500 m.
1,640 ft.



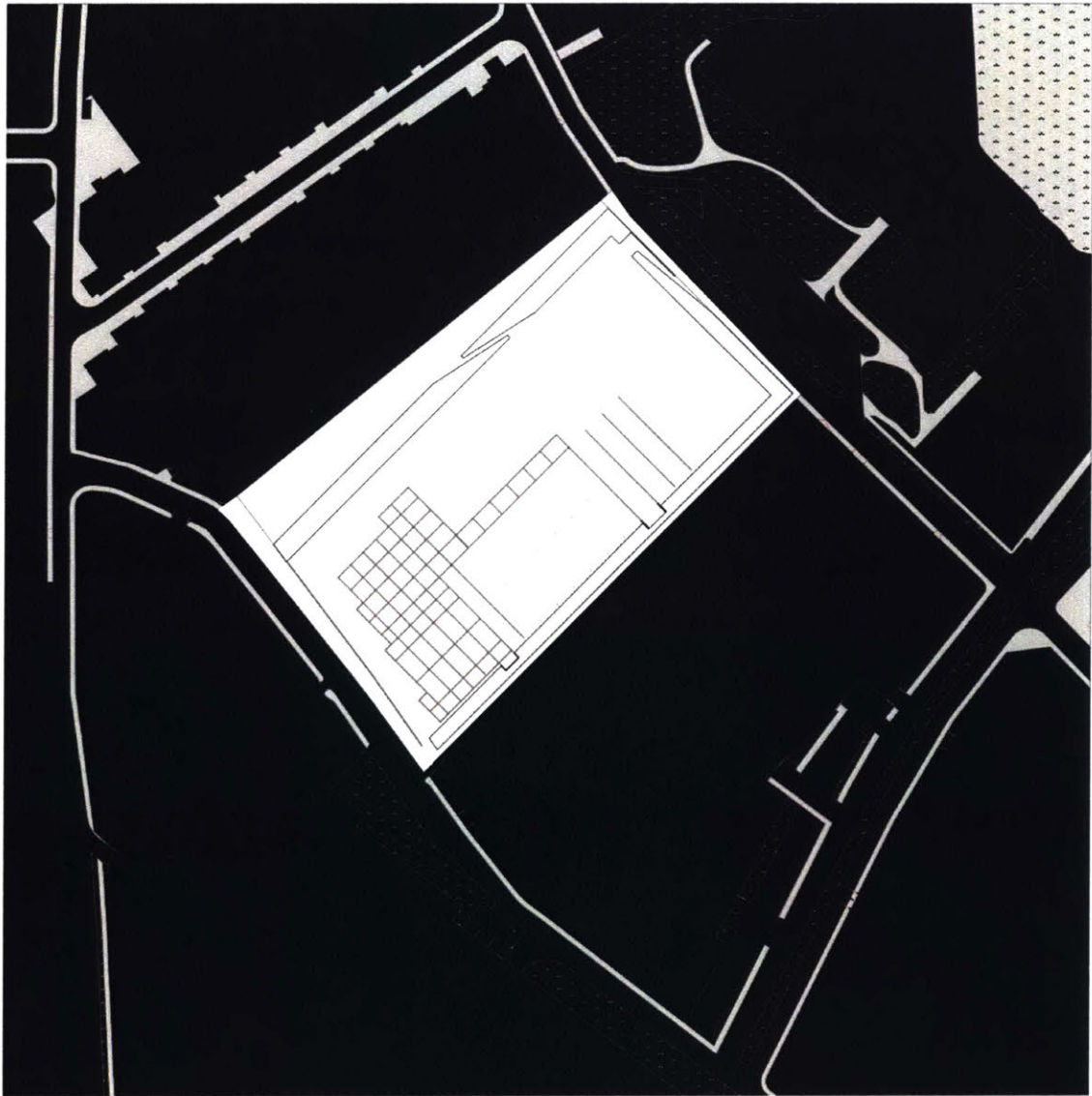
**** Site** The project sits in a plot located in the industrial quarter that developed south of the Historic core of Hénin Beaumont during postwar. It targets the terrain once occupied by the Samsonite luggage factory. The premises closed in the early two-thousands, when corporate executives decided to relocate the suitcase production to lower-wage. To avoid legally mandatory foreclosure payments to their workers, executives devised a scheme where the factory was sold to a phantom investor that let the factory die by itself. The laborers sued the factory for this illegal, exploitative behavior, and finally won compensation.

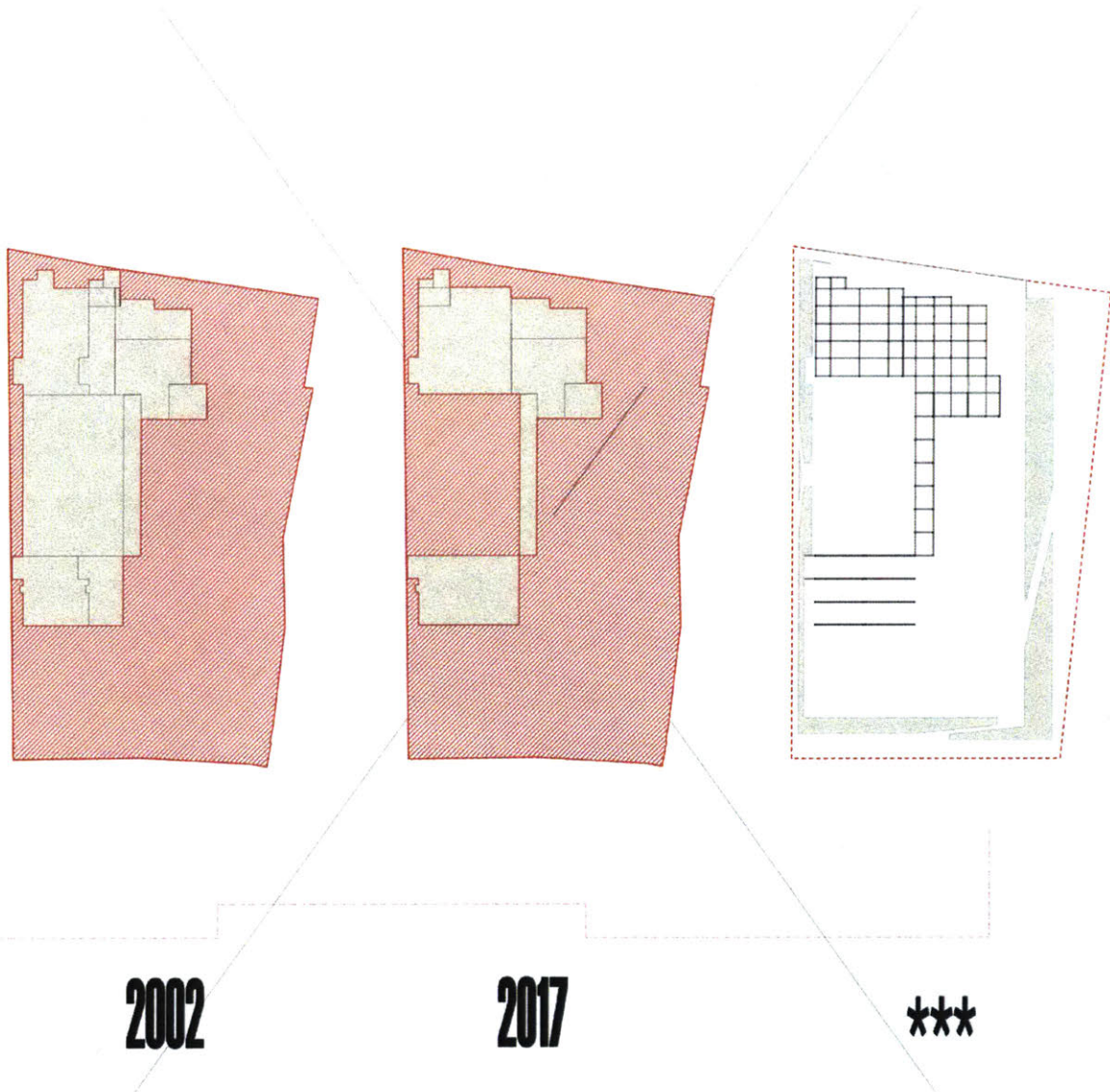
Ever since the closure of the factory in 2006, the plot has remained remains vacant, and acquire the uncanny aura of a self-induced industrial ruin surrounded by contemporary industrial junk space, the fringes of a working class neighborhood devoid of sociability other than a couple of corner bars.

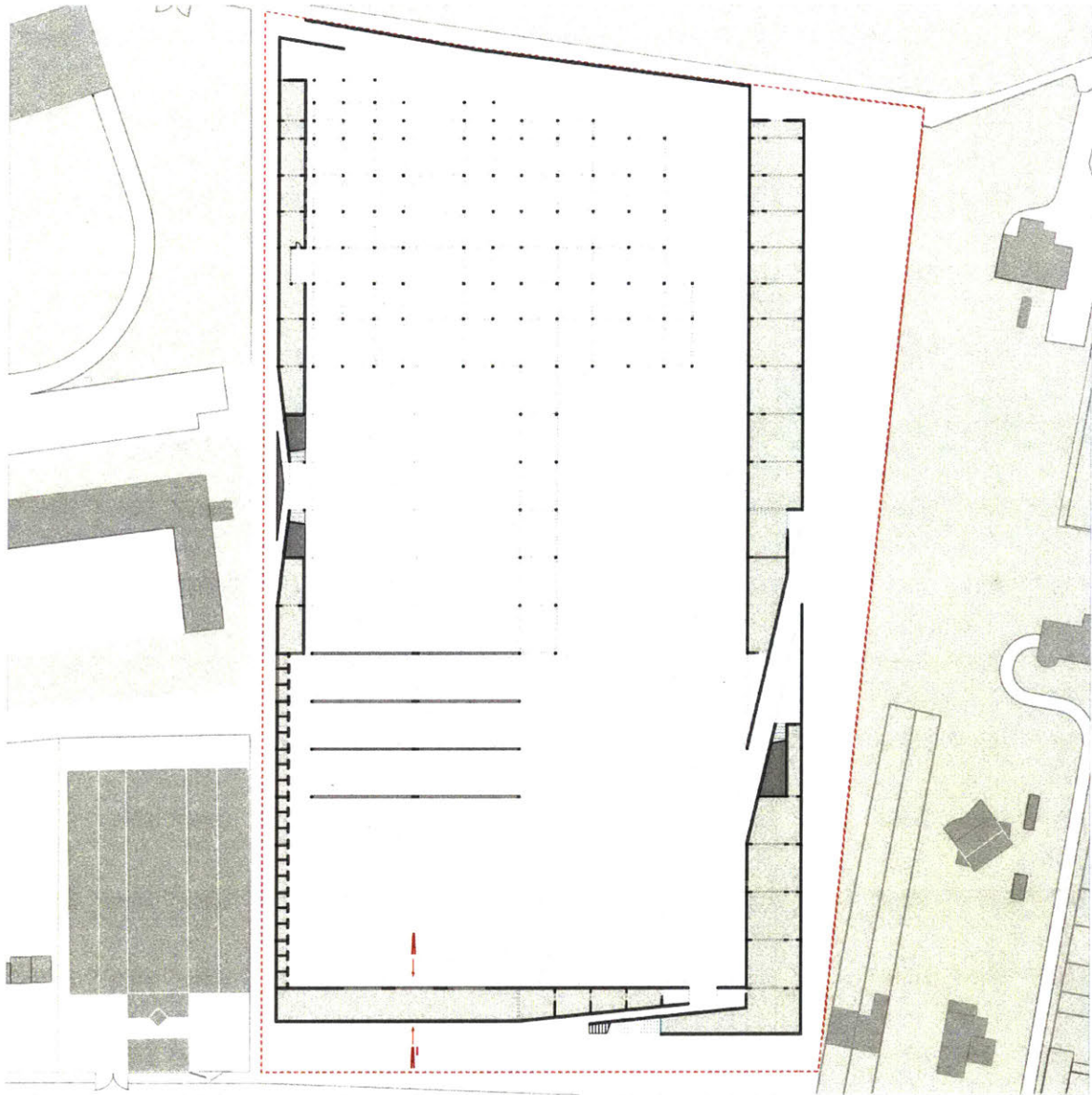




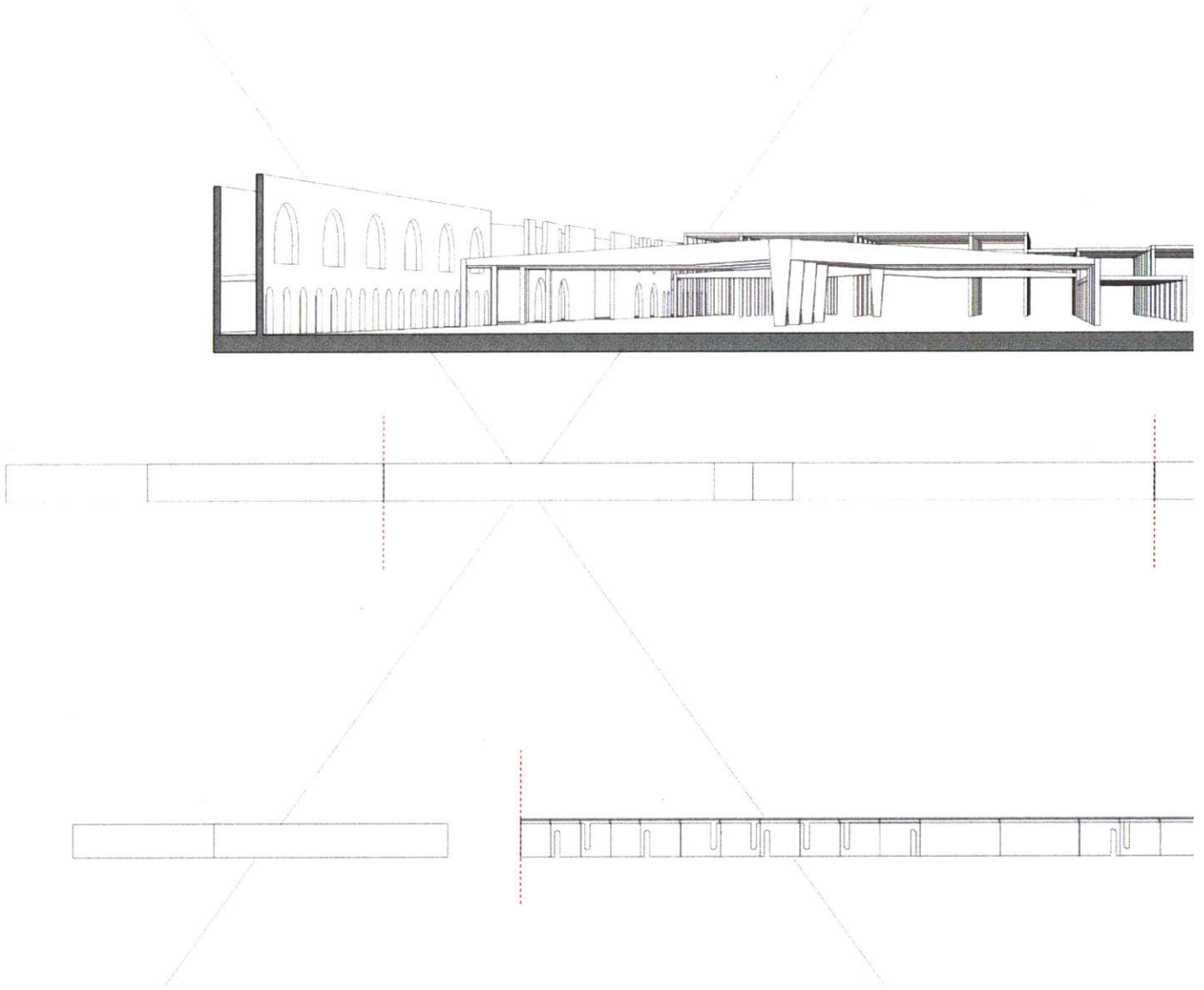
Project The project seeks to endow a completely unarticulated urban space with a public center of gravity through a strategy aimed at memorializing the story of corporate grid and deindustrialization embodied in the foreclosure of the Samsonite Factory through the preservation of the currently ruinous quality of its structure. The space formerly occupied for the production of luggage is left as is, but becomes encircled by a stripe-shape building intended to house a tool library and horizontal learning space that help to demarcate it from the rest of its surroundings.



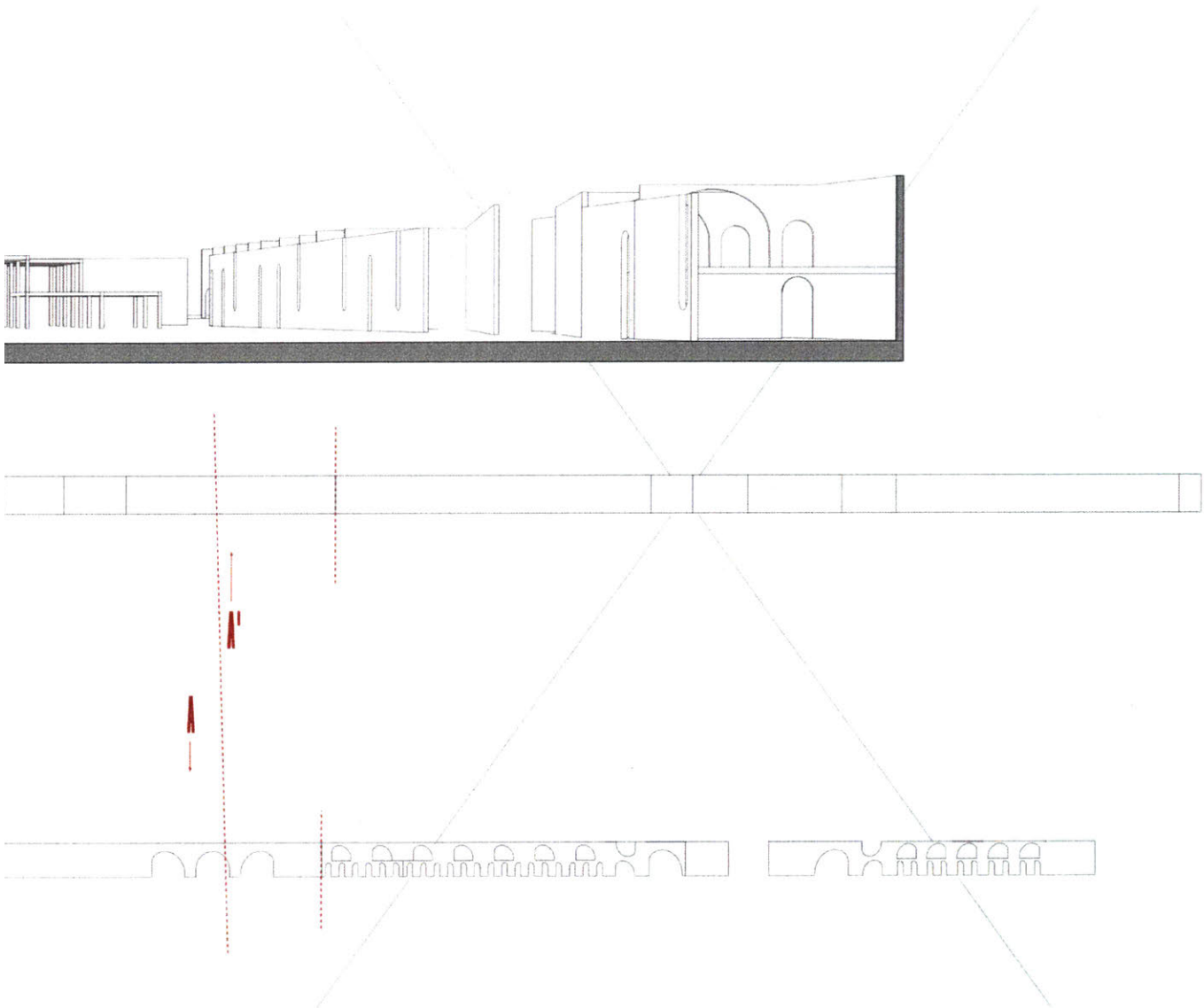




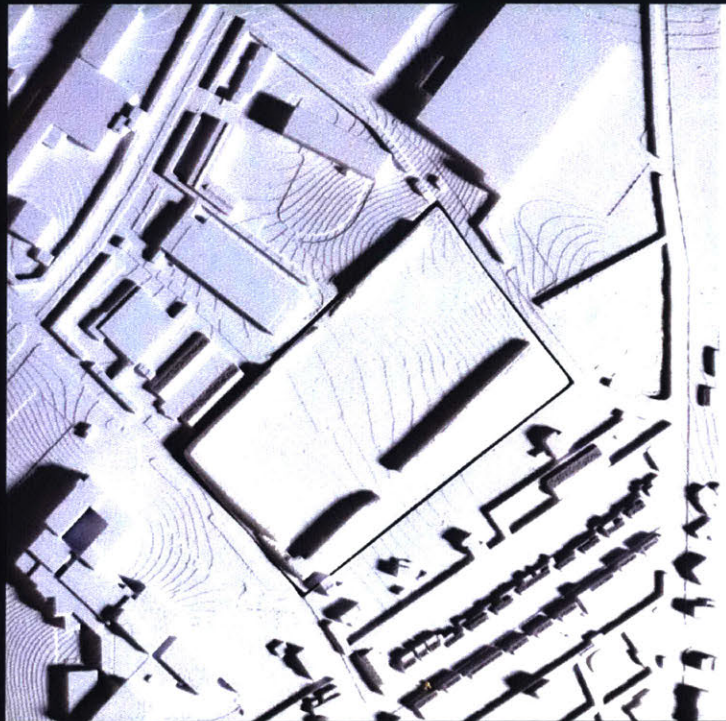
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// Project: Front Section
// Project: Exterior Elevation
// Project: Interior Elevation







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MADRID

CUATRO TORRES

Cuatro Torres Business Area



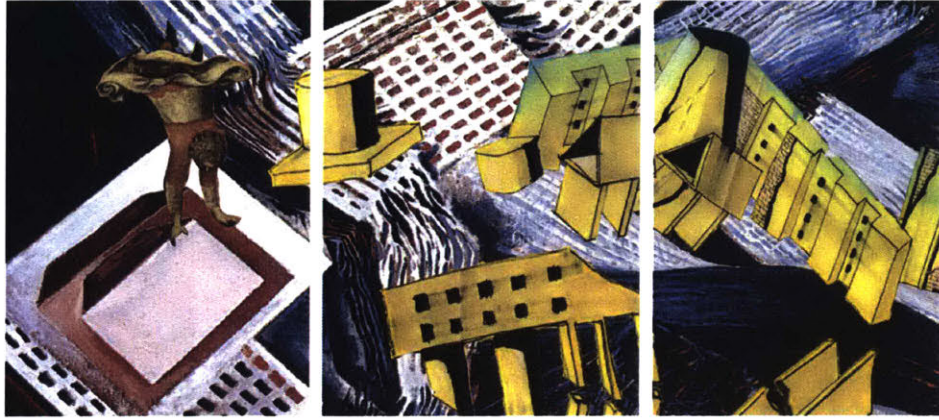
Madrid, Spain

• Condition

In the Cuatro Torres business area of Madrid, exclusion is effected through expulsion. Cuatro Torres sits at the Northern end of the city's main business axis, in a neighborhood that once predominantly occupied by social housing projects. Cuatro Torres has broken this urban ecology through the erection of four state-of-the-art skyscrapers that house the headquarters of organizations like the Australian and British embassies, and local corporations such as the OHL group, an infrastructure development company that made headlines at both sides of the Atlantic for the systematicity with which it received commissions for the construction of public infrastructure out of bribery acts.

In a way that is similar to OHL's corrupt practices, in the last thirty years the land where Cuatro Torres sits has also been part of a dizzying process of land exchange between the Madrid city government Madrid City and powerful Spanish corporations that has been systematically biased towards the latter. In the last chapter of these dizzying swaps, In 2013, the Madrid City government decided to cede to the Real Madrid, one of the most emblematic clubs of the profitable Spanish soccer industry, a hundred-million euros worth of land for the incapacity of the Real Madrid Club to commercialize land that had received from the city government in order to make the plots where Cuatro Torres sits publicly owned. (Public tenure of this plot only lasted three years and ended when the city government sold the lands to the real estate investors that ended up building Cuatro Torres).




This dizzying cycle of real state swap is emblematic of a recurrent path where the city government squander public land to the benefit of investors, draining itself from territorial reserves that could have been used for social purposes, especially in an European capital that now embarrassingly holds Latin American levels of income inequality.



EL PAIS
MADRID

Trece años después, 46 veces más caro

Un error del Ayuntamiento en 1998 obliga ahora a compensar al Real Madrid por un terreno que se ha revalorizado de 0,5 a 22,7 millones. En compensación por el solar no entregado el club ofrece parcelas edificables, un solar en Valdebebas y la propiedad en la Franja que rodea al estadio

ELENA G. SEVILLANO
Madrid

Los planes de Florentino Pérez para remodelar el Santiago Bernabéu, han obligado al club y al Ayuntamiento a ponerse al día en las deudas reciproas que amarraban desde los convenios que firmaron en los noventa, entre ellos, el de las Cuatro Torres en la Ciudad Deportiva. De aquella época quedaba un fidejocomiso. Una parcela de 70.000 metros cuadrados en Las Tablas que en 1998 el Ayuntamiento se comprometió a entregar al club.

Se valoró en 488.000 euros. Pero según se estimó: un error de bulto tal que el Ayuntamiento pactara la entrega de un terreno que era de uso deportivo de carácter básico, es decir, de titularidad pública. Por definición, nunca podría pasar a manos privadas. Justo 13 años después, ante la necesidad de dejar a cero las deudas entre el club y el Consistorio, González ha tenido que compensar a Real Madrid por esa parcela que le debía. Hecha la tasación, el resultado es que su valor se ha multiplicado por 46. La parcela de Las Tablas vale ahora 22,7 millones de euros.


MÁS INFORMACIÓN

El estadio se mete en la Cancleiana

GRÁFICO El proyecto para ampliar el Santiago Bernabéu

El Ayuntamiento niega que se este compensando al Madrid sino cumpliendo "lo que se firmó"

Así gana el Madrid



Recreación aérea de la parcela que el Real Madrid de la imagen de futuro estadio del jugador de la Cancleiana. REAL MADRID

APÚNTATE A NUESTRAS NEWSLETTERS

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ECONOMÍA OPINIÓN VIÑETAS

SOCIEDAD CULTURA TENDENCIAS

GENTE OBITUARIOS DEPORTES

PANTALLA ÚLTIMA

EDICIONES

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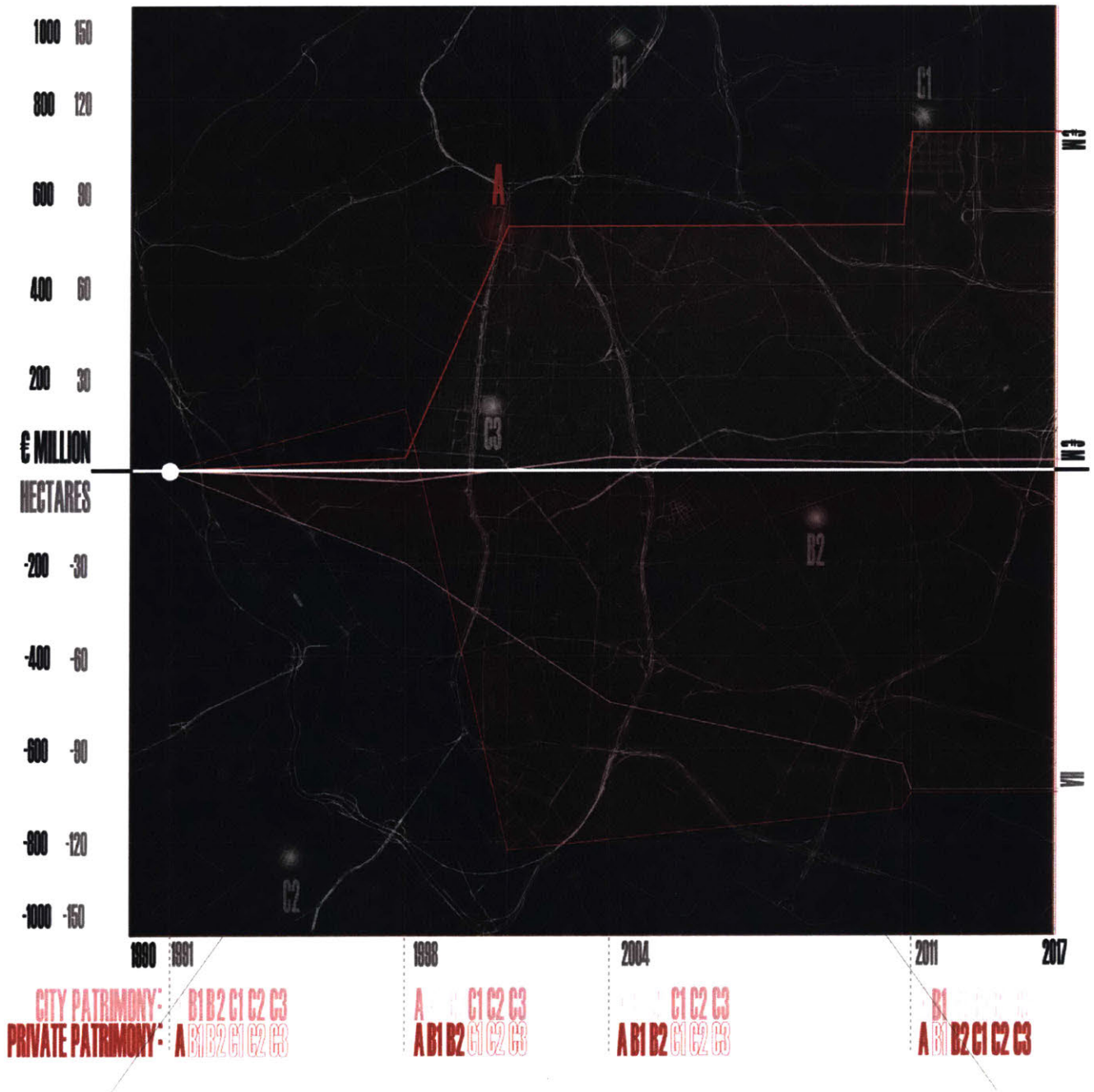
Consulta la hemeroteca de El País

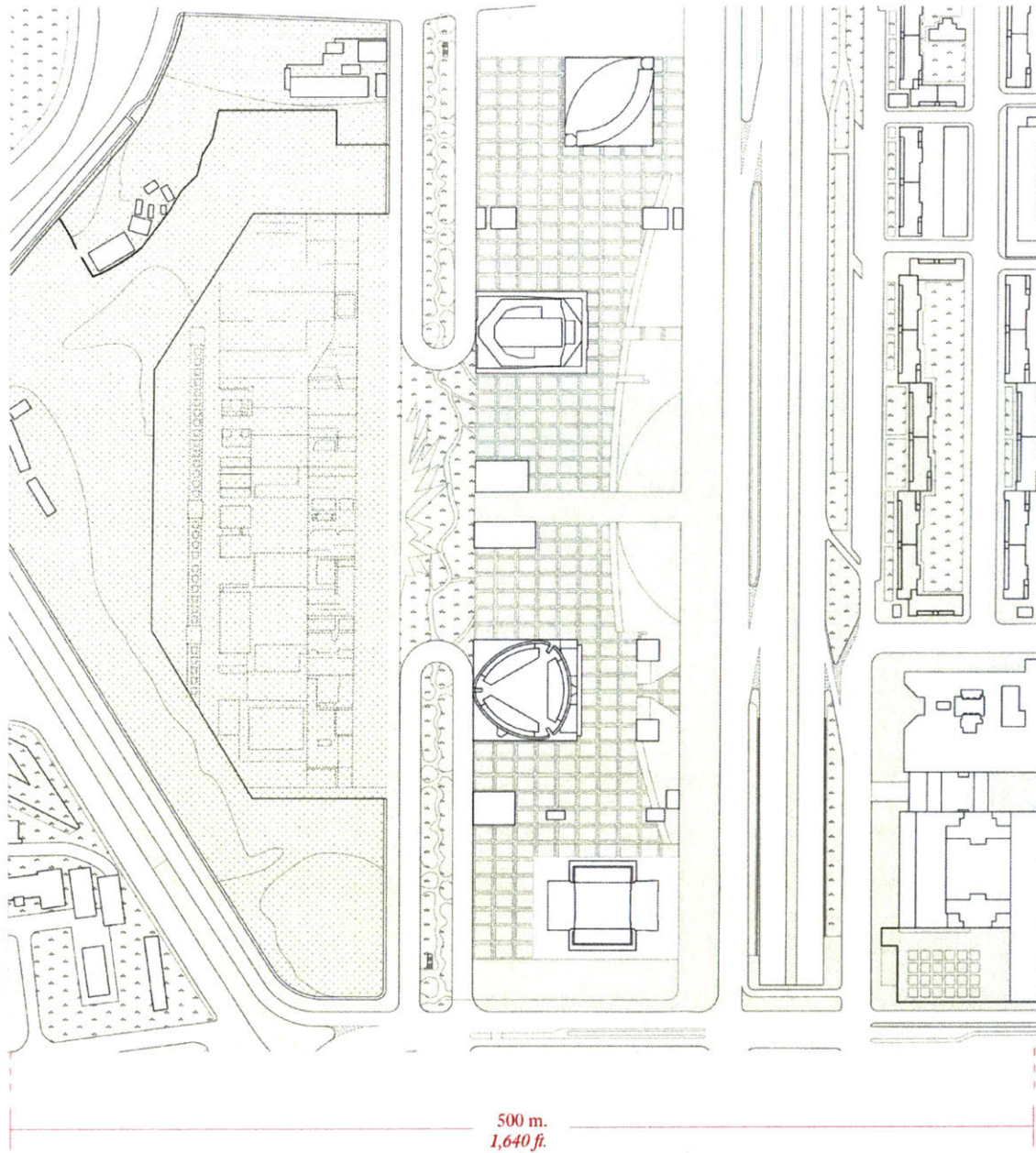
ARCHIVOS DE PORTADAS EL PAÍS

En 1998, Las Tablas era poco más que un solar. Y la parcela en cuestión era campo pendiente de urbanizar que, según los técnicos de entonces, no valía más de medio millón de euros. El Real Madrid, en su informe económico 2010-2011, aun valora el terreno en esos 488.000 euros y lo define así: "Propiedad del club, obtenida en una operación de permuta de terrenos realizada en enero de los noventa con el Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Madrid". Añade que "este terreno no está afecto a la explotación ni tiene un uso definido". Sin embargo, las cosas han cambiado. Las Tablas es hoy un barrio residencial en expansión, al que ya llega el metro desde 2007, y en el que grandes empresas como Telefonía han establecido su cuartel general. El Ayuntamiento ha puesto precio a la parcela "conforme a su valor actual", según asegura un convenio que firmó con el club el 29 de julio pasado: 22,7 millones.

"A pesar del tiempo transcurrido desde entonces y el pactado y fecha de hoy dicha parcela no ha sido entregada", consulta el ayuntamiento, que firma la concejal de Urbanismo, Pilar Martínez, en nombre del Ayuntamiento. Para compensar al club, el Consistorio le entrega, entre otros, cuatro terrenos en el barrio de Osaña (Carabanchel) para hacer chalets. Suman 8.000 metros cuadrados y están calificados como de uso residencial en "topografía de vivienda unifamiliar para esta".



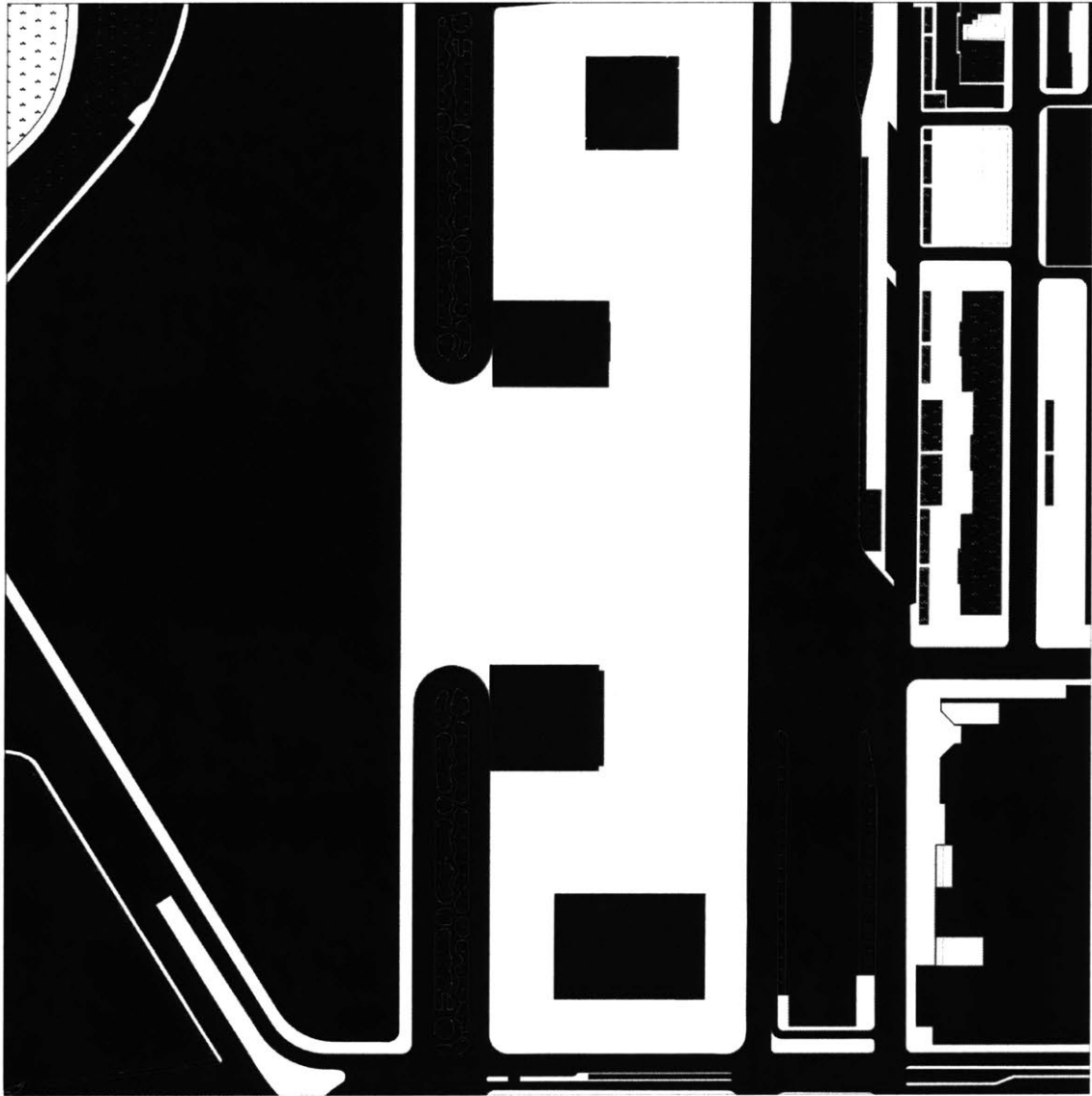






**** Site** The site is located glory north of Paseo de la Castellana, Madrid's flagship axis, in the huge open space that the corporate skyscrapers of Cuatro Torres have created for their safety and self-celebration, and that constitutes a powerful example of the square-as-a-buffer typology revised in the thesis' introductory essay. Up until their construction, the zone had developed throughout the postwar as a land reservoir for the city mainly dedicated to the provision of social housing

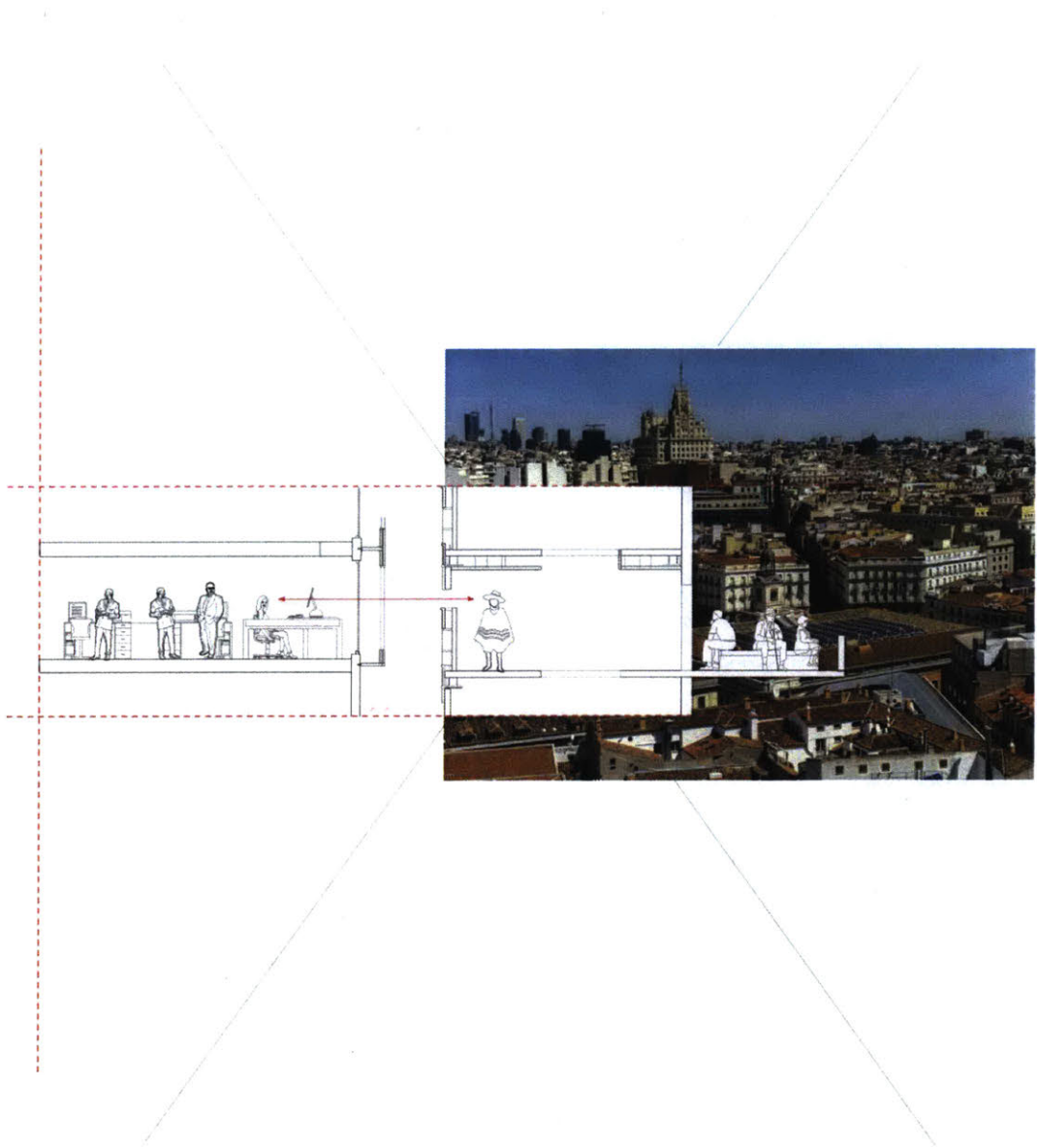


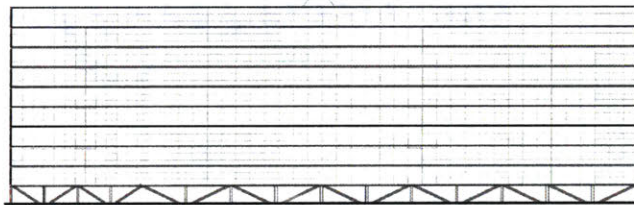
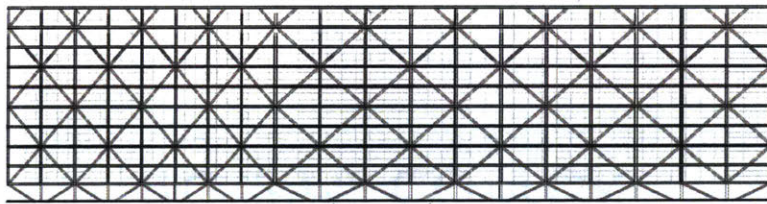


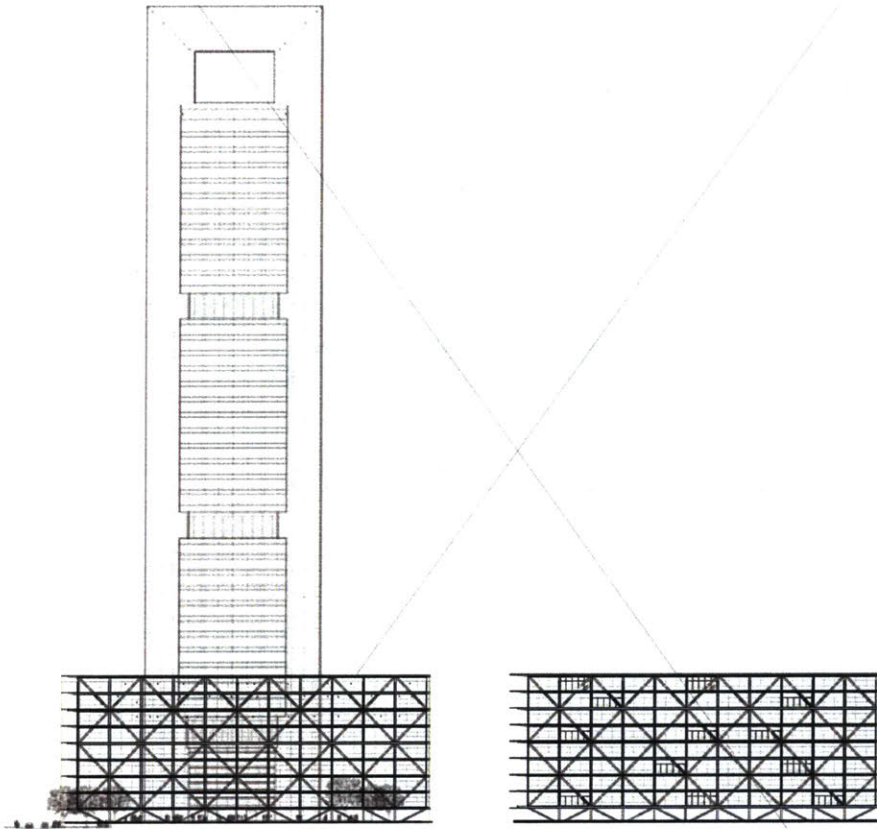
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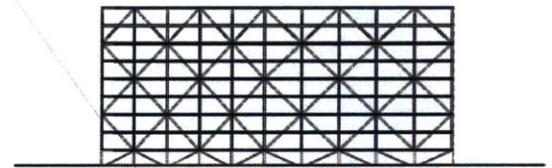
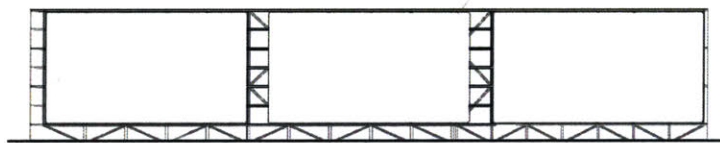
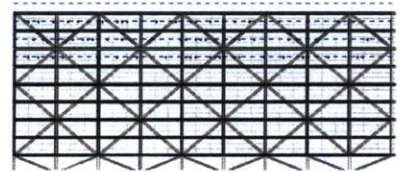
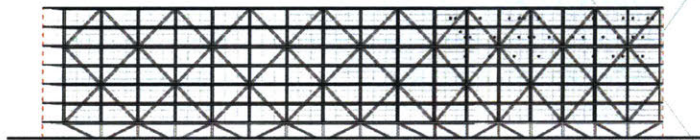
The project invades the blank space that separates the four corporate skyscrapers of Cuatro Torres from Madrid. It erects a series of walls that evaporate the negative space upon which the skyscrapers claim authority towards its surroundings and towards the skyline of the city. The walls house domestic programs that to provide transient housing in a city with structural housing shortages. The envelopes of these buildings are clad with reflecting surface that provide a symbolic way to short circuit the will of the corporate wall to have visual access to the city without changing its circulatory and spatial opacity.

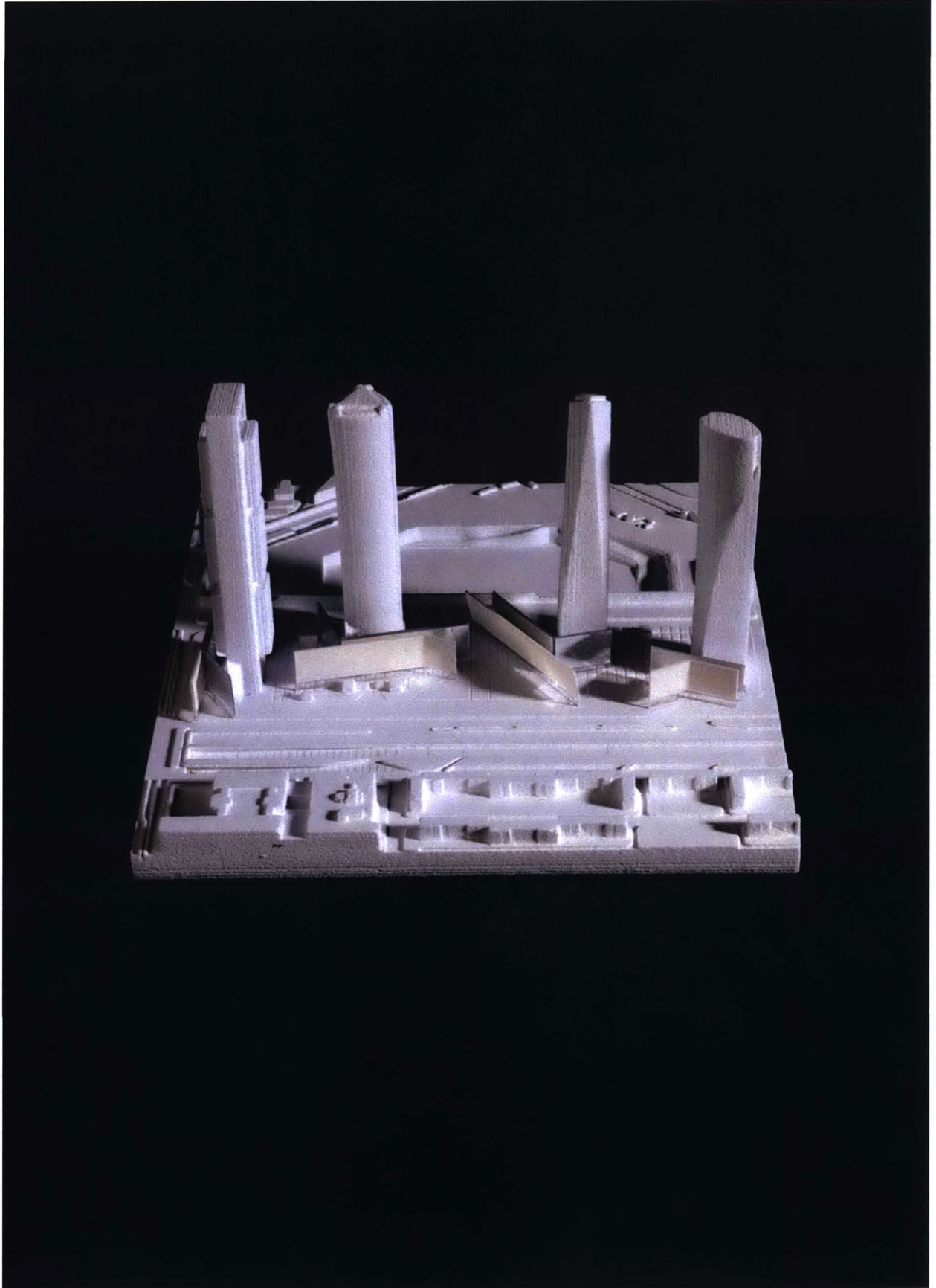


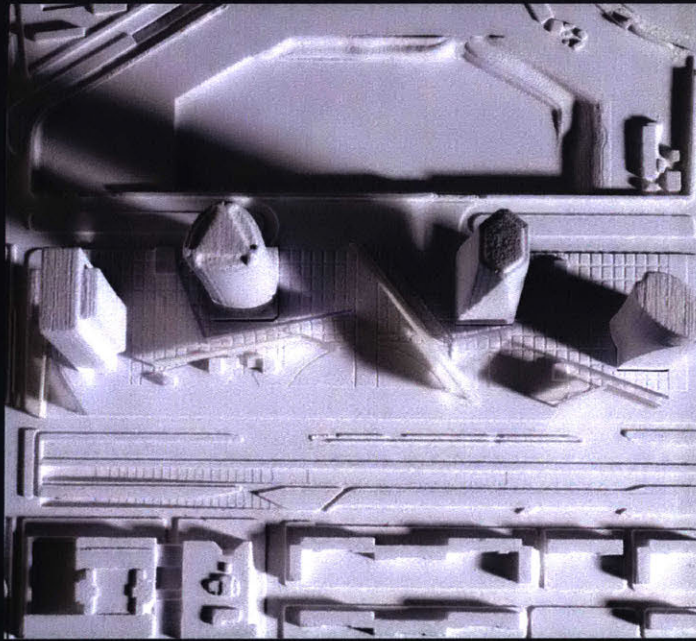












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SANFORD

THE RETREAT AT TWIN LAKES

**The Retreat at
Twin Lakes**
Sanford, USA

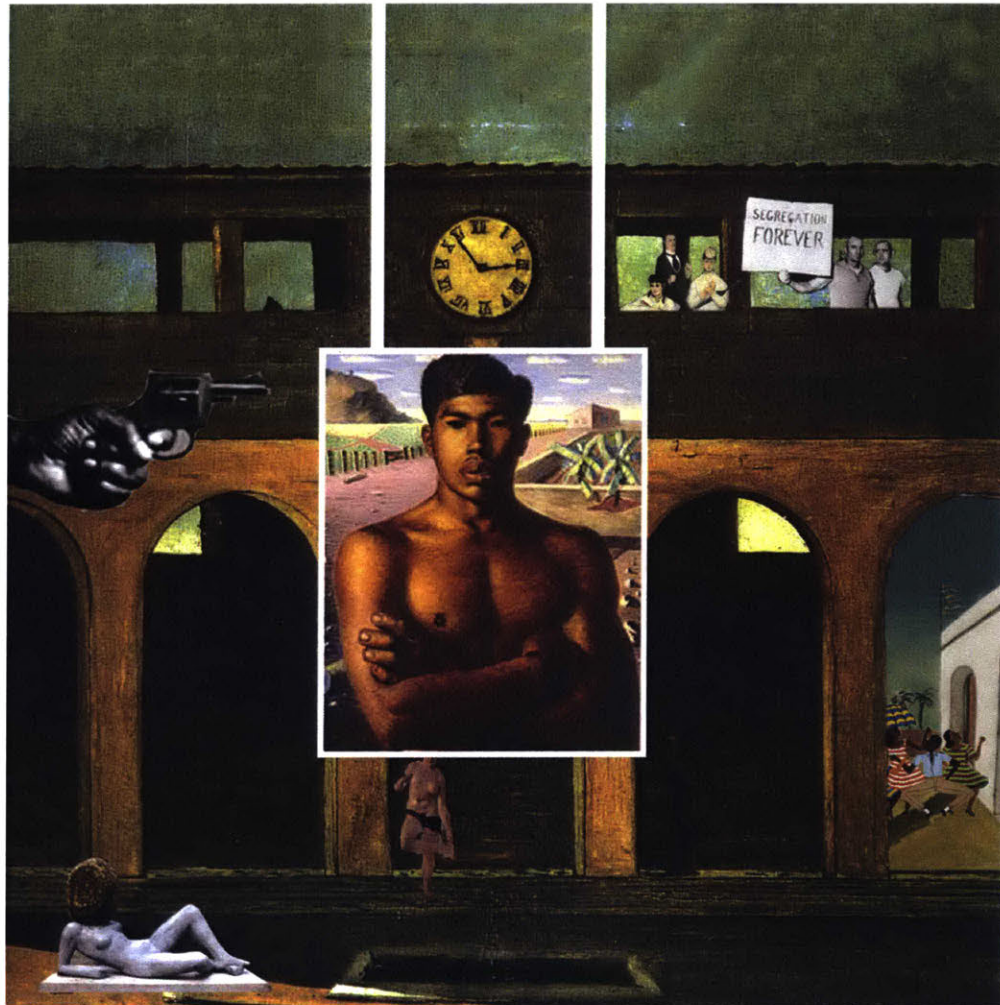


Condition

From a rational bureaucratic register, Sanford is a fifty thousand-people city located in a urban region dominated by the city of Orlando. However, in its physical reality it is a stark fault-line of two different approaches to inhabitation and urban experience: a consolidated grid of open streets predominantly inhabited by black bodies and big box stores, and a rhizomatic array of gated residential islands owned by comparatively well off white citizens. The latter ones are more commonly known as “gated communities”, a semantic disguise used to obscure what are effectively physically and culturally closed congregations that have created for the purpose of securing profits from the consumption of purified lifestyles.

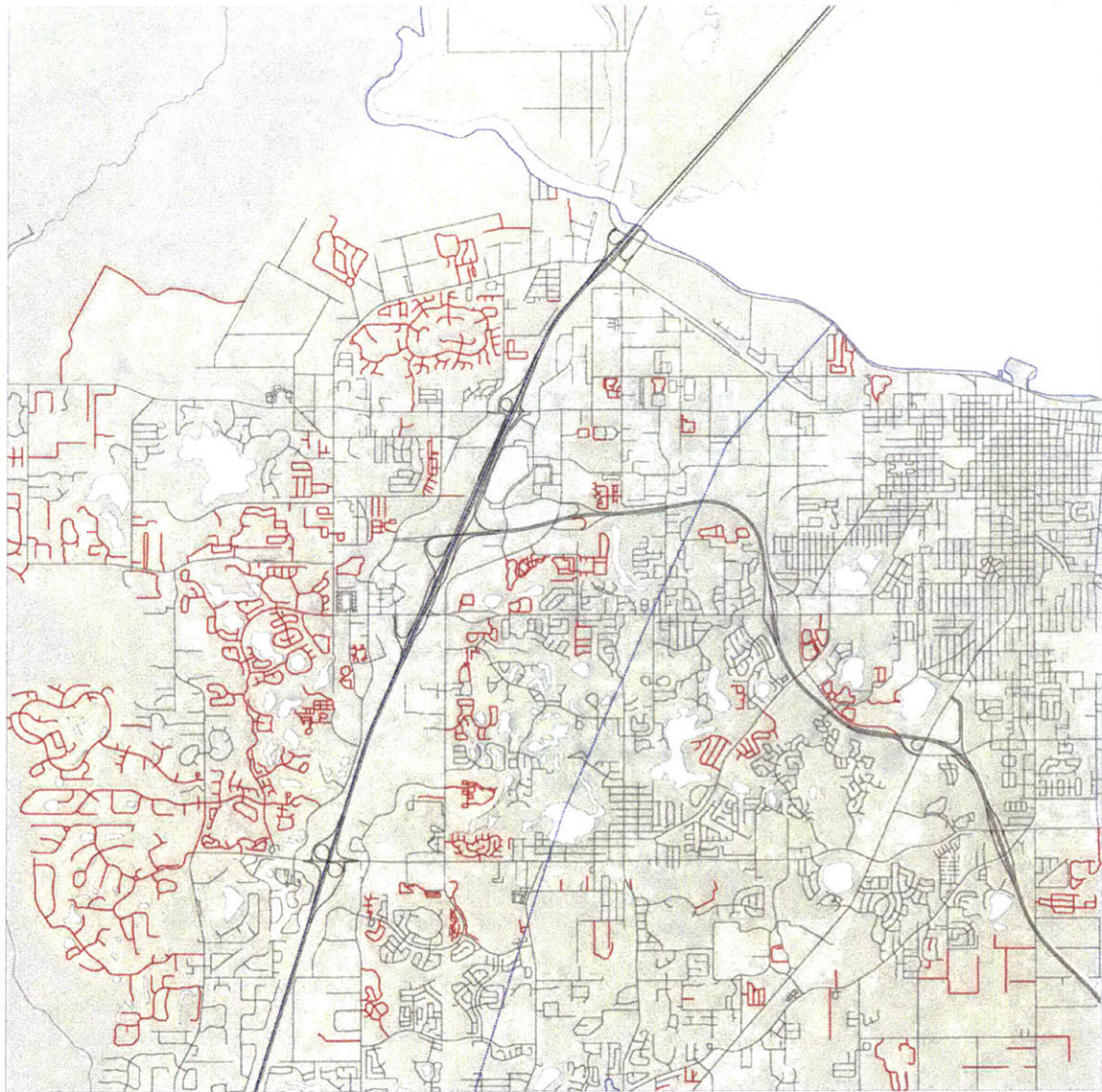
The residential cluster evocatively named “Retreat at Twin Lakes” belongs to this second set of spaces. Sitting anxiously in the transitional zone between the open black city and the white archipelago of gated communities, it was in the Retreat where Trayvon Martin, a black teenager, was fatally shot by a neighborhood watch coordinator when he was returning to his mother’s apartment

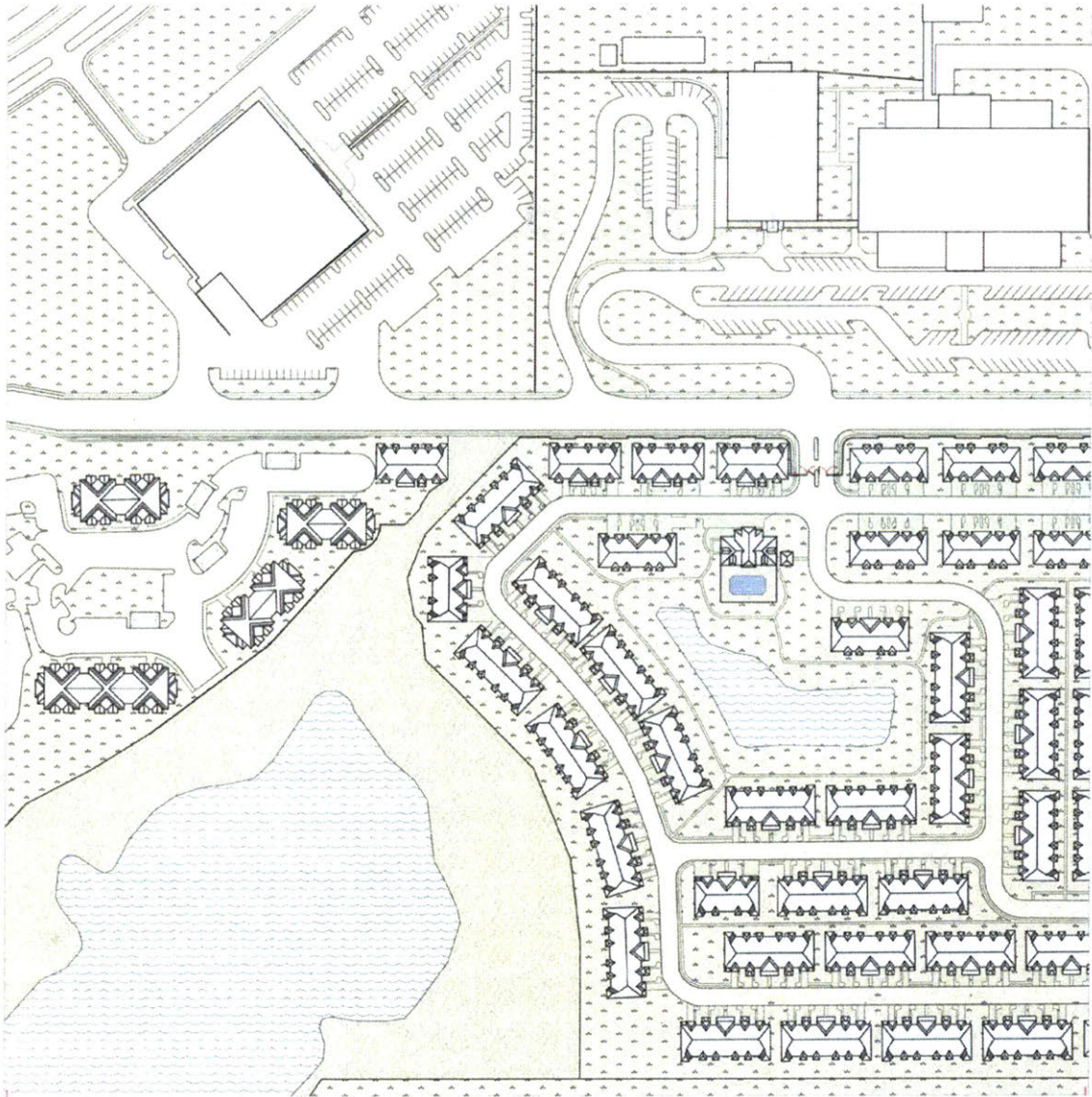
In a site where normative subjectivities have built, in quite a literal way, walls to protect themselves from otherness, one is left to wonder the extent to which physical segregation makes co-presence of effective diversities unimaginable to a degree that making its sheer materialization automatically suspicious, alarming, vanishable.









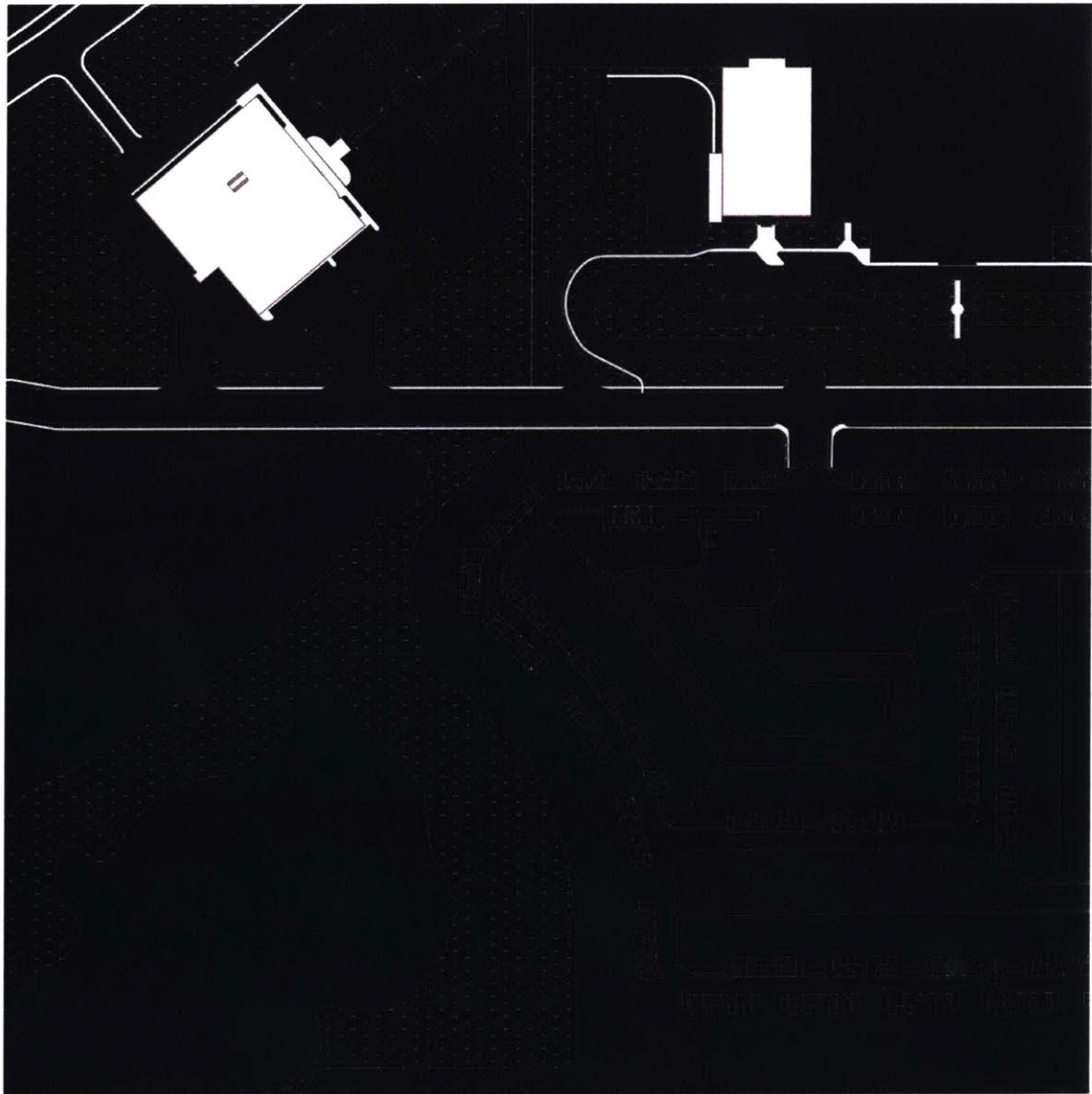


500 m.
1,640 ft.

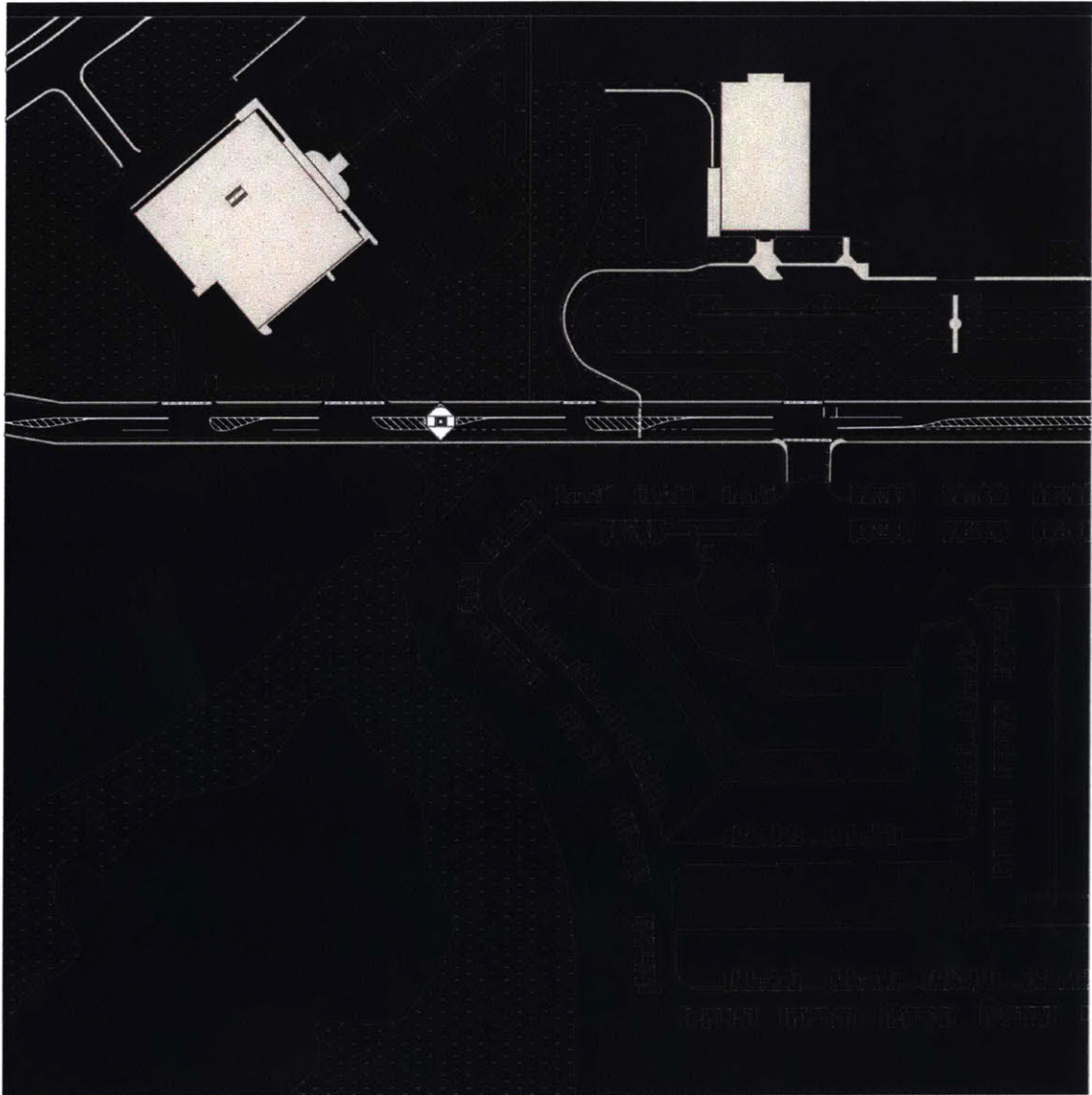


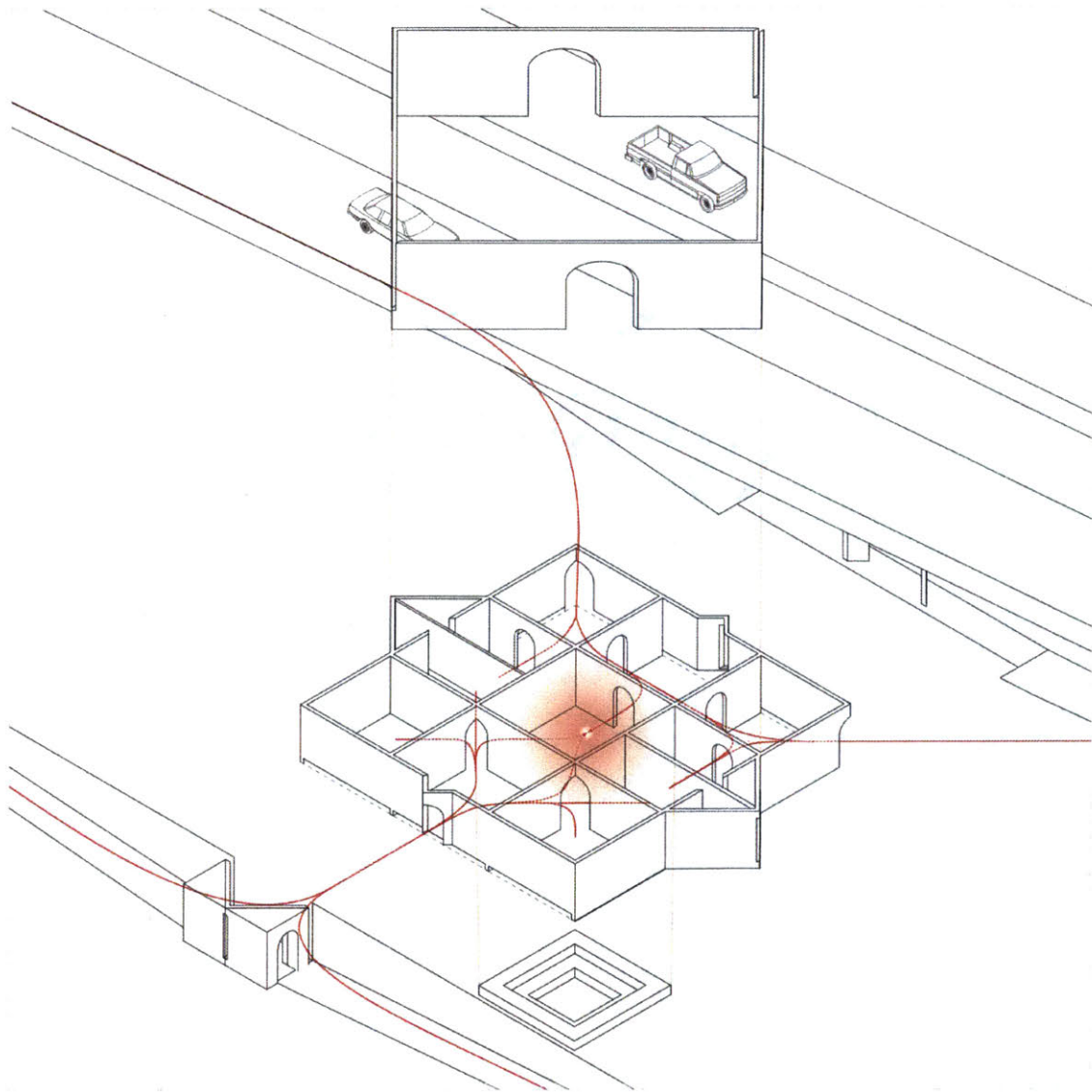
**** Site** The site sits at Oregon Avenue, a few meters away from the access of The Retreat at Twin Lakes, a middle class gated community in the suburban area of Sanford. The zone is a public space desert, bloated with retail junkspace that impedes the experiential connection of the gated community with a school and a big box store located at the other side of its access avenue. There are no gathering places or even places for food consumption in its vicinity. The Seven Eleven that Trayvon Martin walked to the day when he was fatally shot is located about a mile away.

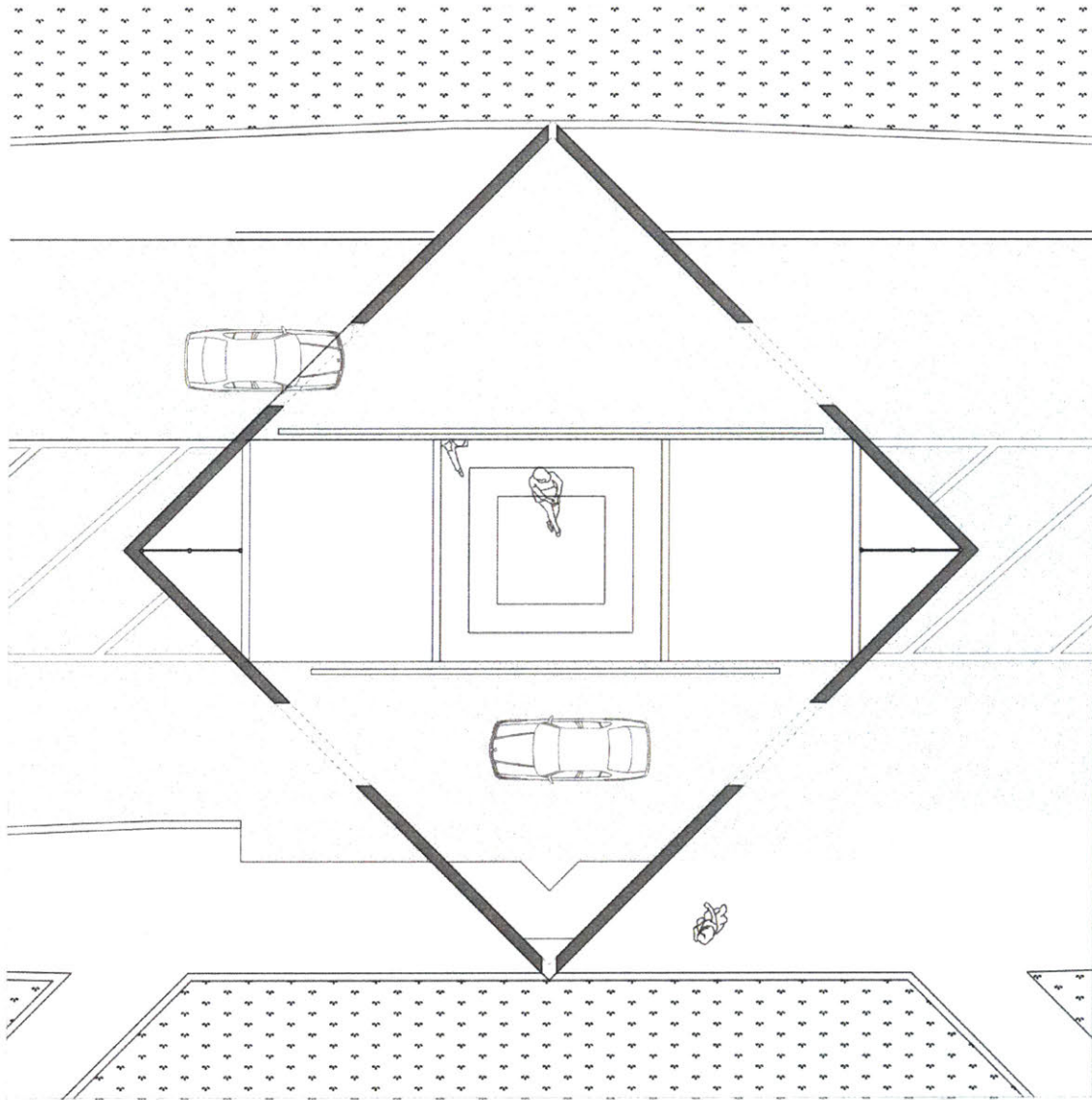


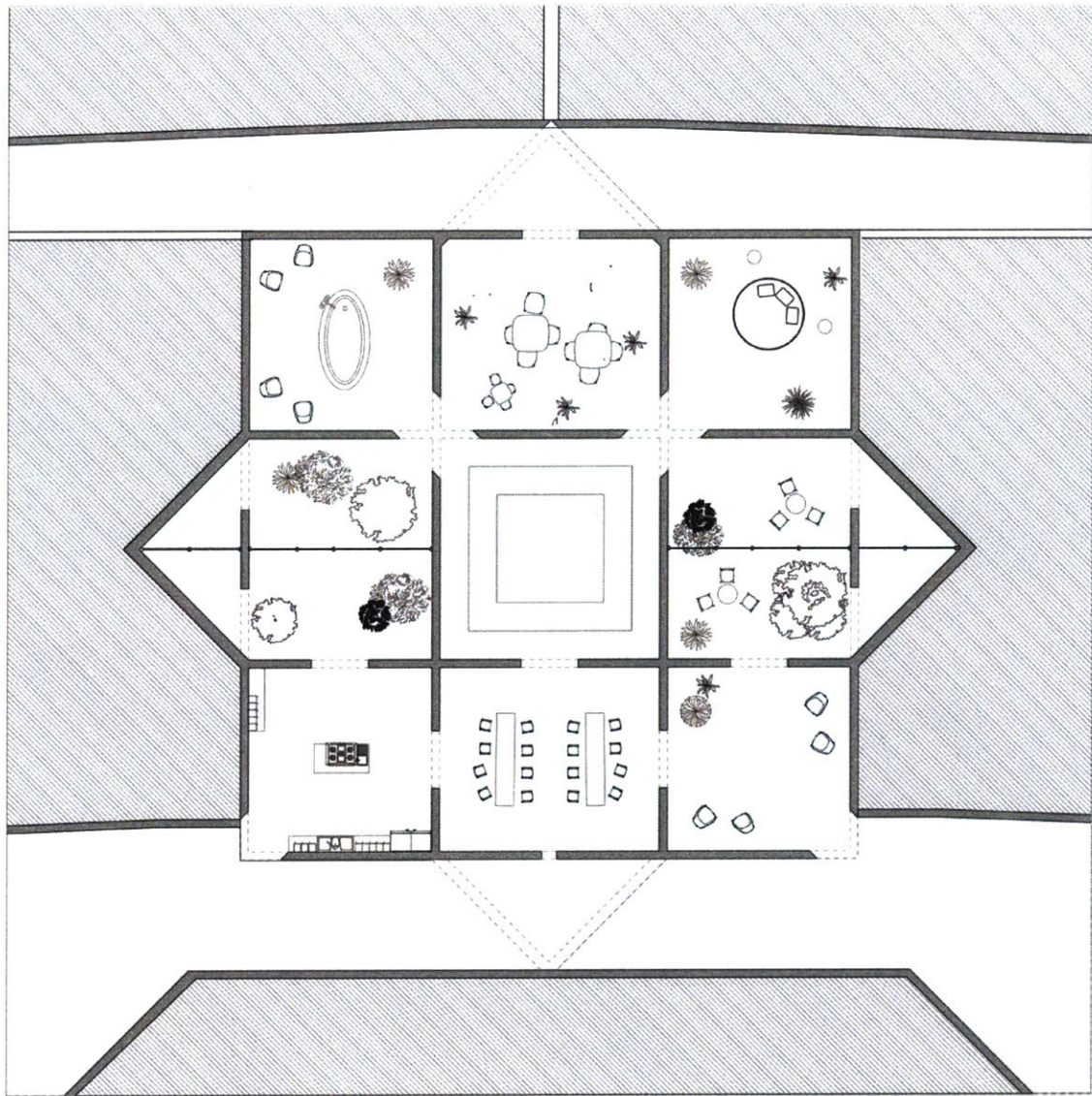


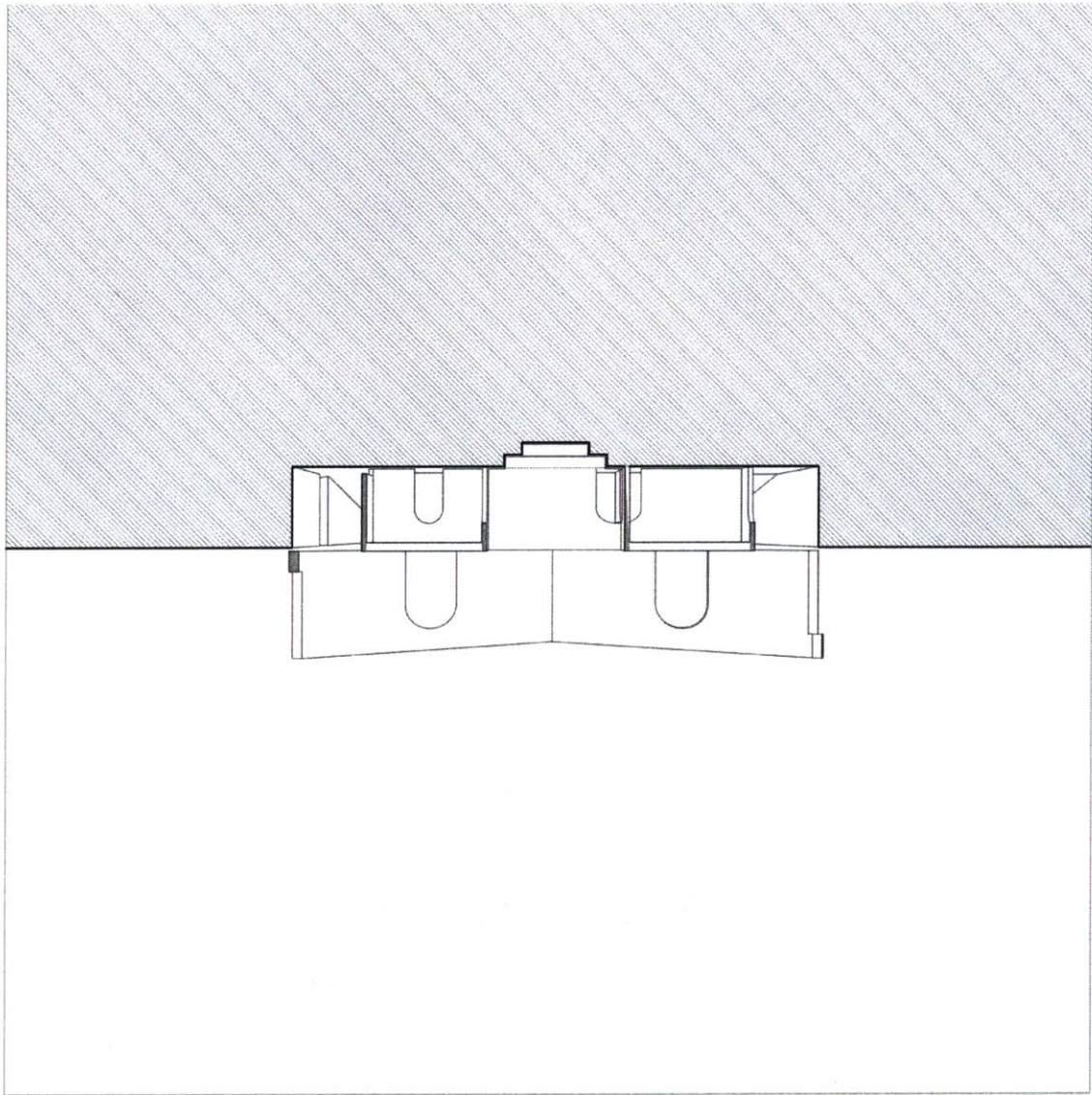
Project The site sits at Oregon Avenue, a few meters away from the access of The Retreat at Twin Lakes, a middle class gated community in the suburban area of Sanford. The zone is a public space desert, bloated with retail junkspace that impedes the experiential connection of the gated community with a school and a big box store located at the other side of its access avenue. There are no gathering places or even places for food consumption in its vicinity. The Seven Eleven that Trayvon Martin walked to the day when he was fatally shot is located about a mile away.

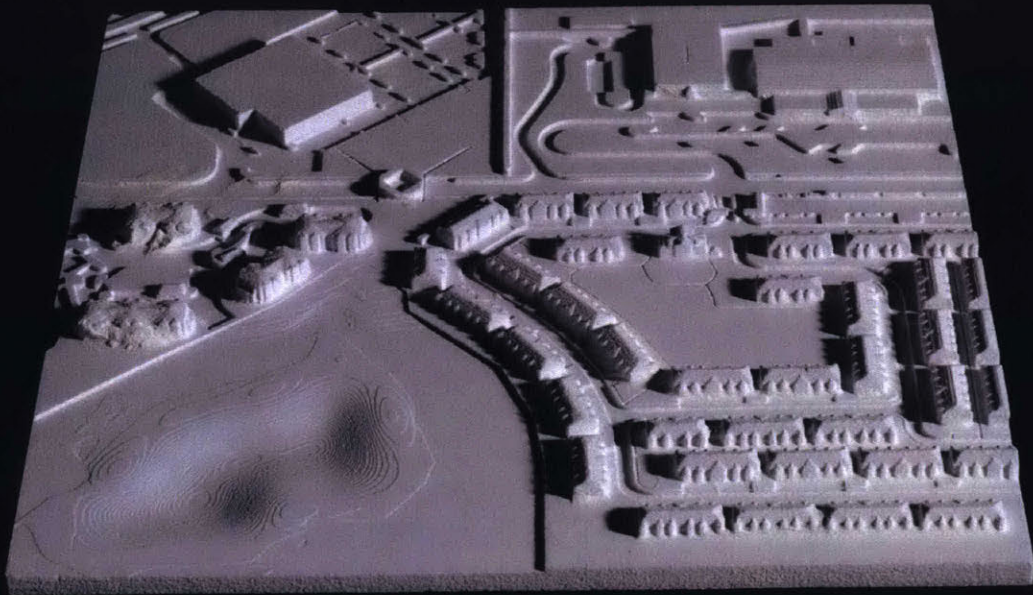


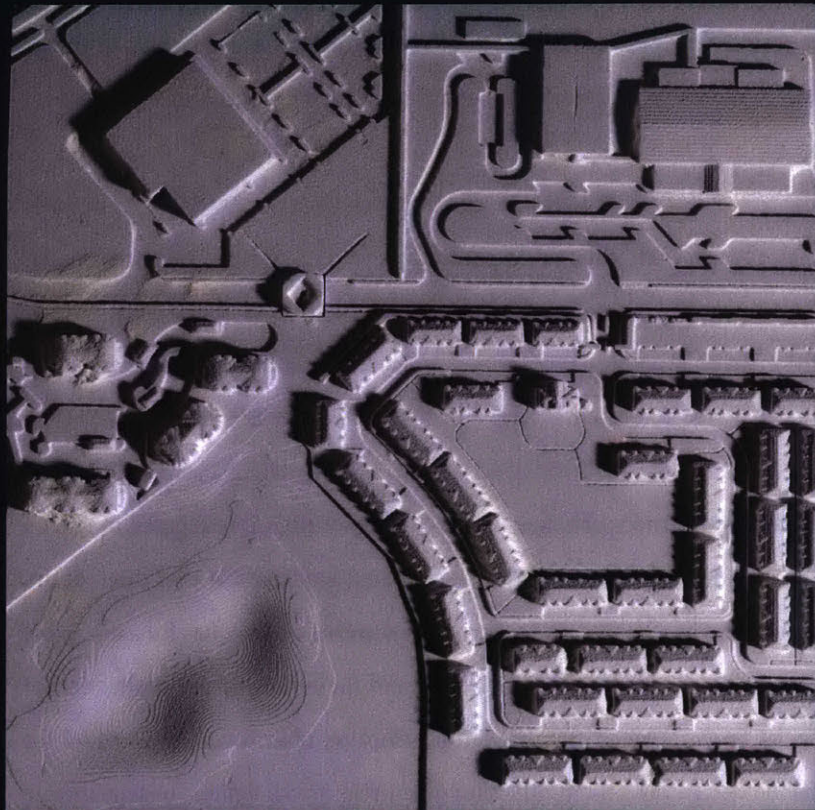












[V]
On Objecthood

Harman 2010

In principle, granting this objective to a architectural strategy predicated on objecthood might appear like sensible decision. Indeed, architecture interest in an objective quality –a conceptual position that originated in art history and philosophy, and currently circulates in a rather intense fashion in contemporary architectural circuits, seems to provide an adequate conceptual foundation for the task ahead, to the extent that it provides a comfortable a space of autonomy for the production of public architecture that may not have been granted seen since the baroque.

However, as attractive and luring an objet approach to architecture may appear, their political implications that this perspective carries is far from being that attractive. To begin with, objet-oriented ontology –one of the main philosophical tenets upon which current architectural attention to the object is predicated, is largely orthogonal to efforts to re-humanize the de-humanize the world that lives around us. Whatever appeal this might have in philosophy and technology studies, architecture is ill-equipped to erect a theoretical firewall to the overautonomizing implications that this –again, quite literally, disembodied approach to material culture, has for a discipline that is inextricably related, for better and for worse, to the production of social space. Against this backdrop, adopting objecthood as a model for public design risks the production of autistic spatial figures, unaccountable to any form of public but its own self, locked in a self-induced delirium of a world with zero political gravity, oblivious to the way in which social structures condition the built environment in a way as important as physical ones.

Brown 2001

In general, we should be weary of objects that feel entitled from the outset to exist only in and for themselves. Through their own social, many of these projects end up being subservient to the status quo, the plague of liberal public space. However, this does not mean that in some cases, a handful of these autonomous objects may have been able to become fertile grounds for social experimentation. In these cases –Eisenman’s Holocaust Memorial is case in point, the very spatial power of these projects becomes so strong that it unconsciously, and probably unwillingly, ends breaking the aura of awe and contemplation that normally mediates between objects and humans, which stop becoming occupants and start being inhabitants of this project. At this moment, the architectural project transcends the territories of the object and migrates into the land of things.

[VI]

On Thingliness

Objects and things: two close signifiers sitting worlds apart.

Objects are contemplated, things end through human interaction.

Objects are contemplated, things are explored, activated.

Objects aspire to be discovered; things long to be reimagined.

Objects are disciplined, precious, unambiguous; things are disobedient, weird and iridescent, productively incomplete.

An object can be a one thing;

A thing can be many objects.

Objects are answers;

Things are questions.

Under the ruins of the square architecture should strive to seed fields of things, places equally seductive for political protesters, teenage lovers, of Mormon preachers.

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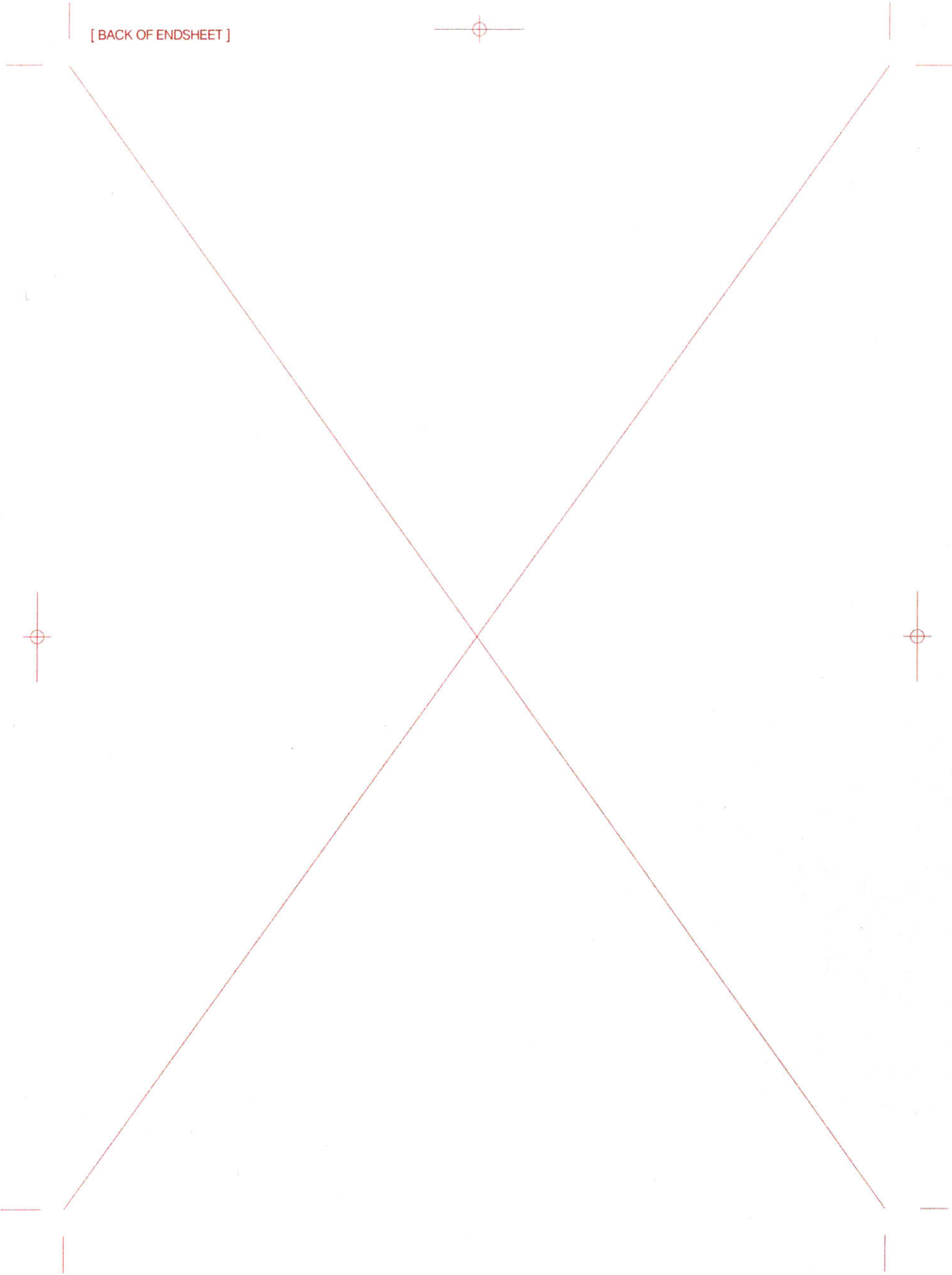
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p.72

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[BACK OF ENDSHEET]





Five Things

for its substitution.
thingly alternatives
square, and
the demise of the
liberal space,
comments on
and a series of

