

ARCHINAUT DESIGN LABORATORY OFFICE MANUAL
OFFICIALLY IN EFFECT AS OF
JANUARY 1 , 2017

ARCHINAUT

ARCHINAUT DESIGN LABORATORY OFFICE MANUAL

Hyper Houston

A thesis presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree
Master of Architecture in the Department of Architecture of the Rhode Island
School of Design, Providence, Rhode Island

by

Joseph Echavarria
2018

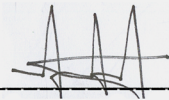
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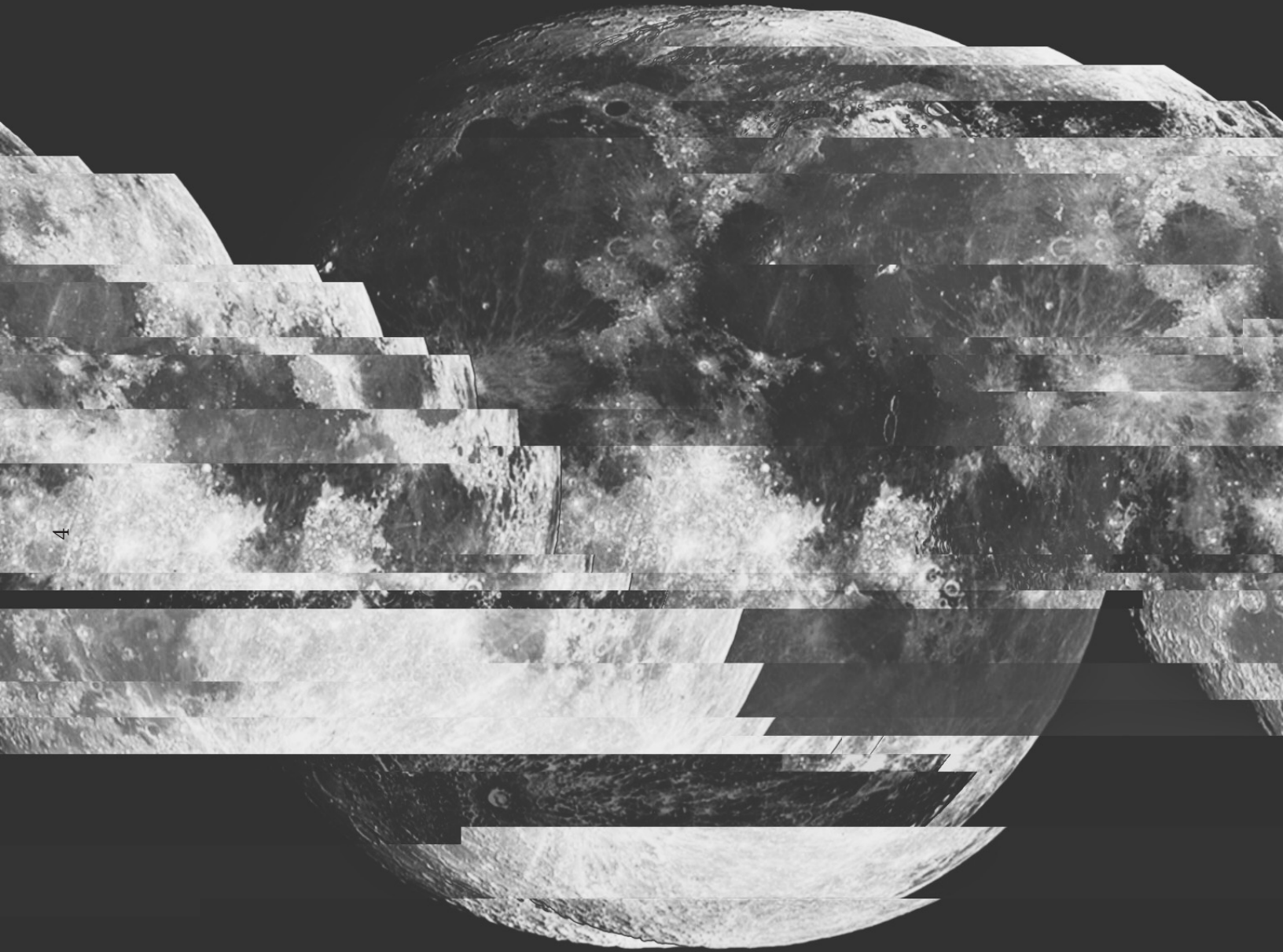
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"EXPLORING NEW SPACE ONE LINE AT A TIME"

—ARCHITECTURAL EXPLORER

OFFICE STATEMENT

This office will explore the unexplored through drawings. You will make marks of things that exist, existed and have yet to exist. You will become an Archinaut, an explorer of new spaces. Just as an astronaut is willing to venture into a new world with little knowledge, we too will treat design the same way.

You will think creatively, you will make a mark for every thought good or bad, and you will build multiples of what come to mind. You will commit to working through your thoughts until they can not be explored any longer. Make multiple informed decisions and compromise for the betterment of the project not the ease of the work.

We are not only architects but designers. This practice will only work with well designed elements in all it's projects. Referencing the Office Manual.

DISCIPLINES

The discipline of design is first conceived from a creative zone. You are more than just a worker but an artist, a creative, a visionary, and a designer. Our work station reflects this ideology of who we are which allows everyone the access to and the means of making marks or building models to convey their thoughts.

An Archinaut is an explorer of space which means we have a passion to explore the unthinkable and find architecture in all the places that have been overlooked.

The goal of the office is to be all in with an idea or method of making. We can explore different styles of architecture and design and always have a passion for it but we will never sell out and second guess our work. Waiting for a “plan b” is not an option. Philip Johnson bounced from modernism to post modernism and client to client to chase the work. It is important to have working opportunities but it’s better to produce quality work.

ALLY VS ENEMY WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE OF ARCHITECTURE

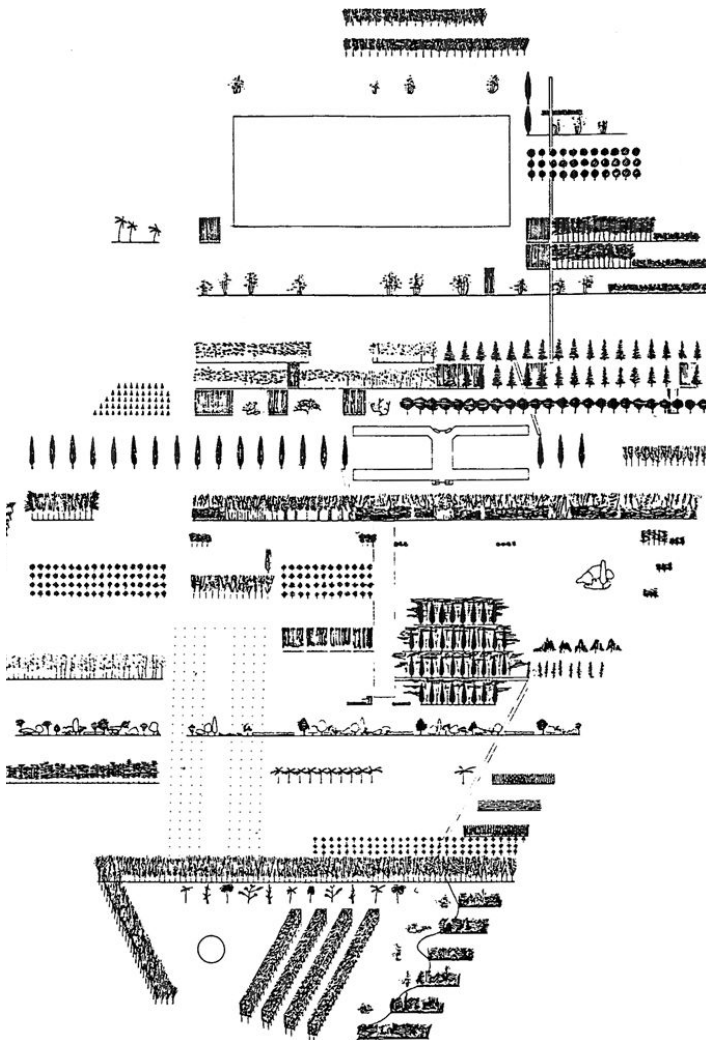
Where do I sit in between the world of Rem Koolhaas and Philip Johnson? The way I see it is that because my undergraduate degree in architecture took place within a Philip Johnson building, I am highly influenced by the design aesthetics of Johnson. Rem Koolhaas thus must be my ally, to learn from someone who can arrange non-architectural elements and create space.

My jump to graduate school is a bit of a rebellion to my past and an attempt to learn the things I unfortunately didn’t get to back in Houston. The art school environment has opened me up to the desire of exploring what “space” really means. The fact that I have always seen Koolhaas’ work and never understood it meant that this would be the time to learn. These three years have been architectural training to teach myself to understand the misunderstood and be able to give it meaning. Now writing this thesis I am in a situation where I must decide who will influence me more, Koolhaas or Johnson. A person always thinks in their first language no matter what language they are trying to speak. I must find a way to incorporate the sampled works of Koolhaas while having clarity in meaning similar to Johnson’s. Johnson’s work is a system of signage, exaggerating formal elements to create space where Koolhaas samples a new method of thinking. In the end, I may revert to my old ways but for now I have an ally and enemy.

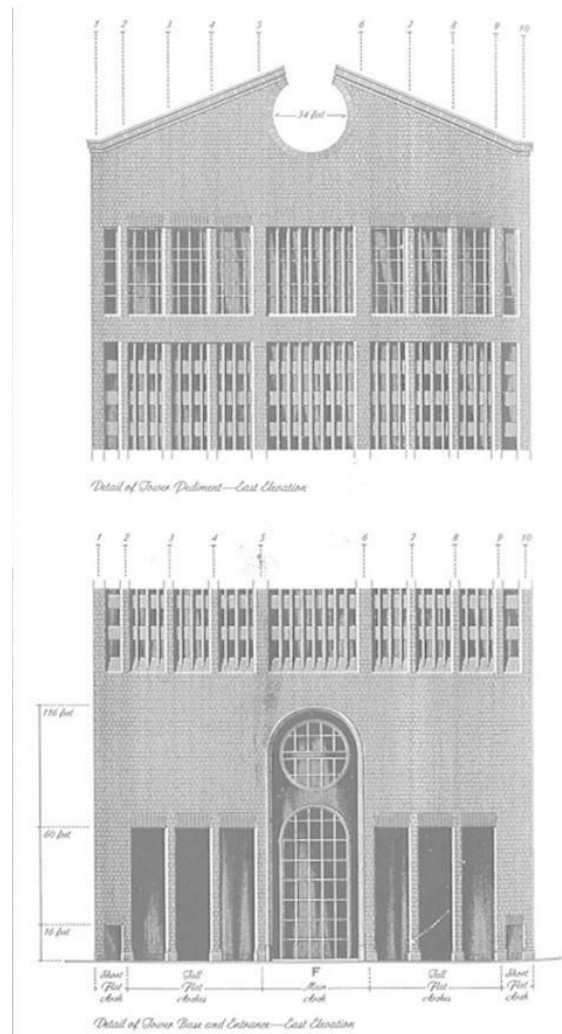
DISCIPLINES

Ally vs Enemy within the discipline of Architecture

Allies are the orange people and enemies are the people in the black and white photo. In this discipline there are times to follow the crowd but we must always be looking at design from a new perspective.



ALLY
Parc de la Villette- Rem Koolhaas



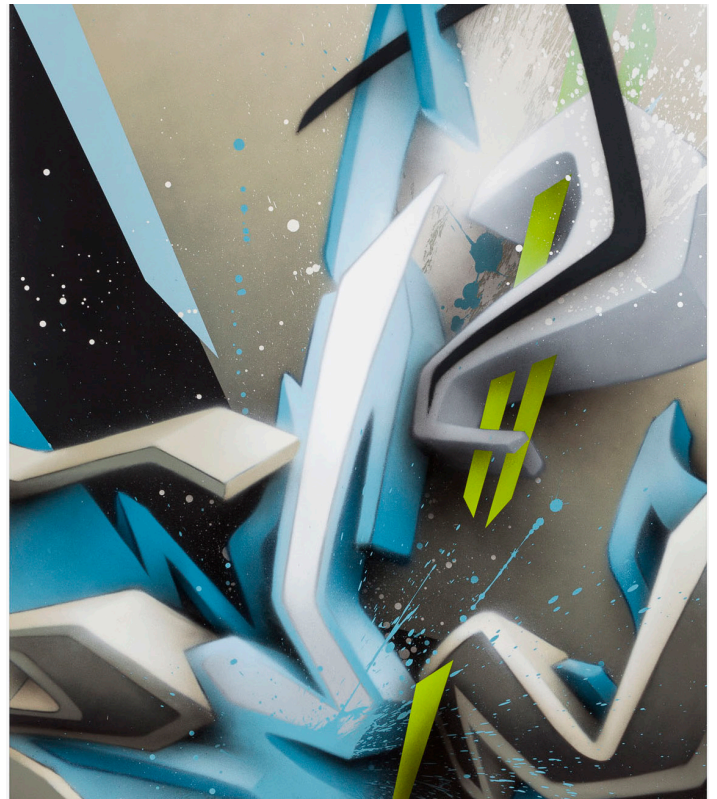
ENEMY
AT&T Building- Philip Johnson

POLITICS

Politics within design are a difficult subject but we take a firm stance on some things. Just as our approach to design can spawn from overlooked or neglected spaces, our inspiration to create is pushed by those in need. Regarding politics, the Ally is ICH, a well known graffiti artist and the Enemy is Deim, also a well known graffiti artist. The reason why ICH was chosen as the Ally was because he is an underrepresented artist who to some would be considered a criminal. His expressions of art remains true to the urban environment. Deim on the other hand is a great street artist who successfully made a career of his art within a gallery setting. The difference between the two is that Deim's art was accepted by the art community through his ability to sterilize his work. His work is presented cleanly and always in a white walled space. ICH has over 3,000 "free" works of art traveling the United States by train on a daily basis. Similar to Rem Koolhaas, Ich has chosen not to cater his artwork to the client but treat it as a means of self expression. Working in this office will teach you the benefits of seeing our political decision making behind the lense of both Ich and Deim. We must treat design as a means of self expression and be willing to produce 3,000 iterations with nothing in return but then just as easily engage the outside world through our work.

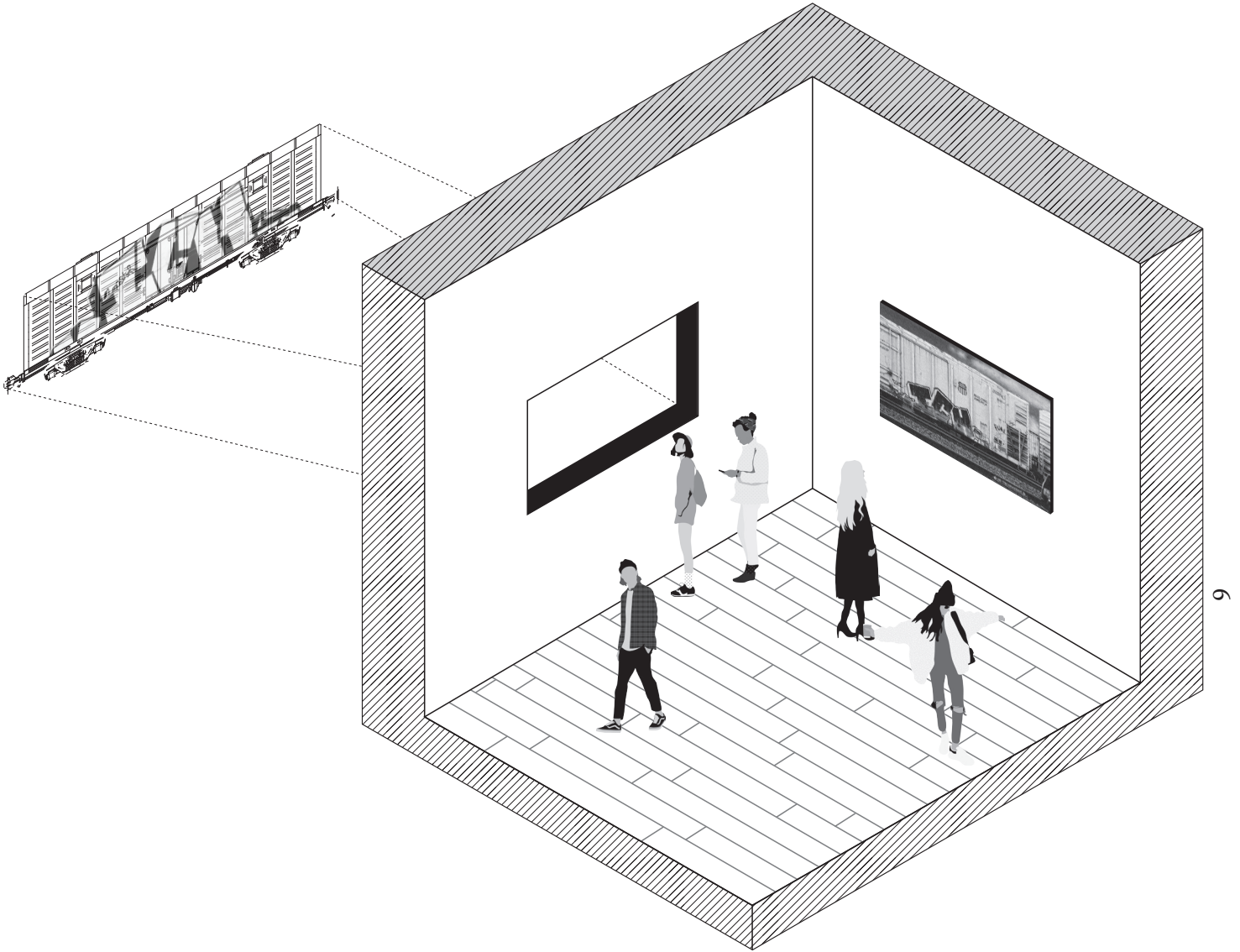


ALLY- ICH Graffiti Artist



ENEMY- Deim Graffiti Artist

POLITICS



Ally vs Enemy outside the discipline of Architecture

This drawing of a gallery section portrays the two faces of politics that we as designers must approach. The left wall has a cut out looking into the space behind the wall at the artwork done by ICH. This represents the willingness to express our designs freely and abundantly. The right wall is the moment that we offer our expression and share it with the public to be engaged with. Our designs must not be confined and sanitized as the only means of being shown.

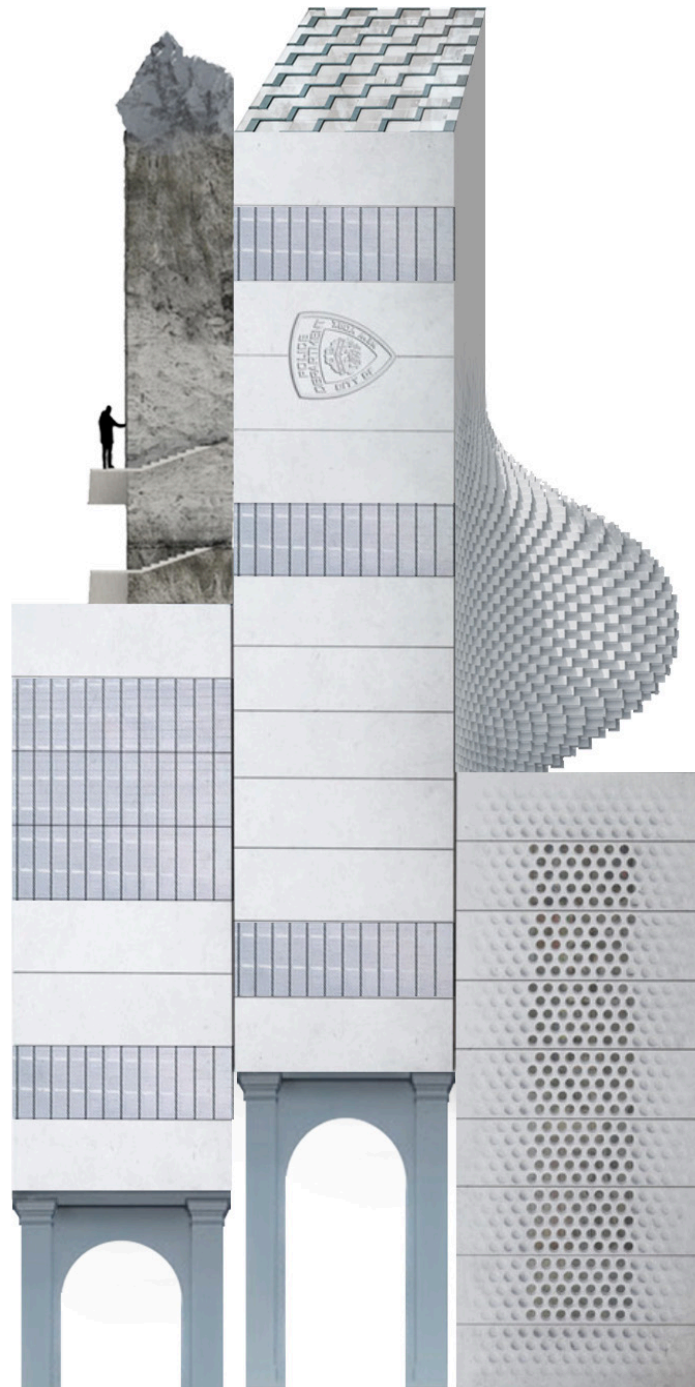
IDENTITIES

As stated in the office statement, we are explorers of new spaces and that is what we will be known for. The benefit of us being artists, creatives, visionaries, and designers means that our explorative drawing style may stand out and so will our reactions towards all materials. Our identity is formed based off the passion we have for designing architecture and how we approach it, not the look of what we produce. Lebbeus Woods, chose to practice architecture solely through his drawings. At no point in his career did he stray away from his formal drawings to build something foreign to his style. When it comes to our Identity we must practice similarly to Woods in which that we stay true to our passion and decisions dealing with spatial design. The Wildcard is MORPHOSIS (late 1980- early 1990s). Morphosis' strength is representation through models and drawings. They crafted the ability to create experimental drawing styles that convinced everyone of the methods of connection. Tectonic drawings transformed the fictional images to built possibilities. The moment we as an office can harness the story telling of a project we have the ability to breathe life into our work. It is only then that we will have a stance in our architectural design and creativity that will identify us as true Archinauts.

IDENTITIES

Wildcard within the discipline of architecture

The collage below depicts partial elements of the work by BIG Architects. It is visible that all their works may take on a different style, the one thing that remains consistent that we identify with is BIG's method of presenting their work. They have mastered presenting their projects to clients and explaining architecture to those unfamiliar to design, making it so that everyone is fully invested in their work.



NETWORKS

**SKYBOX
UPPER DECK**

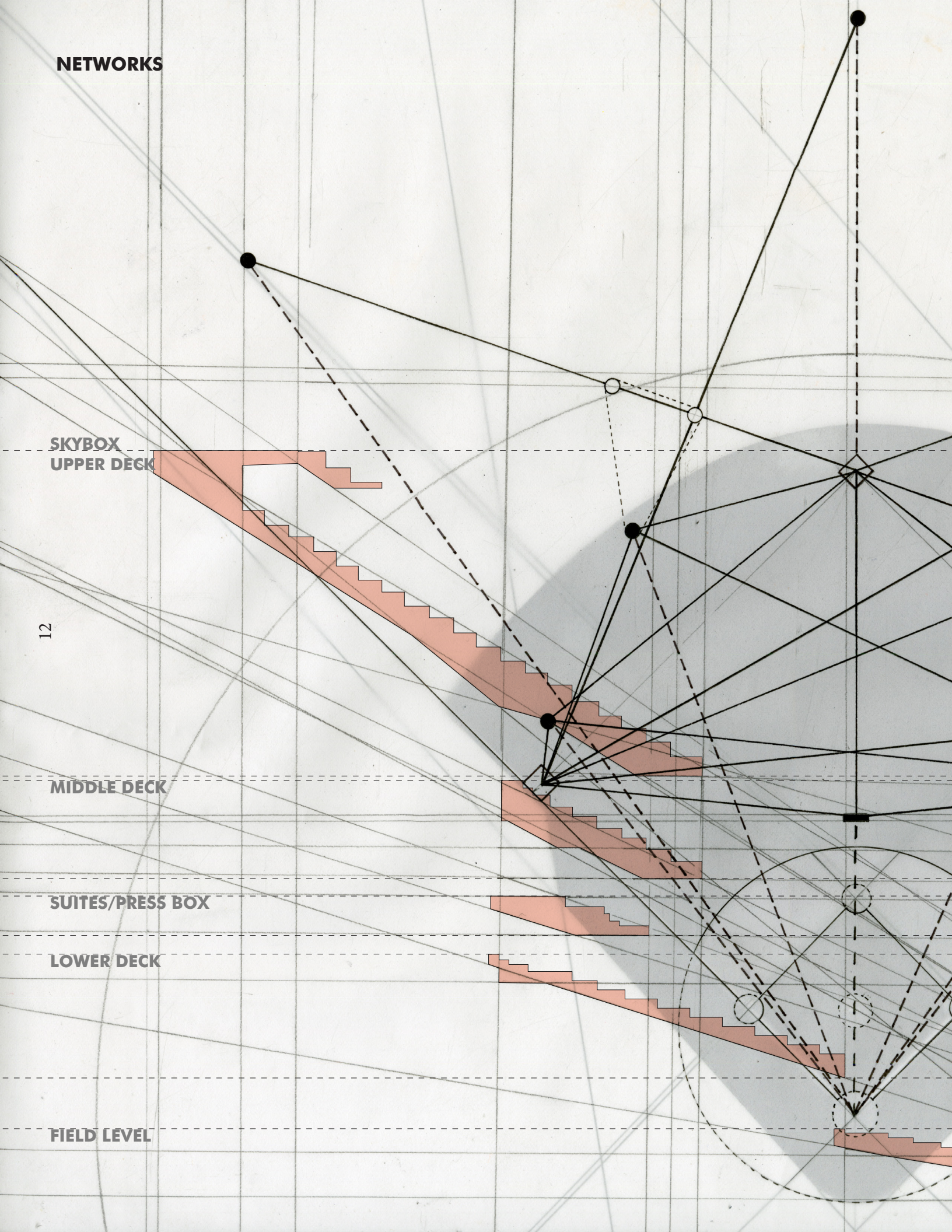
12

MIDDLE DECK

SUITES/PRESS BOX

LOWER DECK

FIELD LEVEL



NETWORKS

First and foremost this is an office where we work best as a team. Baseball is a game played with nine players on the field where they all have to come together and utilize their strengths. The pitcher must either get the strike out or put the ball in play. The catcher is the composer of the field who directs all the players and tells them where they need to play. The infielders cover the bases and hold runners on while the outfielders run after every hit ball and have strong arms to throw the balls to the infield.

Just like baseball we have our strengths and when we play well together we design great projects. The thesis of this project centers around teamwork and the community that surrounds it. Baseball brings people together and now that these displaced people need homes they must work as a team to create a living community within the stadium. The seating within the stadium caters to the rich who can pay for the best views and comfy chairs. This creates a problem that through certain program being strategically placed can be solved. The goal is to create a vertical level playing field for the residents and the game.

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MEDIA

Today's media is what revolutionizes the way we work and how we will begin to work in the future. It is important for us to not become slaves to media but realize that media is a tool to help us create. Media can be a source of inspiration and instant digital archiving. Social media allows us the possibility to share a photo or video with millions of people. Connecting and informing other designers of new recent projects is a simple example. The image to the right portrays the negative effect media can have on people. Although there is a bit of honesty in the attempt to help people in need, the manipulation of media in this case is being used to promote a brand and to use this scenario as an excuse to drive more traffic to their product. This Instagram account [the.displaced](#) can be interpreted as the name of the baseball stadium which is using an event to welcome those in need. They used this event to gain 25 interactions, 58 likes, and 36 new followers that will be updated on every post and exposed to marketing content. In contrast, the photo below which is of the Astrodome and victims of Hurricane Katrina resemble the truth and severity of the need for help.



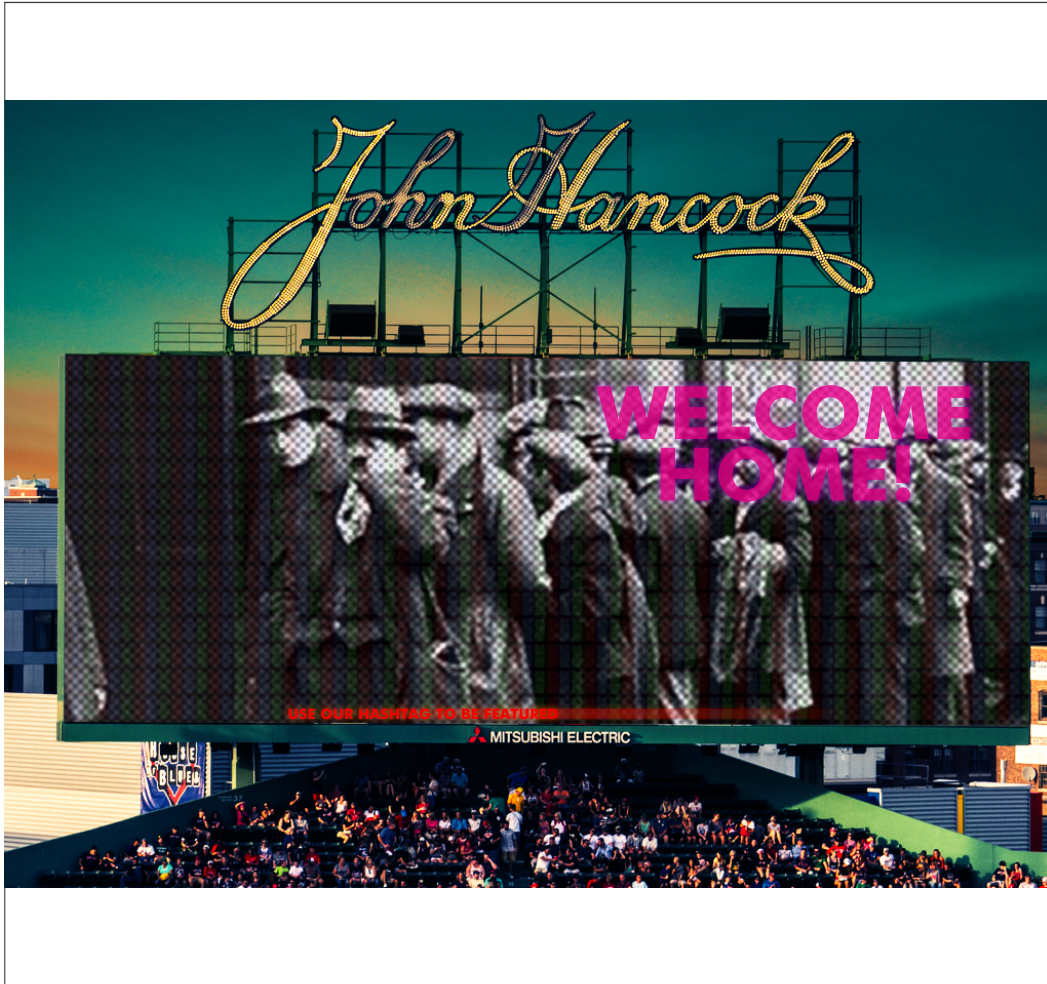
Victims of Hurricane Katrina -Carlos Barria



Instagram



the.displaced
Houston, Texas >



22 Likes

username Hi ya'll!!! Don't forget to use our hashtag to be featured on the jumbotron! #thedisplaced #blessed #baseballstrong #likeforlike

6 MINUTES AGO

25 58 36



THESIS STATEMENT

R Prof. Emanuel Admassu
Thesis Advisor
I Joseph Echavarria
S Thesis Student
D Thesis Statement

Like all cities, they are built up of forgotten or neglected icons commemorating a certain event from the past. Over the years, some no longer have the same social impact they once had. There becomes a need when looking towards the future to preserve the icons of Houston and protect them from erasure.

A few native landmarks, some thriving more than others are replicated and reprogrammed creating a potemkin village within a new hyper urban environment. The new Houston, Hyper Houston, commemorates these icons by stripping the essential elements of these icons to produce these new altered icons of Houston. At the same time they provide added value to a new community focused around the iconography of Houston. By replicating and altering these icons it creates opportunities to build new relationships with these new surrounding landscapes.



ARCHINAUT DESIGN LABORATORY THESIS MANUAL
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HYPER HOUSTON

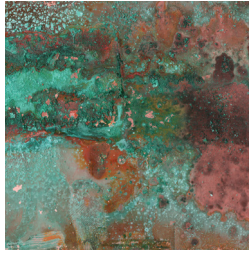
THESIS PROBE

The probe is a symbolism of disaster, rebuilding, and hope. At the time the city of Houston was recovering from a natural disaster that devastated the city of Houston. The majority of Houston was left in ruins after Hurricane Harvey earlier in the year. The probe is an attempt to collect found materials and sample these materials which can be found all over Houston and attempt to rebuild "Houston." Through this process of collecting I came across many textures elements that are significant parts to many icons within the city of Houston. I began to wonder what it meant to collect parts of these icons, these pieces becoming memorabilia to what once was.

PROBE

SALVAGED BUILDING MATERIALS

COPPER



CORRUGATED METAL



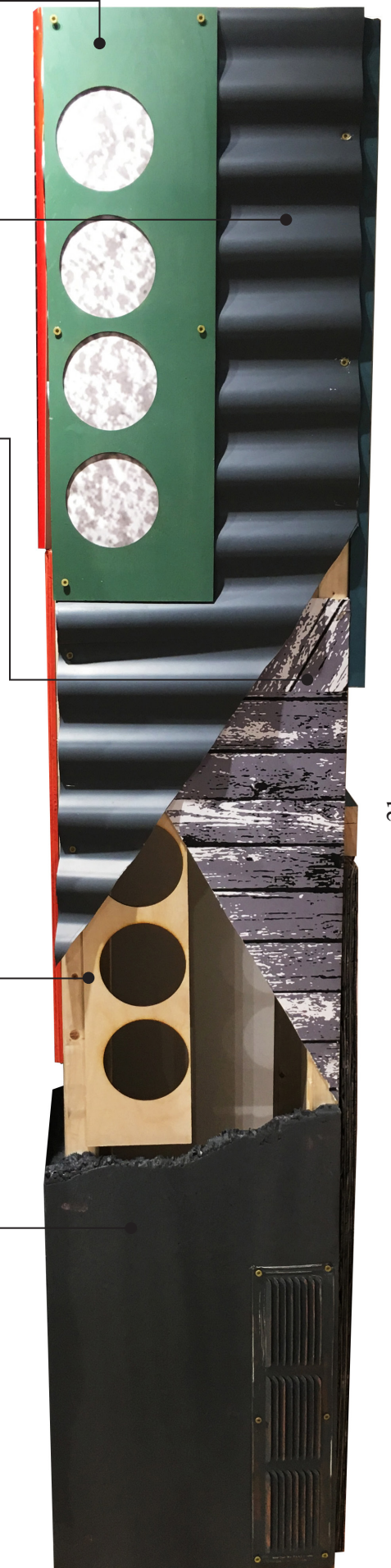
WOOD PLANKS



PLYWOOD



CONCRETE



DESIGN ACTIVISM

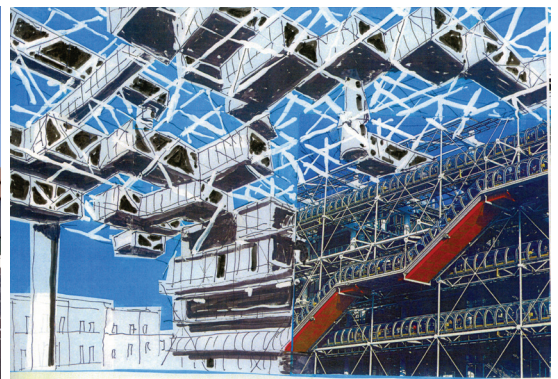
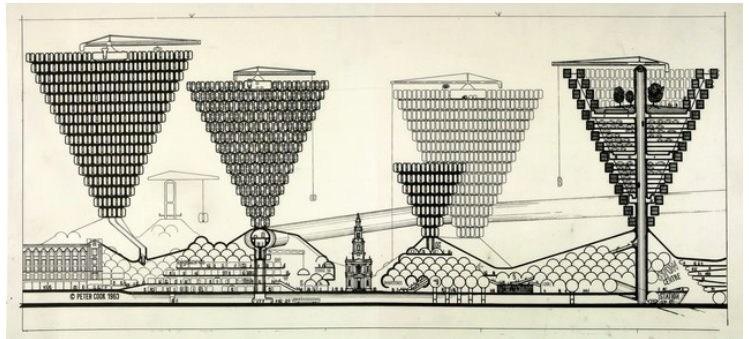
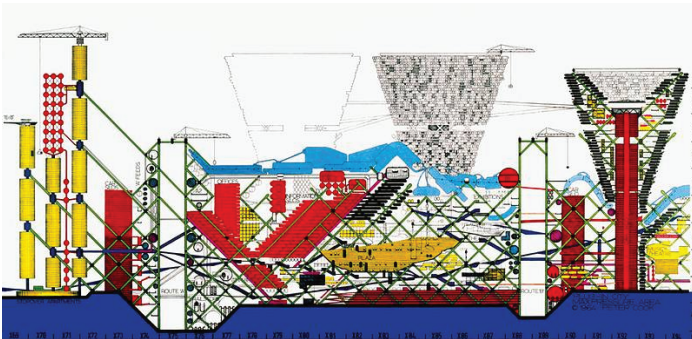
Design Activism is the process of acting out for the greater good of a certain cause through design. As designers and Archinauts, we have the responsibility to stand up for a cause and utilize our weapons of design to create a better space for all.

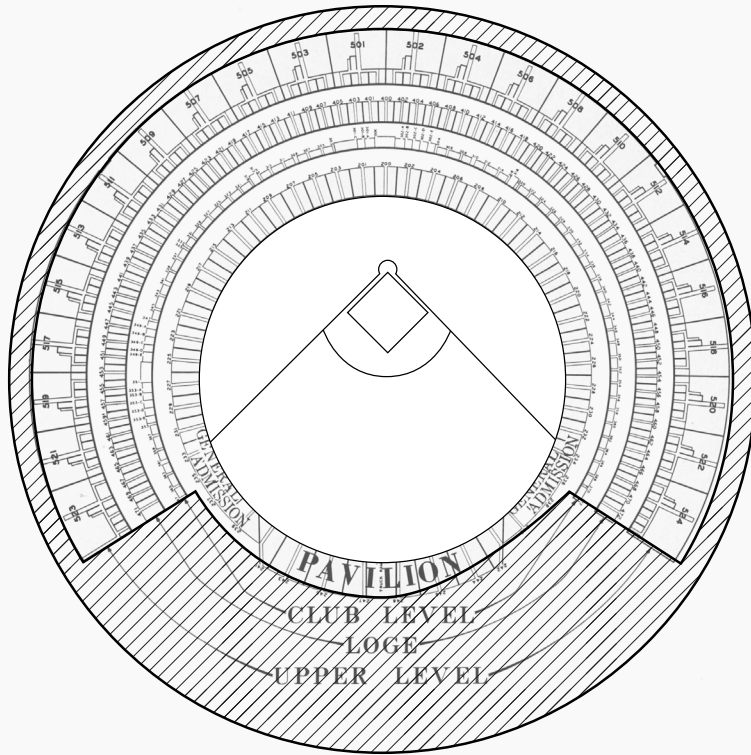
The Houston Astrodome, known as the 8th Wonder of the World is the perfect icon in the city of Houston to utilize the act of Design Activism. Re-purposing the Dome for an alternate cause makes it easy to introduce new programs and activate different parts of the city.

If we look back to SuperStudio, ArchiGram, and others, their introduction of new cities is a form of Design Activism. Their attempt to revolutionize cities by pushing program upwards created new thinking within the architecture world.

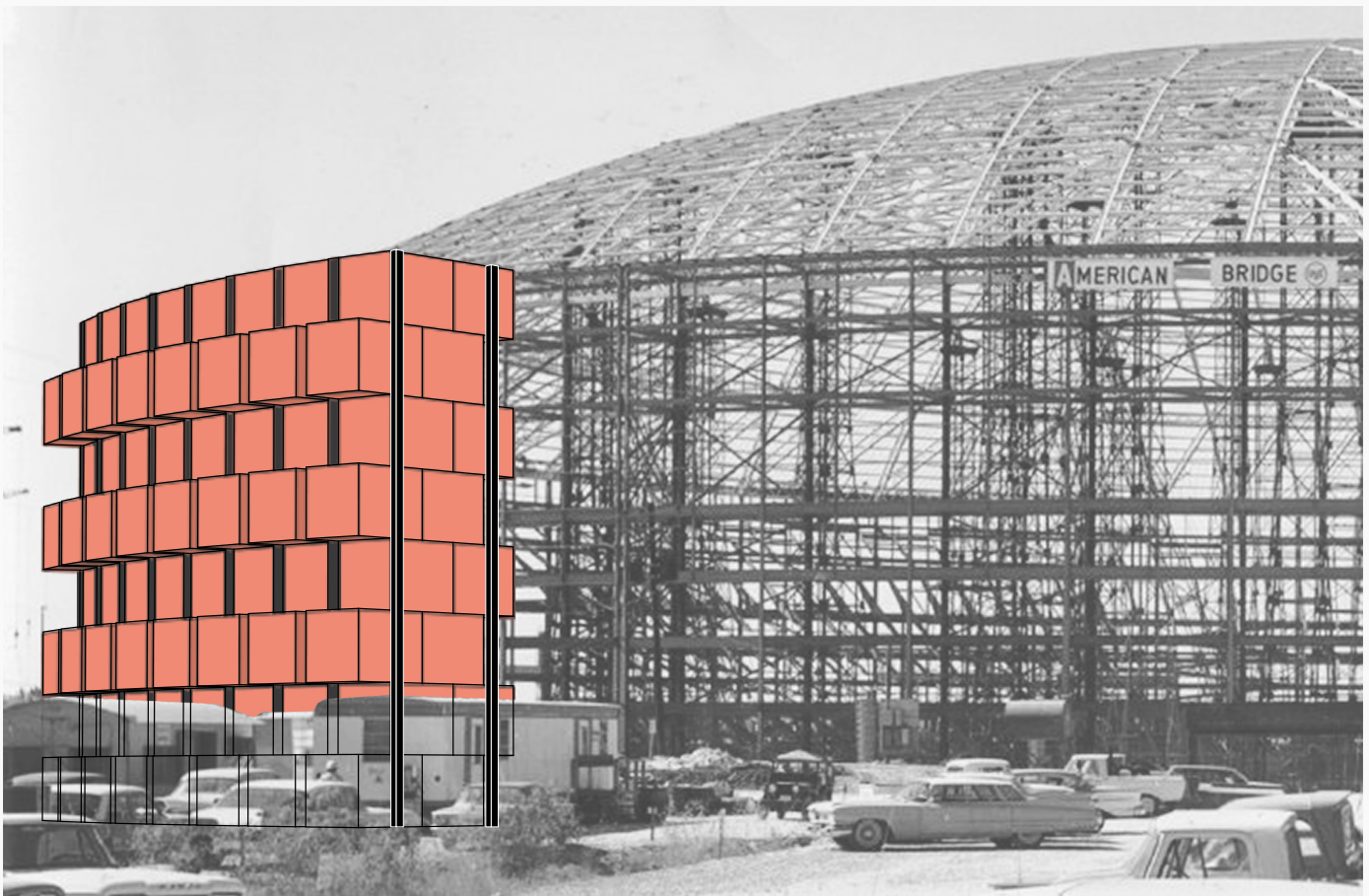
How can those same building models be used in the future?

22 Why would this idea work better than previously proposed?





▣ Exterior structure that wraps the stadium



Exterior structure being filled with prefab rooms_Digital collage

POTEMKIN VILLAGES

24 Potemkin Villages date back to the late 1700's when they were used to disguise villages to impress royalty. These days, the "potemkin village" has been adapted to and is now used for military training and tactical combat. What makes these villages so successful for this purpose is that they can easily replicate a certain city or village to make training more accurate.

There are two types of Potemkin Villages that exist today, the first seen in the top photo on the next page are buildings with an empty program and act as shells. The second form of Potemkin Village is just the facade. These Potemkin Villages are popping up in many places now due to the rise in autonomous vehicles. These vehicles sense the facades of buildings and are able to navigate based on that.

Potemkin Villages allow for rapid reproduction of actual cities to simulate real world scenarios. The World's smallest Target can also be seen as a Potemkin Village because before it was a "Target" it was an empty abandoned building. The branding and name created a new function for this once forgotten structure.



Potemkin Village_Gregor Sailer





HOUSTON ASTRODOME

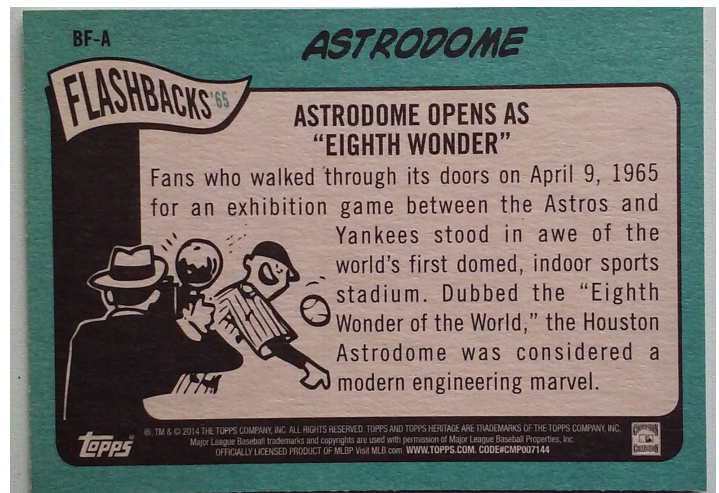
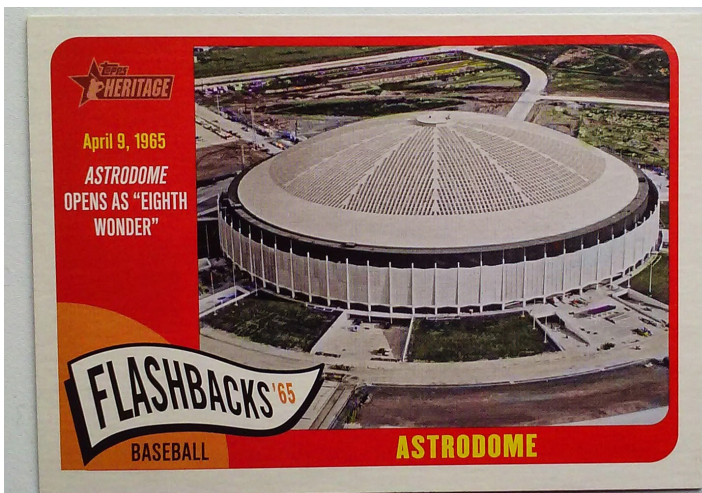


Houston Astrodome 1964_Source: Cecil Burdick Jr.

The Houston Astrodome was built and open to the public in 1965 and was the first domed baseball stadium to have air conditioning. The amazing structural feat of creating this dome earned it the local title of the 8th Wonder of the World. The stadium was intentionally built to be a baseball stadium but was also adaptable to allow football games and other entertainment events to occur.

In 1964, as pictured to the left, the Astrodome sat pure and full of potential. The stadium had not been occupied and baseball was still a thing of the future. This meant that there was still time for the future of the Dome to be altered. The beautiful structure housed the Houston Astros for only about 30 years before it was abandoned. It wasn't until 2005 that it was given a new purpose, one completely opposite of the game of baseball. Hurricane Katrina struck New Orleans and displaced thousands of people. The city of Houston took in many evacuees and because there weren't many large places to house all the people they opened up the Astrodome. Evacuees made the domed stadium their home for a few weeks until they were able to get back on their feet.

The dome was given life once again, although not for a good reason, there was life to this once abandoned icon of Houston. Houston is comprised of many abandoned and nearly abandoned icons which can benefit from a new life. It is up to use architects to find these icons and reprogram them.



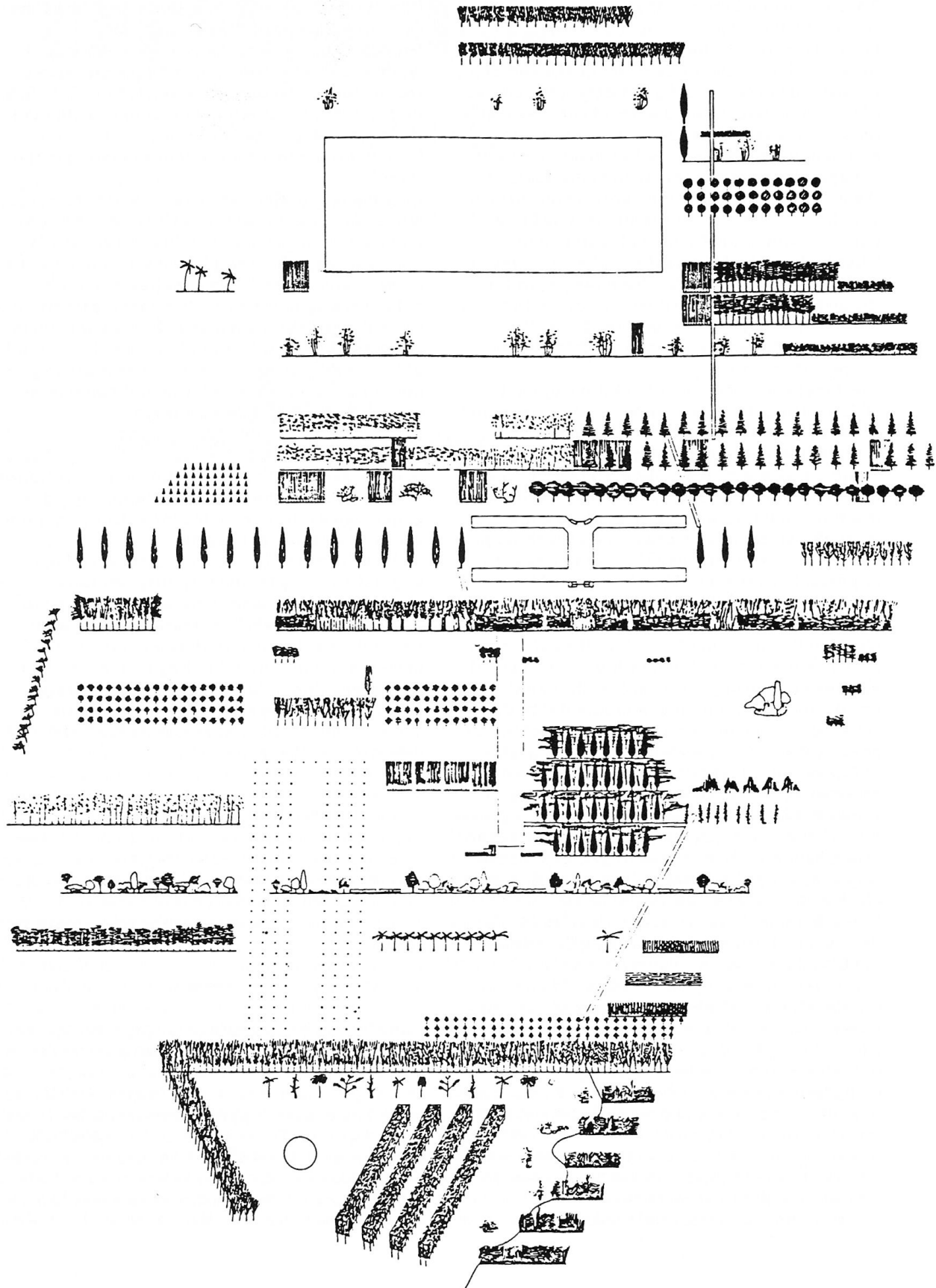
Found Baseball Cards

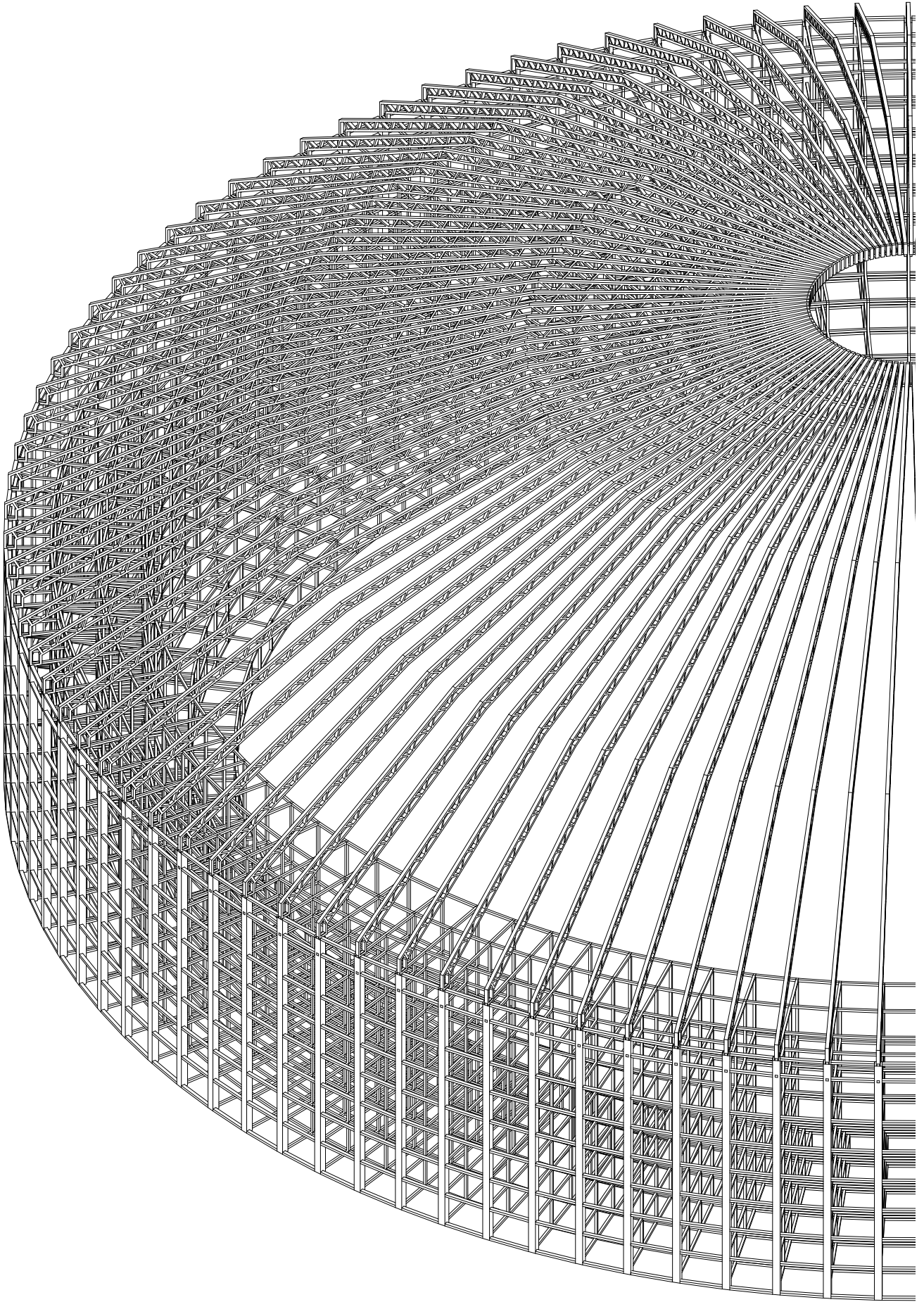


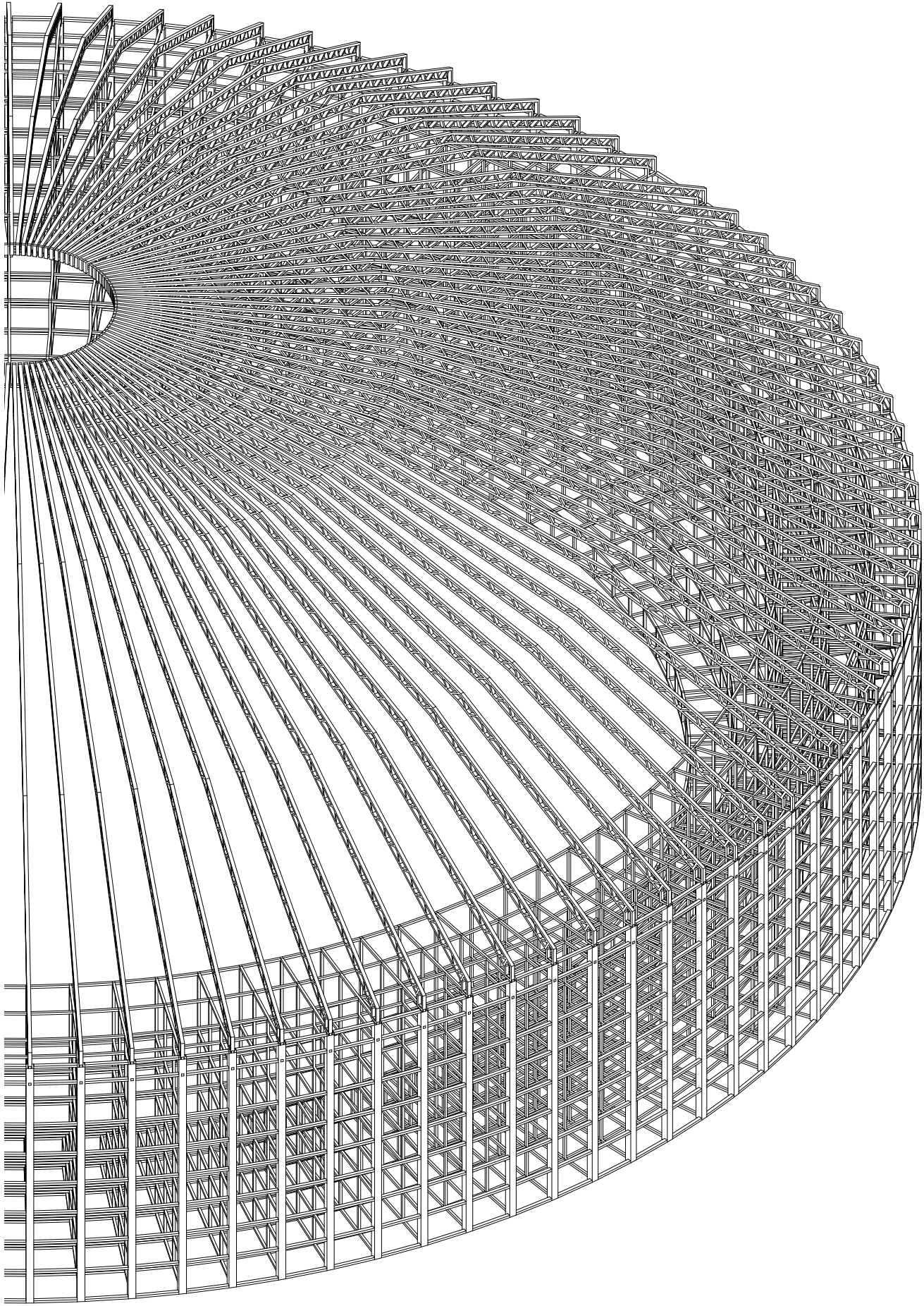
Houston Astrodome_Hurricane Katrina Evacuees 2005_Source: Carlos Barria



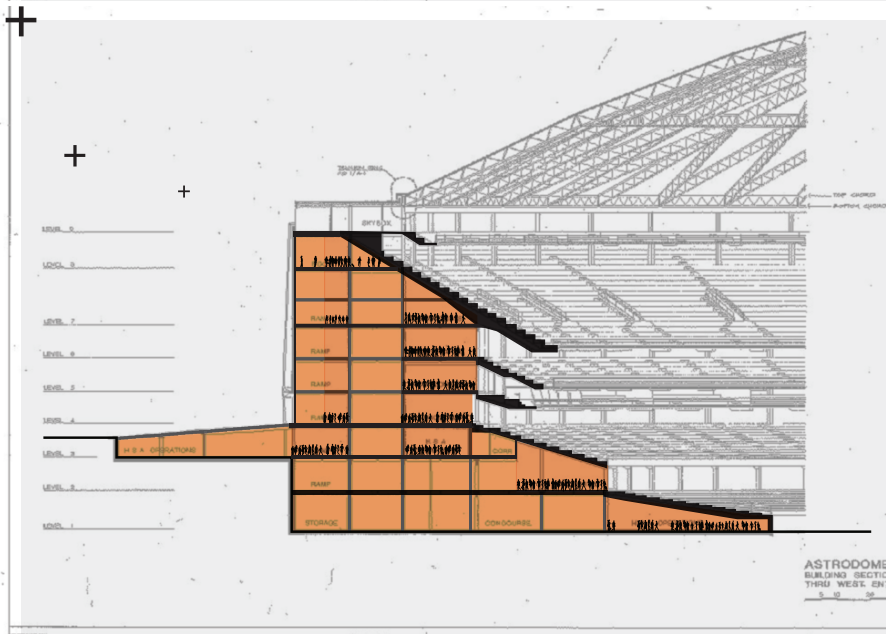
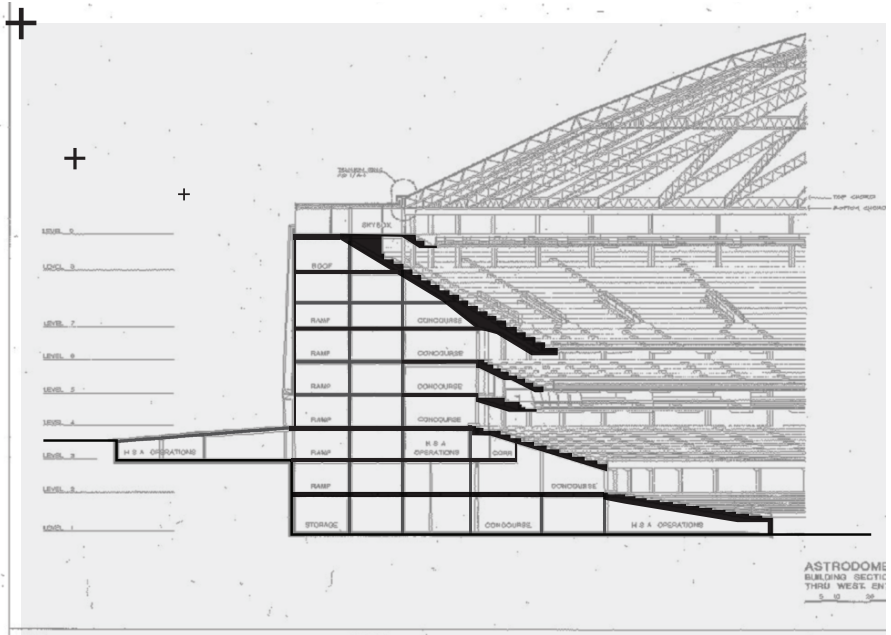
Rem Koolhaas and his proposal for Parc de la Villette was instrumental when looking at Potemkin Villages, the city of Houston, and Icons. Koolhaas being my Ally, I was able to pull some of his strategies in sampling the city by broadening my search from only the Houston Astrodome to other icons in Houston. Zooming out, we can see the Astrodome currently sits on NRG Park with two convention centers and a football stadium adjacent to it. The site has an abundance of empty parking spaces that have the potential to become new program. Instead of working with natural elements like Rem, I chose to extract failing icons and begin to arrange them throughout the site. Before making decisions I had to analyze what gave the Astrodome the potential to become a Potemkin village.

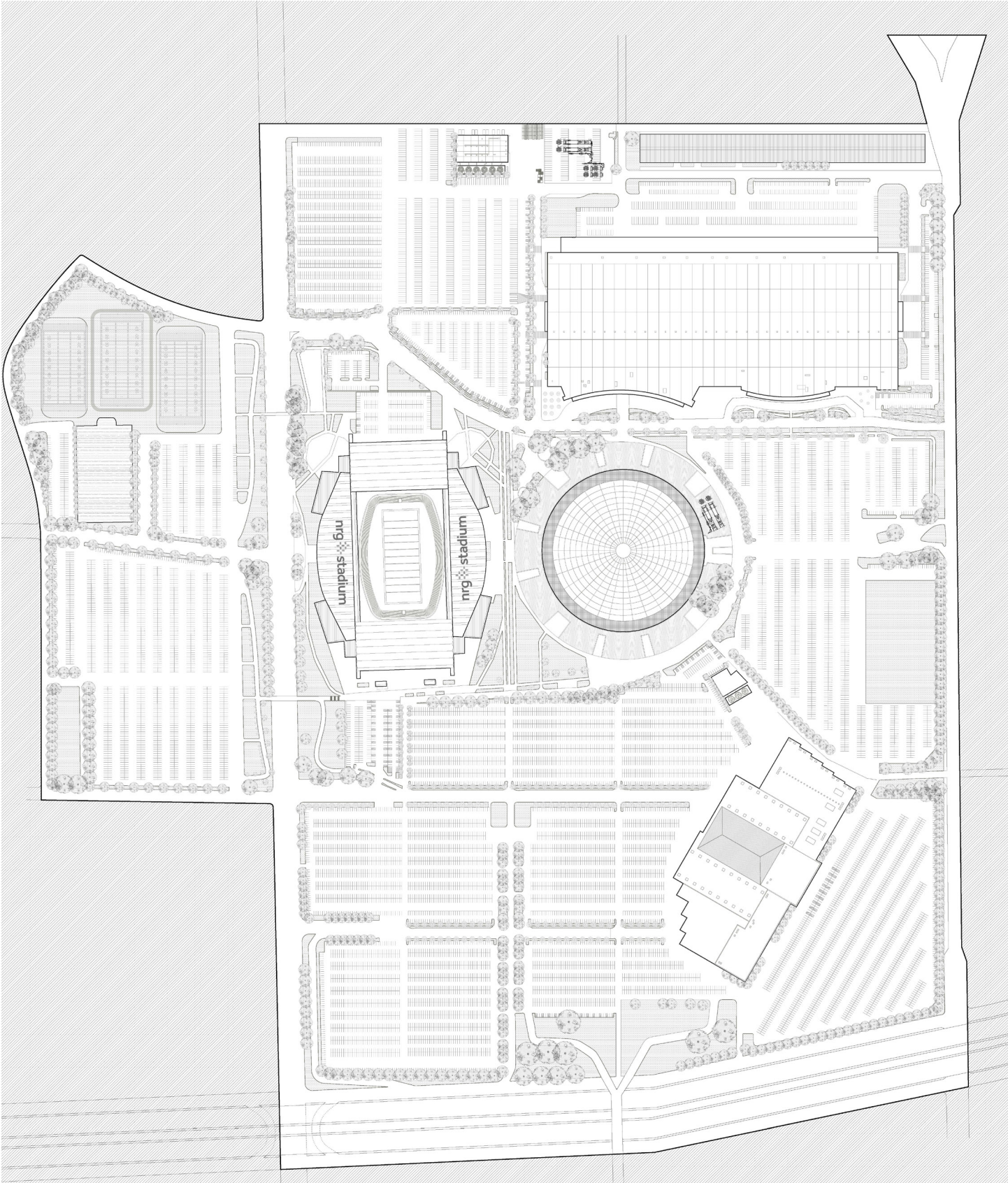


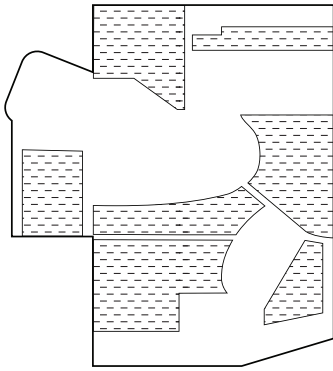




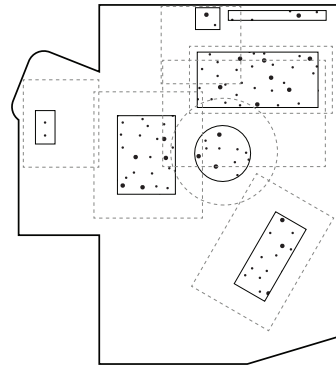
The dome is built with a regular grid and evenly spaced radially. What this means is that when we look at the dome in section there are sub level and above ground level floors that can be occupied. When we highlight the space in the section irrelevant to baseball we get a total of 9 levels which can become a whole new program. As an extreme, the Astrodome could have the potential of becoming the world's largest rock climbing facility. The way the Astrodome is treated here can be reproduced through many other icons within the city.



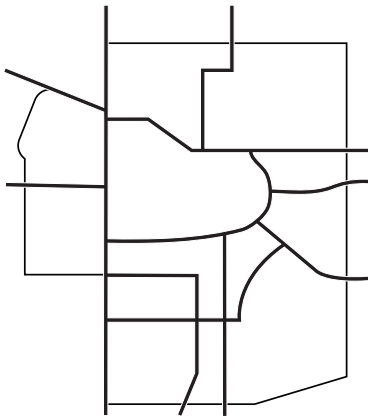




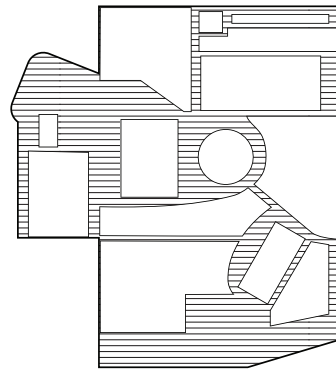
PARKING



BUILDING SPACE



EXISTING PATHS ON SITE



INFRASTRUCTURE VS VOID

NRG Park is in full capacity for only half the year, catering to the Houston Texans NFL team, random conventions that occur, and the Houston Rodeo. The other half of the year the buildings sit unoccupied and the parking lots become seas of concrete. As seen in the diagrams to the right, parking takes up half of the site, existing paths break up the parking zones, building footprints are connected through walk-ability, and the infrastructure vs void show the potential for what can be on the site.

ICONS OF HOUSTON



BEST PRODUCTS COMPANY



THE MENIL COLLECTION



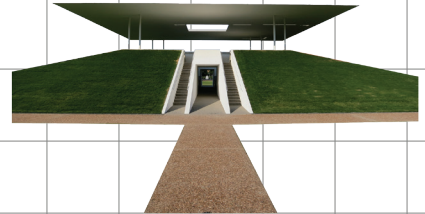
SIX FLAGS ASTROWORLD



INDEPENDENCE PLAZA



ROTHKO CHAPEL



"TWILIGHT EPIPHANY" SKYSPACE



JPMORGAN CHASE TOWER



COCKRELL BUTTERFLY CENTER



HOUSTON ASTRODOME



BUFFALO BAYOU



MODERN ROW HOUSING



NRG STADIUM



GEORGE OBSERVATORY



PENNZOIL PLACE



MILLER OUTDOOR THEATER



INNER CITY HOUSING



RIVER OAKS HOUSING

ICONS

These icons of Houston vary in personal significance to importance of the city. Not all of these icons are failures but some failing more than others create an opportunity for them to be replicated, sampled, and reprogrammed.

Six Flags Astroworld vs the Astrodome show two icons of Houston that failed at the same time because of the same purpose. Astroworld sat across the highway from the Astrodome but when the land that the Astrodome sits on was sold, so was Astroworld and the new owner decided not to keep the amusement park.

43

The Buffalo Bayou runs through downtown Houston and for the longest was an eyesore. Recently there have been efforts to clean it up but because of these new infrastructures being built to help it does the opposite and causes the bayou to flood downtown. The Cockrell Butterfly Center which is located in the museum district is now surrounded by the medical center. This butterfly center is now competing with the buildings and has made it a false oasis for nature within larger buildings.

Inner city housing vs the River Oaks mansions is interesting because they are both the same distance to downtown but one side of the city is treated a whole lot worse. The more historical parts of Houston also tend to be where the majority of the inner city housing exist thus causing it to fail.

After showing how these failed icons relate to either other, they have populated NRG park and reveal the possibilities of what can become within this new hyper urban environment.



Houston Six Flags Astroworld vs The Houston Astrodome

44



Buffalo Bayou vs Cockrell Butterfly Center



Inner City Housing vs River Oaks Mansions





Six Flags Astroworld vs The Astrodome



47

Buffalo Bayou vs Cockrell Butterfly Center



Inner City Housing vs River Oaks Mansions

THESIS PROPOSAL

The new Hyper Houston is based on the Potemkin Village model where the city is replicated and program awaits. Every building, once a notable icon, is now transformed into a new icon, pulling the recognizable parts and going through a scalar shift to create a new icon that can be misinterpreted throughout the years. Hyper Houston is now a collector of these new white elephants of the past and the future to come.

Several towers from the downtown district are merged together to create the production factory for this new urban environment. The vertical farm utilizes the many floors available within the stadium and the height to create gravitational pressure for the water tower. Out front a long outdoor shaded area provides a place for workers to relax, farmer's markets to occur, and protests to gather.

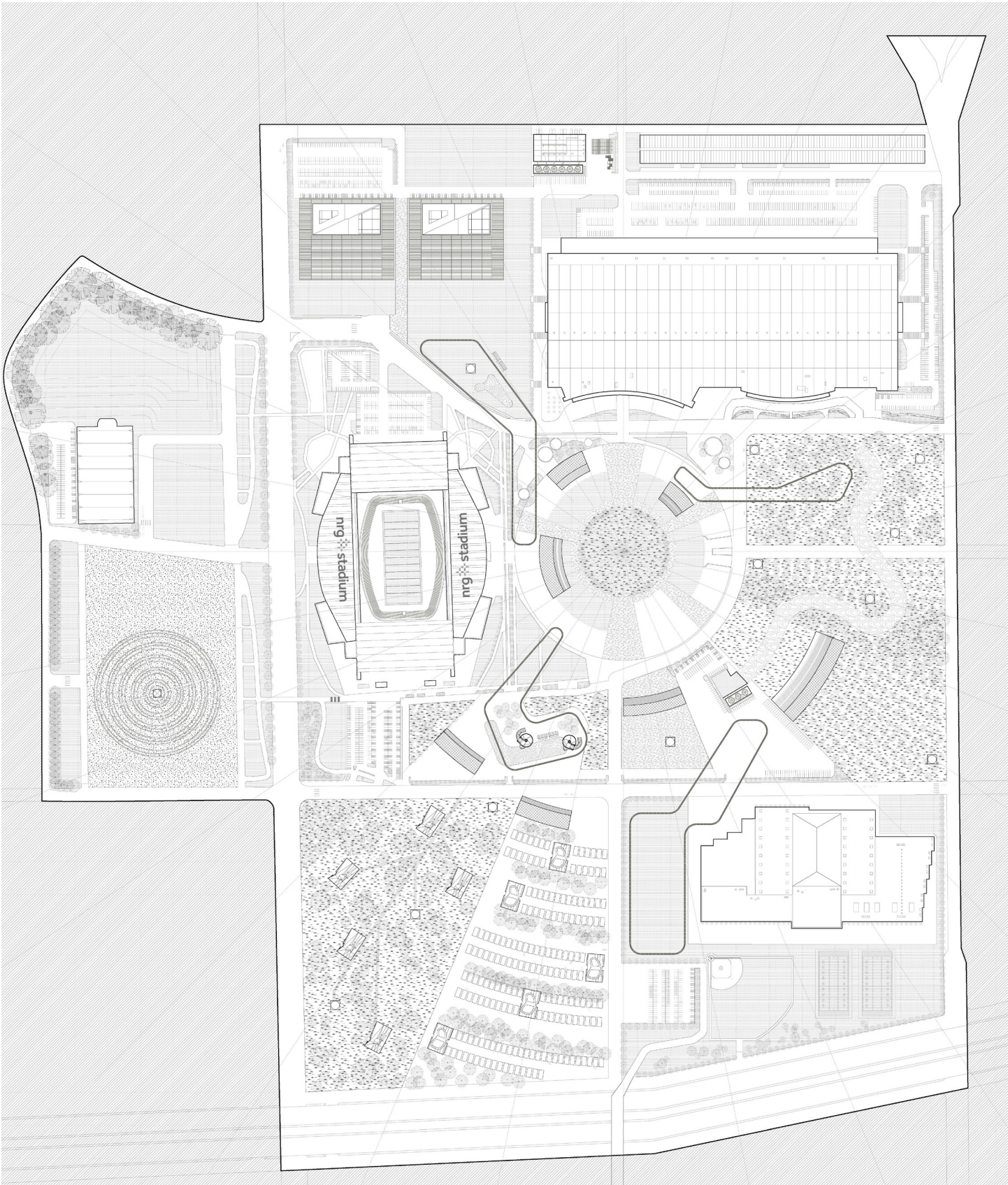
Many altered observation decks are scattered around the site giving the viewer an idea of where their next destination can be. These observation towers are a combination of the Houston observatory and the tall commercial buildings adjacent to it. There was a way to take elements of both of these building types to create a new space. A space that can be interpreted as a hideout for new programs from wrestling matches to dance clubs.

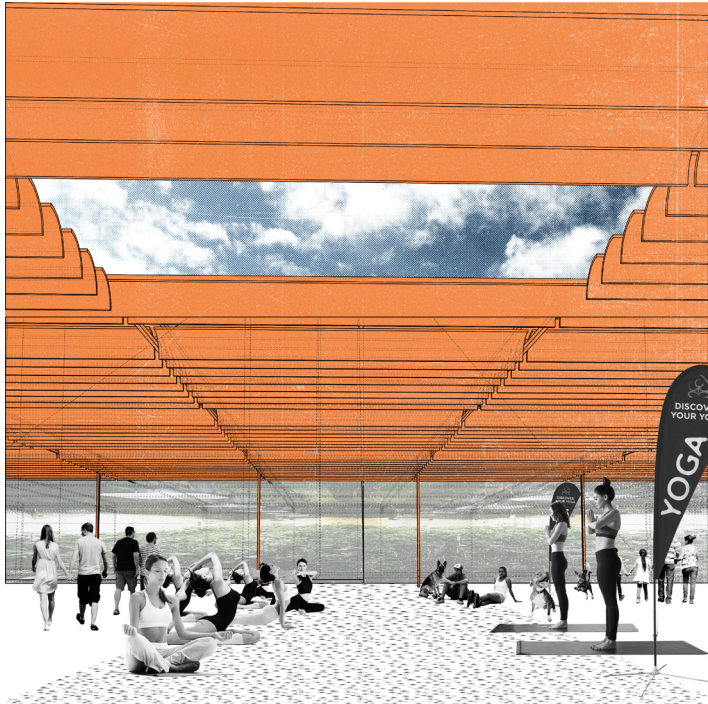
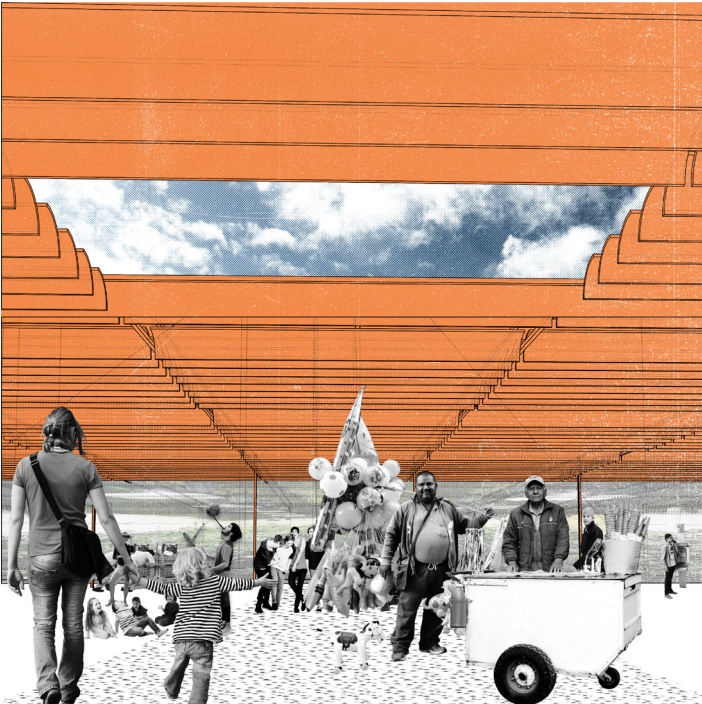
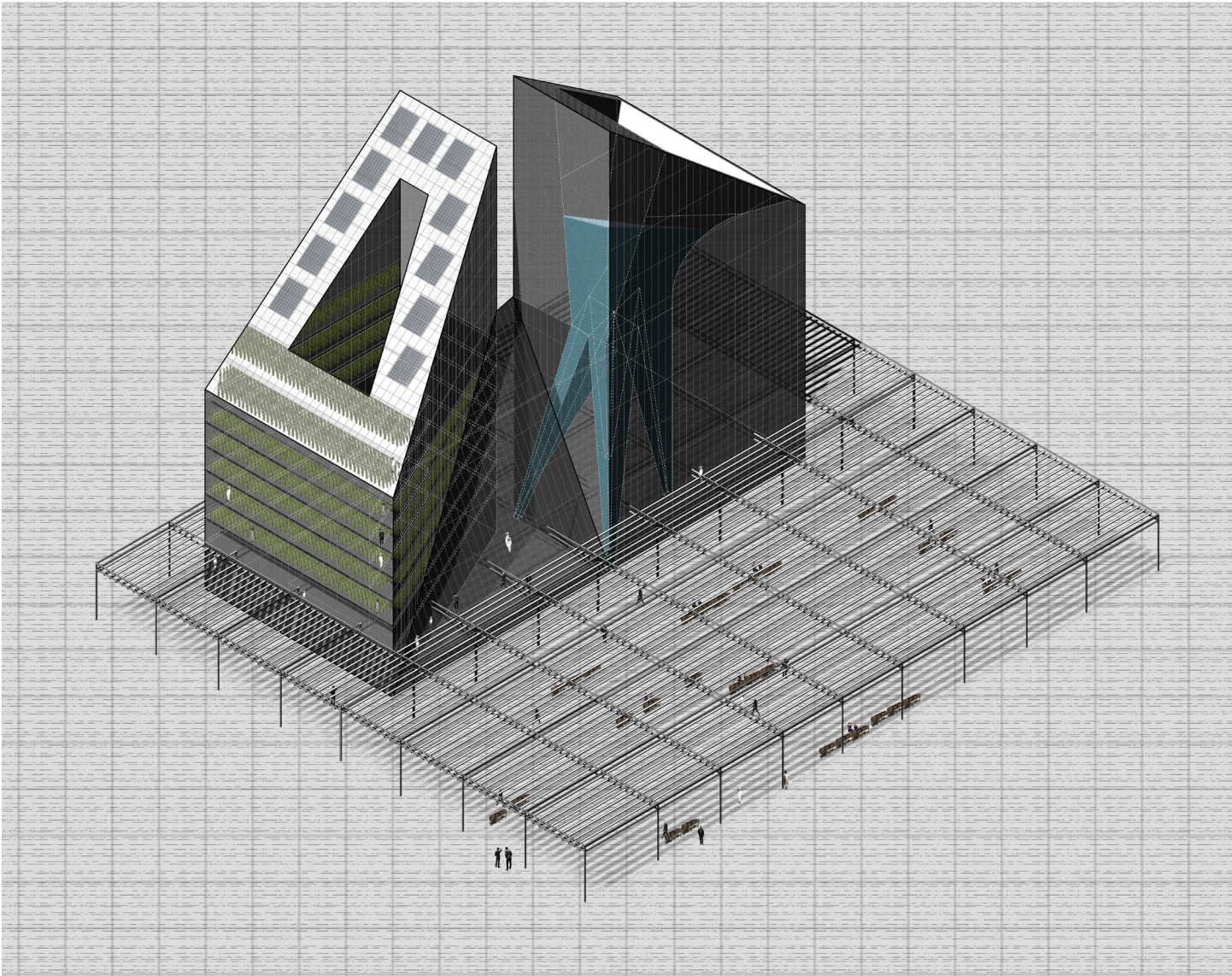
50 The Astrodome is no longer a whole, but now is comprised of fragments of what was. These fragments contain the grided structure to be adaptable to nearly anything. The transformation changes from entertainment center for the city to a city center where people can come and take care of all their needs.

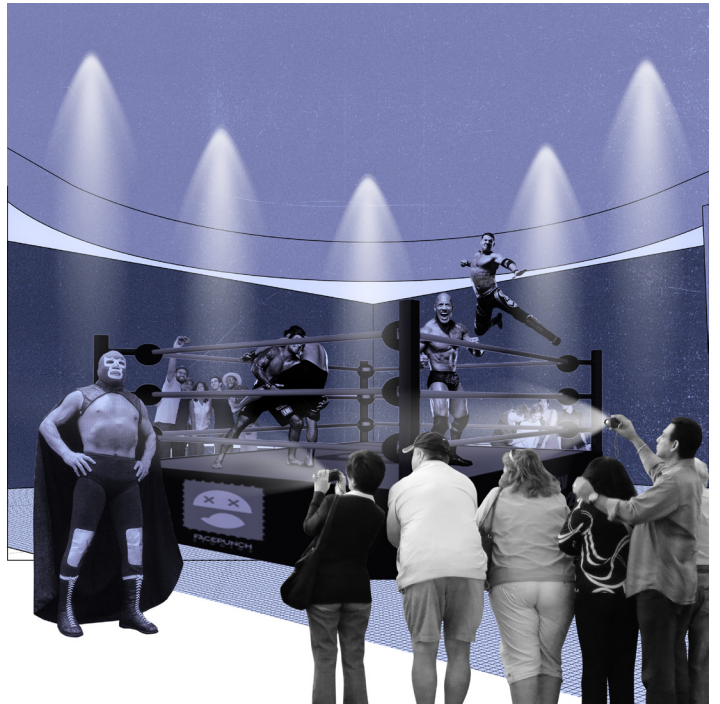
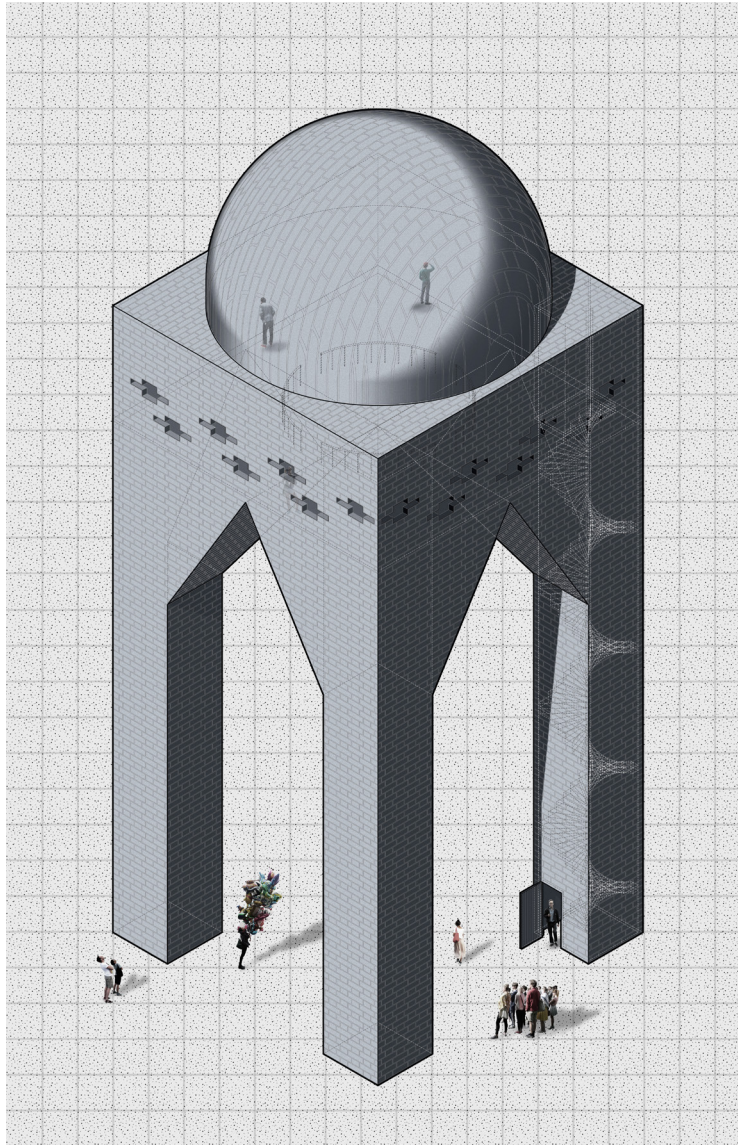
The combination of nature and homes has created the structured dwelling place that becomes a bee farm. The structural grid within the recognizable facade of a home creates an opportunity for other dwellers to thrive. Bee hives gather at the intersections of each grid and are harvested in an attempt to repopulate the bee species.

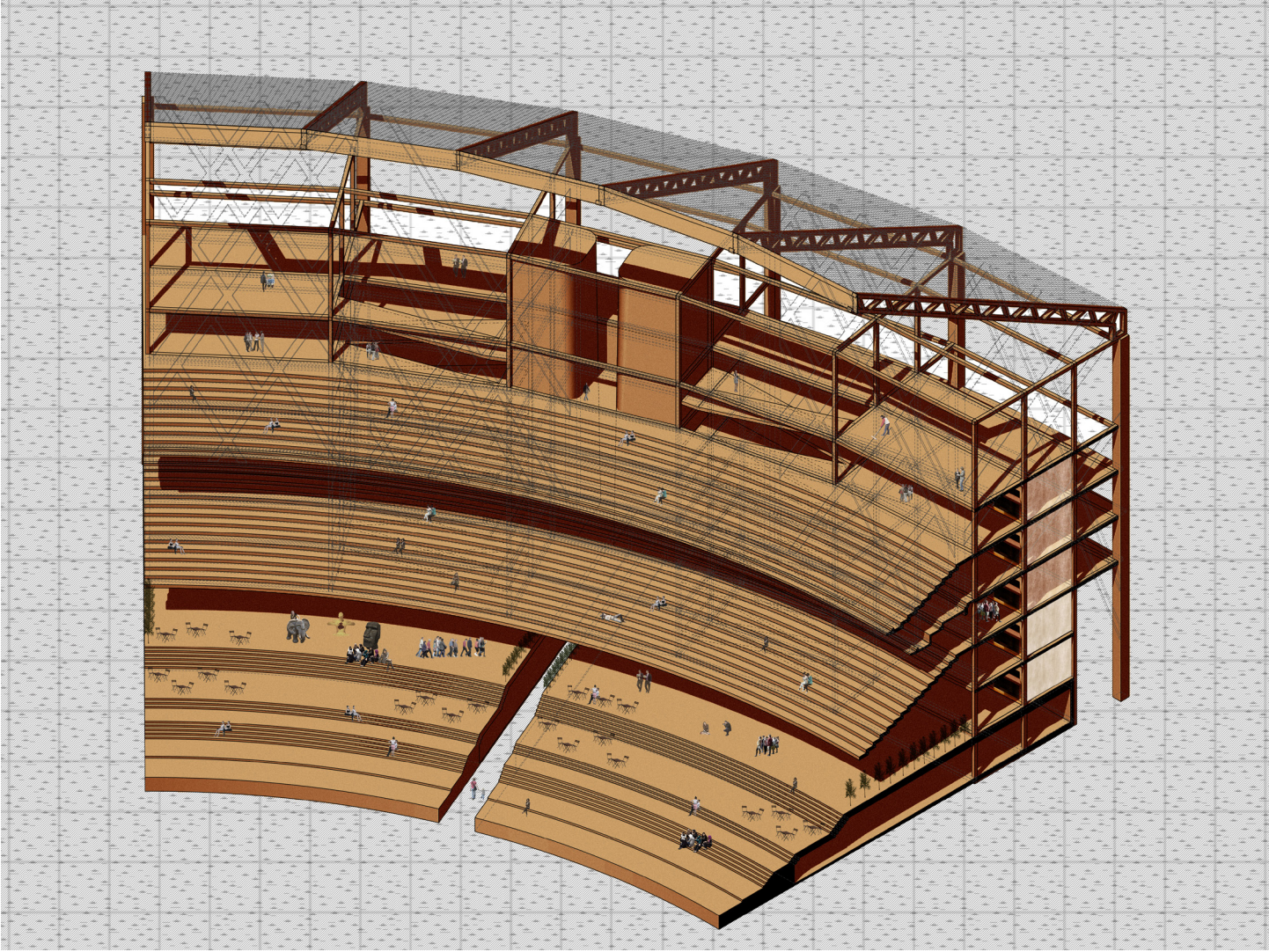
Lastly, the combination of inner city housing and McMansions leads to a community project that becomes the pool house. This new "house" focuses on what is abundant within higher living and gives a program to those that are lacking these programs in the inner city. The "pool house" can also serve the community by being a aktepark, gathering space, or even a trampoline park.

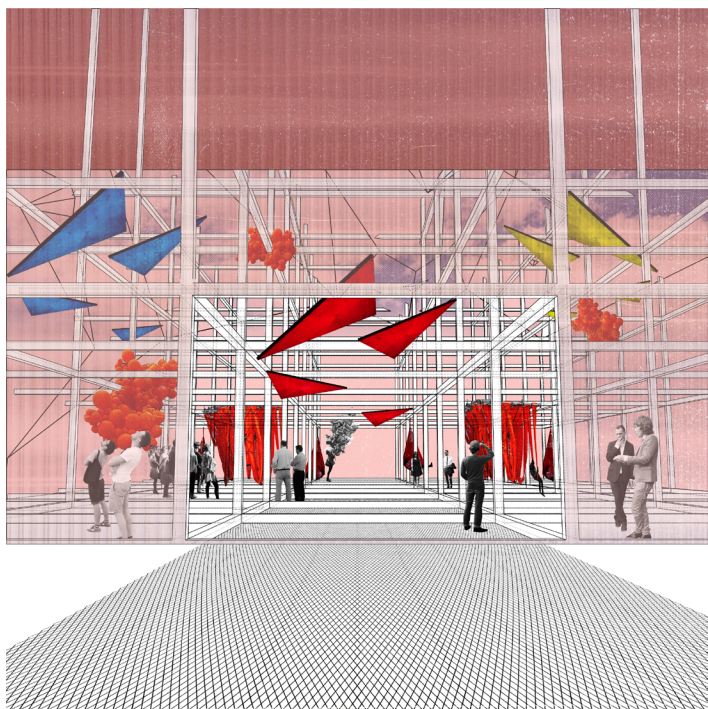
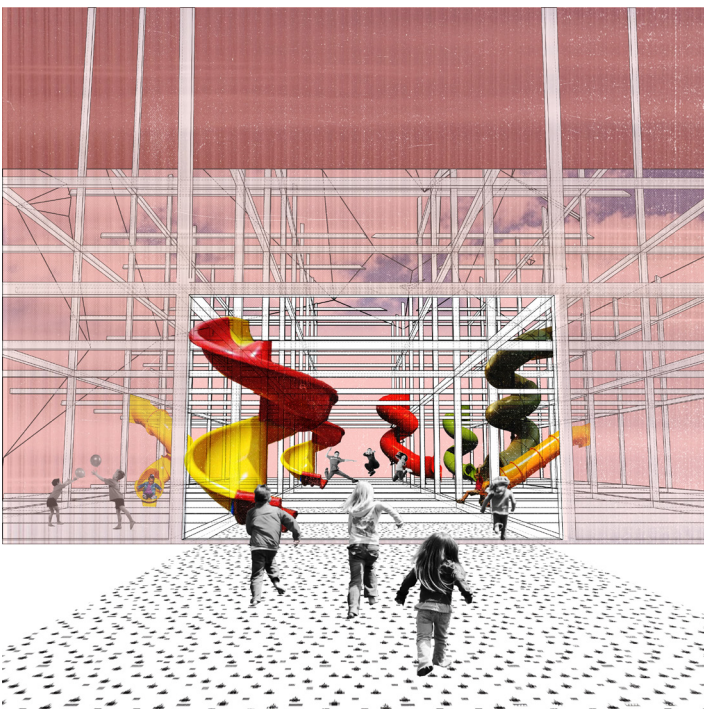
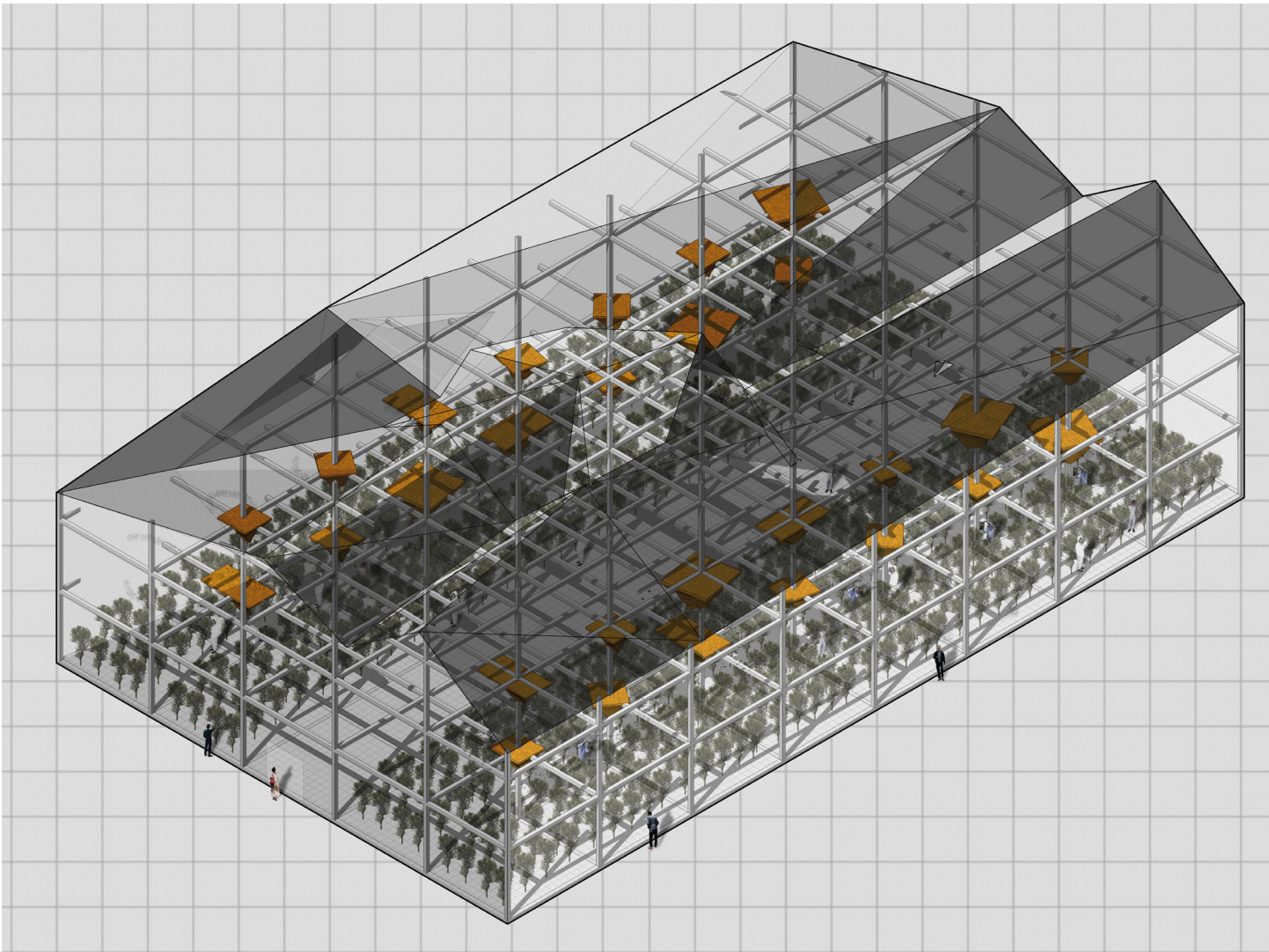
The goal of these icons are to create a new framework for the city, an anti-suburbanism approach to the greater city of Houston and all other cities. These icons can be misinterpreted to become what the people need.

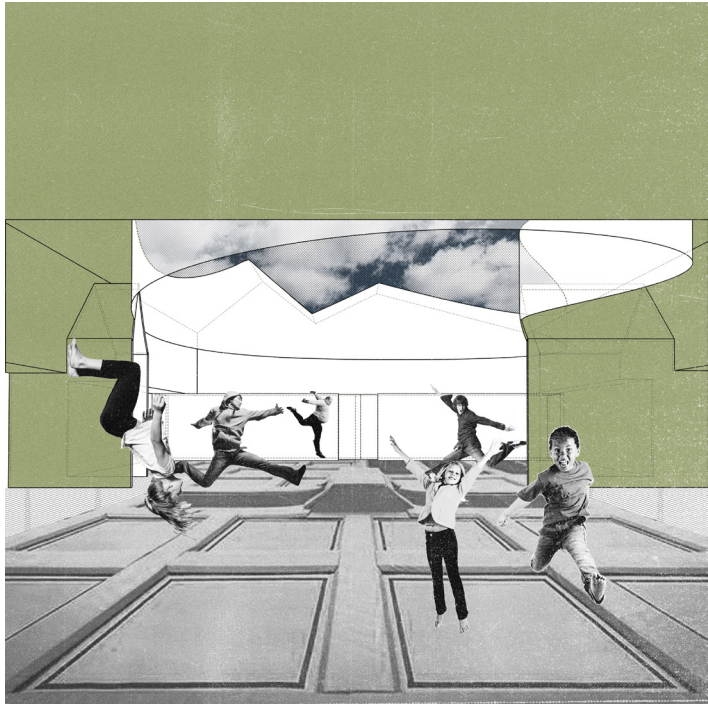
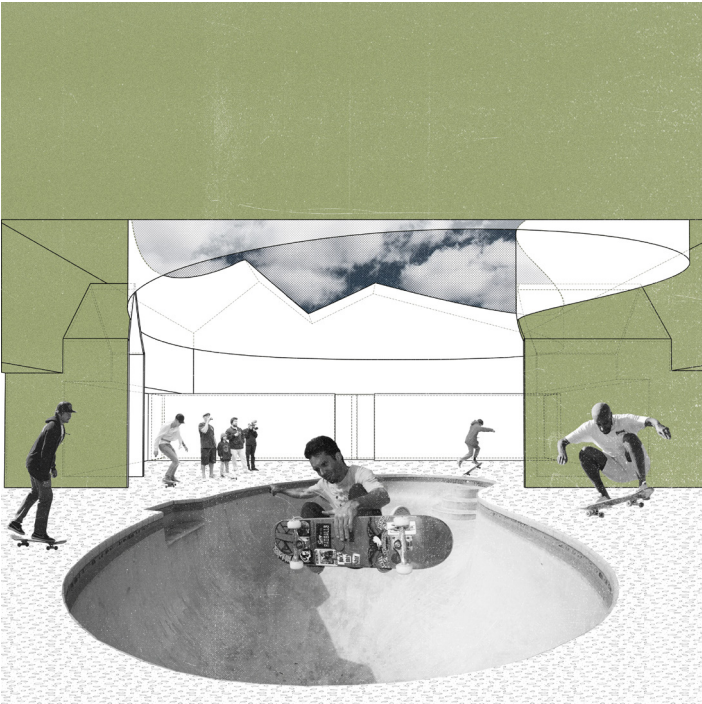
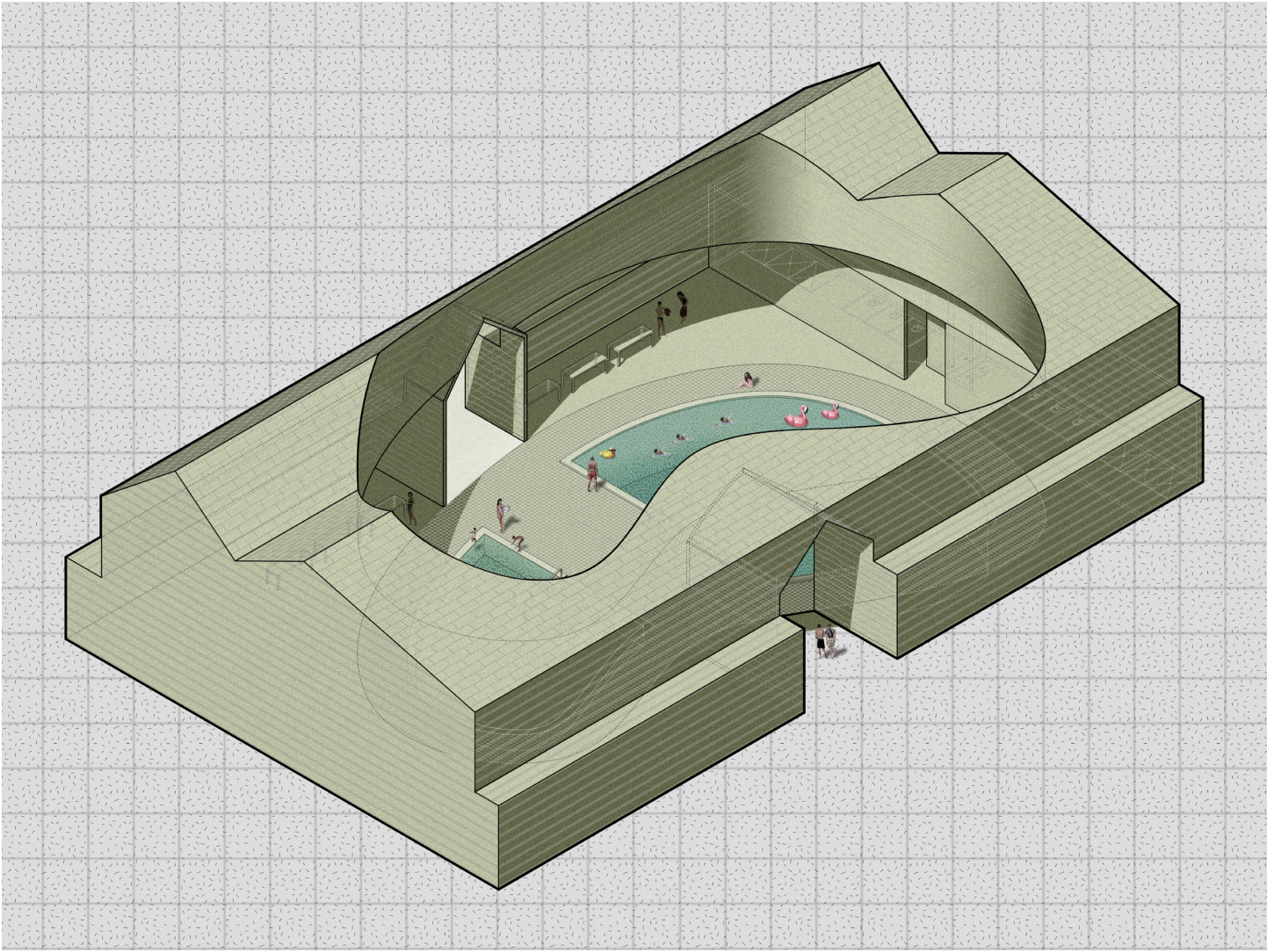


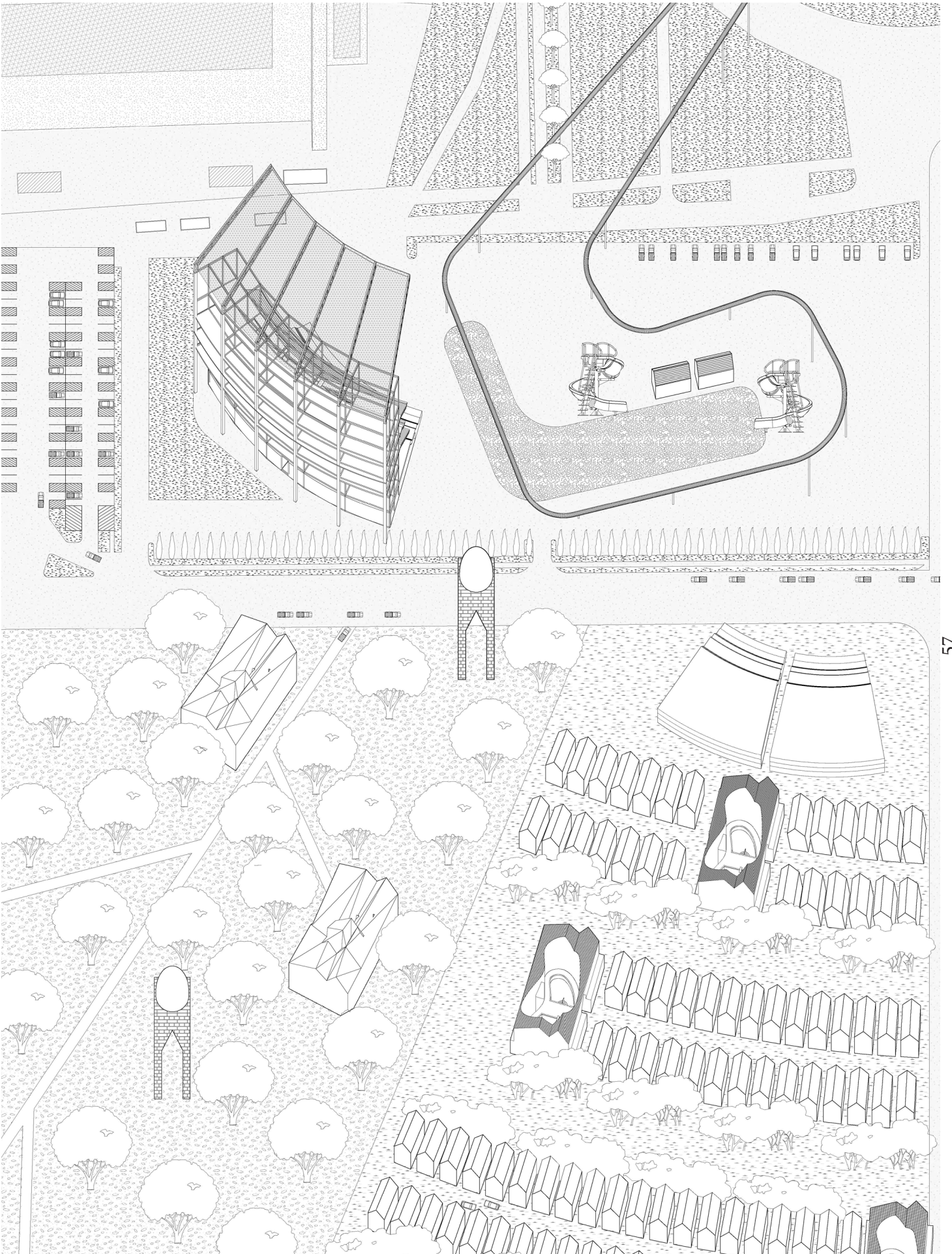


















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