# A WOMB WITH A VIEW:
AN OUTLINE OF INTERIORITY

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I.
No longer contained by rivers and mountains, by flags and hymns, it extends along tracks and pipes, travels through billowing steam, settles its disputes with handshakes and traces its boundaries in ink. Visionary virtuosi flush society's bloodstream with scientific agents, dissolving local clogs and persistent stains. The Experts outperform the Magi in manufacturing cosmic connections. Sinews grip pencils and levers; veins throb like chisels and pistons - a perfectly equilibrated man-machine fuelled by devotion to progress and despise for the idle. Europia's front porches and shop floors adjoin powerful corridors, flocking together under a parliamentary plumage plucked of any odd feather. This is the Homeland to end all wars.[1]

Throughout this essay, the conceptual couples of 'interiority-exteriority' and 'smoothness-striation' will be combined and contrasted according to the quadrants of the below matrix, with the intention of briefly evaluating their spatial implications as means, measure and metaphor. Given that the notions are neither mutually exclusive nor 'belong' together, the operation aims to loosely outline an expanded field of critical architectural agency within the contemporary European city. As a parallel narrative, a series of literary vignettes written in order to reenact moments of the history of Strasbourg, serve as interpretive illustrations of the theoretical framework in question. Contributing to disciplinary discourse, the paper comments on a tendency for post-structuralist theory being used to depoliticise and dematerialise architecture, either through literal, aestheticised translation, or through discouragement of anything but minimal, temporary interventions.

INTERIOR

STRIATED

SMOOTH

EXTERIOR
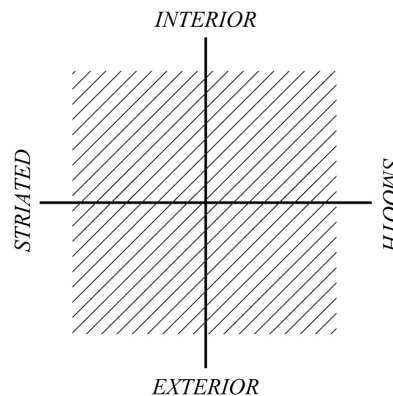
1
Where: Paris
When: 1814
Who: Claude-Henri de la Saint-Simon
What: "De la réorganisation de la société européenne, ou De la nécessité et des moyens de rassembler les peuples de l'Europe en un seul corps politique, en conservant à chacun son indépendance nationale"

2

J. Wambacq and van Tuin-
en, S., Interiority in Sloter-
dijk and Deleuze, p. 3.

3

W. Benjamin, The Arcades
Project, p. 9.

4

H. Arendt, The Human
Condition, p. 52.

5

P. Sloterdijk, In the World
Interior of Capital, p. 12.

6

R. Koolhaas, 'Junkspace',
2002.

7

R. Exo Adams, Invisible
Machines: Toward a Theory
of Interiorization, para. 3.

8

Wambaq and van Tuinen,
p. 3.

9

M. DeLanda, A New
Philosophy of Society:
Assemblage Theory and
Social Complexity p. 4.

10

B. Cache, Earth Moves,
p. 38.

11

A. Parr (ed.), The Deleuze
Dictionary, p. 296.

12

G. Deleuze and Guattari,
F., A Thousand Plateaus,
p. 500.

13

DeLanda, p. 12.

Introduction

Interiority, and more specifically the inte-rior, lies at the heart of architectural awareness. Conceptualised as the opposite of the 'ultimate' exteriority of nature, it is the literal and meta-phorical womb in which human life, and even-tually an anthropocentric conception of civilisa-tion, can occur.[2] Architecture originates from the need to dwell in a state of sequential enclosure; to shape protective membranes and carve out manageable niches in the midst of chaos. Walter Benjamin and Hanna Arendt imagined the inte-rior as "the étui of the private individual"[3] and "the world's last, purely humane corner"[4] respec-tively; vital as a physical place of reflection and retreat from the intense publicness of the mod-ern city. Meanwhile, various spatial theorists and philosophers consider so called 'interiorisation' to be a devastating condition of our capitalist, globalised and technologically advanced reality; virtually as well as actually. Benjamin's arcades being the earliest and most famous example, Sloterdijk's reference to the Crystal Palace as 'hothouse'[5] a potentially more poignant one, and Koolhaas' notion of 'junkspace'[6] the most polemical, they all constitute attempts to define a gradually inflating architectural type, technol-ogy and mentality conceived to eliminate risk by shutting out a the contingency of a perceived ex-terior. Seen through this lens, architecture-as-in-terior operates not simply as enclosed, private or concealed space, but as securitised, homoge-neous, meticulously controlled milieu; hyper-re-sponsive and tendentious while reproducing a dubious sense of transparency and 'organic' development. Waving the flags of 'optimisation' and 'integration', it promotes a state of seamless-ness, at once all-encompassing and invisible; an architecture which appears to dematerialise into a generalised atmosphere, "a silent sky".[7]

Notwithstanding, that which remains inte-riorised can never become part of 'civil' society – rather, it is through the "double movement" of expulsion and enclosure, through what Sloterdi-jk calls 'inclusive exclusivity'[8], that space is pro-duced and perceived at all. What we consider to be fundamentally 'architectural' gestures – the placement of a wall, a roof or a floor – are always acts of differentiation; acknowledging the Oth-

er, and affirming the both/and rather than the either/or. As argued by DeLanda, any notion of internal relations presupposes entities with fixed properties optimally expressed through interac-tion in particular configurations, while ignoring their relative independence, latent dispositions and capacity for multiple realisation.[9] A reading of systems as sets of exterior relationships, where detachable, irreducible and heterogeneous com-ponents wander between assemblages, renders futile any attempt of totalising interiority, while paving the way for manipulation, appropriation and 'noncapitalisable'[10] paradox.

As space negates – escapes – binary con-ceptions, claim Deleuze and Guattari, it be-comes smooth. Limitless and infinitely varied, it emerges as free-moving bodies without fixed qualities, trajectories or points of spatio-tempo-ral reference engage with each other by chance and desire. Bluntly put, this intensive, dense, viscous environment provides a freedom[11] of movement and expression which is not afforded by the extensive, granular, striated space that we usually perceive as our habitat. Striation occurs at the moment of delimitation, predetermina-tion and restriction of flow, when potentialities are 'forced' into particular actualities, and is thus inevitable within the material reality of any hu-man culture or settlement. Despite its connota-tions, the smooth space is not utopian – "never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us"[12] – nor is striation intrinsically undesirable. However, the concepts are metaphorically ca-pable of indicating architectural intent, and function as a spectrum for understanding spatial processes that strive towards heterogeneity or homogeneity, stabilisation and destabilisation, respectively;[13] processes which always, since space is produced and not 'found', are deeply practical, political and poetic.

II.
So be it! One cut, to marry the city's iron and
water mouths.
Let us disembowel the gut cramped since
centuries; release its sickly odour; transplant
its paupers into peripheral convenience. It
shall require equal parts brute force, desirable

displays and subtle rocades. It shall require Haussmannian precision, but none of that blatant Frenchness! Today's boulevard is a sober street, a modestly meandering artery à l'autrichienne. Tomorrow's cosmopolites reside in air and light, consume through tantalising vitrines, and owe their soles to electric transportation.
Empire, gentlemen, is staged on the perimeter.[14]

The Smooth Interior

On the macro scale, any European urban setting is governed by at least three spatio-temporal conditions, or might one say degrees, of interiority. Firstly, it is part of a global space defined by the relationships between "flows that animate any human habitat"[15] – predominantly cycles of production and consumption. Secondly, it is deeply entangled with the European Project; the founding principle of which is free circulation of ideas, goods and people in order to mitigate potentially harmful friction while overriding local conditions and internalising a notion of shared identity. Thirdly, it more than ever relies on logistics and infrastructure not only as means of utilitarian conveyance but as tool for social integration and economic resilience; as political argument and branding strategy. This "world interior"[16] is a complex web of transaction and circulation: a continuous feedback loop where phenomena such as 'urban nomadism', business platforms, just-in-time supply chains, and service-oriented consumption promote minimal material accumulation in pursuit of supreme smoothness. As things are requalified from assets to liabilities, and movement from mere flux to means of value creation, spatial technologies adjust accordingly: eliminating large warehouses while increasing truck capacity and self-storage facilities; creatively developing the hotel typology while investing little into long-term housing; replacing designated office cubicles with flexible, portable work 'environments', to mention a few.

In this strive for seamlessness, sameness becomes a necessity, promoted as service, disguised as desirable uniqueness. Standardisation of signs, units, dimensions, setups and protocols flatten any transitional bumps, physical as well as mental, which might appear on the fringes of the centripetal vortex – making the act of 'exiting' not only difficult to perform but to define, if at all definable. In fact, the more the city resembles infrastructure, the more it is internalised as part of the body itself; the interior becomes a second skin. We partially owe today's 'smart' and even wearable technologies to Modernism's definition of the man-machine assemblage as governing unit of the urbe; an ideal, universal template for non-representational city planning.[17] Replacing the politically and religiously organised, "symbolical agreement" of the civitas[18], the city-as-body or city-as-house are holistic entities made of tissue and arteries, living rooms and corridors – no longer acknowledging a presence of Other, entirely self-referential, and requiring full coordination and consistency in order not to collapse.

If not obvious already, one must now recognise that while undeniably interior, the space described is far from smooth. Contemporary urbanity, regardless of its facial fluidity, operates as a mechanism of capture; a Deleuzeian notion denoting how interiority is produced by sovereignty, aiming to constitute a "general space of comparison".[19] Rather than an ocean of boundless motion, the Seamless system appears as a "vast potential utopia clogged by its users"[20]; its deterritorialising forces capable of producing one difference only – that of relative value. Could it be that the perceived smoothness is nothing but a rationalised construct; a pattern extracted from vast data sets, tailored to fit a causal narrative we want to, or must, believe?

III.
– Dear colleagues, I believe today our hearts have shifted slightly further to the left! Remember the war, when rails became symbols of resistance?
– And a river Styx of sorts…
– All the more reason not to negotiate with the enemy! We worked hard for the statutory right to transport, but I fear for its implementation. Contrary to many of our colleagues, I do not appreciate executives,

14
Where: City Hall, place Broglie, 9 rue Brûlée, Strasbourg
When: 1907
Who: Rudolf Schwander, mayor, et. al.
What: "Grosser Strassen-durchbruch" – La Grande Percée' – an urban renewal plan cutting through the historical city centre.

15
P.V. Aureli (ed.), Brussels – A Manifesto, p. 33.

16
Sloterdijk, 2013.

17
R. Exo Adams, Becoming Infrastructural, para. 5.

18
Aureli, p. 34.

19
Parr, p. 41.

20
Koolhaas, Junkspace, p. 180.

managers and advisers - whatever titles they sport - expressing their commitment to social justice through lavish lunches and generous 'gifts'...

– Only fools trust these so called partnerships. I say, beware of the murky waters! The banks might already be lost... But not this.

– All this talk of market efficiency – we seem to consider the Hexagon, and the Union, as one large balance sheet! I might be an economist, but the bottom line is always peace of mind.

– Hear, hear. The system is vital, frail and must never fail.[21]

The Striated Interior

When refusing the tropes of the 'organic' or 'smart' city, reconsidering its spatial logic as a carefully crafted system of points and vectors, destinations and blank spots, fills and voids, one also refuses the possibility of any persistent smoothness. "Where movement becomes synchronised, it curdles"[22] claims Koolhaas, effectively evoking the moment of striation; where matter becomes form. True to the old dogma of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, capitalism's ever-expanding grasp devours ever more – data, networks, consumers, logistics, trade, communication, platforms, built matter – and spits out ever less – diversity. Whether it be a reaction to such speculative deterritorialisation, or simply a strive for sense in a seemingly senseless world, one might be attracted to Benjamin's claim that withdrawing something from circulation entails giving it a stable value – allowing for material traces of life to become art.[23] Architecture is never a means of embodying 'essences' or genus loci, never an empty vessel waiting to be filled at a point of presumed completion, but it is is indeed an art of distinction – of defining and enacting spatial limits and differences of relative permanence. While something resembling our conventional conception of architecture could well appear as or within a purely smooth space, it would struggle to outlast the singular event, and thus, to become a materially "active agent".[24]

The creative capacity of the incubator is not

a contemporary obsession, but was addressed by 19th century political theorist Claude-Henri de la Saint-Simon, claiming that England owed its industrial and political prowess to geographic insularity which enabled it to experiment with independent, pioneering modes of production and social organisation.[25] This is an admittedly slightly oversized but still viable example of a clear spatial delimitation becoming a facilitating environment; providing margin, memory and predictability that help synchronising collective interests and individual needs. Although considered auxiliary, passive and receptive, lacking other purpose than that of keeping and holding, container spaces need no manipulation to perform, produce, at maximum capacity. The striated interior creates a systemic 'lag' that allows us to evaluate fluctuations, haeccities and tendencies in otherwise hyper-responsive networks. In the intricate web of needs and desires that is the city, these artifacts for containment and supply, whether following precise volumetric standards or approximating demand, all reveal a background dialogue between current norms and limitations. However, this is not a particularly effective use of the singular capacity of architecture – that of producing and projecting future contexts, rather than simply micro-managing real-time behaviour.

As networks of exponentially increasing synchronisation become both cause and effect, necessity and goal, object and representation, they are rendered self-evident and politically 'neutral'. In this environment, architecture tends to operate mimetically: adopting a correlationist approach in line with the entrenched gospel of 'form follows function'. Such claims to optimality, a 1:1 ratio, a perfected use value, undermine architecture's capacity to operate as a "critical device".[26] In order to turn Koolhaas' curdling crowds into swarms of political subjects, architecture needs to exteriorise itself; affirming both its specificity and its potential of becoming other.

IV.
Now Catherine, smugness does not become you. But 56 for, 34 against... Was

21
Where: Hôtel Matignon, 57 rue de Varenne, Paris
When: 18 February 1983
Who: Pierre Mauroy, prime minister; Charles Fiterman, transport minister; Jacques Delors, finance minister; Laurent Fabius, finance minister's budget responsible.
What: The SNCF attaining EPIC (Établissement Public Industriel et Commercial) status, thus becoming completely nationalised for the first time since its creation.

22
Koolhaas, p. 180.

23
Benjamin, p. 9.

24
Aureli, p. 74.

25
C.H. de la Saint-Simon, De la réorganisation de la société européenne..., p. xiii.

26
Aureli, p. 74.

that a flash of relief across poor Rudloff's face? Fifteen years of inherited opinions, unscrupulous lobbying, endless quarrelling; a particularly dirty campaign, this. But what to expect from leaders favouring big business and car-hugging suburbanites; considering the tramway a passé, plebeian infringement on their civil liberty to park within arm's length of Galeries Lafayette? Clearly, this tram transcends standard talk of convenient conveyance and equal opportunity. Ideology takes you only so far; address identity and go further. While they are still scratching their bewildered heads at the sight of a socialist at the helm - not to mention a woman - I will polish the streets of this polluted pothole. I will show them chic and cosmopolitan. I will give them profit and PR. They do not call me Czarina for nothing.[27]

The Smooth Exterior

When attempting, for the purpose of extrapolation, to discuss interiority in isolation, every argument somehow feels unfinished. Obviously, this unease stems from the already stated fact that any act of delimitation, withdrawal or capture also is an act of differentiation. While metanarratives about Europe, Markets and Progress appear to be 'all-inclusive', every redefinition of a centre produces new peripheries, feeds desires to be 'in', and increases difficulties to remain 'out', regardless of whether these counteract a seemingly fundamental human need to 'belong'. On levels closer to individual cognition, any mode of networked transport represents a collapse and folding of the unstable categories of interior and exterior: a traveller or object in transit exists in an enveloped state of 'inside', moving through the panoramic 'outside' condition of the street- or landscape, viewed from within the physical and administrative boundaries of the motorway, the train tracks, the bus schedule... Similar space-folding occurs in any constructed environment, but is intensified in modern types such as the glazed atria of shopping malls, online chatrooms, industrialised greenhouses, free trade zones and airport mini-cities.

We can no longer withdraw into the interior – punctured by pervasive technologies and fears of missing out, our personal étuis are paper thin, leaving us uncomfortably exposed and still suffering from cabin fever. As argued by Virilio, the paradoxial predicament of modernity's speedy smoothness is that of the inescapable meltdown, catastophe – paraphrasing Aristotle, "the invention of the 'substance' is equally invention of the 'accident'."[28] In more or less benevolent forms, the contingencies of the exterior provide the contemporary subject with rare force majeure moments of repose, respite and discharge – the bus was late, it was impossible to find a parking space, someone stripped the rails of its conductive copper... Transit space in particular, that which strives to be nothing but a pleasant blur, somehow becomes the 'realest': revealing its flaws as the immaculate virtual is violently pulled into the actual, with scaleable effects and a curious intimacy. Its points of exchange and transition are not simply beeping plastic cards, toll stations or real-time adjusted travel planners, but are inhabited by overwhelmingly physical swarms of bodies shuffling, stumbling and swearing in space. It is sore behinds and tense thighs; it is damp overcoats and graffitied billboards; it is platform vomit and gum-dotted seats. Although perceived as a lack, an in-between, an anticipation, it could be considered far more tangible, far more expressive, than the carefully curated simulations of familiarity and community which make up the majority of urban 'public' space today.

Reintroducing DeLanda's definition of exteriority, one needs to adopt a habit of regarding locally exhibited properties not as essence or identity, but as specific material expressions of theoretically endless capacities. In so doing, the subjective nature of phenomenological and metaphorical readings become not constitutive of, but complementary to, a tentatively 'objective' understanding of reality as literal "processes of assembly."[29] These processes, operating across a spectrum from homogenisation to heterogenisation – the one side aiming to stabilise assembled Wholes, the other to tear them apart – are themselves assemblages, making it impossible to outline any type of 'pure' intent or causality;

27
Where: Administrative offices of the Municipal Council of Greater Strasbourg, 1 Parc de l'Étoile
When: June 30th 1989
Who: Catherine Trautmann, newly elected mayor, and 94 other deputies.
What: Vote in favour of installation of tramway system rather than VAL (underground automatic light rail).

28
P. Virilio, The Original Accident, p. 5.

29
DeLanda, p. 3.

only gradients and feedback loops. As the two parallel aspects of exteriority – the material-expressive and the processual – translate into and onto architectural practice, they effectively reaffirm its disciplinary relevance and singularity as a form-finding exercise which both constructs and critiques. Furthermore, they facilitate a reading of smoothness as indeed not an absolute state or 'saviour', but a dynamic configuration of things that, much like flying dust before it settles, exhibits the most degrees of freedom.

In order to maintain the remarkable capacity for smoothness immanent to the sheer amount of amalgamate assemblages flocking together in the contemporary city, it must not be treated as an entity analogous to the body, but as an assembled territory of perpetual otherness. When challenging an atomistic world view of minimal units and rigid hierarchies, scale shifts are key – much like the action of zooming into a point in order to requalify it as an intersection of vectors, and the action of zooming out in order to uncover the vector as a sequence of points. One concrete example of smooth exterior spaces are residuals: 'left-overs' and border conditions produced when overarching, interiorising narratives translate poorly or inefficiently onto the immediate territory. Those strips of land delineating the highway, that void under the viaduct, that vacant parking lot – they are all ambiguous; escaping formal or material classification; difficult to read as objects, sites or fields; perceived as both presence and lack, singular and same. They appear as "real space edited for smooth transition in virtual space"[30], seemingly bereft of any properties beyond mere extension, and yet they both produce and hold the territory; embodying the noncapitalisable. An architectural fascination with such spaces is intrinsically dialectical, and entails constantly balancing the degrees to which these fields of potentiality are expressively materialised as novel urban types, or left as abrasive anomalies, engaged in silent struggle.

VI.
A blurry brushstroke along the horizon; a sleek serpent hugging virgin rails with a whirring roar. It is the very fastest of its kind,

allowed one final sprint before conforming to regularised caution. Fifty-three gazes flutter between dull displays and a pioneering panorama. Today Paris is far less than 108 minutes away. But curves appear in a matter of seconds.
The earth tilts before it strikes.
The serpent shrieks before it shatters.
Then silence.[31]

The Striated Exterior

At the opposite end of the spectrum from elusive residuals and contingent crowds, one finds territories which are parcelled, named, zoned, measured, valued, distributed and administrated. Dotted with historical artefacts, riddled with boundaries and appropriated by rent-extracting enterprises, these relatively similar environments are constituent of the majority of contemporary European cities. Within the striated urban exterior, architecture either conforms to, or struggles to break free from inherited assemblages that constitute both backdrop and stage of a sociopolitical drama with rigid roles and precise choreographies. However, although seemingly homogeneous and conceptualised by dominating metanarratives, even the most scripted environment cannot escape its immediate material reality – every spatial intervention adapts to very specific, local demands, whether it be troublesome topographies, family feuds, a rare bird species, volatile weather conditions, or other. Striation does not necessitate consensus or eradication of all difference – stable relations, whether desirable or not, do not occur automatically, but procedurally, additively, iteratively. Just like sedimentation, to use a Deleuzeian analogy, it is a process of layering; subject to exterior impact, never really reaching a 'state' but constantly becoming.

Monuments and institutional buildings tend to be the most significant urban exteriorities – immediately legible as Other by substantiating their foreign temporality and abstract sovereignty. Despite the relative ephemerality of 'functions', the inherent slowness and massive presence of architectural form allows for the disjunctive synthesis of multiple voices, bodies and

30
Koolhaas, p. 189

31
Where: Eckwersheim, north of Strasbourg
When: November 14th, 2015, 15:04:42
Who: SNCF staff, family and friends. 11 deceased, 32 injured.
What: Derailment of TGV train 2369

timescales, initiating a process of folding which is not materially emergent, but metaphorically expressive. Metaphor is a means of exteriorising concepts – of casting into the world – not as objectification, suggesting the existence of either something or nothing, but as one of many potential actualisations of the virtual. In the realm of architecture, form and materiality are often read as signs and metaphors. However, while an analogous reading might uncover artistic intent, reveal historical processes and hint to latent capacities, it says little of actual operability. In order to encourage a more performative reading, perhaps one must reverse the interpretation of the architectural assemblage from thing-as-metaphor to metaphor-as-thing. Shuttling metaphor from material assemblage to abstraction and back again postpones the process of sedimentation, while the 'meaningful' rhetoric of intent and purpose is overlaid, distorted and redefined by accumulating traces of life.

As an act of spatial distinction, and an attempt to produce a relatively stable assemblage, any architectural intervention entails striation. However, every new constellation also releases latent capacities for otherness – the relative interiorisation exteriorises that which was previously only a potentiality; it simultaneously realises a certain preformed intent and actualises potentials which until then lacked definition. The European city, in full representative regalia, is not 'done for' as a contemporary political arena. However, spatial discourse turns dull when the ultimate exterior of urban 'heritage', or worse 'identity', become overriding images that transpose the exterior into a hermetically sealed, meticulously polished interior.

VII.
Non, Merci!
Since 2003
We refuse to be part of your scheme
In the name of the European dream
This cut will cause our lands to bleed
And wipe away the rarest breeds
'Congestion' rhymes too well with 'greed'
Pseudo-solutions for pseudo-needs
From up there it must be hard to see

But more is not less, unfortunately
Invest in people, not in fleets!
Watch and learn as we clog up your streets
Thousands of feet causing tires to screech
Under the pavement, the beach! [32]

Enter Exteriority

Whether one entertains the thought of interiorisation as a gradual realisation of a 'global village' or a reminder of capitalism's Chthulhu[33]-esque character; as a technologically driven process of spatial optimisation or as an inflated "meta-architecture"[34] turning the world into a shopping mall, it appears as if architecture has the greatest potential political agency when operating as an exteriority. This is not simply due to the fact that architecture is most easily conceptualised as something which 'holds' or 'critiques' the human environment, but to the limited variety of people, things and thoughts that the interior can contain – even when containing the entire world. Given that the interior performs a cultural role of safe haven and 'second skin', a shift in control or definition of its domain has vast implications – faced with a modern condition of space-time compression and dissolving categories of public and private, intimacy and integrity, we have begun to wrap ourselves in blankets made of the very stuff from which we initially wanted shelter. A critique of current spatial configurations cannot be fully articulated if relations are considered as solely interior or exterior; spaces purely smooth or striated.

Whether an inflated void or dense presence, archtitecture has "equal capacity to affect and to be affected".[35] Despite any desire for 'realist' alternatives to 'idealist' conceptions of the human environment[36], we cannot escape subjectivity – any efforts to operate 'beside oneself", are subjugated to the human condition of being, in every sense, of the world. What we need, however, is not a theory of how to produce 'exteriority' or 'smoothness', but one of how to think and practice 'externally' and 'smoothly' – striving towards spatial configurations which allow for the greatest amount of scenarios, and produces a kind of abrasive reality which has the ability to surprise. One useful conceptual-

32
Where: Place Kléber
When: October 15th, 2016
Who: GCO Non Merci – initiative against the Grand Contournement Ouest – and 50 other affiliated protest groups: a total of 3000 people.
What: Anti-Bypass Protest.

33
Chthulu is a monstrous, godlike character appearing for the first time in H.P. Lovecraft's eponymous novel from 1928. In function of high-priest of the Old Ones that will annihilate humanity, Cthulhu was cursed from the surface of the earth, and hibernates on the bottom of the ocean until found and awoken by its disciples.

34
R. Exo Adams, Interior: Twelve Points in the Phenomenology of Empire, para. 2.

35
DeLanda, p. 124, citing Deleuze.

36
Delanda, p. 3.

isation of architecture evoking complex simultaneity through simple, precise and sequential gestures is afforded by Bernard Cache's theory of 'framing'. As an "art of the frame"[37], architecture is occupied with selecting and articulating of spatial intervals that produce potentially smooth milieus, without being smooth 'as such'. The frame, regardless of its orientation, never suggests a three-dimensional, totalising interior, but rather provides focus as a flattened, relative arbiter between inside and outside. The image produced within the frame is one of potential metaphor, subject to global trade, but the frame itself always operates locally. Removing, shifting or dissolving a frame is referred to as 'deframing' – the act of decoding and disassociating certain intervals, perhaps when they express too great a degree of striation. This process, one might argue, is an example of the metaphor-as-thing: the frame likens the surrounding environment to an image, appreciated not for its 'contents' or 'subject matter', but for the fact that that particular image has been framed. Life ensues due to the apparent potential for life to happen within that interval – a self-affirming loop, albeit never self-referential or symbolical.

Far from resembling a Claude glass – simplifying complex material assemblages to something 'picturesque' to be looked at in hindsight – these architectural images produce not spectators, but participants. Instead of retreating into a silent, invisible sky, or dotting the urban environment with attention-seeking exclamation marks, an architecture of radical exteriority could indeed provide our womb with a view.

37
Cache, p. 1.

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I.
The Rugged
Side of Seamless

The project seeks to question the self-reinforcing 'pan-humanist'[1] logic behind a contemporary spatiotemporal condition I decide to name the Seamless Paradigm – an urban, capitalist economy founded on the ethos of smooth, transnational circulation of bodies, goods and ideals. Despite being a modus facilitated by and generative of a typically postmodern, neoliberal reorganisation of capital[2], this urbanistic dictum is not a late 20th century phenomenon, but an ever ongoing material-discursive[3] project. It follows the steps of the likes of Cerdà, who in 1861[4] imagined the substitution of the insular, ad-hoc medieval European city by the globally continuous grid of the urbe, structured according to a teleological ideal of vialidad - unlimited circulation[5] – and programmed according to very precise calculations of the appropriate urbe-to-body ratio. A similar stance was formulated by he French early 19th century Saint-Simonians, whose post-revolutionary spiritual entrepreneurialism figured the city, as well as the whole of Europe, as an organism permeated by a 'bloodstream' of circulating capital, flushing the system clean of sedimented modes of production and government, and harmonising viewpoints so as to produce an "expanded sensibility" of "european patriotism".[6]

Naturally, a well-developed mobility network is capable of breaking centre-periphery dichotomies, redistributing capital, providing just-in-time, around the clock goods and services and rendering accessible a greater variety of spaces for a greater variety of people – theoretically enabling everyone to 'choose' their lifestyle. However, the deterritorialisation of internal boundaries always entails a reification of external ones; something of which, to name an example of particular interest to this project, the migration politics of the European Union is a clear example. Furthermore, transit space is not something to 'enter' and 'exit' – "you are not stuck in traffic, you are traffic" – and all mobile societies require intense synchronisation, monitoring and control – modulation – of bodies and spaces. I argue that we ought to remain aware and weary of the effects of the positive feedback loop of interiorising forces and hypermobile ideals, on subjectivity in general, and the built environment in particular.

1
R. Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, p. 40.

2
R. Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p. 2.

3
See K. Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Meaning and Matter,* Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

4
Called *Teoría de la Viabilidad Urbana y Reforma de la de Madrid*; a precursor to the later *Teorìa General de la Urbanización*.

5
Ross Exo Adams, *Becoming Infrastructural*, lecture at the TU Delft Faculty of Architecture, 19 Feb 2018.

6
C-H de la Saint-Simon, *De la réorganisation de la société européenne, ou De la nécessité et des moyens de rassembler les peuples de l'Europe en un seul corps politique, en conservant à chacun son indépendance nationale*, Paris, Adrien Egron, 1814, p. 52.

II.
Interiority, Exteriority –
Making Worlds

Architecture originates from the need to dwell in a state of sequential enclosure; to shape protective membranes and carve out manageable niches in the midst of chaos. Walter Benjamin and Hanna Arendt imagined the interior as "the étui of the private individual"[8] and "the world's last, purely humane corner"[9] respectively; vital as a physical place of reflection and retreat from the intense publicness of urban modernity. In a similar vein, whether it be a rare species, a tech startup or a separatist group, relative isolation has an incubatory, protective and productive effect. Nevertheless, one can argue that so called interiorisation is a problematic condition of neoliberal, globalised and technologically advanced "societies of control"[10] – promoting a gradually inflating architectural type, technology and mentality conceived to eliminate risk by shutting out the contingency of a perceived exterior. Such an architecture-as-interior operates not simply as enclosed, private or concealed space, but as a securitised, meticulously surveyed, homogeneous milieu; hyper-responsive and tendentious

while reproducing a dubious sense of transparency and 'organic' development. Waving the flags of 'optimisation' and 'integration', it promotes a state of seamlessness, at once all-encompassing and invisible; an architecture which appears to dematerialise into a generalised atmosphere, "a silent sky."[11]

Notwithstanding, it is through the 'double movement' of expulsion and enclosure that space is produced and perceived at all. What we consider to be fundamentally 'architectural' gestures – the arrangement of walls, roofs and floors – are always acts of framing[12] and differentiation; habitually affirming the either/or, but surely capable of dealing with the both/and. Manuel DeLanda goes to far as to argue that the very suggestion of 'internal' relations is flawed, as it presupposes entities with fixed properties optimally expressed through interaction in particular configurations, while ignoring their relative independence, latent dispositions and capacity for multiple realisation.[13] This view is partially

8
W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 9.

9
H. Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 52.

10
G. Deleuze, 'Postscript on the Societies of Control', October, Vol. 59, 1992, pp. 3-7.

11
R. Exo Adams, 'Invisible Machines: Toward a Theory of Interiorization', *Machines of Urbanization* [website], 2015, para. 3. https://rossexoadams.com/2015/07/14/invisible-machines-toward-a-theory-of-interiorization/ (Accessed 2017-11-03)

12
'Framing' as architectural practice is discussed by Bernard Cache in *Earth Moves: the Furnishing of Territories* (1995).

13
M. DeLanda, *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity*, London: Continuum, p. 4.

→

14

See Barad (2007), chapter 4: 'Agential Realism: How Material-Discursive Practices Matter'.

15

B. Massumi, *99 Theses on the Reevaluation of Value. A Postcapitalist Manifesto*, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2018, para. 10. 'Framing' as architectural practice is discussed by Bernard Cache in *Earth Moves: the Furnishing of Territories* (1995).

16

R. Exo Adams, R., 'Twelve Points on the Phenomenology of Empire', E.R.O.S., issue 7, 2015, para. 2.

17

Massumi, *99 Theses*, para. 10.

shared by Karen Barad, who employs the concept of 'intra-actions' in order to account for how no property, function and form precedes the encounter between agencies and objects within the frame of a measuring apparatus.[14] Such a reading of systems as sets of exterior relationships, where detachable, irreducible and heterogeneous components wander between assemblages, renders futile any attempt of totalising interiority. In addition, Brian Massumi argues that the "systemic environment" of neoliberal capitalism, which quantitatively defines its singularity through interior-exterior relations, cannot sustain itself without the 'immanent outside' – the relatively autonomous "processual ecology" consisting of all factors which affect and are affected by capitalism without being immediately involved in its system.[15]

Thus, regardless if one entertains the thought of interiorisation as the benign realisation of a 'global village' or as a reminder of capitalism's ruthlessly deterritorialising force; as a technologically driven process of spatial optimisation or as an inflated "meta-architecture"[16] turning the world into a shopping mall, it appears as if architecture has the greatest critical and operative agency when favouring exteriority, from a position of the in-between. This claim does not simply mean that architecture affects the human environment from the 'outside in' – in fact, I will soon argue for the possibility of a reverse relationship – but points to the limited variety of people, things and thoughts that the interior can contain; even when containing the entire world. Architectural practice that locates itself within the 'immanent outside', devotes itself to (re)articulating the 'peripheral' and instrumentalises 'externality' as qualitative change[17] rather than unwanted consequence, becomes an expressive act of dissent within the disciplinarity, centrifugality, and purported inevitability of the Seamless.

III:
Mobile Bodies,
Nomadic Subjects

Given that the interior performs a role of subjective safe haven and 'second skin', a shift in control or definition of this intimate domain has vast implications. Thus, when faced with a modern condition of space-time compression and dissolving categories of public and private, intimacy and integrity, chances are we begin to wrap our bodies in blankets made of the very stuff from which we initially wanted shelter – every body is fashioned to fit the system, while the system makes itself fit. Whether conceptualised as a divine replica, a sinful vessel, a productive machine, a part of an unruly mass, or – as in contemporary 'urbanity' – a free-floating "bio-economic dividual"[18] and site of data-extraction, the body has always performed the role of 'hinge' between political structure and spatial organisation.[19] Most understandings of the body to date, however, reduce it to a representation of a civilisation, cause, or truth somehow located 'elsewhere'. My project approaches the body as neither object nor subject of the city, but as an entanglement of, as Rosi Braidotti puts

it, of "the physical, the symbolic and the sociological"[20]; an assemblage of 'machines' or 'micro sites' of ecological exchange. The body is not a singular subject – a 'person' – or a predefined set of properties, but an agency whose capacity to affect or be affected[21] changes with every encounter with another body, every 'felt' transition between figurations. Contemplating the above critical conceptualisation of the interior, it appears as if bodily scale and abilities in relation to the material configuration its surroundings – its environmenal features[22] – are crucial to the human capacity to perceive, relate to, and appropriate it; when the environment is too 'large', abstract or distant, it 'disappears'; becomes ungraspable. However, in order to avoid an overly phenomenological or localist reading, one ought to define the body in terms of its affects and affordances. These are, argues Anthony Chemero, to be understood as relational phenomena between bodily abilities and situational features[23] which are perceived to allow particular activities – conditioning not only

18
W. Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, p. 9.

19
R. Exo Adams, lecture at the TU Delft, 19 February 2018.

20
Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects,* p. 4.

21
G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, New York: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, foreword.

22
A. Chemero, 'An Outline of a Theory of Affordances' , *Ecological Psychology*, vol. 15(2), p. 181.

23
Chemero, *Outline of a Theory of Affordances*, p. 191.

→

capacity, but also disposition to act. Given that affects are emergently relational, they are always externalities, and although 'countable', they are fundamentally qualitative. The combined affordances of an animal, human or otherwise, form an exclusive niche – which one could regard as an 'interior' – which is constantly subject to events[24] – predominantly 'external', environmental occurrences – that alter the configuration of said affordances. After pointing out the mistake of regarding human habitats as 'organisms' or representations, the 'city' emerges as a collection of unstable niches; a multitude of phenomena brought about by bodies intra-acting, simultaneously inside and outside of themselves, in a mutual articulation of matter and meaning.[25]

Much like any other political, economical or social project, the Seamless Paradigm is produced from a series of events which affect a multitude of niches, thus changing concerned organisms' capacities to act; their degrees of freedom. The particularities of its globally homogenising, interiorising

effects, however, is the formation of a metanarrative, a 'supra-niche' which dictates and restrics affordances and affects on an unprecedented scale. My project argues that architecture can operate as an event which transforms not only the features of a particular environment, but induces an 'internal' reconfiguration of the subject itself – not by 'triggering' predetermined behaviours or sensations, but by shaking the habitual; by exteriorising, exposing, and thus intensifying the bodily experience[26] of being 'of-the-world' rather than merely 'in-the-world'. Architectural form can be explored as something which produces subjectivity from the "preconscious" and "prediscursive"[27]; from lived, embodied, 'molecular'[28] intensity.

Yet, although shattering dated categorisations, maintainting a healthy distance to essentialism and determinism, and presenting affects as afforded intensities[29] which are neither 'emotional' nor 'rational', one might ask whether this conceptual framework runs the risk of neutralising, depoliticising – 'flattening'[30] –

24
Ibid., pp. 191-192.

25
Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, p. 152.

26
E. Grosz, *Chaos, Territory, Art. Deleuze and the Framing of the Earth*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2008, p. 24.

27
Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects*, p. 14.

28
A. Lara et. al., 'Affect and Subjectivity', *Subjectivity*, vol. 10, 2017, p. 39.

29
L. Blackman, 'Affect and Automaticity', *Subjectivity*, vol. 7, 2014, p. 378.

30
Lara et. al., 'Affect and Subjectivity', p. 33.

→

the subject and its environment to the point of surrendering to an ever relativist status quo. Indeed, since affect 'in itself'' does not discriminate, a shift from interiorised consent to exteriorised dissent as well as the construction of non-normative collective imaginaries requires a "re-theorisation of subjectivity".[31] Quoting Donna Haraway; "it matters which stories tell stories, which concepts think concepts. Mathematically, visually, and narratively, it matters which figures figure figures, which systems systematize systems".[32]

Through the notion of the 'nomadic', Rosi Braidotti outlines one such potential displacement of the trope of the singular, humanist subject – seeking empowerment in a fragmented, 'non-civilised' existence. This nomadism has little to do with the Seamless equivalent, which transforms a willingly itinerant way of life into an obligatory, precarious condition, seductively packaged and sold as 'world citizenship' and 'freedom of choice'. Neither does it refer to travelling,

to homelessness, or to being in a literal state of motion. To Braidotti, nomadism is a subversive, deeply political mode[33] of being – a tonality, pattern, temporality – and the nomad a subject which sheds indentities, trajectories and belongings in favour of a roaming reality where minor positions, "alternative figurations" and destabilisations of 'self' are embraced and encouraged.[34] In such an uprooted existence, consistency and coherence is achieved through recurring rhythms and situated, bodily experiences rather than through hegemonically encoded locations, roles and discourses. However, Braidotti distinguishes the relatively privileged, affirmative state of nomadism from the superficially similar conditions of migration and exile, both of which are primarily defined by the notion of a missing 'home'. For, indeed, in order for subjective experience to "make statements of general value"[35]; to form bonds and connections and bring about new, transferrable affects, location matters – subjects need somewhere to dwell, if ever so briefly.

31
Ibid., p. 34.

32
D. Haraway, 'Anthropocene, Capitalocene, Plantationocene, Chthulucene: Making Kin', *Environmental Humanities*, vol. 6, 2015, p. 160.

33
Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects,* p. 1.

34
Ibid., p. 4.

35
Ibid., (quoting Donna Haraway), p. 37.

IV.
Ritornello –
Constructing Territories

While acknowledging 'chaos' as the primary state of the universe, we can avoid nihilist or even apocalyptical rhetorics by suggesting it be defined as a condition where nothing has a natural place; where no thing is already made.[36] Chaos is a soup of pure potentiality, of unfettered becoming; simultaneously a prerequisite for and a threat to 'life'. In order to grasp just how beings still manage to organise provisional homes, to claim temporary turfs in the midst of utter muddle, and especially how art, architecture and the 'city' contribute thereto, I will introduce the Deleuze-Guattarian notion of ritornello as analytical concept as well as generative tool.

We already understand the niche as the collected affordances of a being, but this accounts for but one part of the quarternary "block of space-time"[37] that constitutes a milieu – the 'annexed' one, meaning the organism-environment system from which the being receives energy and overall agential capacity. In addition, the 'internal' milieu of the body, such as organs or cognitive processes, is continuosly exchanging information with the 'external' milieu of available matter, through the 'intermediate' milieu of membranic limits.[38] Milieus are material assemblages concerned with selection and framing – boundary-enactments dealing with directionality and functionality, beginnings and ends; raising questions of 'where' and 'what'.[39] However, while explaining the orientation and to some degree desires of bodies in space, little remains known of how milieus affect each other, or how components wander between assemblages: to grasp this in-between[40], transition, passage – the 'how' and 'when' – one needs to introduce a notion of periodic repetition, pattern, or rhythm. Just like niches are conditioned by events, milieus are regulated by rhythms – manifested as variations in pure relationality, pure intensity, pure becoming, rather than any steady, measurable pulse. Yet although these intervals distinguish a milieu from chaos, milieus cannot become 'homes', or 'worlds' until rendered expressive through an "artistic and appropriative"[41] act or event – a territory. Subjectivity emerges alongside the territory, as stylised rhythms and qualitative components

36
A. Kleinherenbrink, 'Territory and Ritornello: Deleuze and Guattari on Thinking Living Beings', *Deleuze Studies*, vol. 9, issue 2, 2015, p. 212.

37
Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 313.

38
Deleuze and Guattari, p. 313.

39
A. Kleinherenbrink, 'Territory and Ritornello', p. 212.

40
Deleuze and Guattari, p. 313

41
R. Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts*, London: Routledge, 2013, p. 19.

⟶

become signatures or markings of a specific space, recognising the space as claimed; possessed. Although there are no ready-mades, qualities and rhythms have a machinic, autonomous disposition which allows for every artistic, aesthetic expression to be different, assigning meaning to flows and ritualising behaviours for the purpose of information and signal. This simultaneously de- and recoding, de- and reterritorialising force that constructs and regulates territory is the ritornello, which operates by assigning a "point of stability" in the shape of a differentiated component; tracing a "circle of control" or volumetric space, and drawing a "line of flight", opening the territory to other, non-territorial, milieus.[42] The ritornello thus expresses the syntactical relationship between internal and external occurrences – territorial motifs and counterpoints – as a style which should be appreciated as neither 'final touch' nor 'frivolous flair', but as the assembly of a specific mode of being; of subjectivity itself.

Why, then, is this complex philosophy of disassembly and reassembly, decoding and recoding – in short; territorialisation of

the world - at all relevant to architectural practice? First of all, it affords us a tool to crack open what Kleinherenbrink calls 'universalised assemblages'[43] – God, Market, Nation, Nature, and why not Seamlessness – and reorient our gaze towards the 'plotholes' in such interiorising, determinist narratives; the radically external yet intensly embodied relations between heterogeneous points of view. If the Seamless modulates subjectivity not by natural law but through the expression of particular motifs and counterpoints, it means that other ritornellos are possible through other expressions; that the line of flight to the immanent exterior is unbroken; that although one cannot avoid complicity[44], one can stave off real subsumption. Secondly, it helps us understand the crucial difference between mechanisms of capture and mechanisms of holding – while both possessive and centralising, argues Deleuze, the former attempts to establish conditions of causality, hierarchy and entitlement, forming sovereign enclosures that function like "moulds, distinct castings"[45], while the latter produce a facilitating environment, controlling not end states but modulations,

42
Bogue, *Deleuze on Music, Painting and the Arts*, p. 17.

43
Kleinherenbrink, 'Territory and Ritornello', p. 221.

44
Massumi, *99 Theses*, para. 59.

45
Deleuze, *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, p. 4. Capture operates on all levels - material, psychological, symbolical, sociological...

→

like a "self-deforming cast".[46] Mechanisms of capture are instrinsically systemic and quantitative, while holding mechanisms are processual and qualitative – when affect is captured, explains Massumi, it mutates into personalised emotion that clings to "aspirational narratives" of self-actualisation[47], whereas 'holding' affect means condensing and intensifying it, allowing the subject to assemble and express a multitude of 'personas', similar to the styles and figurations discussed above, for the purpose of differentiating rather than homogenising the 'self''. Thirdly, the notion of ritornello empowers ethico-aesthetic practices, such as architecture, by conceptualising artistically expressive composition of spatiotemporal intervals as the very foundation of what we habitually call 'society', albeit that this agency is more transductive than inductive. As elaborated by Claire Colebrook, in order for the city to become a life-affirming territory, if one by life means intensity, producing territories which enjoy the greatest possible degrees of freedom, are capable of satisfying not only needs but desires, and strive towards an urban economy beyond self-interest, we need to promote wiggle-room over perfect fit; favour a certain delay, distance and tension between subjects and matter instead of immediate reaction, adaptation or appropriation.[48]

46
Ibid., p. 4.

47
Massumi, 99 Theses, para. 67.

48
C. Colebrook, *Sex and the (Anthropocene) City*, unpublished, 2017, p. 1

V.
Designing with the Immanent Outside

Architecture, as a material-discursive, aesthetic practice, is always transversal; cutting through milieus, and articulating the in-between through these cuts, producing and distributing relatively stable spatial/quantitative as well as temporal/qualitative intervals. Whereas classical notions of strength, utility and beauty, which still seem to prevail as means of both production and 'evaluation', capture creativity and political agency inside the boundaries of objecthood, a view of architecture as "processual ecology"[49] suggests replacing structure with rhythm, function with affects, and appeal with lived intensities. Effectively, if form and materiality is treated in these terms, we can decode architectural components of certain inherited associations – for example, a transparent surface does not signify openness, but allows us to see through, to enjoy sunlight, and experience multiple spaces at once; a tall wall does not signify occlusion, but blocks or delays a bodily trajectory. When designing for (or preferably with) a population in transit, I find it important to find alternatives to a 'temporary' aesthetic. Despite avoiding symbolism, there is an actual difference in density and longevity of material, a qualitative difference in composition and modulation of space, and, just like the ritornello, the manner in which these are expressed constitute a 'style' of being, intra-acting, relating. Rather than assemling a custom-made solution to an immediate 'problem', I would like to consider my architectural intervention as a foundation for new rhythms, styles and subjectivities; indeed a question rather than a response. Therefore, I aim to design with a degree of 'permanence'; with a sense of the irrevocable, allowing for perceived contingency or 'threat' to make a lasting imprint.

49
Massumi, para. 11.

PROJECT POLICY PROGRAM

Free Circulation

Single Market

1958- Treaty of Rome

INTERNATIONAL

European Citizenship Monetary Union Controlled Borders

1958- EUCU: European Customs Union

1990- Schengen Convention

2015 Refugee Crisis

2013- SIS: Schengen Information System

1996- Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) *

Connect Europe

European Court of Justice

2010- Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport

Sustainable Transport

Maritime Transport Without Barriers

1993- Maastricht Treaty

European Community

European Commission

European Parliament

Single European Transport Area

2010- Europe 2020 Strategy

Competitiveness Job Creation Cohesion

2015- MOS: Motorways of the Sea

1999- Amsterdam Treaty

2008- Air Quality Directive

2013- Core Network Corridors Project

2013- Horizontal Priorities Tech Projects

Knowledge Economy Techno-Economic Paradigm

2011- Urban Mobility Policy

2013- Rhine-Danube Freight Corridor

2013- ERTMS: European Railway Traffic Management System

2009- Lisbon Treaty

Smart Sustainable Inclusive

2008 Financial Crisis

Poor Urban Air Quality

NATIONAL

Decentralisation

1958- French State: Fifth Republic

2017- Ministry for Ecological and Solidary Transition

2016- Crit'Air Eco-Vignette: Air Quality Certificate

2015- Loi NOTRe: New Org. of the Territory of the Republic

1982- LOTI: Law for Organisation of Internal Transports

1990- VNF: Voies Navigables France

1937- SNCF: Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Français

Public-Private Relationships Accessibility Quality Affordability

1996- PDU: Urban Travel Plan

1981- TGV: High-Speed Train

1996- Loi Sapin: Public Procurement Code

World's Fastest Railroad

2015 Eckwersheim Derailment

2007- LGV Est: Ligne Grande Vitesse

1966, 1974 A35, A4: National Highway

2010's Low Profitability

LGV, TGV, Location, Taxes

1925- SXB Airport

REGIONAL / LOCAL

'Hyperstructurant'
'Structurant'
'Distribution'

2016- Grand-Est: Region for Territorial Administration

1926- Autonomous Port

Pleasant Attractive Functional Ecological Metropolitan Status as Brand

2010's Low Profitability

2016- Bas-Rhin: Department for Territorial Administration (67)

2010- PDU: Strasbourg

2014 Mismatch Train Size

2015- Strasbourg Europmétropole: Metropolitan Area

1878- CTS: Strasbourg Transport Company

1984- TER: Transport Express Regional

A350, A351

France's 6th Most Congested City

'Service-Oriented' Public Transport Plan 'EcoCité'

GCO/A355 Bypass West

1928- Bus 1994- Tram 2010- Vélhop 2007- Park n' Ride

2016- Anti-Bypass Demonstrations

Motor
Wiring
Switch
Multiplier
Ground
Resistor
Resistance

* Rail 164 (40%)
IWW 29 (7%)
ERTMS 42 (10%)
ATM 16 (4%)
Multimodal 33 (8%)
Road 52 (13%)
ITS 4 (1%)
Galileo 1 (0.2%)
MOS 20 (5%)
Airport 11 (3%)
Port 26 (6%)
RIS 15 (4%)
Number of Projects

Rail 2925 (53%)
ERTMS 599 (11%)
ATM 462 (8%)
Multimodal 407 (7%)
Road 224 (4%)
ITS 210 (4%)
Galileo 190 (3%)
MOS 150 (3%)
Airport 51 (1%)
Port 55 (1%)
RIS 33 (0.5%)
Funding (million €)

SEAMLESSNESS AS PROJECT

Whether considered as a means of social cohesion or as a tool for market expansion (or both), global mobility enjoys the role as one of few untouchable 'truths' in contemporary planning and politics. However, although generally conceived of as an inherently modern, self-evident condition, it is not a 'fait accompli' but a an ongoing process – a Project.

Arguing that the European Union is ultimately nothing more, nothing less than infrastructure – circulation of goods and people – reifying external boundaries while deterritorialising internal ones, this map traces the 'wiring' of Strasbourg transport systems from latent ideals to manifest interventions. The highlighted instances of resistance serve to show the fragility of the material dimension of the hypermobile, 'seamless' paradigm, yet illustrate the political persistence of its ideals. Finding a 'breaking point', a potential short circuit, appears impossible; when faced with friction, the system rewires - in terms of management and money flows - tunes into current needs and trends - such as disincentivising car use - or polishes its rhetorics - from 'circulation' to 'connection', from 'market' to 'competitiveness', from 'technology' to 'sustainability'... Yet, these points of friction serve as 'plot holes' which can be used to build other narratives.
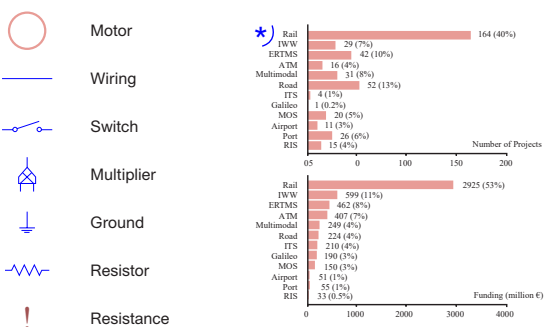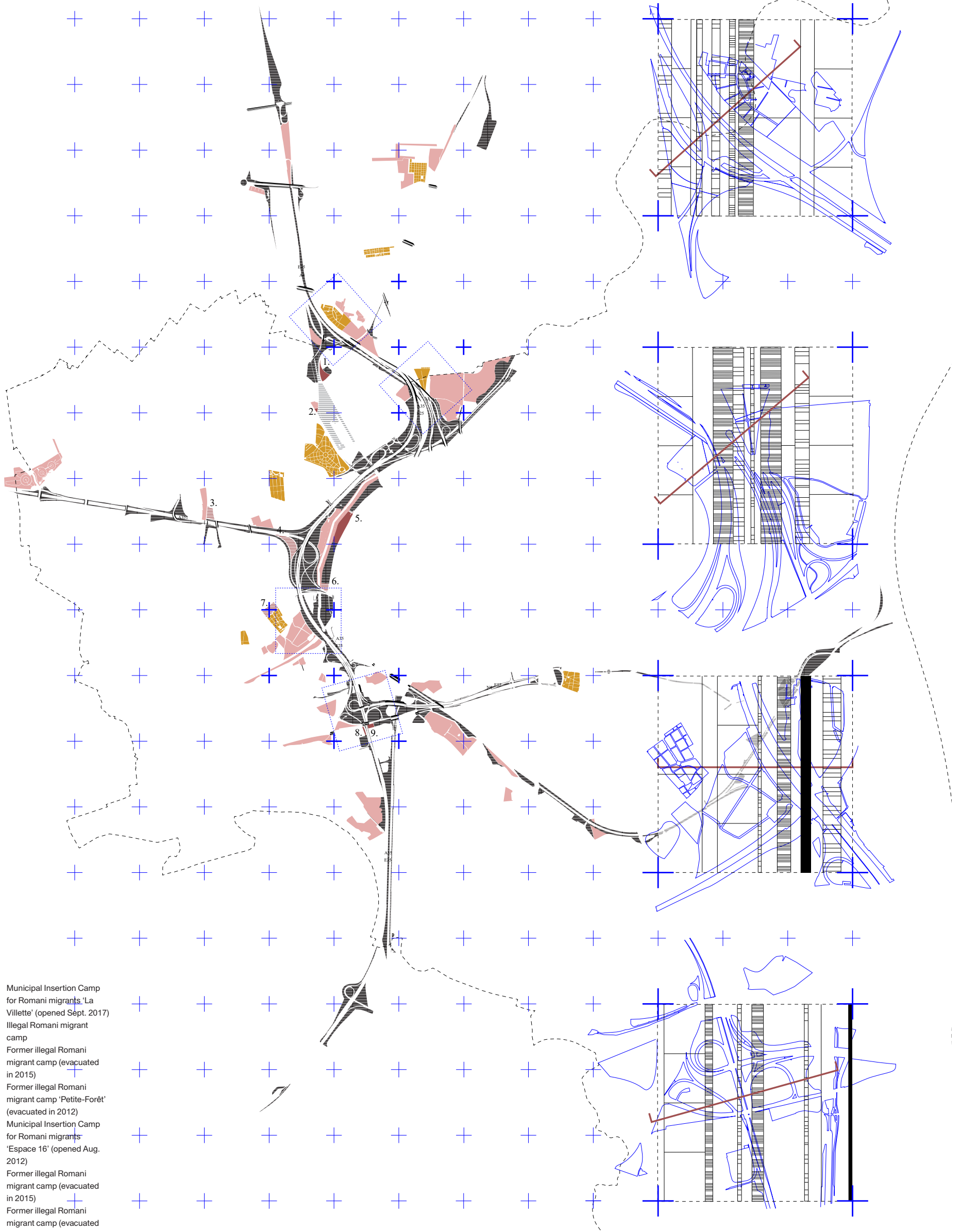
1 Municipal Insertion Camp
   for Romani migrants 'La
   Villette' (opened Sept. 2017)
2 Illegal Romani migrant
   camp
3 Former illegal Romani
   migrant camp (evacuated
   in 2015)
4 Former illegal Romani
   migrant camp 'Petite-Forêt'
   (evacuated in 2012)
5 Municipal Insertion Camp
   for Romani migrants
   'Espace 16' (opened Aug.
   2012)
6 Former illegal Romani
   migrant camp (evacuated
   in 2015)
7 Former illegal Romani
   migrant camp (evacuated
   in 2015)
8 Illegal Romani migrant
   camp
9 Illegal Romani migrant
   camp, 'L'Écluse'

   ‖ Rhythm/intensity

   ▬ Allotment garden

   ▬ Cemetery

   ▬ Residual

   ▬ Post-industrial

   ▬ Migrant camp

   ╲ Overpass

   - - - Eurometropolitan area

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM

Questioning a conception of the contemporary city as a smooth 'organism' of seamless infrastructures, this map identifies places where the scale of the network translates poorly to the scale of the immediate territory – creating carefully carved islands of 'useless' residuals – as well as sites which resist the regular rhythm of ever-circulating bodies and goods. Such a reading highlights not only the actual thickness of the multi-modal transportation border that bypasses and bisects Strasbourg, but rewrites the landscape as an archipelago of disparate, coexisting tempos and spatial intensities.

This friction becomes even more tangible at certain points, where local residuals and heterotopias intersect with the territory of the European Union and its supposedly 'open borders' – points appropriated to serve as legal and illegal migrant camps. These precarious settlements, whose inhabitants are not only travellers by culture but literally required to circulate in order not to disturb the status quo, become traces of that which is not allowed to leave a trace.

TRANSIENCE

SPECIFIC ('APPARATUS')

GENERIC ('UTENSIL')

Expression   Supply

Holding   Precaution
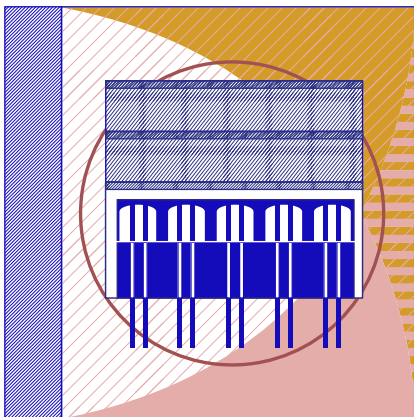
1. Train Yard
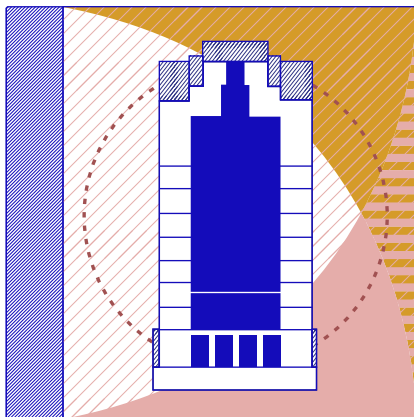
2. Grain Silo
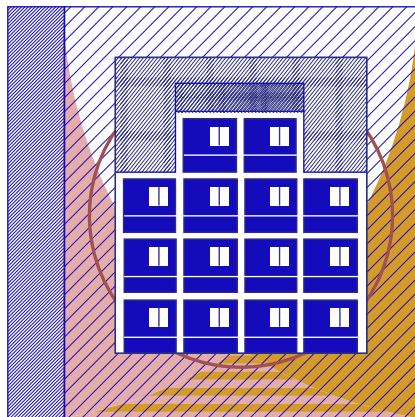
3. Hostel/Hotel
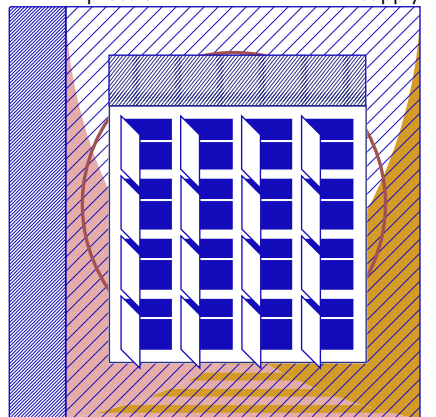
4. Luggage Box
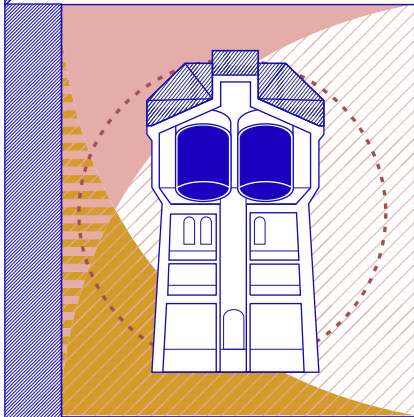
5. Water Tower
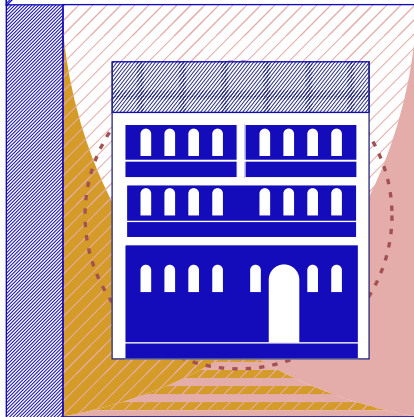
6. Surplus Granary
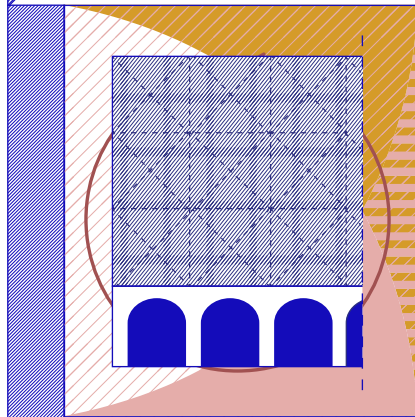
7. Wine Cellar
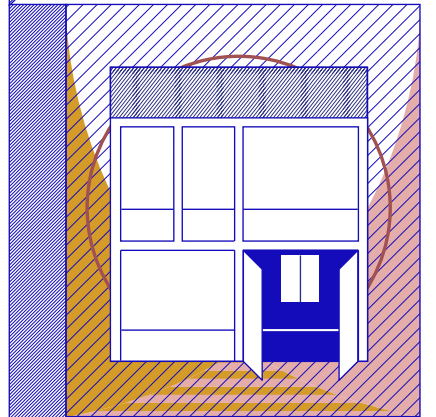
8. Solidary Storage
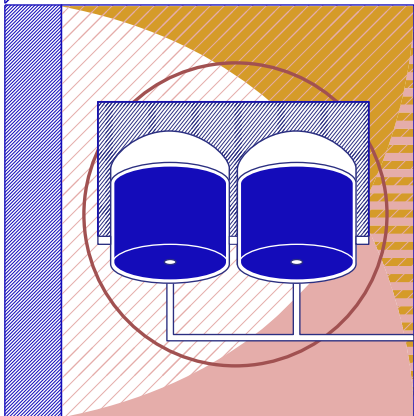
9. Petrol Depot
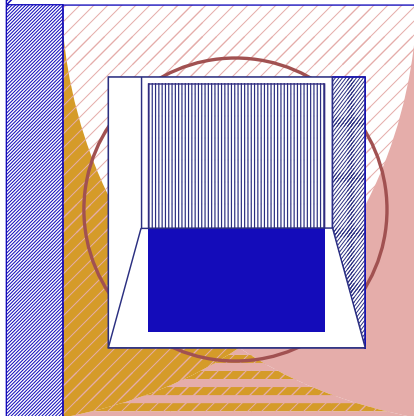
10. Water Reservoir
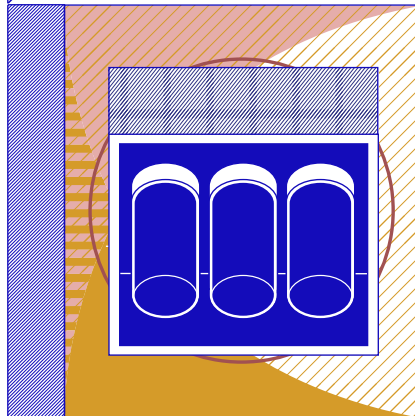
11. Time Capsule

12. Self-Storage

Governing Units
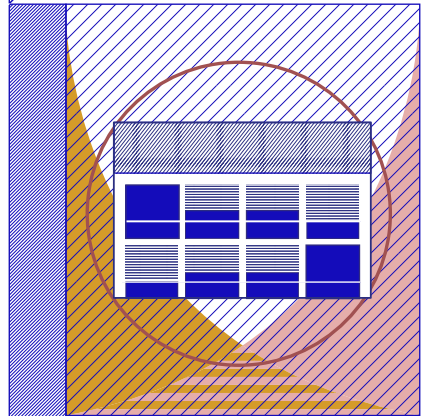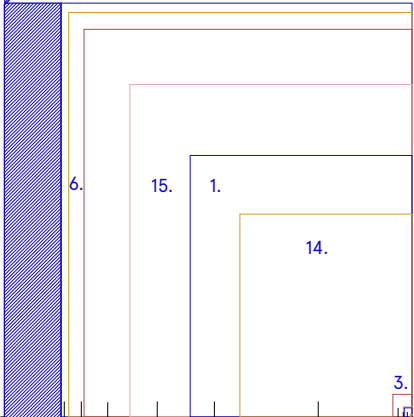
13. National University Library
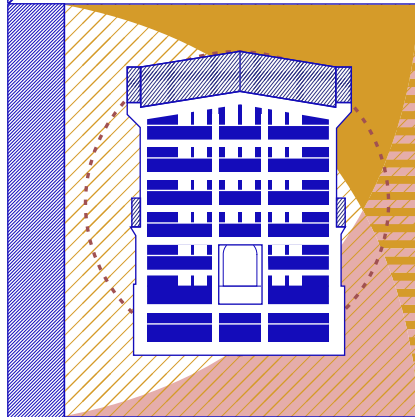
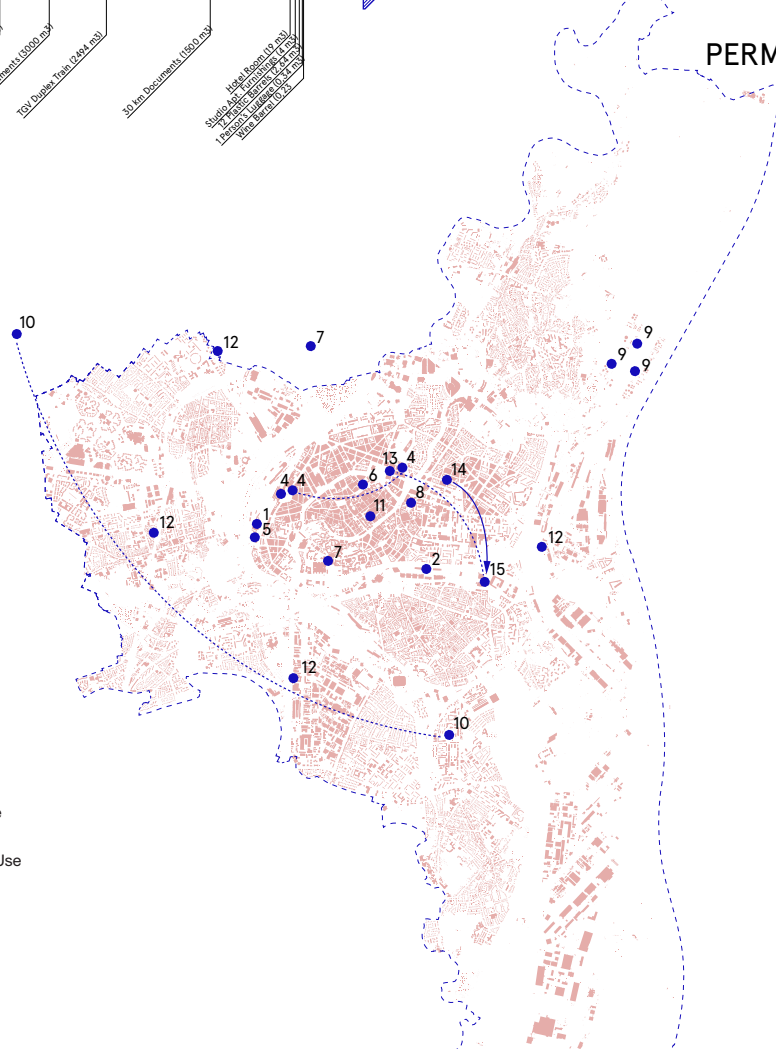14. Old Departmental Archive

15. New Departmental Archive

PERMANENCE

Storage Space
Public
Collective Memory
Self-Keeping
Continued Original Use
Discontinued Original Use
Holding-Supply
Precaution-Expression
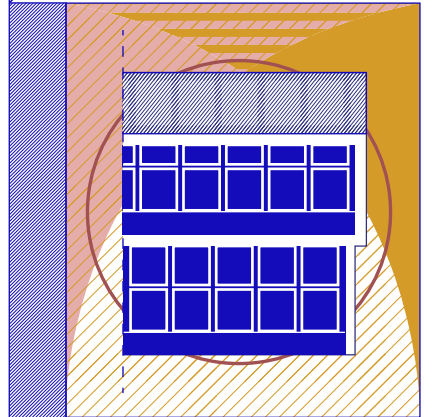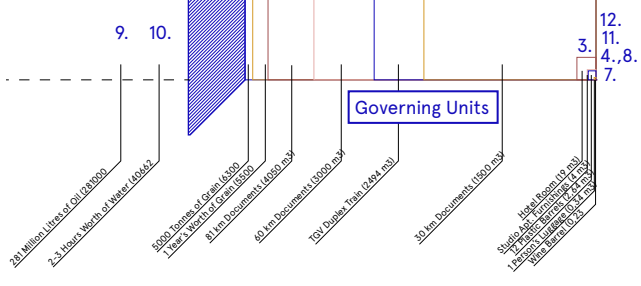
BUFFERS

The Seamless Paradigm demands flux – goods and people have litte value if not constantly transacted, circulated. Contemporary phenomena such as urban nomadism, business platforms, just-in-time supply chains, and service-oriented consumption promote minimal material accumulation in pursuit of supreme spatiotemporal efficiency. However, today as much as yesterday, we depend on, care about, and struggle with stuff – things with extensive properties impossible to ignore, and necessary to somehow contain. Container technologies produce a facilitating environment by providing margin, memory and predictability; by synchronising individual needs and collective interests. Such spaces are commonly considered auxiliary, passive and receptive, lacking other purpose than that of keeping and holding, and yet they need no manipulation to perform, produce, at maximum capacity. Containers create a systemic 'lag', which allows us to evaluate fluctuations, haeccities and tendencies in otherwise hyper-responsive networks. In the network of needs and desires that is the city, storage manifests itself as a vast array of artifacts for containment and supply, all revealing a background dialogue between current norms and limitations.
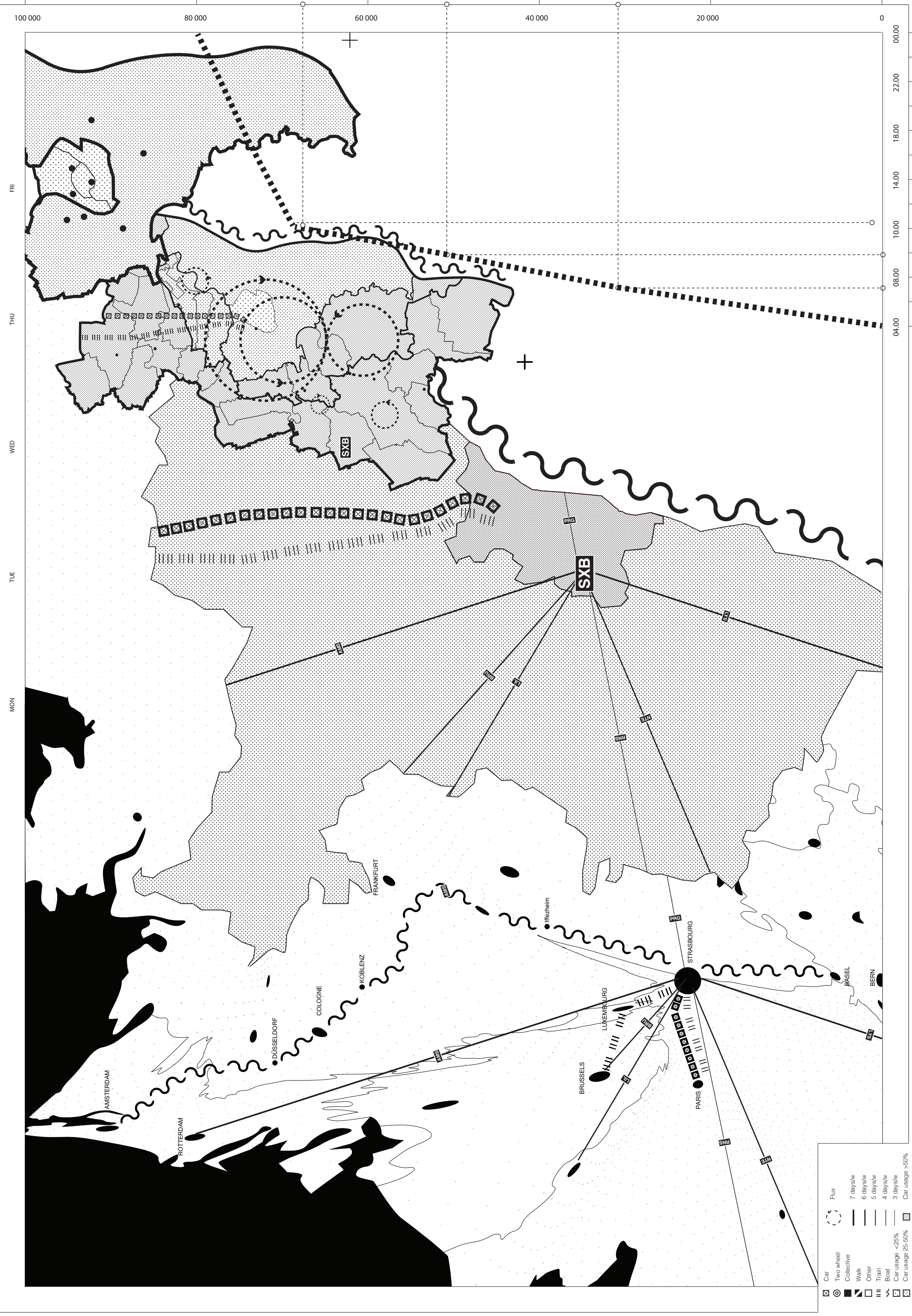
This map attempts to catalogue the formal, programmatic and discursive logic of select Strasbourg spaces designed to store, for shorter or longer periods of time, that which we value. Some follow very precise volumetric standards, whereas other approximate current and future demands - their configuration effectively determining reuse and iconic potential.
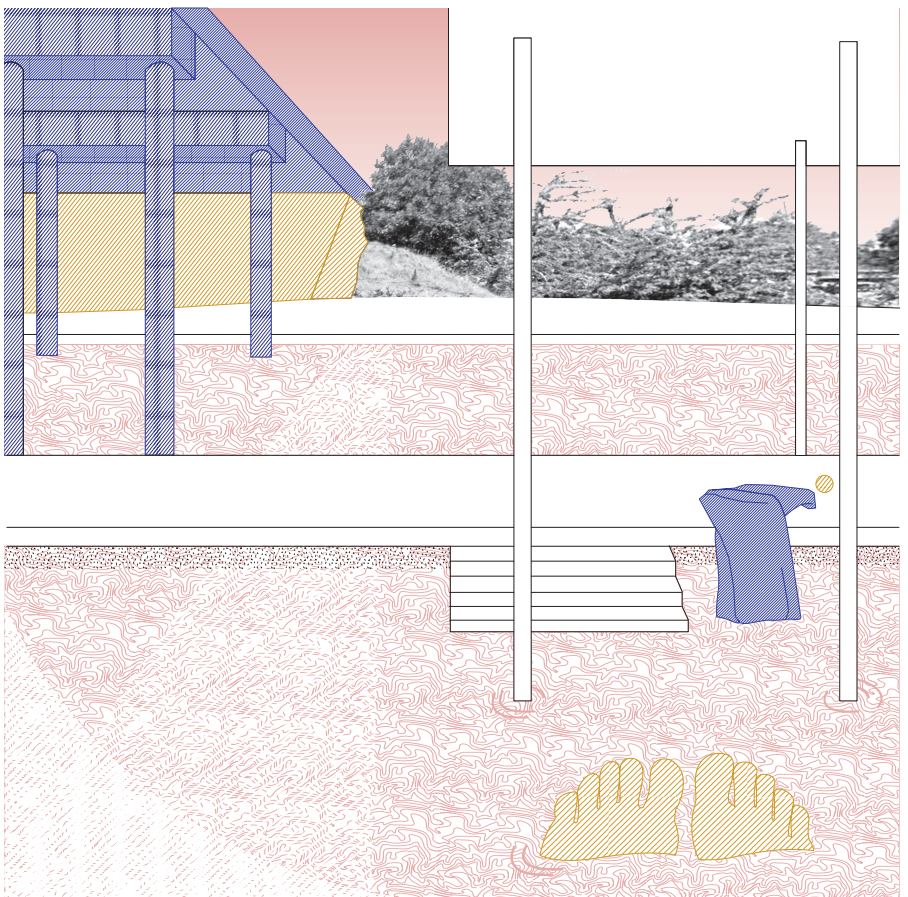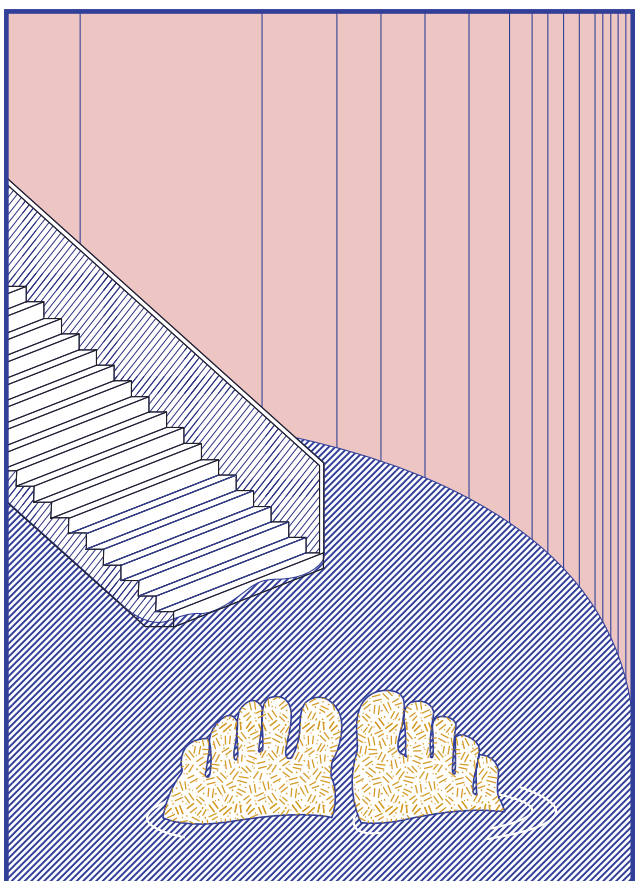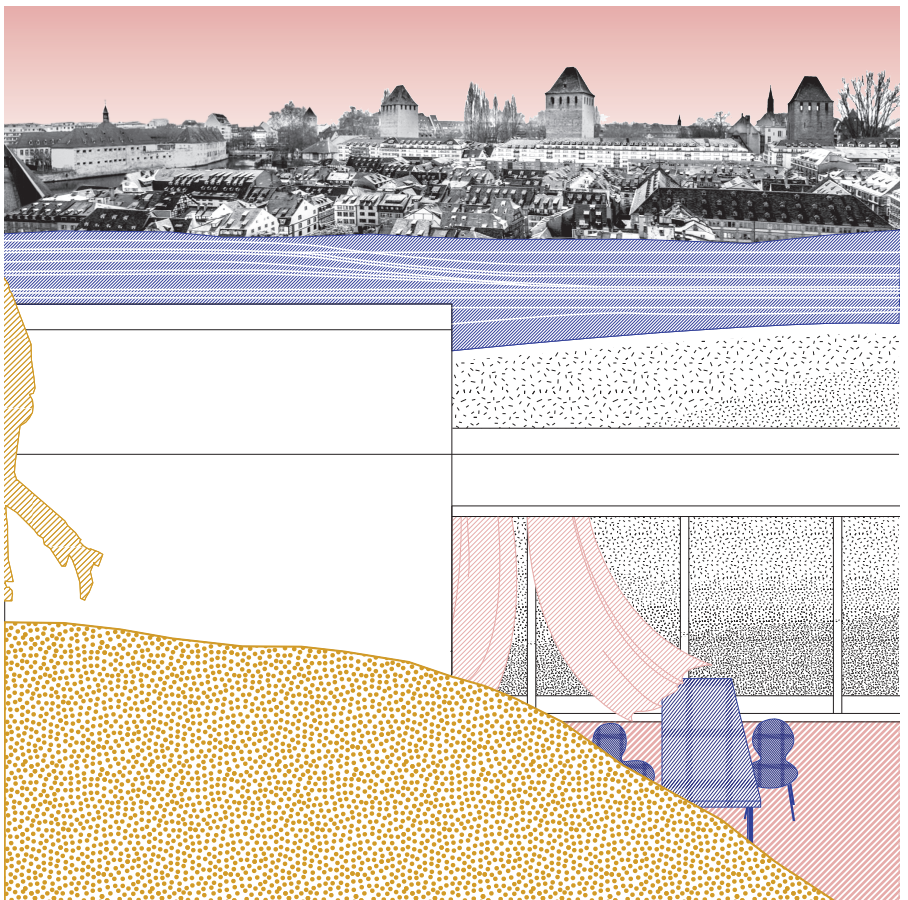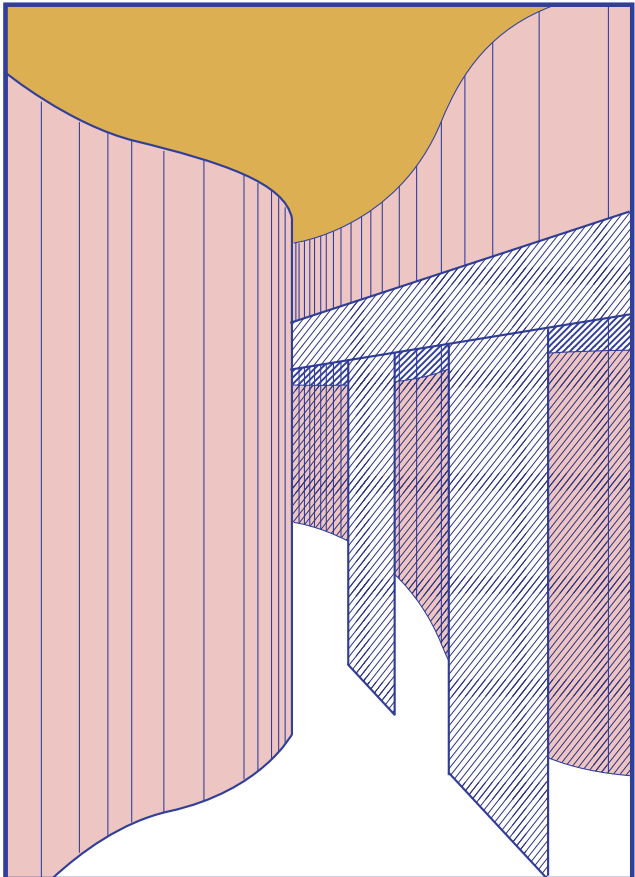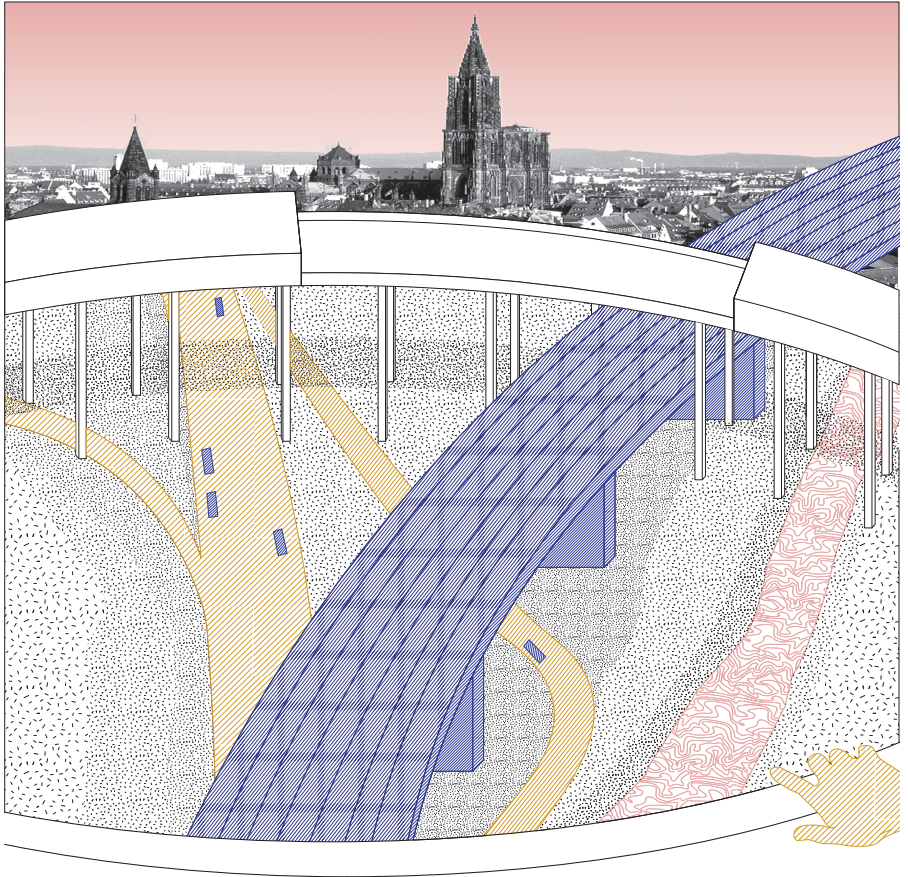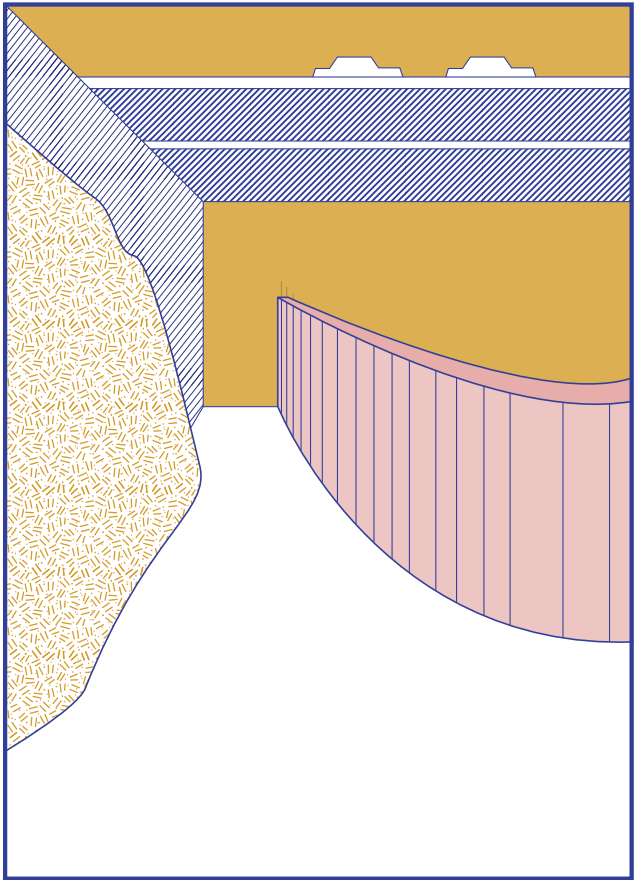
FRI   THU   WED   TUE   MON

100 000   80 000   60 000   40 000   20 000   0

00.00
22.00
18.00
14.00
10.00
08.00
04.00

SXB

SXB

PRG

FRANKFURT

COLOGNE

KOBLENZ

DUSSELDORF

AMSTERDAM

ROTTERDAM

Iffezheim

STRASBOURG

LUXEMBOURG

BRUSSELS

PARIS

BASEL

BERN

PRG

Car
Two wheel
Collective
Walk
Other
Train
Boat
Car usage <25%
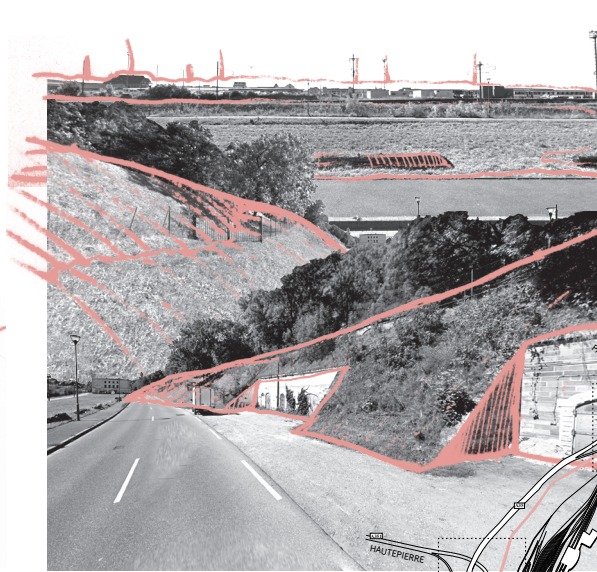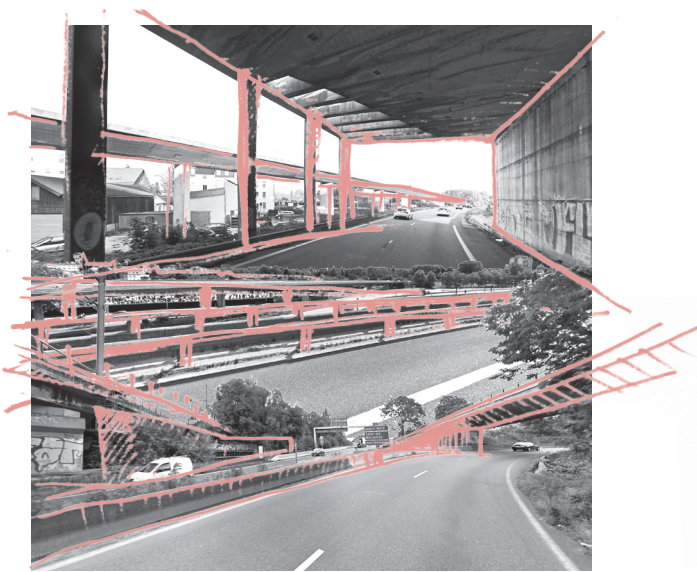Car usage 25-50%
Car usage >50%

Flux
7 days/w
6 days/w
5 days/w
4 days/w
3 days/w

Axiomatic structure.
(Porte de Pierre)

Site construction.
(Porte Blanche)

Marked site.
(Montagne Verte)

SITE
CONSTRUCTION

LANDSCAPE ← Contradiction → ARCHITECTURE

MARKED
SITES

AXIOMATIC
STRUCTURES

Implication

Involution

LANDSCAPE ← → ARCHITECTURE
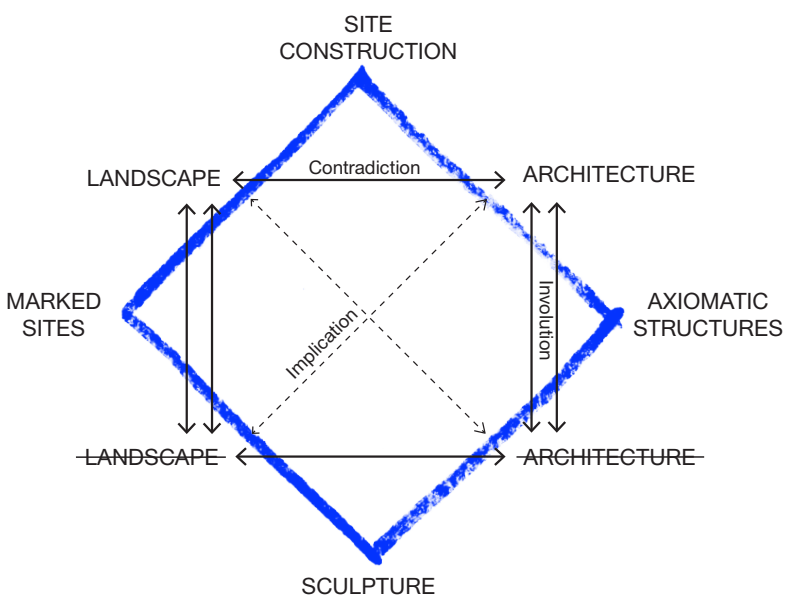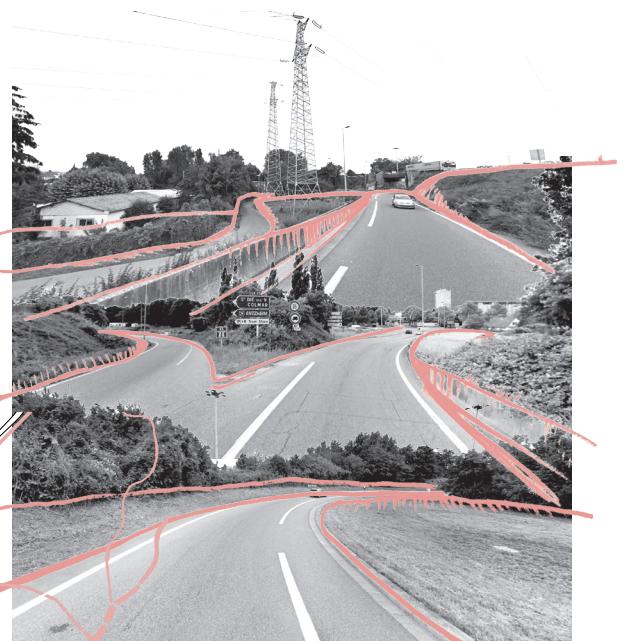
SCULPTURE

CONSTRUCTED SITES

Just like Rosalind Krauss believed that 'sculpture' was too blunt a word to describe postmodern threedimensional art, 'site' and 'building' are too vague to portray the existing and potential conditions of the predominantely infrastructural zones of Strasbourg. Krauss' so called 'expanded field' matrix produces new categories by crosspollinating seemingly exclusive conditions through relationships of contradiction, implication and involution. Here, views from the road within and adjacent to large traffic intersections are analysed according to said matrix, affording a more nuanced reading of a seemingly homogeneous infrastructural landscape.
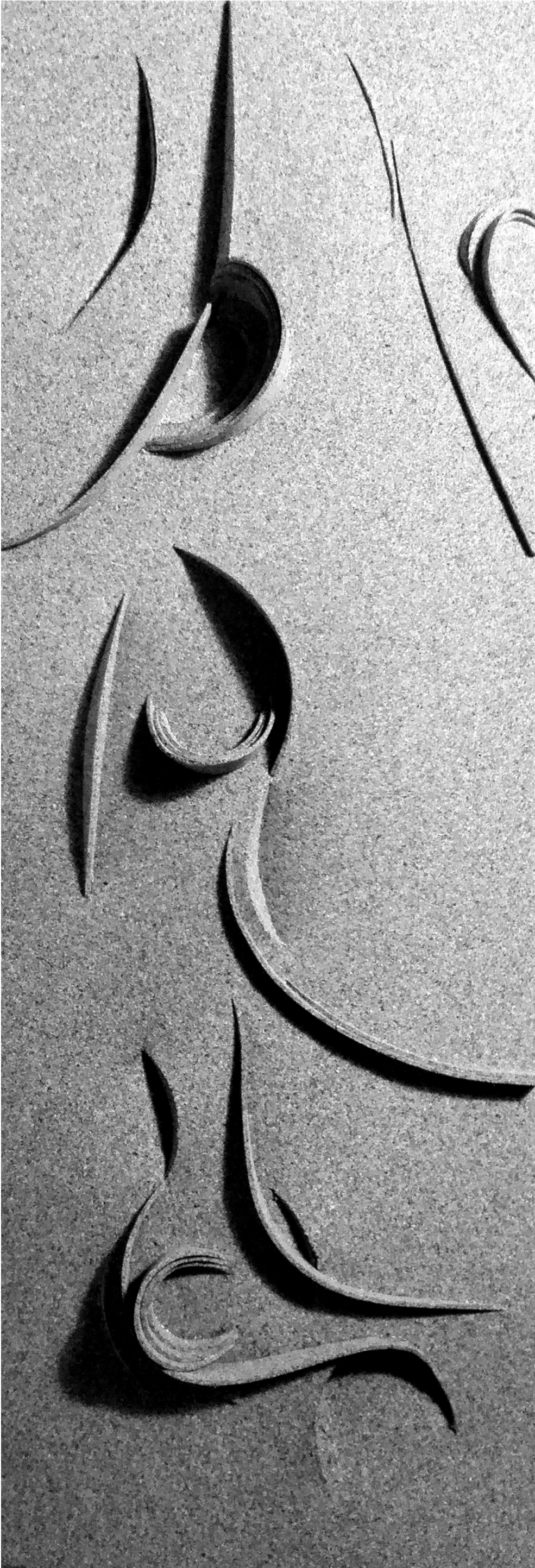
SEDIMENTED DEVIATIONS

Infrastructure space might be perceived as continuous, smooth and highly efficient. However, where the flow meets the materiality of static structures, and the speed and mass of the vehicle any trajectory but the straight and linear, specific anomalies occur. This model, based on three areas around the motorway entrances to the city, traces deviations from the 'perfect' flow as ridges and trenches carved into the landscape by the passing vehicles – their movements reshaping the territory like a desert wind. After all, the supposed smoothness of she surface cannot be achieved without this strange topography.