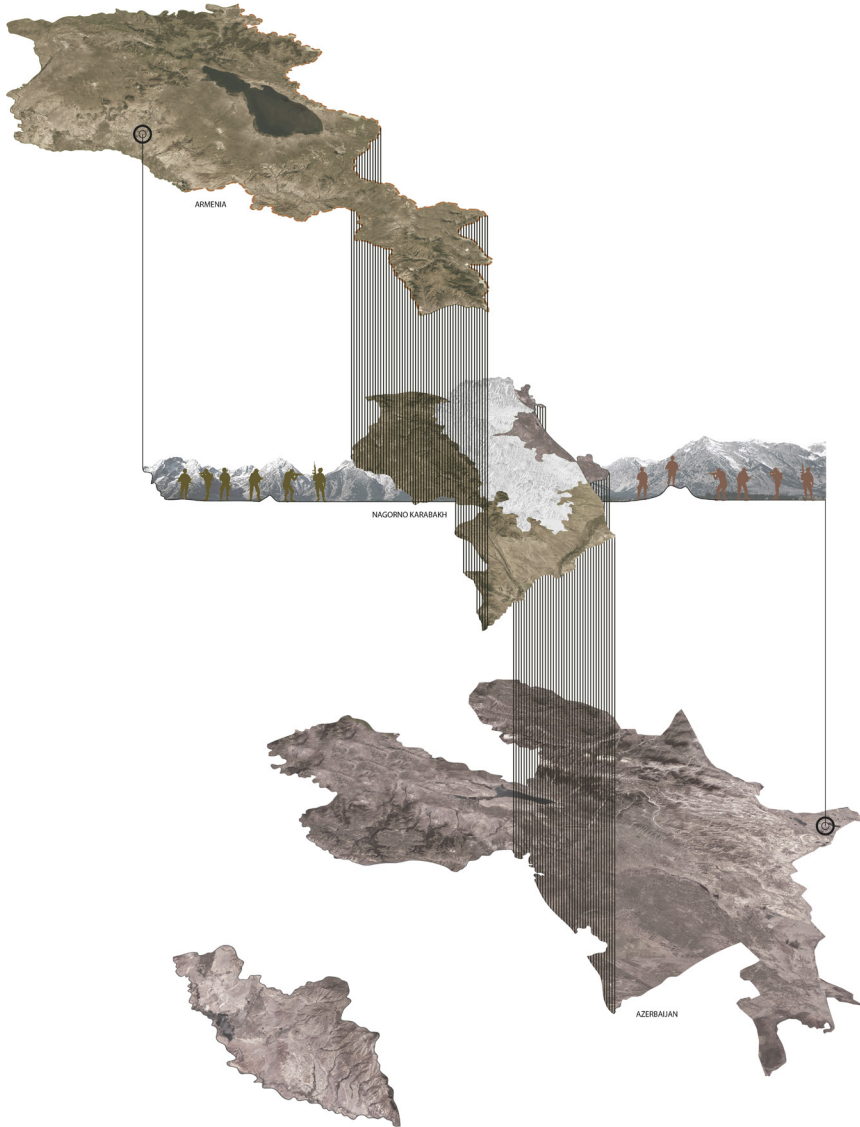


SURVEILLANCE / INTIMACY

Shifts in spaces - transformations of realities



1. TERRITORY OF NAGORNO KARABAKH

Nagorno Karabakh is a territory which was originally a part of Armenia, but after wars, conflicts and Soviet Union occupation it was finally given away to Azerbaijan. Nowadays, although the territory officially belongs to Azerbaijan, it is currently occupied by Armenian military forces. During the last decades Karabakh have been suffering from recurring wars as both countries still have not found compromise in this conflict.

SURVEILLANCE / INTIMACY

Shifts in spaces - transformations of realities

SURVEILLANCE

Surveillance is the monitoring of behavior, activities, or other changing information for the purpose of influencing, managing, directing, or protecting people. It could be split in direct and indirect. Direct is rather perceived through senses. The most crucial and common one is the gaze. The conditions of gaze surveillance are described through physical environment which includes the distribution of *surveillers*, frequency of surveillance and distribution of obstacles which might be artificial or natural.

INTIMACY

Used as a verb it means to state or make known, implying that the information is not routinely known. In the very basic manner intimacy could be understood as a strong relation between two or more subjects. We can differentiate an intimate relationship from certain forms of information or behavior that can be intimate independent of interaction with others. E.M. Forster captures this in noting that we “radiate something curiously intimate when we believe ourselves to be alone”.¹ This suggests a related form – protection from intrusions into solitude or apartness. Whether alone or with trusted others, this implies a sense of security, of not being vulnerable, of being able to let one’s guard down, which may permit both feelings of safety and of being able to be “one’s self”.



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Narratives in Armenia

SITUATION IN ARMENIA AND YEREVAN

Before visiting Armenia, the group in the studio collected as much information about the country as possible. The data we found was brought in a form of narratives - a collection of stories having relation with the country with a potency to be further investigated. During the research I have noticed the tendency that many of my found narratives are linked with international relations, militarisation, internal relations between government institutions and society, protests and control. At the same time a great number of narratives were associated with community, family, brotherhood and private Armenian life. These narratives allowed me to clarify the topics of interest and let me formulate insights about the country.

Armenia faces international conflicts

especially with Azerbaijan and Turkey. There is always a chance of a sudden intensification of conflicts what results in extreme militarization of country as well as strengthened social control. Social control gains new level as the relation between government and society is also complicated. As a consequence the country and Yerevan city is highly surveilled. The presence of surveillance surely guarantees a certain level of security, but it also affect the privacy and even intimacy of society. This problem escalates when cultural aspect of Armenians is taken into a count. Armenians give a great value for family and fellowship.² Expressions of intimate relationship often appear in Yerevan city especially in the places where their relatives stay. Such relationship always occur under the gaze of *surveillers* what becomes problematic as they sometimes are not even capable to escape it.

These oppositions found within the narratives were further investigated and

remained as the main leading points of the project.

DERIVE + BINOCULARS

At the moment we visited Yerevan, a method of *Derive*³ came into practice encouraging unintentional drifting within city which rather brought unexpected time and location based findings. Moreover, a method of

Indexing helped there to identify immediate⁴ objects or phenomena in each environment. For indexing a device consisting of camera and binoculars was used. It allowed me to identify those objects in large distance and perceive their condition without entering the area where they are located. This ensured avoiding interactions and perceive almost natural appearance of the objects of investigation also allowing to collect the information about them in high



8. Photos made through binoculars allowed to identify actions of intimacy or surveillance

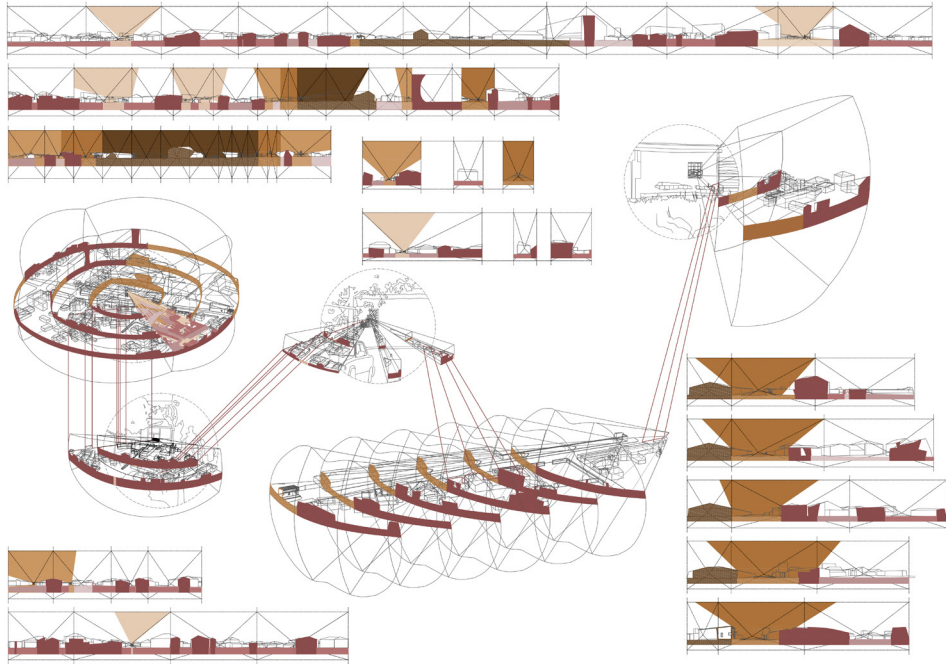
level of detail. The tool was valuable during investigation of the objects and spaces related to privacy and intimacy, but it was especially convenient when the elements of surveillance were explored since it allowed to monitor them from safe distance. Such way of perceiving could be considered as oligopticon introduced by Bruno Latour as an inverse method of panopticon “do exactly the opposite of panoptica: they see much too little to feed the megalomania of the inspector or the paranoia of the inspected, but what they see, they see it well.”⁵ Methods of *Derive* and Indexing proved that the previously analysed narratives are present in the city and their contradictive nature has an impact on formation of urban fabric and social behaviour. The methods revealed that the phenomena of intimate and surveillance appears in almost every place one visits in the city.

KANAKER DISTRICT/MAPPING

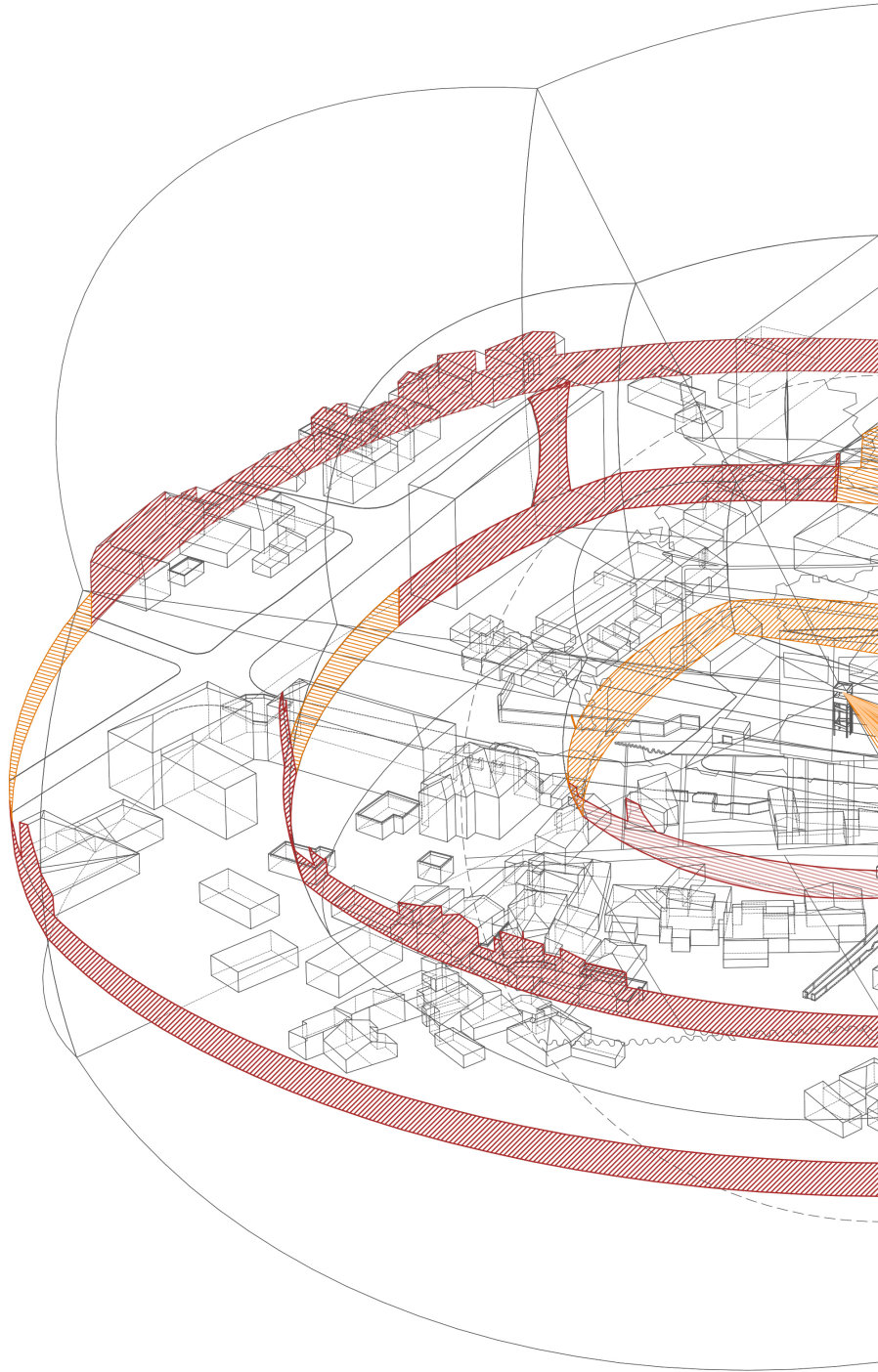
Further investigation of the phenomena continued by picking a site where penetration of the gaze and vulnerability of intimacy are more radical compared to the rest urban setup. By keeping in mind the narratives, looking on the map and *Deriving* in the city I noticed that a few military institutions (army bases) were scattered in the capital. Most of them are built near residential areas what encouraged to analyse how citizens manage to live near such apparatuses of control, discipline and power or how people react and respond to constant surveillance of the area.

For further analysis the site in Kanaker district was picked where the distances between residential area and borders of the military base are close to each other and the gap indicating these boundaries is extremely narrow. The army base is surrounded by fence (three metres high wall) which is always monitored by the guards. There are a few stationary located spots in the area where visual surveillance is active - the watchtowers and the entrance/exit monitoring posts. Additionally, soldiers are always present in the street by goin on foot or driving vechicles what makes the surveillance flexible and inscrutable. Windows in the fence wall or in the buildings belonging to the base also create a certain obscurity in a form of panopticon as the one from outside never knows if any guard is supervising the environment through them or not. In respond to the monitoring a few of local residents covered the windows or entrances to the houses where they live probably in order to avoid possible gazes from the base.

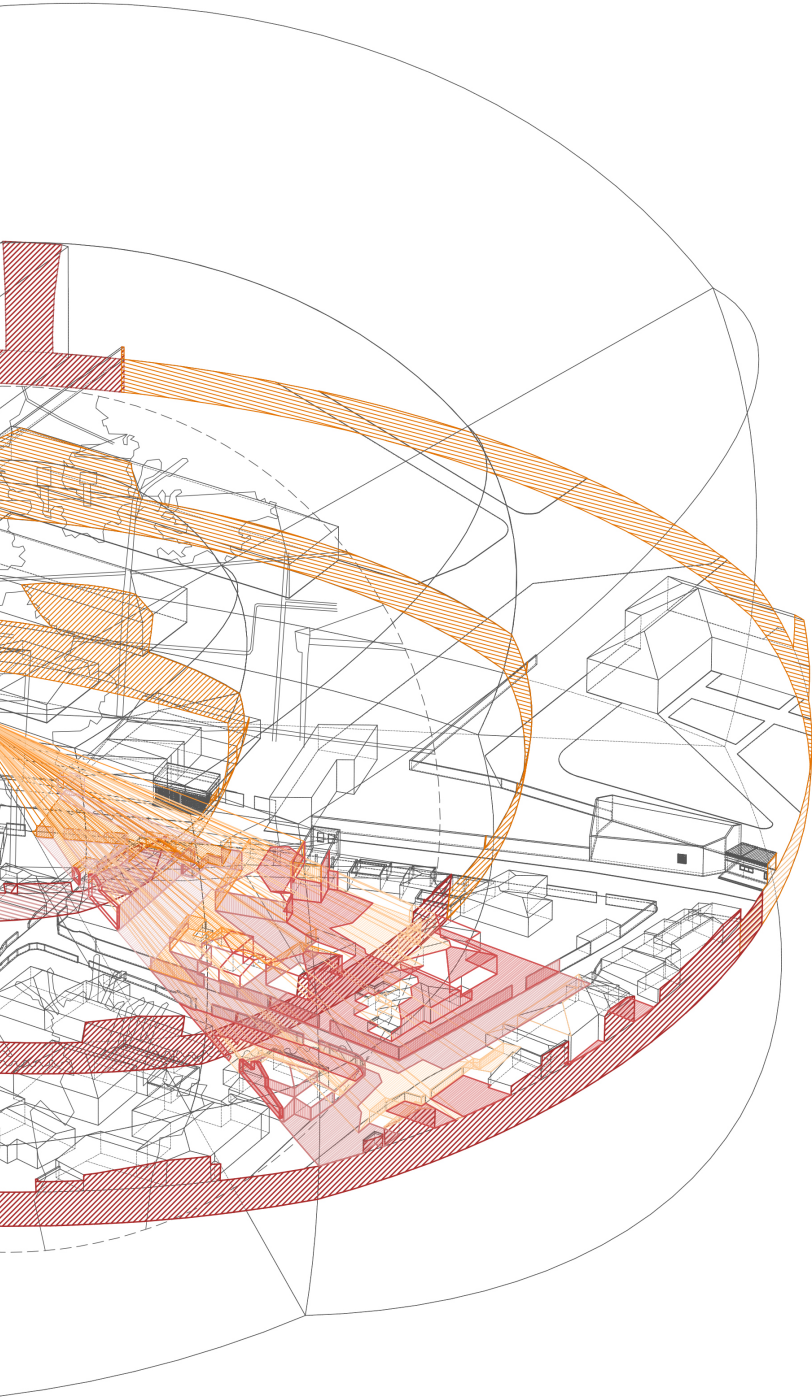
All collected information was implemented in a form of mapping revealing the locations and relations of the types of surveillance in the site and possible obstacles which could form blind spots for potential actions of intimacy experianced by citizens. The research revealed a range of space types where both surveillance and actions of intimacy are present seperately or immersing one into each other.

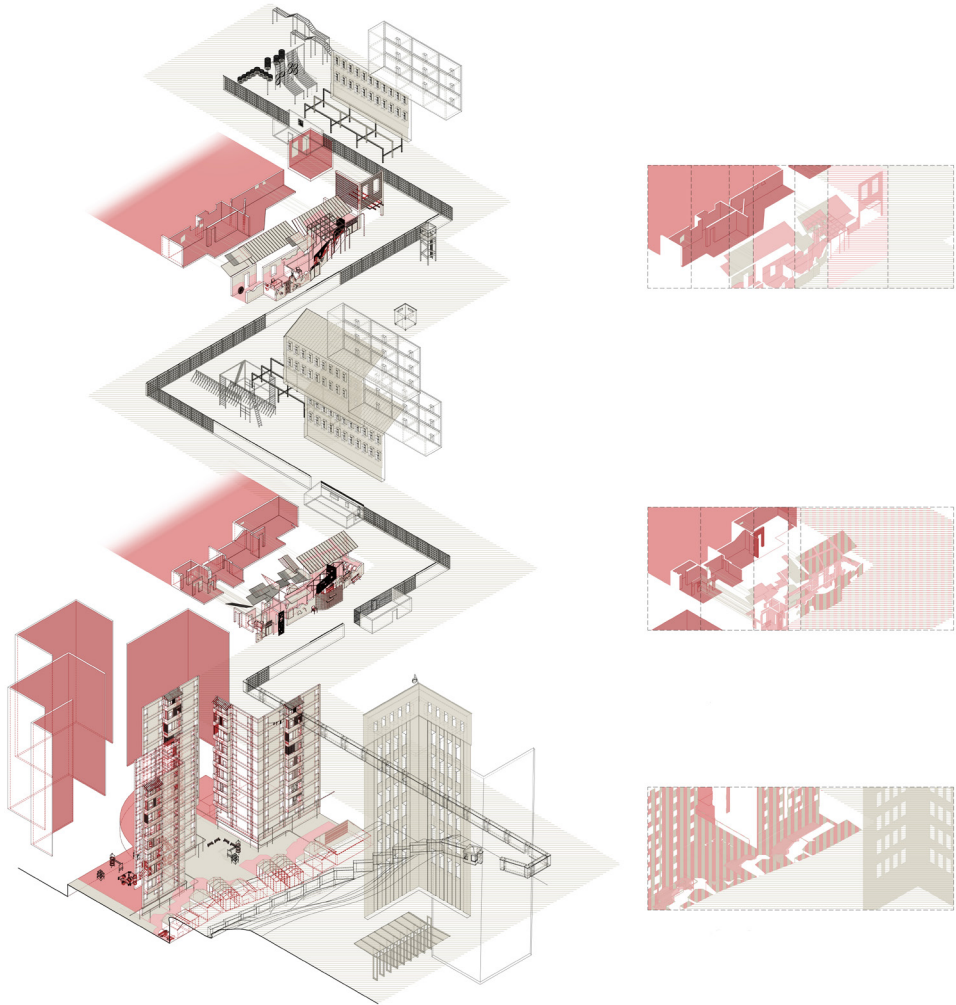


9. Types of surveillance and intimacy in Kanaker district

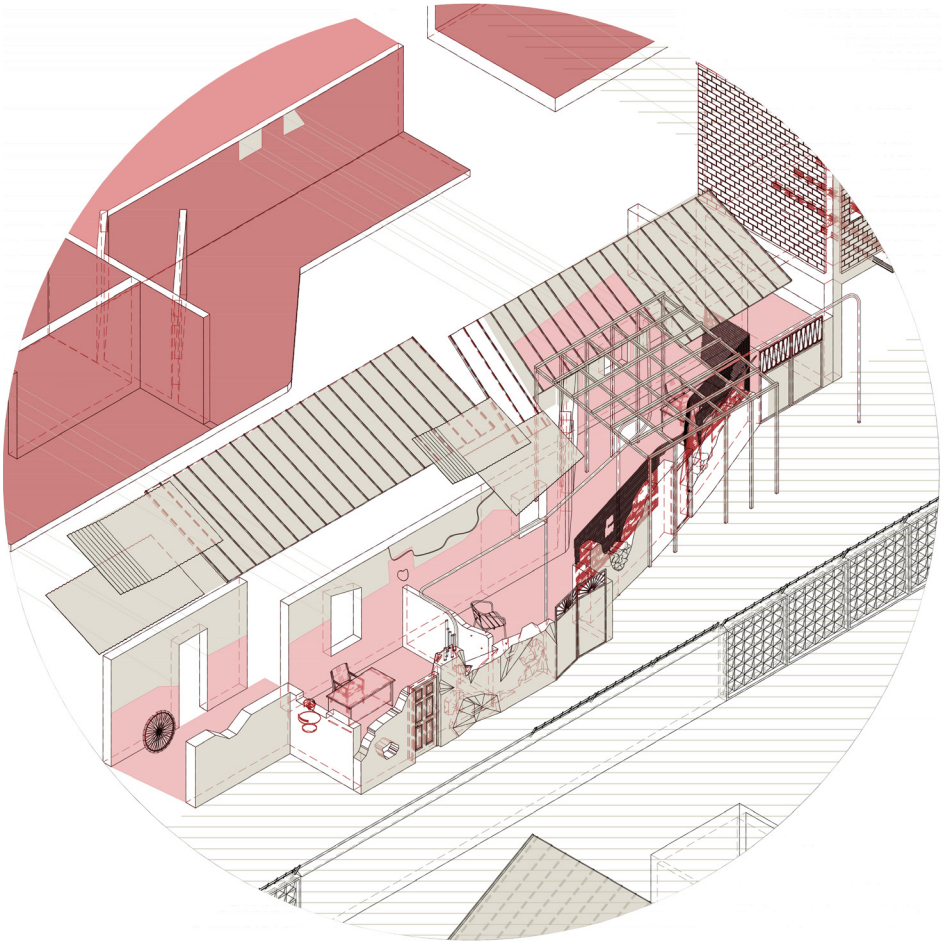


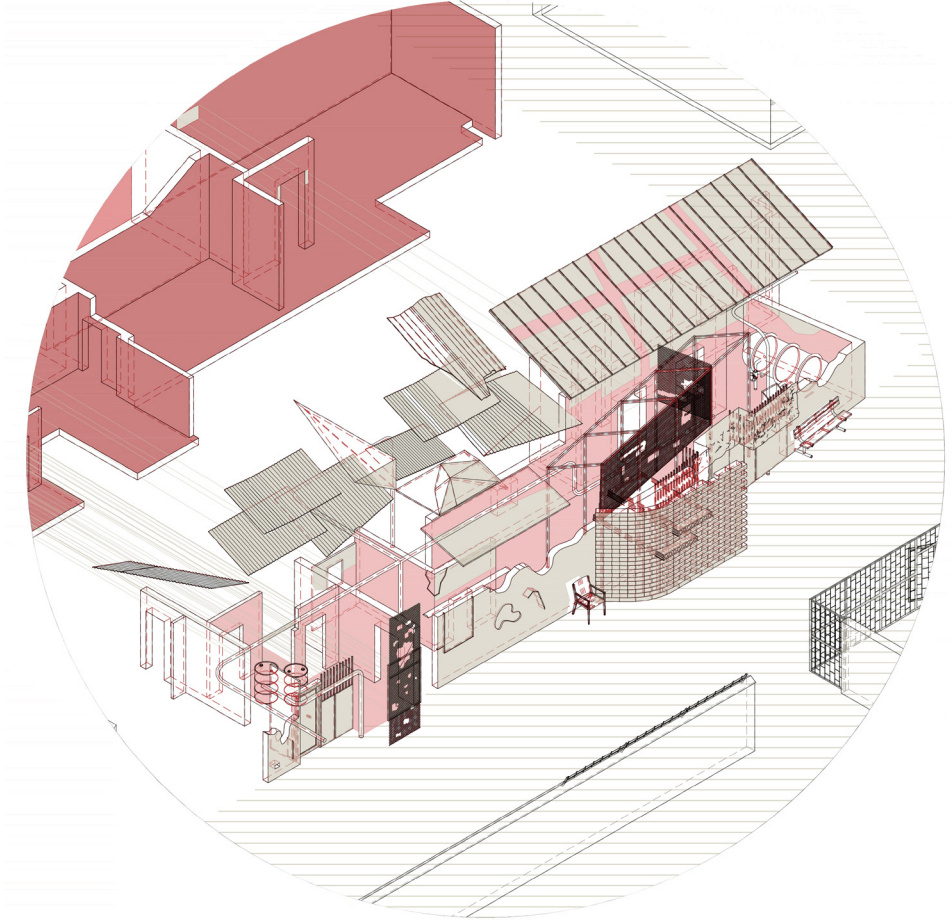
10. Watchtower in Kanaker district

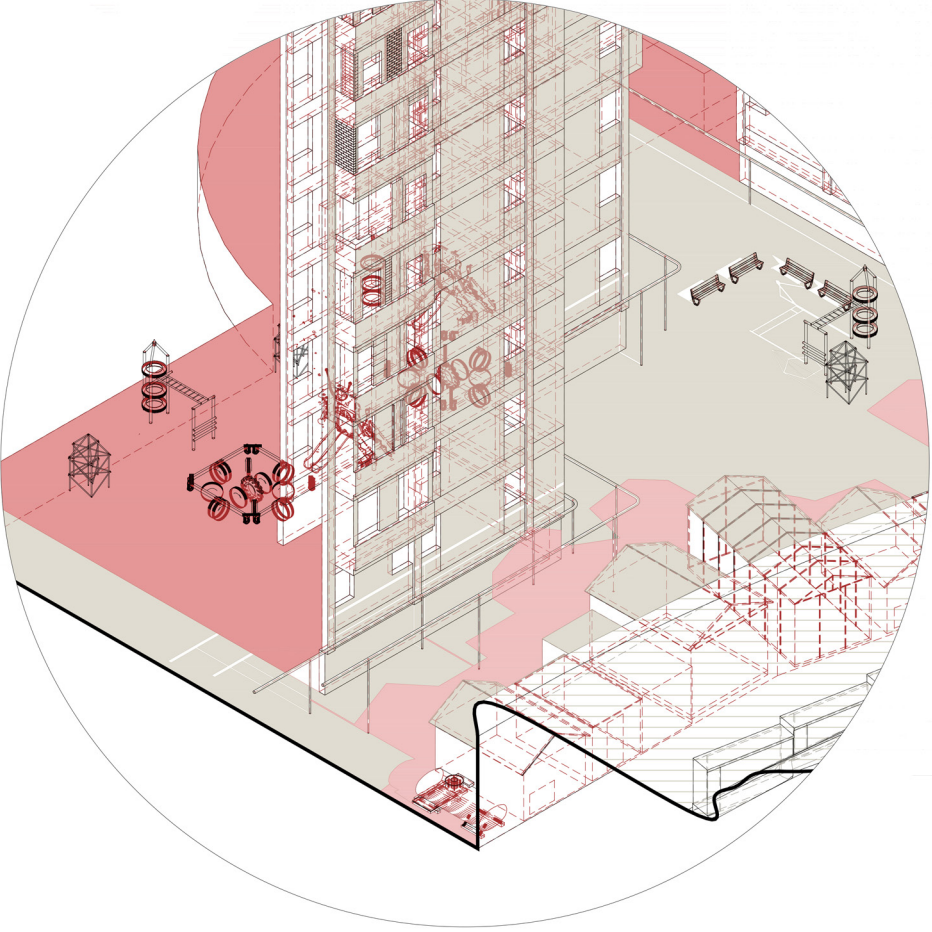




11. Mapping of military base and residential area in Kanaker district





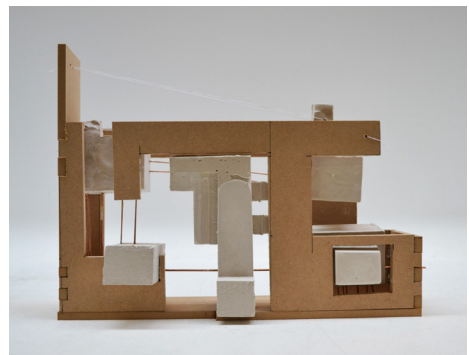
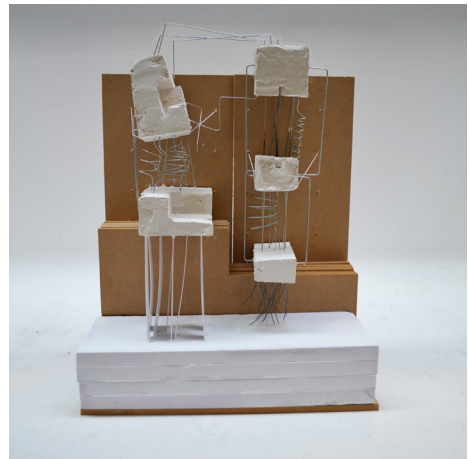


CONTINUOUS DISCIPLINE

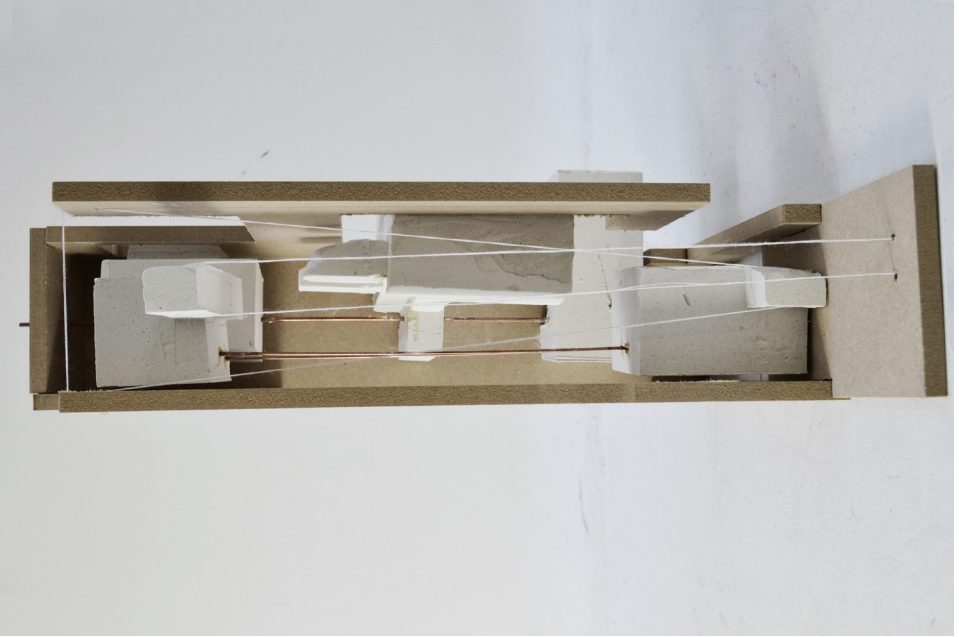
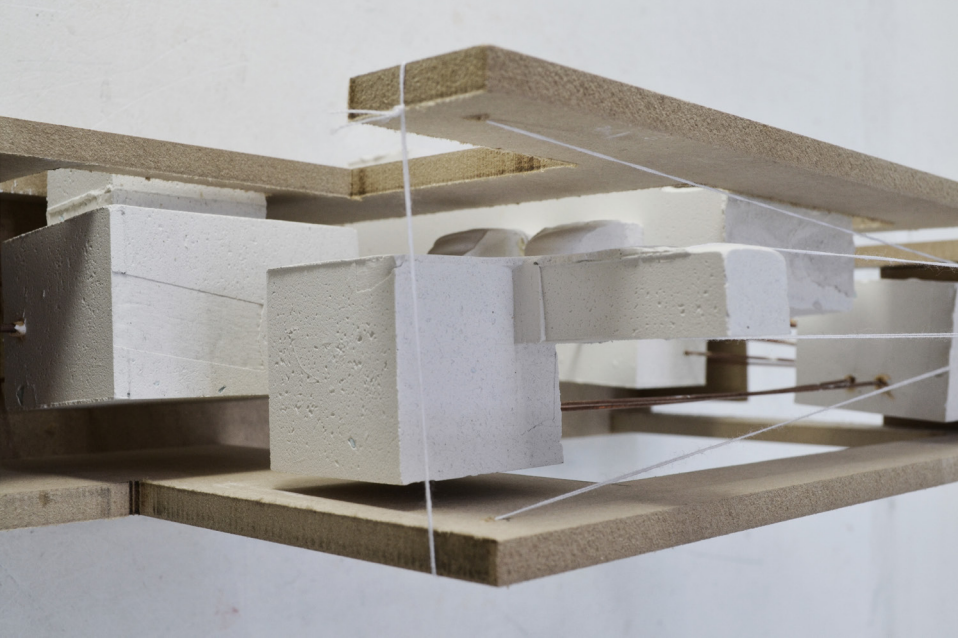
All investigated types of surveillance create a network of monitoring where the gazes intertwine.

The mapping revealed that the main load of surveillance is perceived by the street next to the military base and the first residential houses of citizens. The continuous monitoring damages urban vitality and private life as surveillance have an extreme influence on collective behaviour leading to a fear and collective conformity. Society in exposure is forced to act in an accordance with the rules the *surveiller* dictates where as a result individuals loses their individuality and their role becomes almost the same. The environment in the street is rather deserted where discipline is a language of behaviour. Public and private spaces there lacks of functional diversity. By entering the surveilled space people lose their privacy and intimate relationship between each other. Because of control, the space in between acts only as a transitional environment while the gaze gains a hegemony over it and becomes indispensable. Additionally, since it penetrates even to the intimate environment, the control becomes unavoidable. The penetration splits the areas of private space into islands and in such way interrupts or terminates the relations in the neighborhood. Because of these actions, accumulations of spaces where intimacy might appear are still present but rather faces a continuous detachment. The shelters and covers appearing in this space demonstrate the effort to hide and to

stay away from exposure. Because of the gaze penetration It is a place where two realities almost immerse one to each other - the surveilled one, where a person behaves by the rules and the one where he actually becomes himself. It becomes even more miscellaneous when the frequency of surveillance and position of *surveillers* are analysed. As none of them are perceived by static aspects and are rather related to dynamic physical movement and irregular time lapses, the particular spaces indicating the intimate and exposed never address only the same condition. As a consequence the



12. Modi Operandi models

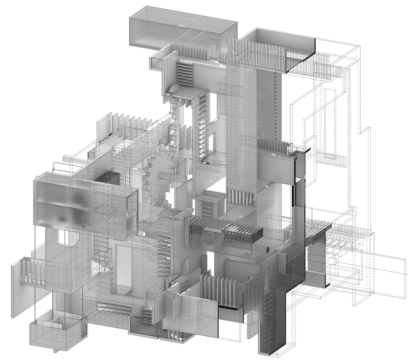
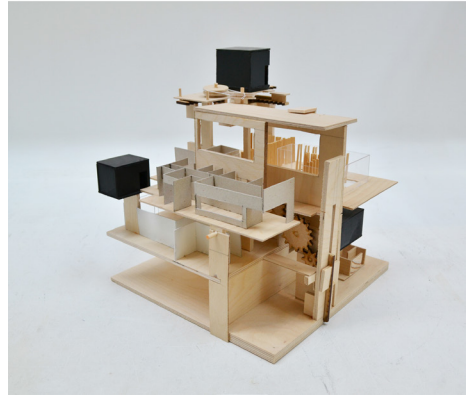


chosen site always acquire distinctive appearances.

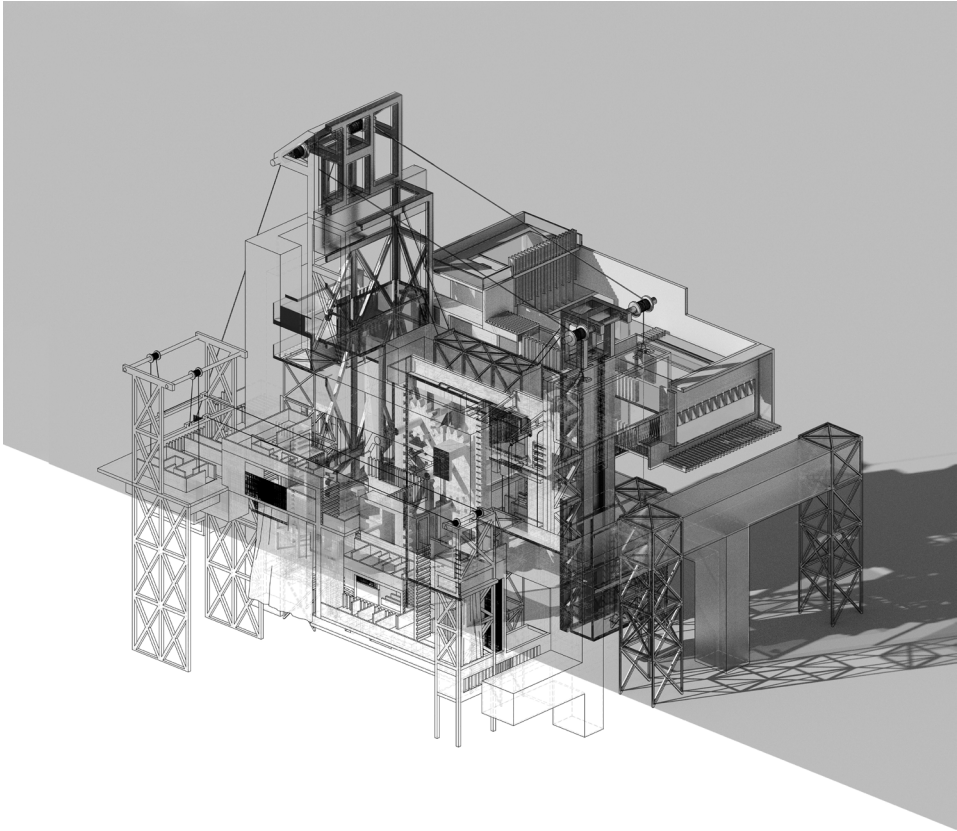
MODI OPERANDI AND FURTHER INVESTIGATION

During and after the workshop I converted the mapping describing the spatial conditions in Kanaker District into a series of assemblage models. The mapping addressed the continuous tension where private spaces always encountered the gaze of surveillers. The mapping revealed that such condition is always fickle and and hardly comprehensible as the gaze of the surveiller is not stable nor repetitive. The workshop was helpful as it triggered the transition from research towards design. These physical models gained atmospheric and tectonic appearances reflecting the conditions of the narrative and research. The models in my particular case consisted of elements addressing the private and exposed factors where the idea of unpredictable surveillance and lack of privacy were expressed through transformations of spatial formants. They caused unexpected shifts of environment appearance where one might experience the intimate and the exposure and even the condition containing characteristics of both.

Because of physical transformations parts of the models gained open, semi open, closed or semi enclosed spatial conditions which were always modified into new shapes making the content visible or invisible . In such way models revealed ambiguous appearances forming moments of unexpected

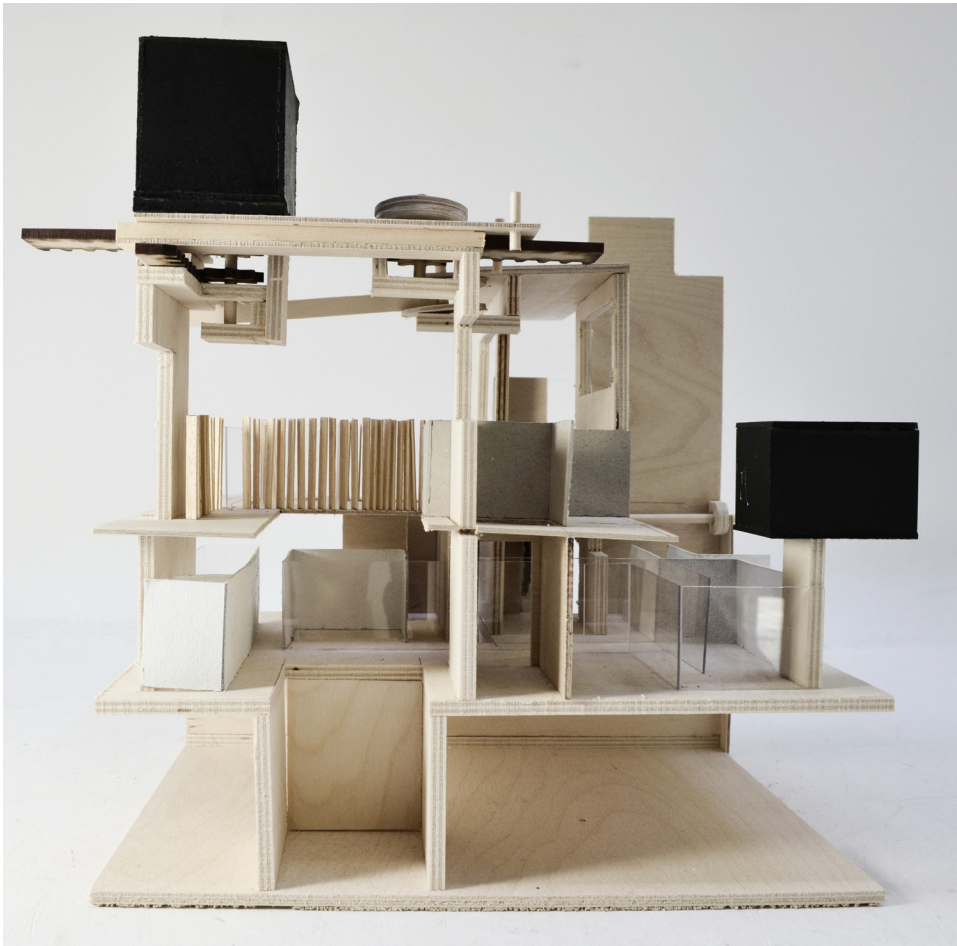


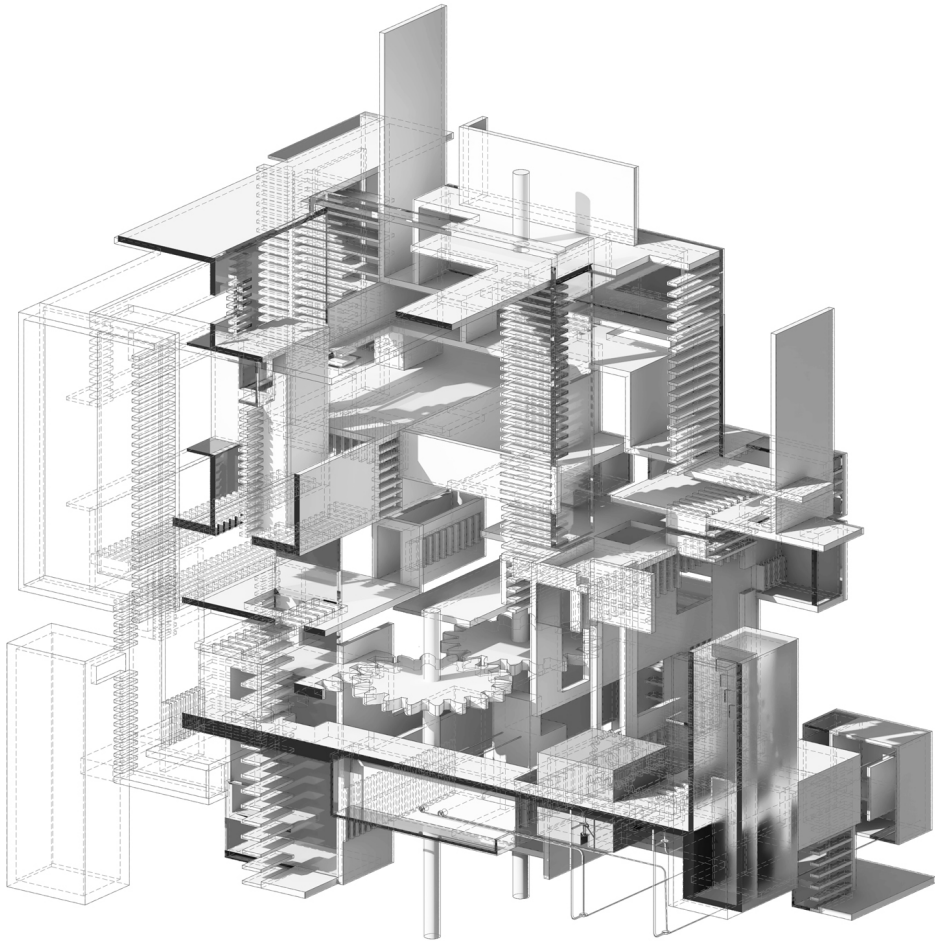
13. Compositions designed to investigate functional possibilities



14.







surprise. It was developed further when the transformations were expressed not only in physical manner by shifting the position of spatial formants but also addressed the visual perception by considering materials and lighting. This sparked the material investigation where types of glass, metals, mirrors and their reaction to lighting were considered.

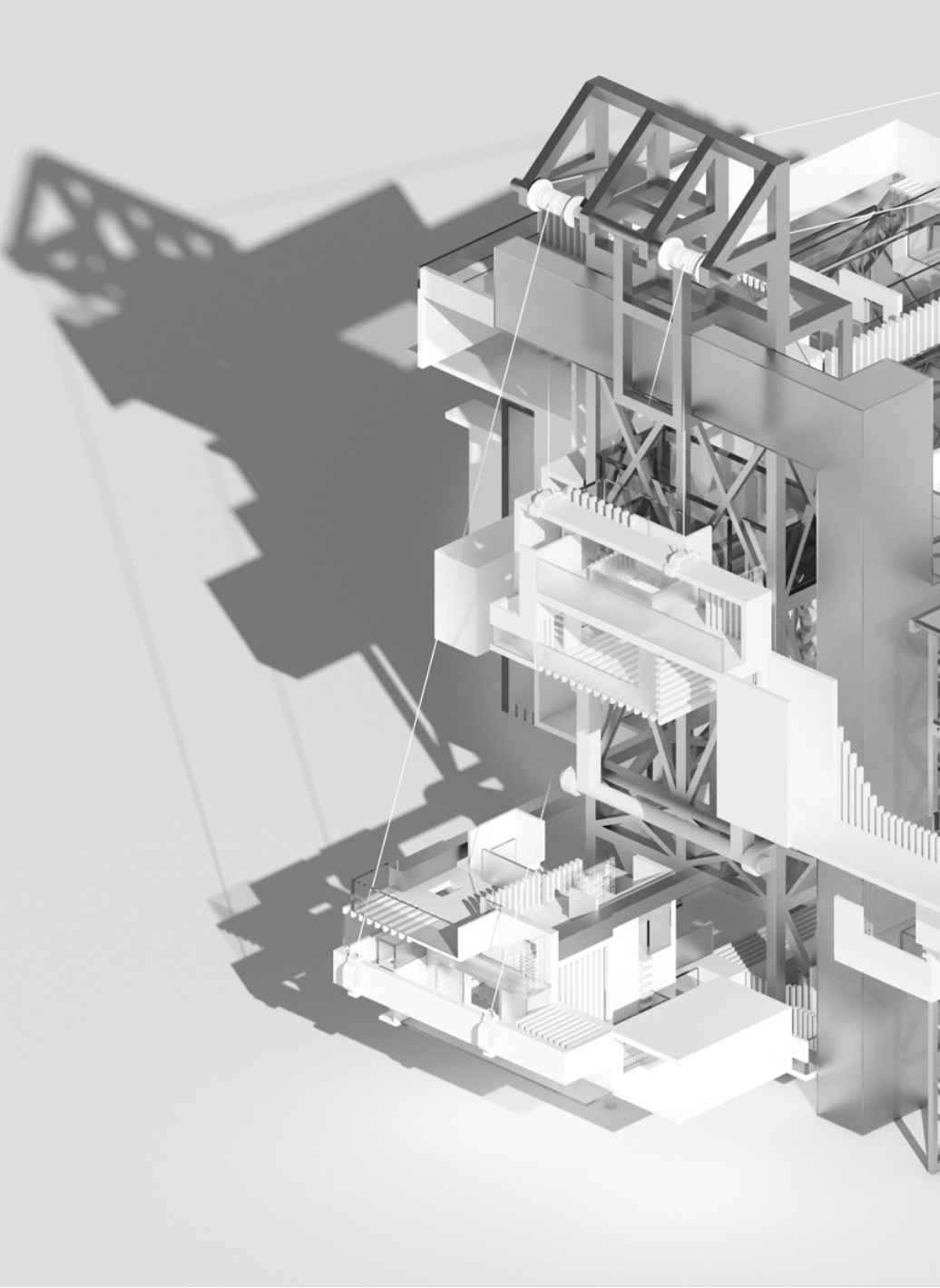
PROGRAM- AN IDEA OF REALITY SHOW

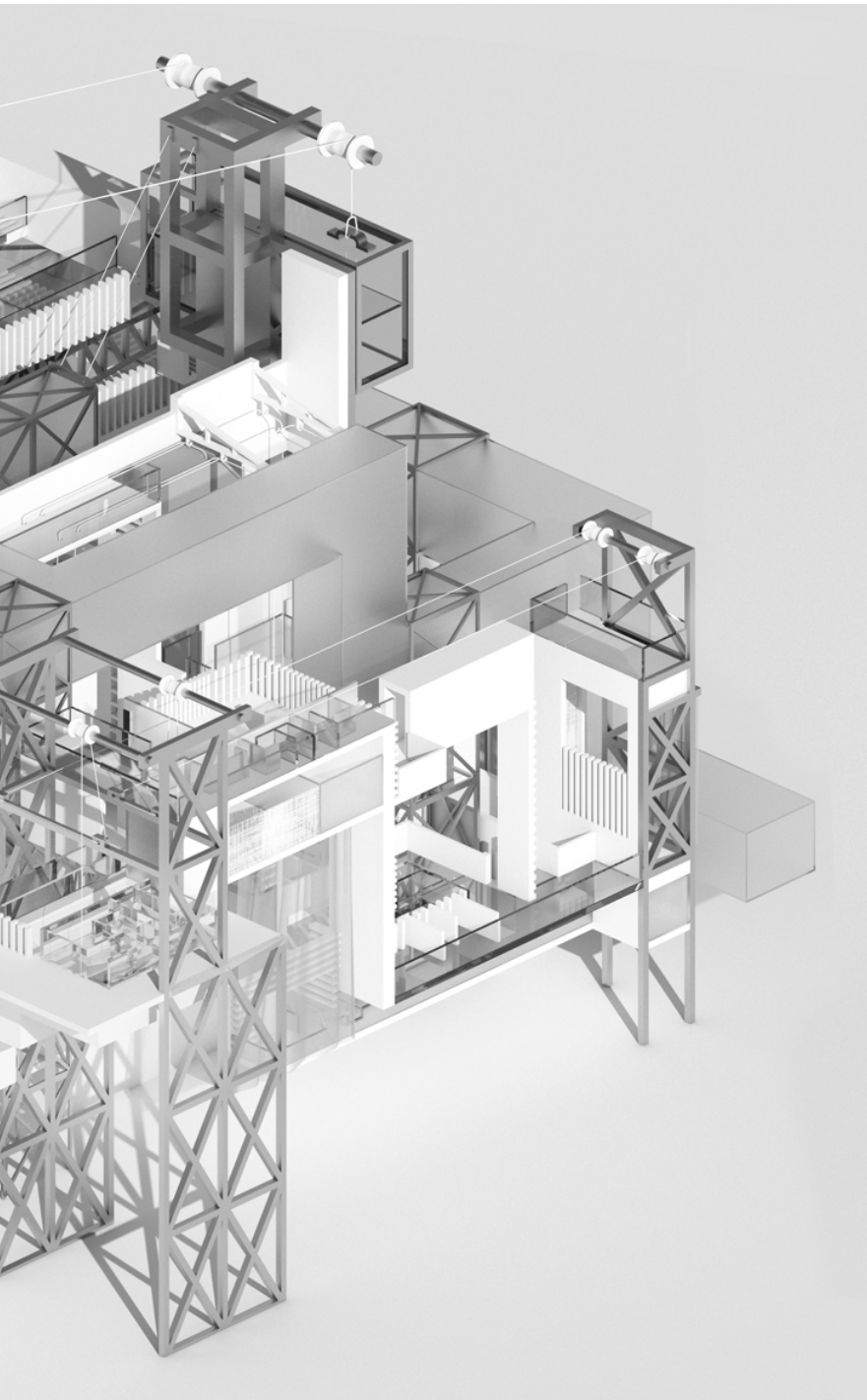
Since mapping and models started addressing the obscurity and volatility of both realities, for further design process became important to reconsider new possible program related to introduced conditions. These conditions formed by both entities emerge from visual relation between people what even encounters certain level of voyeurism. These characteristics were further expressed in a form of reality show. The reality show in this case should not be perceived not in conventional literal way, but the design rather address only the qualities the show delivers.

Reality show demonstrates the condition of repressive surveillance and lack of privacy also commonly present in the city of Yerevan. Such program was also chosen as the participants are always under the gaze and reality show fulfills the mental satisfaction of the one who watches it since it delivers voyeuristic elements or cultivates unusual behavior of the actors. The privacy there is almost absent. It is a design where the threshold between exposed and intimate sometimes even becomes unclear. Such environment acquire both the intimate

and exposed areas but the intimate there is rather indefinite and extremely limited. The design acquired the characteristics investigated in workshop models and mapping demonstrating continuous shifts of spatial conditions expressed through materials, light sources and physical transformations.

The main objective was to address these conditions in design spatial arrangements. The idea of lack of privacy and the omnipresence of surveillance in terms of the reality show was interpreted into spatial solutions reflecting either the impossibility to reach the private space or get imprisoned in a condition of pure exposure from which the individual is not capable to escape. Furthermore, as the reality show in its very nature tend to misrepresent the actual reality and rather cultivates deceptive appearances of real life, the design also was filled with architectural elements which started misleading the ones who experience them, in such way the compositions slowly got the expression of 3D maze where specific routing was incorporated containing the correct paths but also the the ones reaching the dead end.





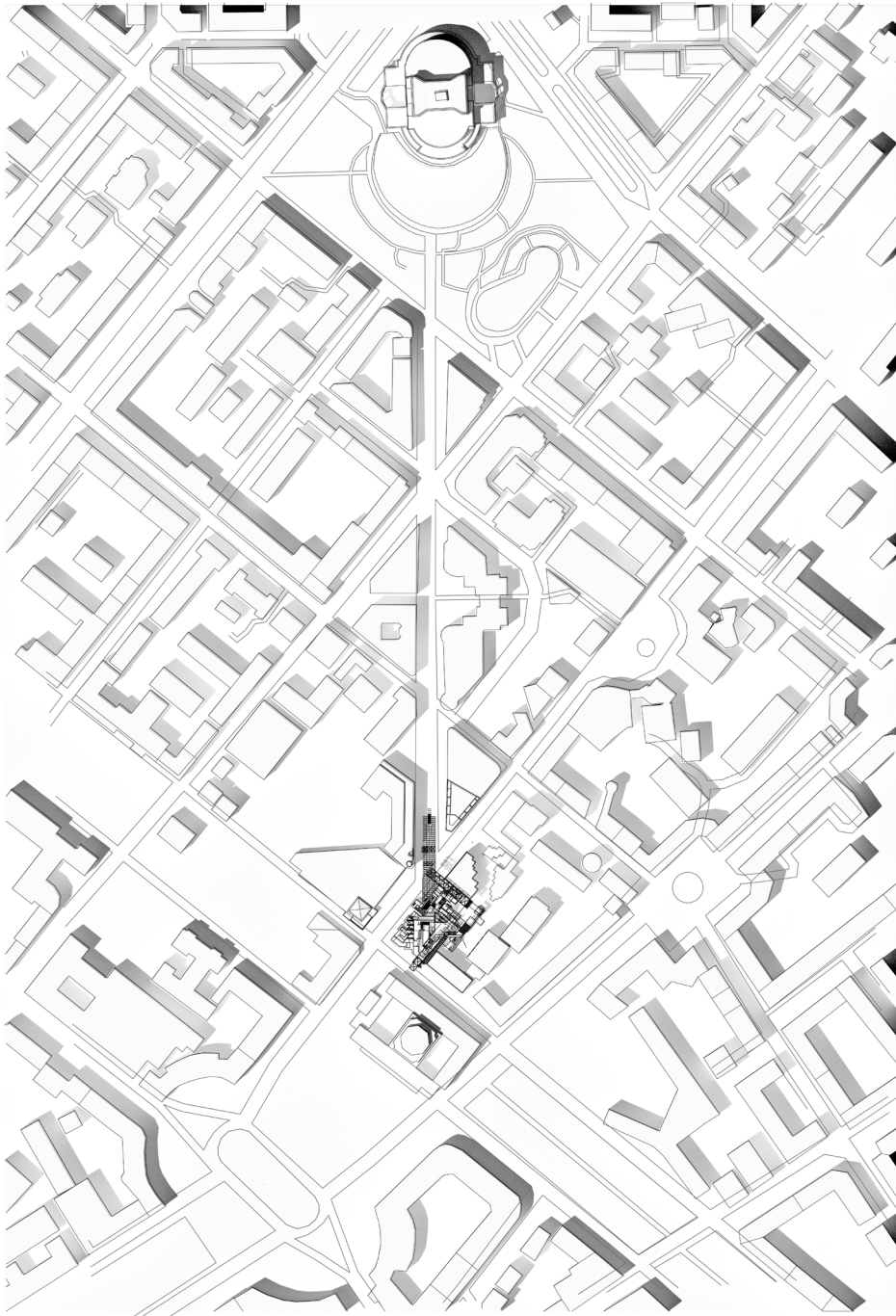


19. Site before and after the construction of Northern Avenue

SITE

The compositions I designed previously were later integrated in the site which I picked by keeping in mind the research results and program. The chosen location is based in the city centre at the beginning of newly constructed Northern Avenue where the ending of the avenue reaches the Freedom Square with Opera building. Before the construction of the Northern Avenue the territory consisted of dense urban fabric with small scale residential houses built by citizens. Although it was a poor community the spatial elements were well appropriated by locals. In order to realise previously designed urban plans and increase the value of the territory the government decided to demolish the whole block of these small family houses and build new residential apartments for wealthy people. It is a site where a displacement of inhabitants occurred

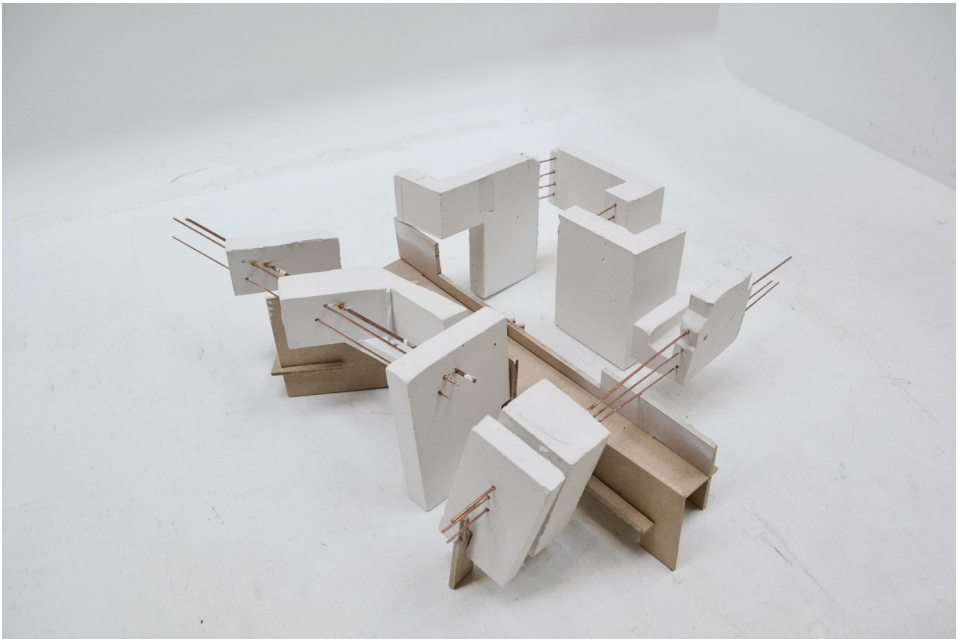
and new identity was formulated. All ground floor of newly built residential houses in the avenue contains shops and restaurants where wealthy people are meeting mingling and watching each other. It became a place where demonstration of social status and welfare became present where people get exposed because they want it. On another hand, Northern Avenue was constructed in two levels, one is on the ground while the second one is beneath it. The underground level is much more enclosed and smaller what in the end delivers two contrasting spaces – the level from above mostly contains exposed spaces while the enclosure of the second one provides the possibilities for actions of intimacy. Furthermore, one side of the site is facing the open and more public environment while the other side is connected to the courtyard



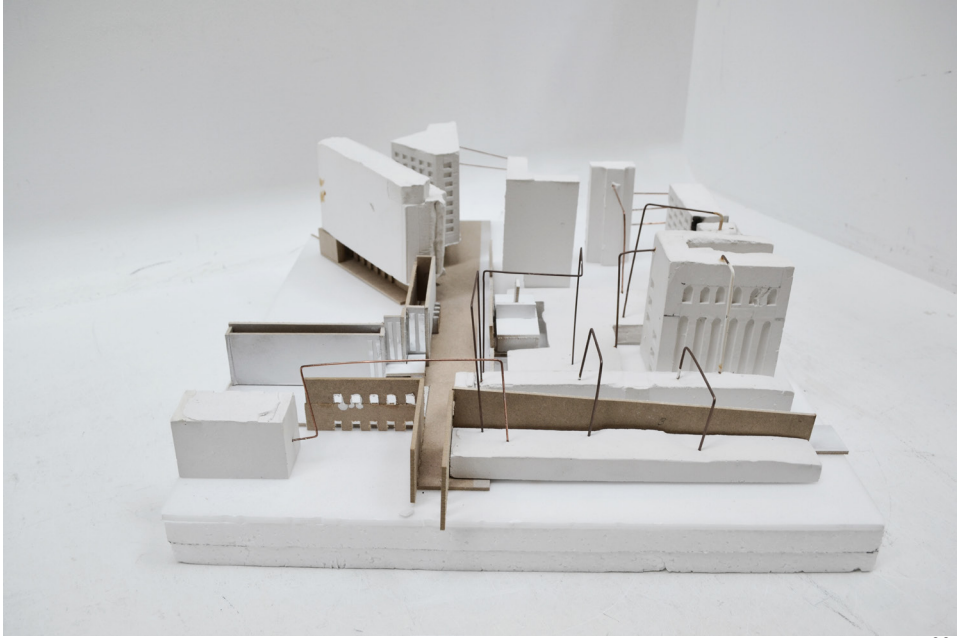
20. Site plan



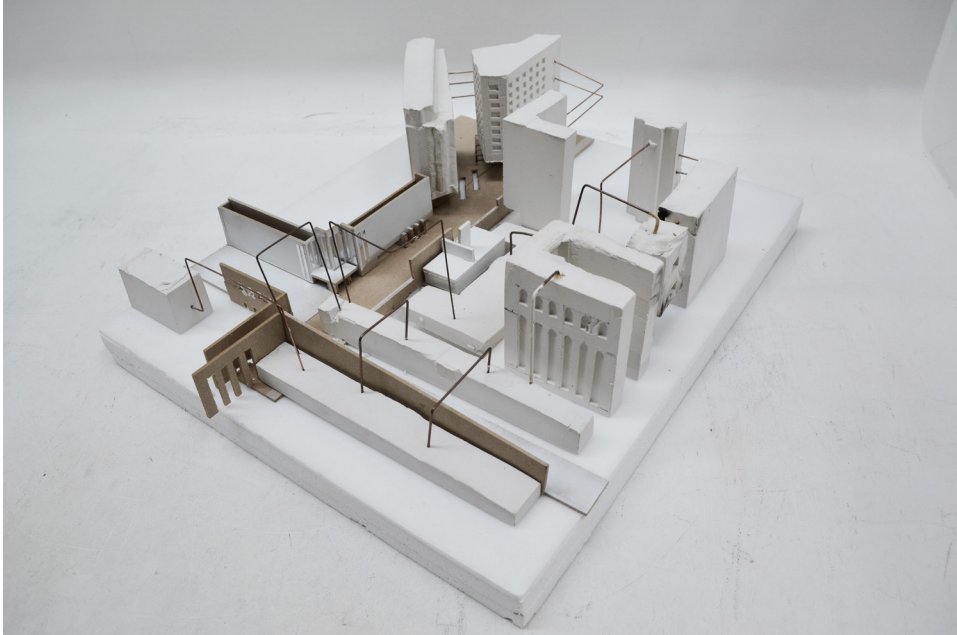
21. Site analysis models



22.



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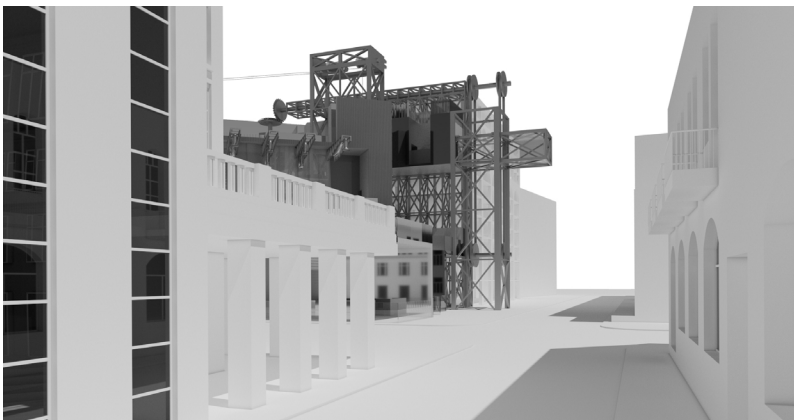
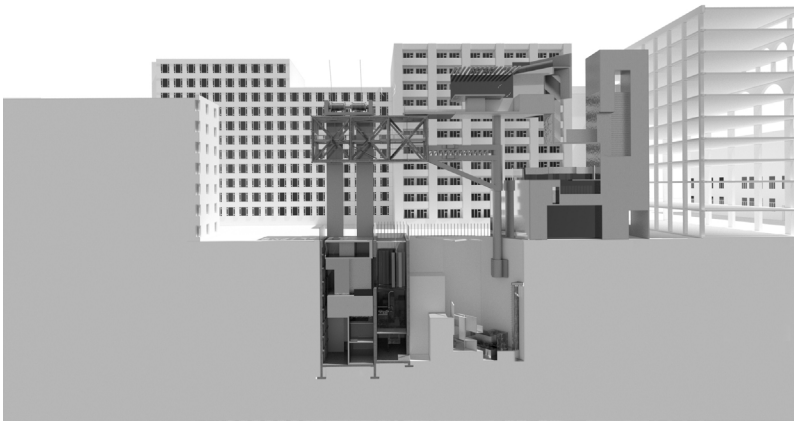
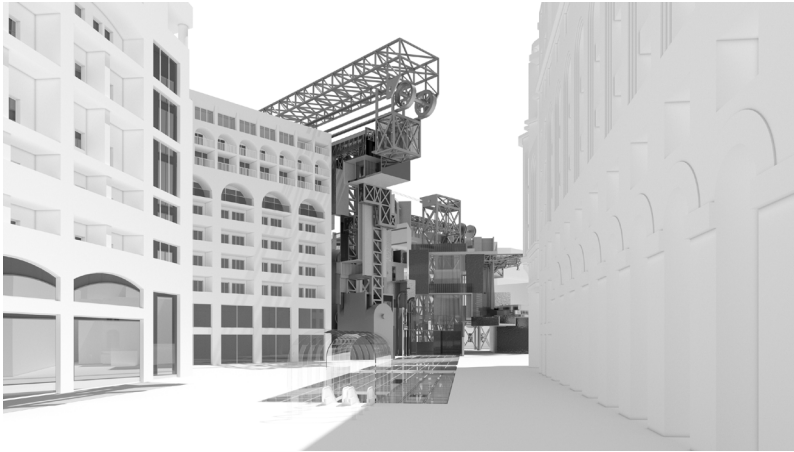
24.

of residential buildings which is rather more private, but also brings a certain level of surveillance by inhabitants because of community defence purposes. During the design of the project such conditions were taken into a count when spatial transformations were considered especially when moments of imprisonment in a pure exposure were delineated.

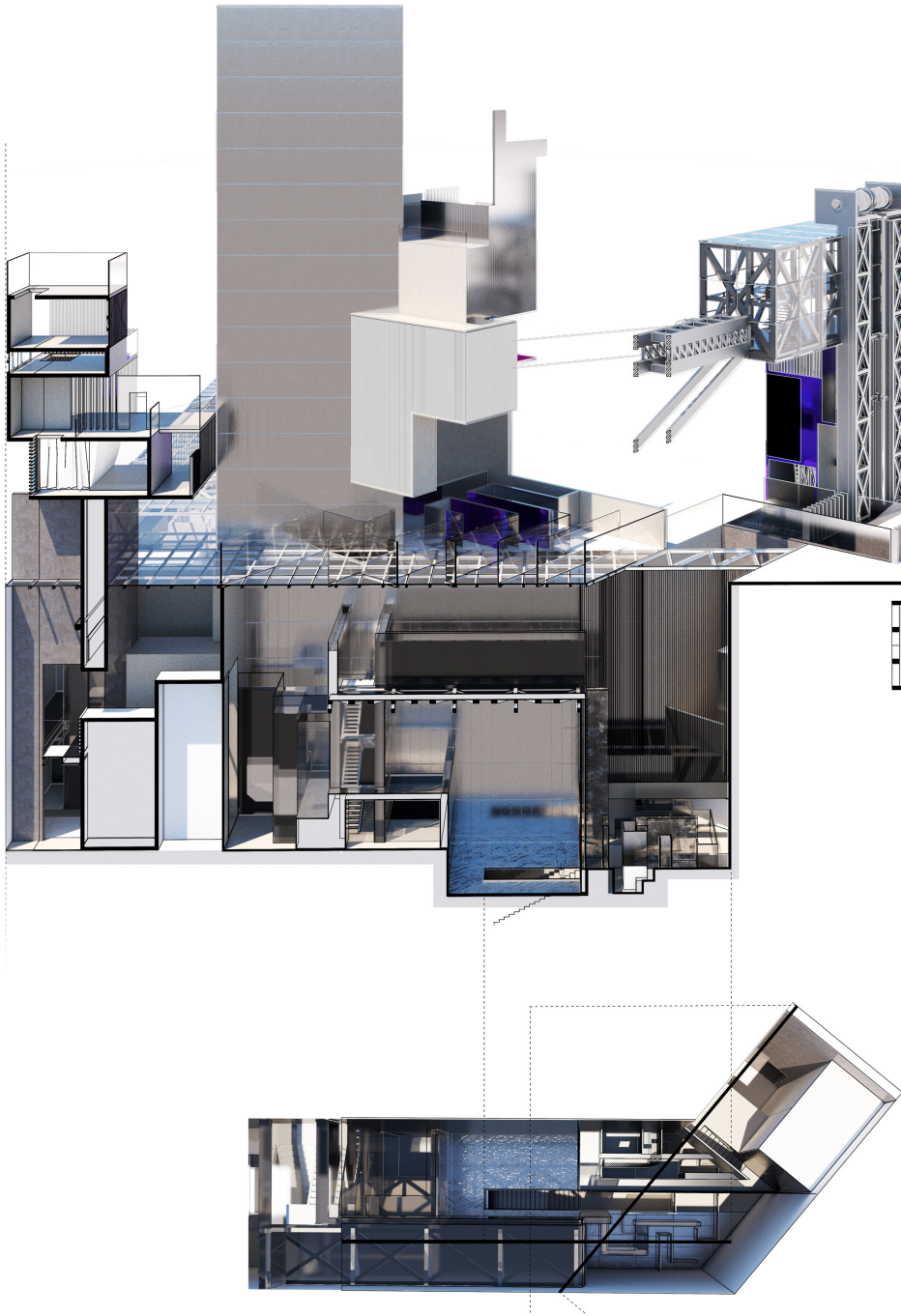
INTEGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

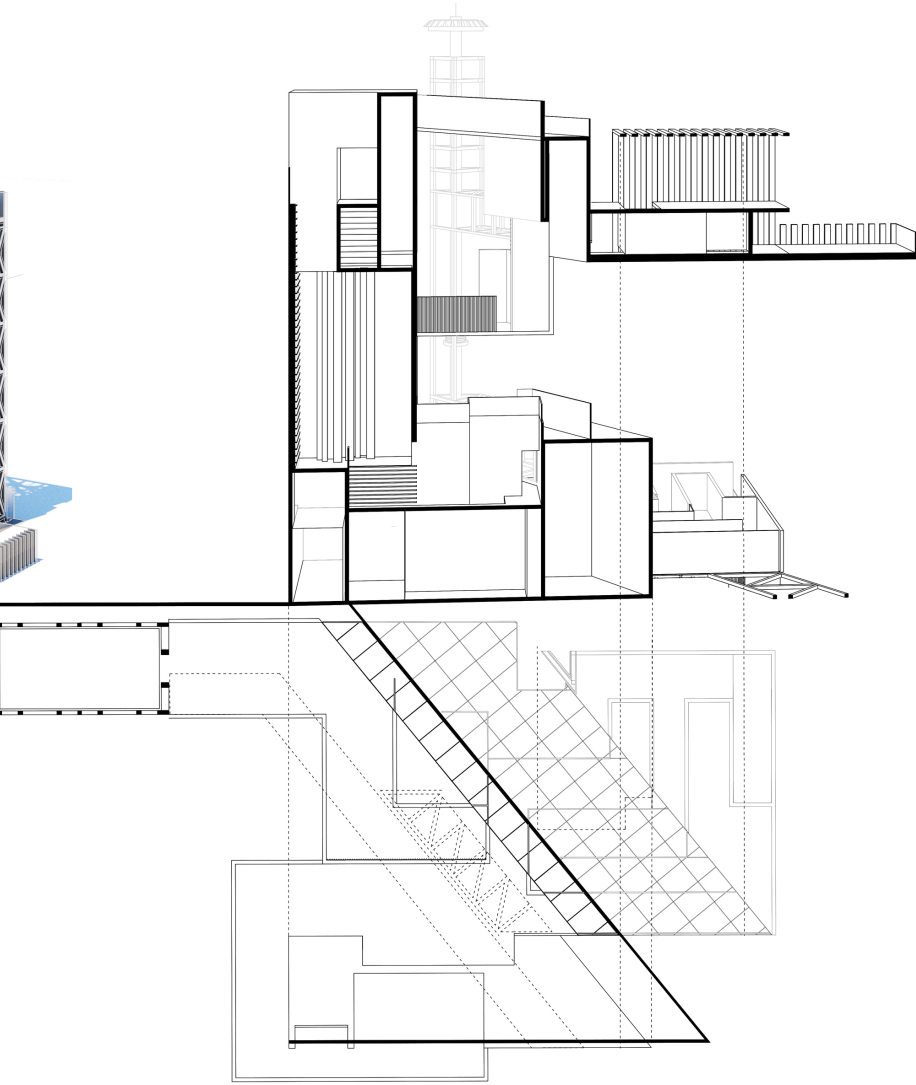
I continued to design the project by keeping in mind the dependencies between spatial conditions and visual relation between people. The design begun with the extension of both levels of Northern Avenue which reached the site. By doing this I clearly divided different two groups of people moving in parallel levels where the visual connection occurred as the surface between the levels became transparent or semi-transparent. The spatial arrangement became as a scenography of realities where the participant always faces the shifts of spatial qualities either emphasizing or suppressing the level of exposure. These transitions between various spaces become even more radical where the physical transformations occur. As the project and program address the relation between participants, the transformation happens only when both groups of people occur in specific spaces so the ones who reach the spot earlier are not capable any more to move further and keeps waiting for others getting to their dedicated place.

In that sense the exposure level of each participant depends on other players. At that moment a certain stagnation of movement appears and the ones who are forced to stay and wait faces a short period of imprisonment in the same condition. Such imprisonment appears in the places of the site where exposure is extremely radical where the one becomes visible for the audience even from the streets or surrounding buildings. This makes the city itself as a part of scenography where the roles between participants start swapping. Because of the density of spatial arrangements and scale of scenography, the project became too complex to read it as a whole, so a technique of mapping once again was operated allowing to subdivide all elements, express their dependencies and reduce the complexity of the background each part contains. The scenography was developed into enclosed loop where the end of the routes appears at the same place they tend to begin what highlights the idea of the condition one is not capable to escape.

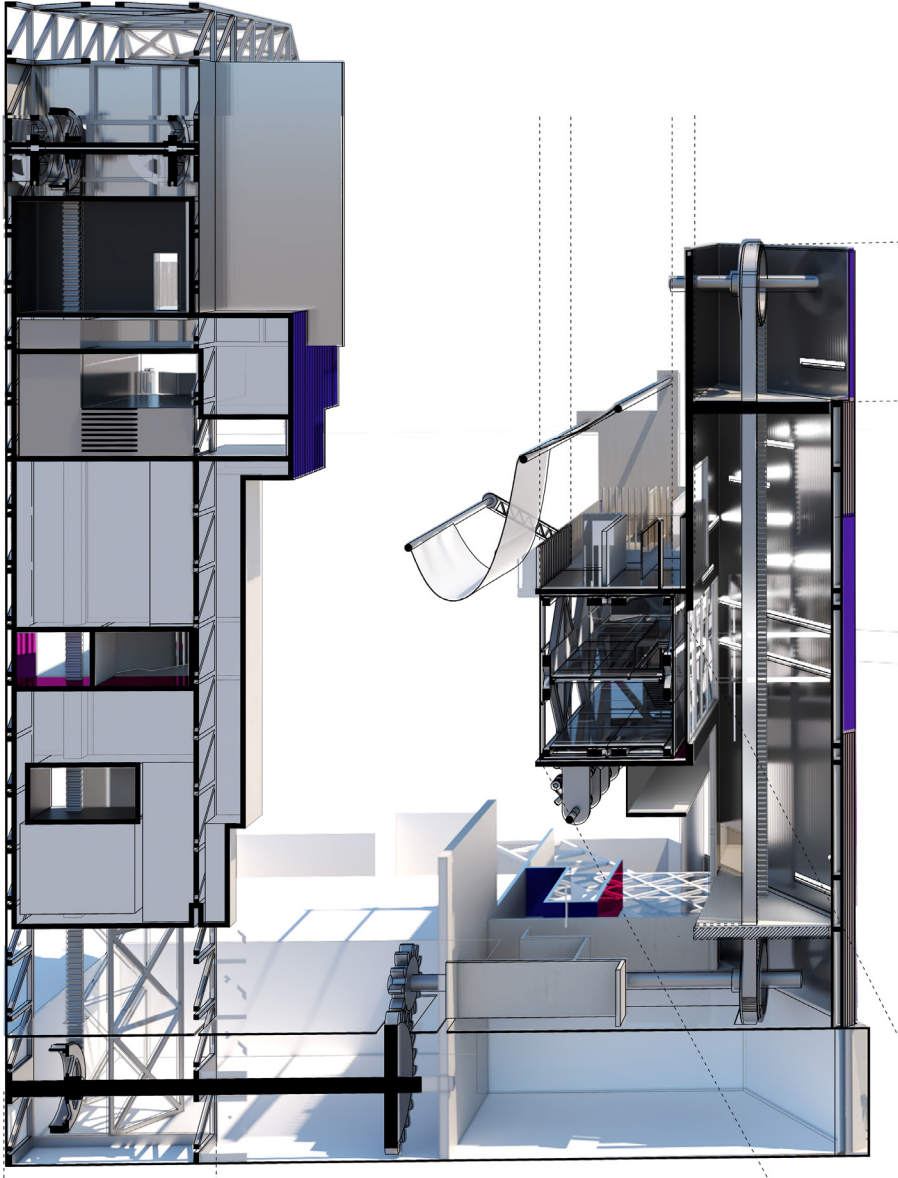


25. Public spaces around the site where gaze permeability is highest and level of exposure is mostly radical



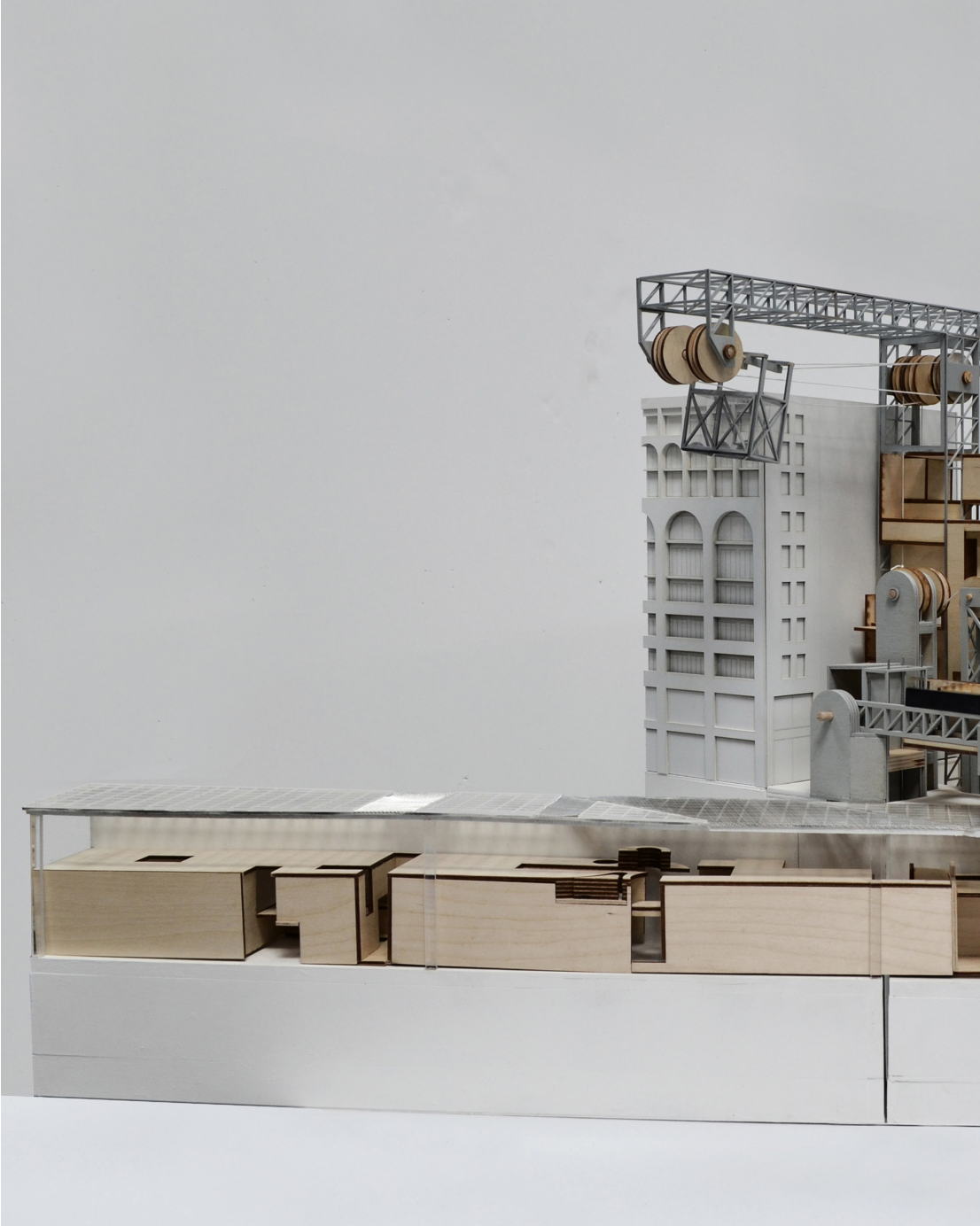


26. Parts of project mapping where spatial transitions occur





28. Complexity of the project in physical model





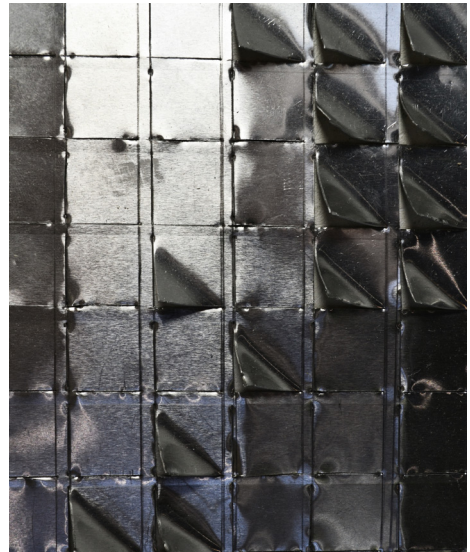
MATERIALS

During the process of design many different materials were tested. A few of them became intriguing as their parameters allowed to emphasize or suppress the visual relations between people or affect the orientation of participants in the environment. Mostly I have tested different types of metal treatment and paints. These tests led to a distorted perception and reflections of realities with various see through possibilities. The most successful ones were the triangular metal pattern and crystallised paint which became effective when dynamic aspect of the movement is considered. The triangular pattern consist of triangle or square shape timber profiles covered with metal sheets on one side what provides multiple presence for one surface. The

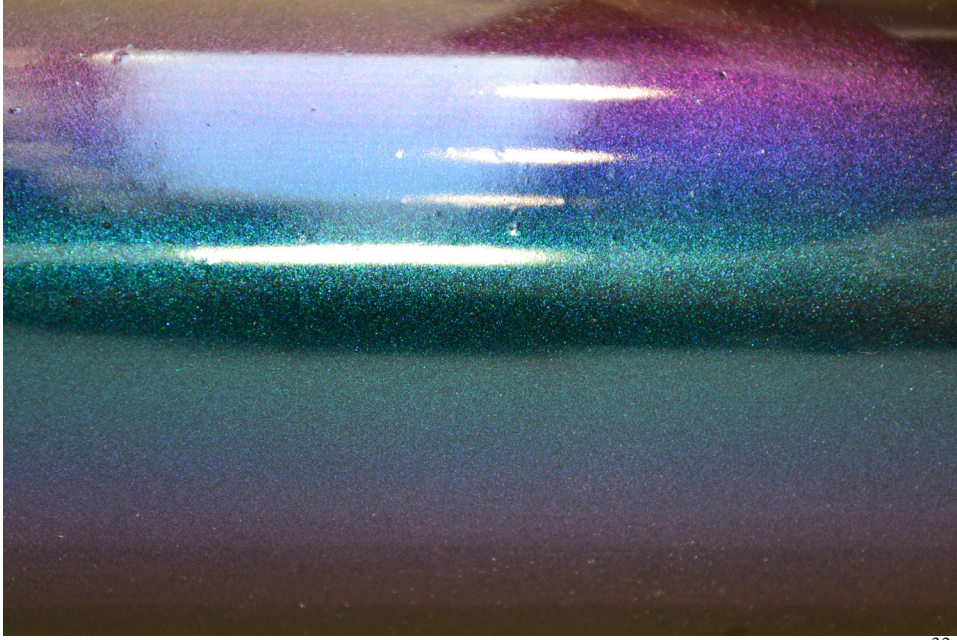
paint consists of small translucent particles which during the spray lay down on the surface in particular manner. The particles refract the light from different angles creating the whole spectre of colours on one surface. The objects covered with the paint or spaces surrounded by the pattern gain distinctive appearances in various angles when a person moves through them. Such characteristics of materials turns the environment to more unpredictable and surprising what emphasizes the obscurity of the scenography. In order to check whether the metal pattern express the dynamic aspect in various appearances through movement, the test with metal was further developed in much larger 1:1 scale detail. By making the detail of the project much more attention was given for precision at places where different materials



30. Tests of metal treatment and paint



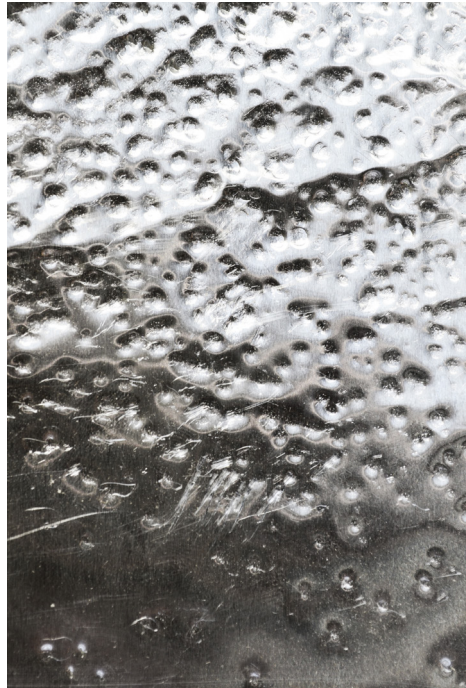
31.



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35. 1:1 Scale detail





36.

encounter each other. In this particular case the metal sheets had to be attached to the wooden surface in such way that the edge of the sheet does not bend over the corner of the timber profile in order to avoid undesired metal deformations. Furthermore, for emphasize the reflection, the metal surfaces were polished with polishing paste. The test also addressed spatial perception where the view focuses on large scale of space nearby and finally shift to much smaller one which surrounds the observer. The project also contains of clear, frosty

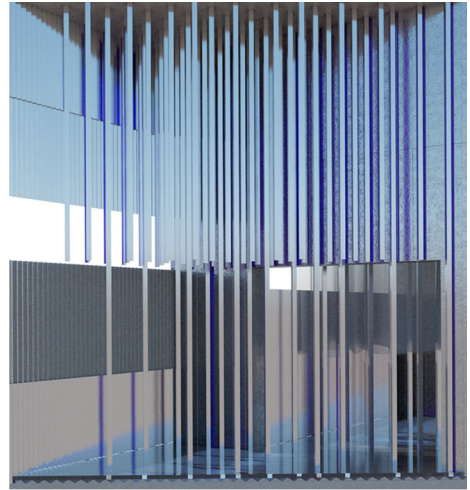
glass combined with polycarbonate plastic elements which control the translucency of spaces.

ATMOSPHERE AND CLIMATE CONTROL LIGHTING

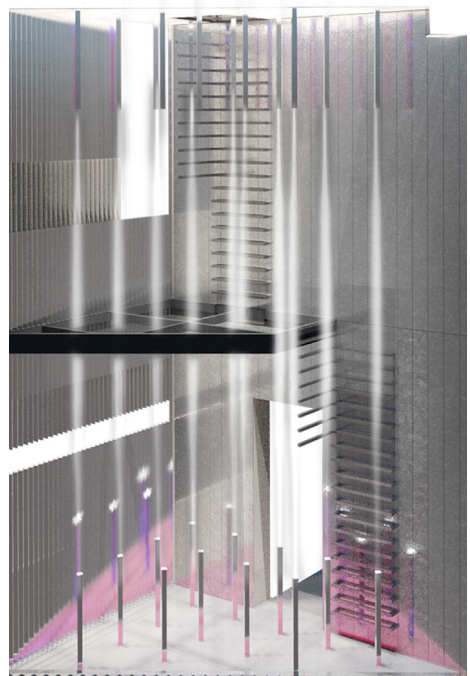
In order to develop the idea of realities transformation, lighting was also taken into a count where natural diurnal sun lighting shifts to nocturnal artificial light both emphasizing opposite spatial aspects. The same spatial arrangement disappearing in darkness during the day time start glimpsing and flickering during night time what might hide or betray the presence of the one who experience it. In the same way the one who is imprisoned in the exposure during the day might get empowered to watch and stalk the others at night time. In such way lighting also becomes as a form of spatial conditions control which fundamentally could change the perception of environment.

WATER AND FOG

During the Corner workshop climate conditions were further explored. The main intention was to design climate control system which not only solves the problematic aspect the climate delivers but also to adapt and link them to functional aspects of the project. In the case of the project rain water collecting into glass tanks became efficient part of the design especially when it was combined with light sources. The wavy surface of water and light source directed towards it create the distorted and flickering light rays' projections on surroundings what strengthens the dynamic haziness of space size



37. Atmospheric elements



38.



and conditions. In that sense fog also produced in the project as a rather unstable phenomenon which stimulates ambiguous reading of space. In addition, fog functionally also becomes helpful for cooling off the metal surfaces in scenography which reflect hot sun rays in summer.

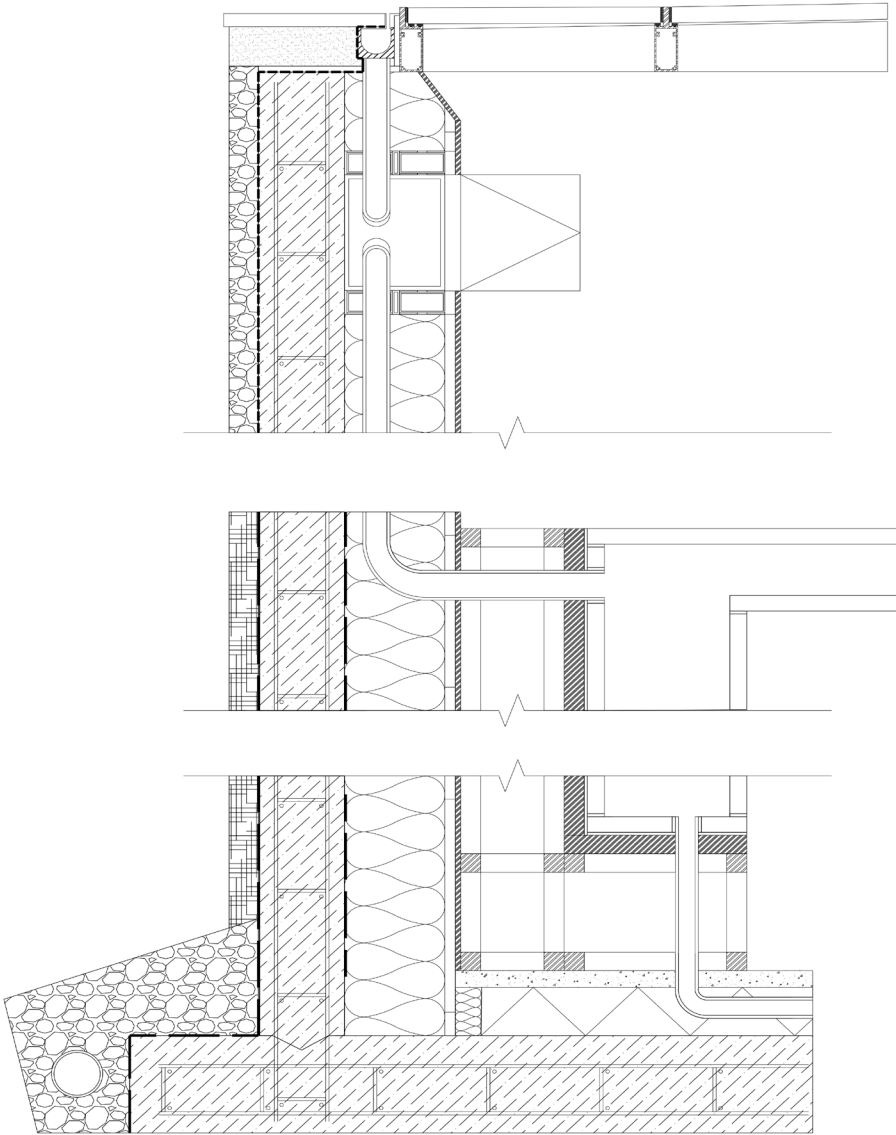
WINTER CONDITIONS

Armenia always confronts radical temperature changes during winter and summer. In cold period a great amount of snow falls in in the city causing additional loads on the surfaces. These conditions would adversely affect the fluent processes of transformations as the load would become too heavy. To combat this problem additional heat sources should be ensured in the site. The site is located near active metro line what gives the possibility to provide the heat from underground by collecting the heat through ground source heat pumps. The heat would reach the ground level in the site where pipes are mounted to the nozzles distributing the warm air through the whole perimeter. In cold environment physically the heat moves upwards what should melt the snow and keep the scenography clear from additional weights.

STRUCTURE

The structure of the project is related to the function. All the steel trusses either support and become as a part of scenography or hold the transformation elements in the project where steel gears, pinions and racks occur. The gears are connected with Dyneema fiber belts making the structure a bit lighter. These elements express the

dependencies between objects facing spatial transformations, in such way making the structure as a linkage between different realities. Steel trusses are mounted together with CLT panels. CLT panels are much lighter than other structural elements and more flexible for adjustments of surfaces. It becomes beneficial when one considers the application of paint or attachment of metal panels.



40. Structural detail of water tank placement in scenography

In terms of the whole project the design derived from the research performed in Yerevan city. The concept was developed through production of many models which slowly adopted and started addressing the values and characteristics of the continuous confrontation between surveilled environment and spaces where intimate actions occur. Although the project gained an appearance of apparatus or literally a shape of machine, it also revealed the architectural language through scenography where atmospheric spatial arrangements appeared. As the design provokes not only the participants of scenography but also the audience from the city it seems that the design is liberated from physical boundaries of the site and rather continues beyond these limits.

ENDNOTES

1. See in G.T. Marx (2006) *The New Politics of Surveillance and Visibility*, Toronto Press: Toronto p.92
2. See Fehlings S.H.C. (2015) “Intimacy and exposure – the Armenian “tun” and Yerevan’s public space”, *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, Vol. 35 Issue: 7/8, pp.513-532, <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSSP-02-2015-0028>
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3. Debord G. *Theory of the Derive*: <http://tbook.constantvzw.org/wp-content/derivededebord.pdf> [accessed 31 March 2018]
4. See Pearce C. S. *Semiotic theory* in B. Francesco, *Exploring Peirce’s speculative grammar: The immediate object of a sign*: <file:///C:/Users/Vartotojas/Desktop/booklet/170-289-1-SM.pdf> [last accessed 2018 April 01]
5. Latour B. (2005) *Reassembling the Social An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford: Oxford University press, p. 181

IMAGES

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2. Armenian soldiers in Nagorno Karabakh, source: <https://www.fort-russ.com/2017/03/situation-on-nkr-azerbaijan-contac/> [accessed 01 April 2018]
3. Russian and Armenian politics source: <https://eurasianet.org/s/armenia-karabakh-peace-seen-as-more-elusive-after-crimea-annexation> [accessed 01 April 2018]
4. Armenians playing Nardi game (community), source: <http://thdk.be/travel/armenia-a-travel-destination/> [accessed 01 April 2018]
5. Armenians protesting in Yerevan, source: <https://twitter.com/qirimhaber/status/856466838087139333> [accessed 01 April 2018]
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8. Photos made through binoculars allowed to identify actions of intimacy or surveillance, (Yerevan) 2017 October 07
9. Types of surveillance and intimacy in Kanaker district
10. Watchtower in Kanaker district
11. Mapping of military base and residential area in Kanaker district
12. Modi Operandi models
- 13-18. Compositions designed to investigate functional possibilities
19. Site before and after the construction of Northern Avenue
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25. Public spaces around the site where gaze permeability is highest and level of exposure is mostly radical
- 26-27. Parts of project mapping where spatial transitions occur
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