

Extractive Preservation

Interfaces of Profanation, Power and Ecology in the Restricted Zone



Fig. 01: Local in Letea
Source: : Leupold, 2016.



Fig. 02: Grigore Antipa and King Ferdinand in the Danube
Delta
Source: : Historia, 2025

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Alexandra Muntean
6317162

Studio and supervisors
Faculty of Architecture and the Built Environment, TU Delft
Explore Lab 41

First Mentor (Architecture & Research)
Negar Senaan Bensi

Second Mentor (Building Technologies)
Roel van de Pas

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ABSTRACT

“Extractive Preservation” interrogates the friction between environmental governance and situated practices of care, asking how political structures are constituted for communities whose ways of life exceed dominant regulatory logics.

Focusing on the Danube Delta as a critical zone, the project traces how ecological processes, governance frameworks, and everyday practices are deeply entangled. It argues that environmental governance does not merely preserve nature, but functions as a form of extraction, reorganizing access, displacing livelihoods, and constraining situated knowledge through zoning regimes, permit systems, and remote modes of control.

Within the condition of the natural reserve, the project asks what it means to live under continuous preservation, and how governance might be rearticulated for communities that inhabit and negotiate its limits. Here, diplomacy is reframed not as an external institutional protocol, but as a situated spatial practice emerging from the tensions between regulation and lived experience.

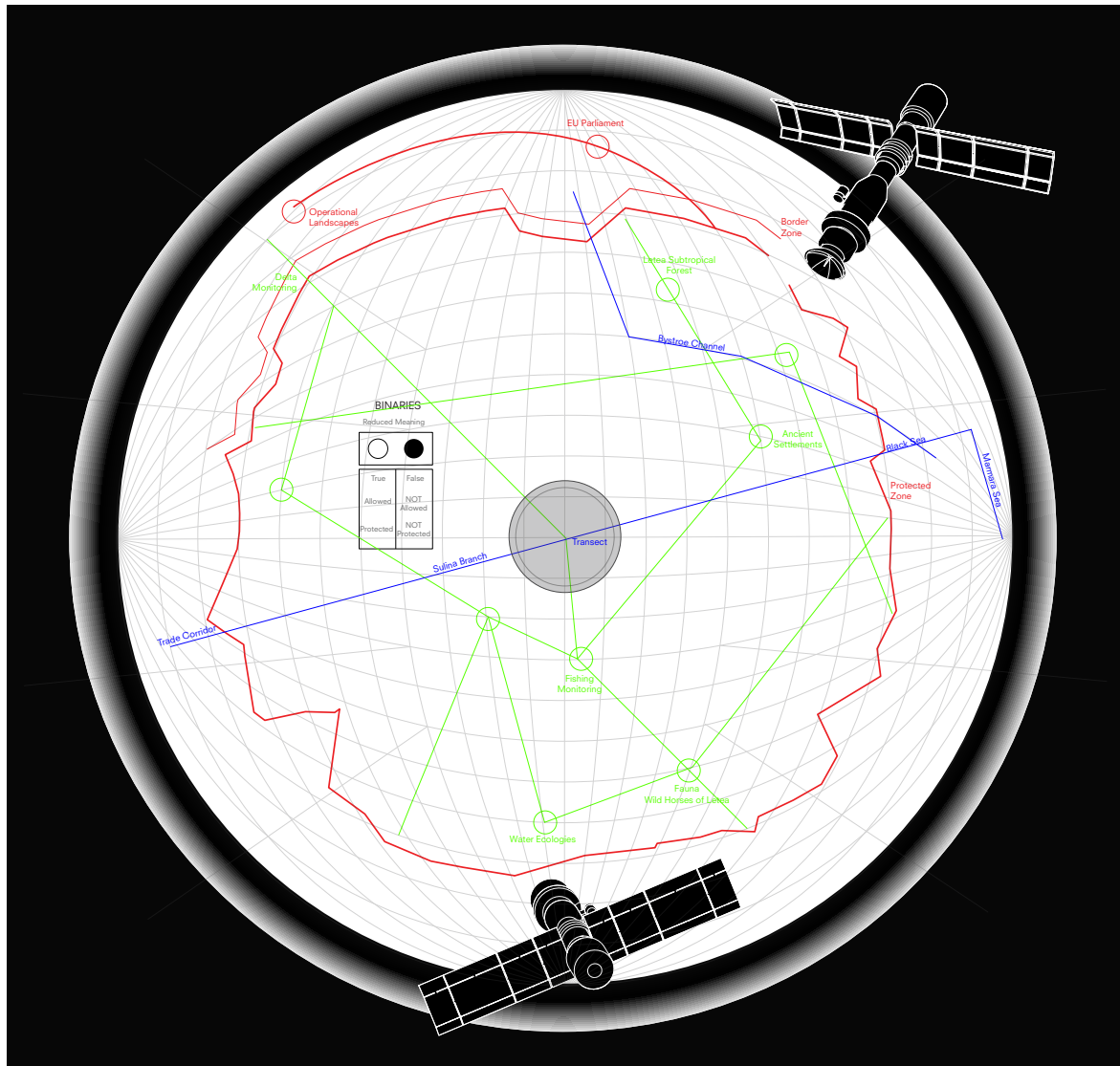
In response, the project proposes a series of infrastructural “acupuncture” that make local agency legible within the territorial system. These operate across three scales: a distributed sensor network that reclaims environmental monitoring as a collective practice; a fishing satellite that creates direct interfaces between fishermen, data, and policy; and a parliamentary gathering hub that acts as a site of deliberation, exchange, and archive. Together, these interventions culminate in a spatial system where formal and informal modes of governance intersect.

her than stabilising the territory, the project seeks to informalise governance, opening it to negotiation, participation, and contestation. It ultimately speculates on forms of diplomacy embedded in everyday life, where preservation is continuously reworked from within, and where environmental knowledge is collectively produced across the space between remote observation and situated experience.



Fig. 03: Remoteness
Source: : Photography in Berlin, 2016.

Key Words: Extractive Preservation, Profanation, Natural Reserve, Diplomacy, Infrastructural Accupuncture.



You want me to land on Earth? Why? — Because you're hanging in midair, headed for a crash. — How is it down there? — Pretty tense. — A war zone? — Close: a Critical Zone, a few kilometers thick, where everything happens. — Is it habitable? — Depends on your chosen science. — Will I survive down there? — Depends on your politics.

(Latour & Weibel, 2018).

PROLOGUE

The Danube Delta unfolds as a Critical Zone: an extractive territory where preservation itself becomes extraction, looping human and ecological interventions back into the ceaseless circuits of operational landscapes, non-city terrains of circulation, and infrastructural practice that shape the material and the political. In this framing,

preservation policies and management infrastructures do not stand outside the system. They become drivers of intervention, embedding extractive logics within the very landscapes they intend to safeguard, while exposing the political tensions of ecological governance.

PART 1. INTRODUCTION (WHAT AND WHY?)

Problem statement

This research approaches the Danube Delta through the conceptual framework of the critical zone as articulated by Bruno Latour: a thin, inhabited stratum in which ecological processes, political decisions, technological systems, and everyday practices are inseparably intertwined. Within this zone, loss does not appear as an external consequence or a terminal state, but as an operative condition through which territory is continuously produced and governed.

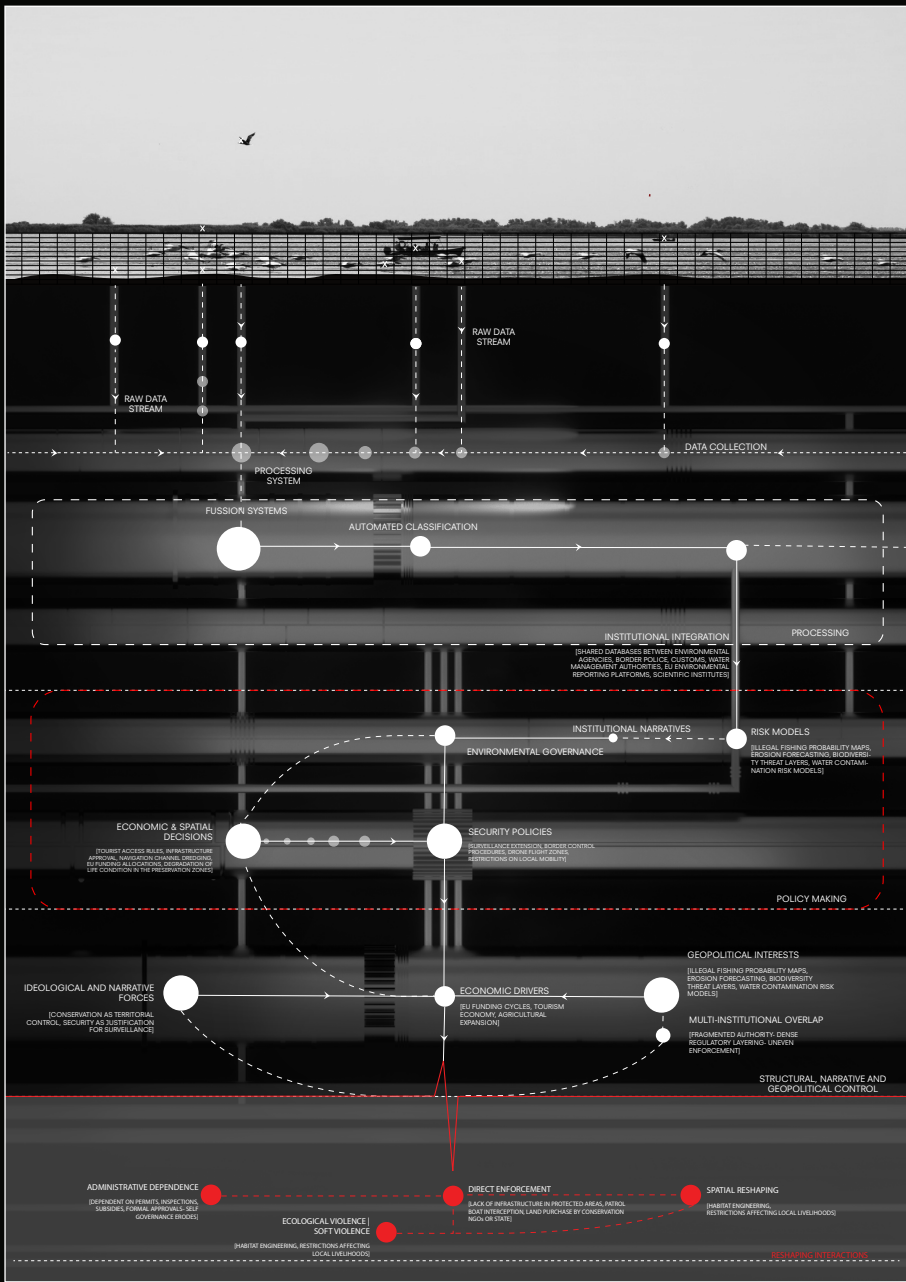
The project reframes the Delta not as a self-contained natural reserve, but as an operational landscape (Katsikis, 2021): a territory whose value is mobilized, regulated, and optimized to serve distant political, ecological, and economic agendas. Within this condition, the Delta functions as a hinterland, supplying ecological services, biodiversity value, geopolitical stability, and symbolic environmental capital to national and European centers, while absorbing the costs of regulation, restriction, and instability locally. Extraction is therefore understood not solely as the removal of material resources, but as a spatial logic that operates through governance, preservation, and abstraction.

Following the fall of the communist regime, extraction in the Delta did not cease; it was reconfigured. While socialist modernization extracted value through infrastructural control, hydraulic engineering, and productive intensification, post-1989 environmental governance introduced a different extractive regime. Conservation zoning, permit systems, quotas, and environmental monitoring technologies increasingly regulate access to land, water, and resources, producing forms of loss that are gradual, cumulative, and structurally embedded.

Under contemporary regimes of preservation, limits are drawn in the name of ecological protection. These limits operate not only on territory, but on the conditions of everyday life. Fishing, reed harvesting, navigation, settlement, and infrastructure are subject to regulatory regimes that restrict agency and foreclose viable futures. Displacement unfolds not through direct eviction, but through incremental erosion and administrative dependency. In this sense, the Delta becomes paradoxically extractive through the very mechanisms intended to preserve it.

Within this detachment, loss accumulates spatially and politically, manifesting as the disappearance of practices, settlements, and forms of collective presence.

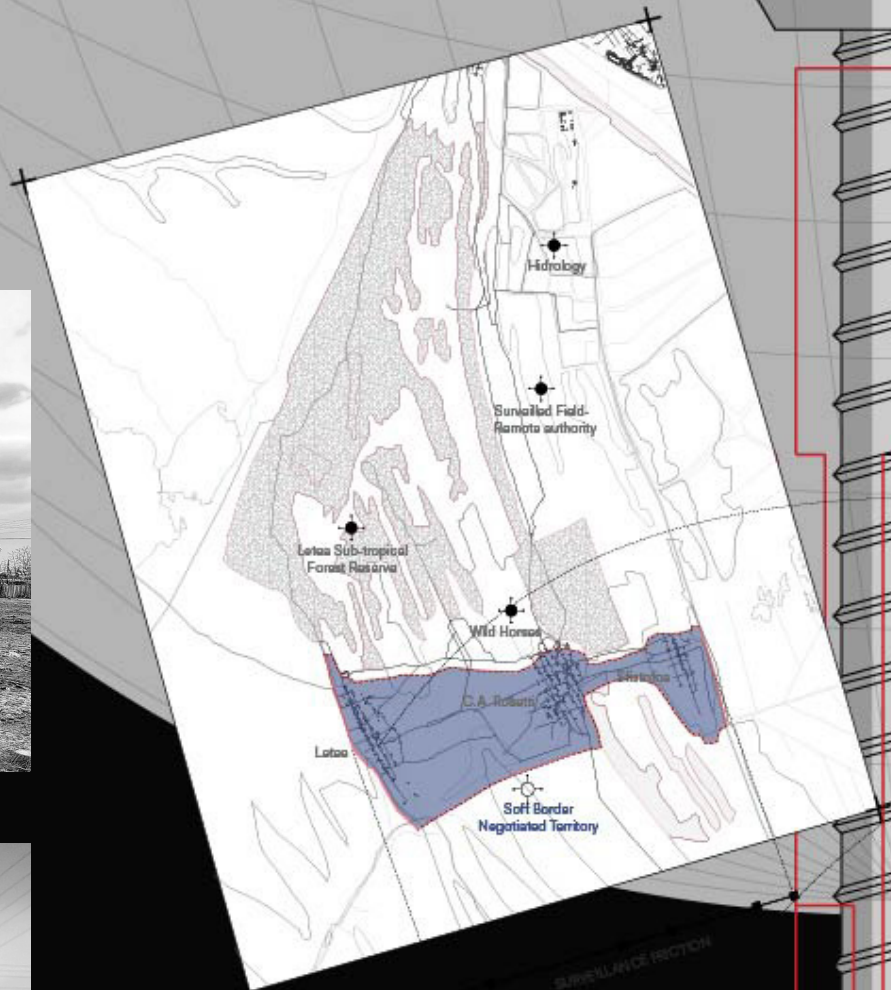
Against this trajectory, the project positions architecture as a mediating practice rather than a solution-oriented discipline. Architecture is understood as a spatial interface capable of rendering loss visible, negotiable, and politically legible. The research explores the notion of a dispersed parliament for the Danube Delta: a network of spatial dispositifs that embed governance within everyday practices, enabling preservation, extraction, and livelihood to be negotiated from within the critical zone rather than imposed upon it.



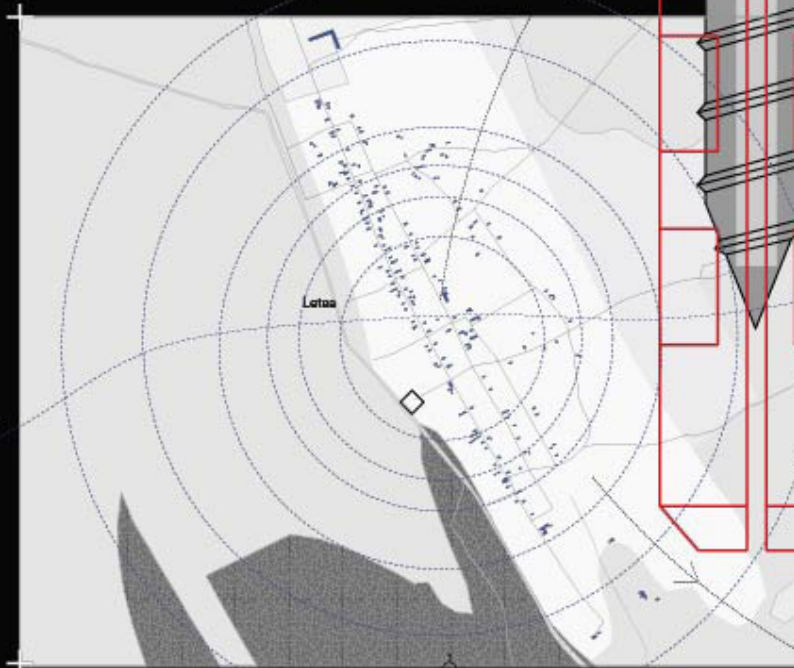
System of Abstracted Governance
The data and policy mechanism under a pristine landscape



Local in their courtyard, in Letea
Source: Letea Film (n.d.), The Noise of Letea.

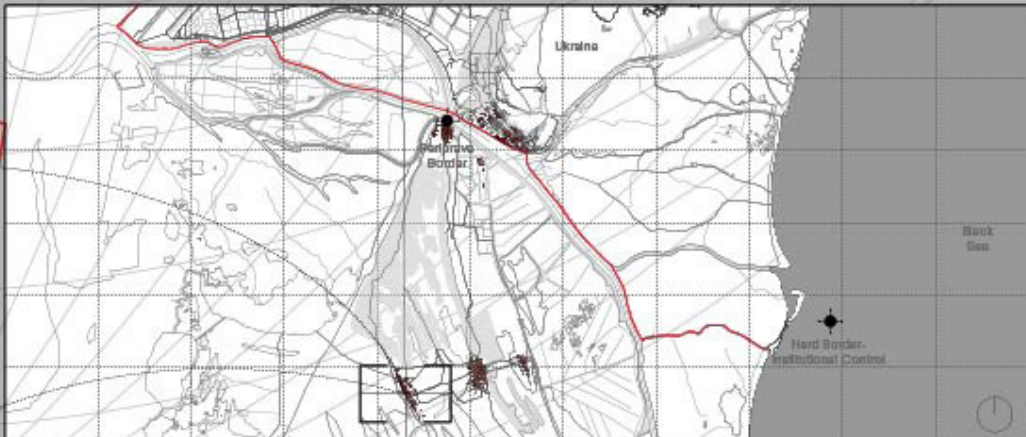
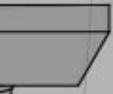


Dialect Confluence
Space Intelligence



ervation

traction



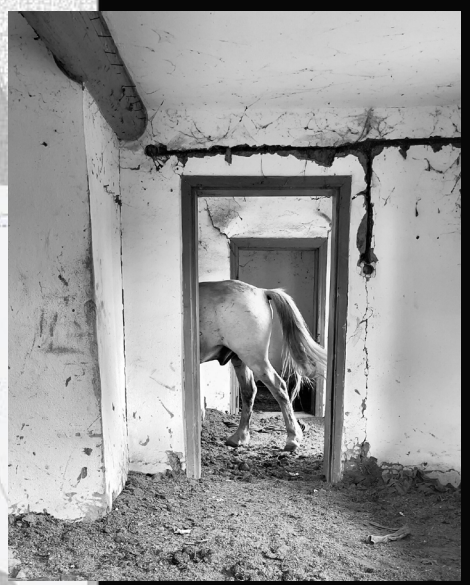
[Northern Region]

Fishing Regulations

Harvesting Regulations



[C.A. Rosetti and Sfistofca Villages]



[Letea]

Relevance

Societal Relevance

The Danube Delta exemplifies a growing category of territories where environmental governance, geopolitical interests, and technological control increasingly converge. Across Europe and beyond, preservation landscapes are expanding in scale and regulatory intensity, often becoming central instruments of climate policy, border security, and ecological management. The Danube Delta makes visible the social consequences of this shift: while ecological value tries to be protected and mobilized at national and supranational levels, the territorial costs of regulation, restricted access, reduced livelihoods, and infrastructural neglect, are disproportionately borne by local communities.

By framing the Delta as an operational hinterland, the project contributes to urgent debates in political ecology, environmental governance, and urban studies. It demonstrates how preservation and environmental protection can function as extractive processes when decision-making is abstracted from lived territorial conditions. At a time when ecological regulation is accelerating globally, the project foregrounds a critical question: how can environmental protection be pursued without producing new forms of displacement, dependency, and loss? Addressing this tension is essential for developing more just and socially resilient models of ecological governance.

Architectural Relevance

Architecturally, the project challenges the discipline's limited engagement with landscapes governed primarily through regulation, data, and policy rather than form. It argues that architecture's relevance in such contexts lies not in object-based intervention, but in its capacity to spatialize governance. Regulatory frameworks, monitoring systems, and institutional processes are treated as spatial material, conditions that shape access, movement, and visibility.

By positioning architecture as a mediating practice, the project expands architectural knowledge beyond problem-solving or representation. It explores how architecture can operate within conditions of abstraction and

loss, transforming them into sites of negotiation rather than control. In doing so, the project contributes to architectural discourse by proposing new roles for design within preservation landscapes, where ecological urgency demands not only technical solutions, but spatial frameworks capable of supporting participation, accountability, and long-term inhabitation.

Objective and motivation

This project is motivated by a growing disjunction between ecological protection and lived territorial conditions in highly regulated landscapes. While ecological indicators register success, they often obscure a parallel reality of progressive loss: restricted access, constrained livelihoods, and the gradual erosion of political presence. Preservation, in this sense, is not neutral. It produces its own spatial effects. The project therefore problematizes environmental governance not as a stabilising framework, but as a set of spatial operations embedded in everyday life.

The primary objective is to develop an architectural approach capable of engaging this condition without reducing its complexity. Rather than translating the territory into a simplified object of design or control, the project seeks to construct an infrastructural system of care and debate, one that remains embedded within the tensions it addresses.

The research reads the Danube Delta simultaneously as a Critical Zone and as an operational hinterland; within this condition, governance operates through a constant split, stabilising ecological representation while redistributing uncertainty, restriction, and loss across lived territory. Architecture is positioned here not as a form-making discipline, but as a mediating practice capable of exposing and reworking this split.

Within preservation landscapes, the project moves away from isolated objects toward a dispersed infrastructural framework that embeds decision-making within the territory itself. It operates through a strategy of infrastructural acupuncture across three interrelated scales: a distributed sensor network that renders ecological conditions collectively readable and politically actionable; the fishing dock, reconfigured as a hybrid space of labour, observation, and situated debate; and the former fish factory, transformed into a parliamentary hub where formal institutions and informal practices are brought into direct spatial co-presence.

These interventions are located within key friction zones where governance, ecology, and livelihood intensify: the Crişan village area, the Crişan–Caraorman river branch, and Sulina, the Delta's port city. Together, they articulate a

differentiated rural–urban field, in which the Sulina channel operates as a critical interface between inland practices and external regimes of governance and exchange.

Taken together, these spatial instruments do not resolve governance into clarity. They render it operable as a contested condition. Rather than eliminating conflict or smoothing over loss, the project sustains the tensions through which both are produced. In doing so, it positions architecture as an infrastructural practice of care, one that works within metastable territories where preservation and disappearance are continuously co-produced.

Research and design questions

In the Danube Delta, territory is neither stable nor singular: channels migrate, settlements contract, borders harden and soften, while regulatory frameworks attempt to stabilise what materially resists fixation. Loss, control, and disappearance are not residual effects but operative conditions that actively produce spatial and social relations. They generate a field of tension in which architecture does not resolve instability but works through it. The project does not aim to compensate for fluctuation or impose order; rather, it engages the Delta as a condition of relational production, where processes become legible, and inhabitation is negotiated rather than secured. Within this framework, the research unfolds across three entangled fields: territory, community, and politics.

Main Research Question:

How can architecture operate as a mediating device between regimes of environmental governance and situated practices of care in inhabited yet restricted territories?

Sub-questions:

Situated knowledge and practice:

How do embodied practices of fishing (reed harvesting, navigation, and seasonal settlement) constitute informal systems of spatial intelligence, and how can architecture register their continuity without translating them into fixed or normative spatial orders?

Politics and spatial appearance

Which spatial formations allow negotiation to emerge as a material condition, enabling decision-making and disagreement to be situated within the territorial scale of the Delta?

Metastable spatial condition

How can architecture construct interfaces that sustain metastability, supporting relational, adaptive, and contingent spatial practices without stabilising them into closure?

Scalar Translation

How can architectural operations articulate relations between distant regulatory regimes and situated territorial realities, translating abstract environmental policies into spatial conditions that remain responsive to ecological and material complexity?

Through these questions, the research positions architecture as a mediating practice, a way to translate abstract systems into material conditions, sustain relational and contingent spatialities, and render visible the otherwise invisible forces that shape territories. Architecture becomes both a lens and a tool, enabling observation, negotiation, and participation without erasing the tensions that produce the Delta's complexity.

Scope

The research is situated in the North- East Delta, the eastern side of the Sulina Branch, connecting Letea, Crişan and Sulina, is the primary focus. This zone is chosen for its heightened tension: it encompasses protected Natura 2000 sites, lies adjacent to the international border, and features the Sulina Branch as a strong territorial and infrastructural interface linking ecological regulation, governance, and local practice.

The project is organized around a dispersed parliamentary hub. Structured as an assembly, it enables architecture to operate at multiple scales, linking centralized decision-making with everyday territorial processes, and providing grounded sites for participation and negotiation.

The project establishes a conceptual and territorial framework, without advancing finalized architectural solutions. Its primary task is to trace zones of friction and resistance, points where abstraction, regulation, and environmental management collide with local practices, or where these interactions function productively. These zones form the analytical and spatial groundwork for subsequent design interventions, highlighting where architecture can intervene as a mediating interface. Mapping and analysis trace infrastructural networks, regulatory regimes, ecological zones, and patterns of inhabitation, revealing conditions under which these systems intersect.

Project Brief: Dispersed Parliament

While conventional architectures of governance tend to be monumental and sacralized, aligning themselves with an international and largely Western institutional discourse, the dispersed parliament operates through proximity and engagement. Rather than reinforcing abstract systems of efficiency and speed, it situates governance within local realities, where regulatory frameworks encounter ecological processes and everyday practices. In doing so, the dispersed parliament does not seek to streamline or accelerate governance, but to problematize it, exposing delays, frictions, and debate.

How can a fishing dock and a (former) fish factory make politics?

Drawing on Agamben's notion of profanation, understood as the reactivation of separated systems into common use, the project explores how architecture can formalise local practices while informalising systems of data and governance. Profanation operates here as a method for constructing situated diplomacy between everyday territorial practices and abstract regulatory regimes.

The project engages the Delta not as a neutral site of intervention, but as a material field already structured by labour, ecology, and regulation. Fishing is understood as one of its primary spatial practices: a form of situated intelligence that continuously reads, adjusts, and negotiates with environmental change. Rather than being absorbed into systems of control, this practice becomes a basis for spatial agency.

The satellite intervention is embedded in existing fishing infrastructure along the Crişan–Caraorman branch. Reconfigured as a governance dock, it operates as a lightweight interface for monitoring, labour, and situated debate, linking everyday fishing practices with shifting ecological and regulatory conditions.

The central hub, located in Sulina within the former fish factory, functions as a parliamentary field where territorial information is assembled and where decision-making, debate, and coordination are spatially concentrated. It also engages the site's industrial "grey heritage" as a resource for spatial and urban reactivation.

Together, the hub and satellite (extended through a network of sensors) form a minimal but replicable system in which governance is decentralised and embedded within lived territory. Fishing dock and fish factory become instruments of situated diplomacy, where politics emerges through the continuous negotiation between practice, environment, and data.

PART 2. APPROACH (HOW?)

Methods

The research follows a mapping approach, where analysis, and interpretation inform the design intervention. It serves as a tool to understand and question spatial conditions, revealing instability, loss, and control as active forces. Literature, field observation, and mapping are combined to interpret institutional and territorial data, positioning architecture as a mediating interface.

Methodological Position

The research draws on assemblage thinking, viewing space as a provisional alignment of human and non-human actors, institutional regimes, ecological processes, and symbolic systems (Latour, 2020). Governance, monitoring, and regulation are treated as active participants in territorial production rather than neutral representations. This is complemented by political ecology, situating environmental knowledge within social-ecological dynamics, highlighting the performativity of infrastructural and data systems. A syncretic approach considers material, ecological, political, and social processes together without collapsing their differences. Research and design converge as a negotiation between abstraction and situated knowledge, maintaining tension between institutional logics and everyday practice.

Research Methods

The project is organized around three interrelated fields: territory, community, and politics. Territory is studied through critical mapping, archival research, and infrastructural analysis. Zoning plans, monitoring systems, and hydrological data reveal how governance operates through abstraction and how interventions materialize. Mapping functions as both analytical and generative: exposing friction, overlap, and displacement while informing design interventions.

Community is investigated through spatial ethnography and field observation, documenting fields of intensity of their daily practices as informal governance systems and repositories of spatial knowledge (Stengers, 2010). Attention is given to practices persisting under constraint, revealing expertise often invisible to regulatory frameworks.

Politics is approached through speculative mapping, tracing how zoning, permits, and surveillance operate as spatial infrastructures that structure visibility, access, and distribution across territory, while also attending to how local forms of assembly are constituted through situated, often informal practices of gathering, negotiation, and shared decision-making. In reference to Hannah Arendt's understanding of politics as the space of appearance, where politics emerges through people coming together in speech and action rather than through hierarchical representation, it is framed here as a condition of assembly rather than institutional authority (1958).

Research Tools

Mapping is central, informed by Terraforma's (2019), approach and James Corner's landscape urbanism methods. Two complementary registers are traced: abstract/institutional (governance, monitoring infrastructures, Natura 2000 sites, and regulatory flows), and round/territorial (infrastructure, ground condition and local practices, with friction zones and resistance points identified).

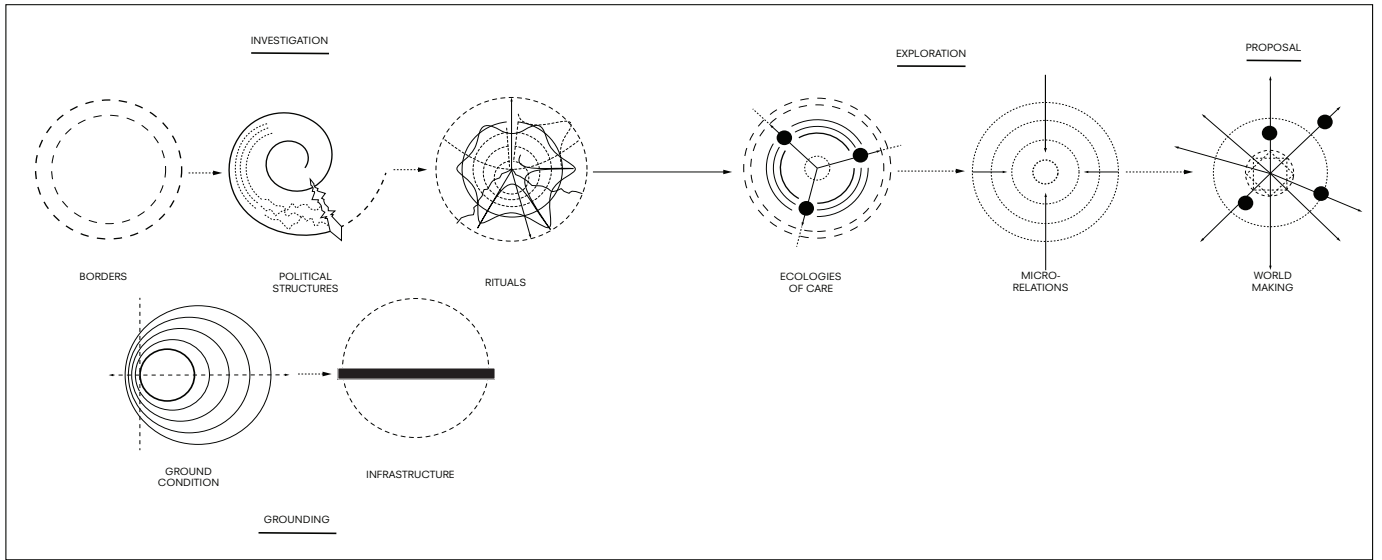
Mapping is generative, and operative, directly informing the design of the dispersed system of sensors, fishing intervention and the hub. Fieldwork (July 2025) included observation of local practices, infrastructural mapping, and photographic documentation in Letea, C.A. Rosetti, Crisan, Sulina, and surrounding natural reserves.

Outputs include analytical maps, spatial diagrams, design prototypes, and speculative infrastructures, translating complex relational processes into actionable frameworks for architectural intervention.

Planning and Phases

A1 – Conceptual and Territorial Framework: Establishing research proposition and topic, maps constraints and opportunities, and developing the program brief.

A2 – Design Iteration: Exploring design language, archi-



Design Process
Mapping as the main method of engaging with the territory

tectural forms, tectonics, materials, and environmental strategies

A3 – Design Refinement and Preparation: Integrating insights from mapping and experimentation, and consolidating dispersed interventions and central hub strategies.

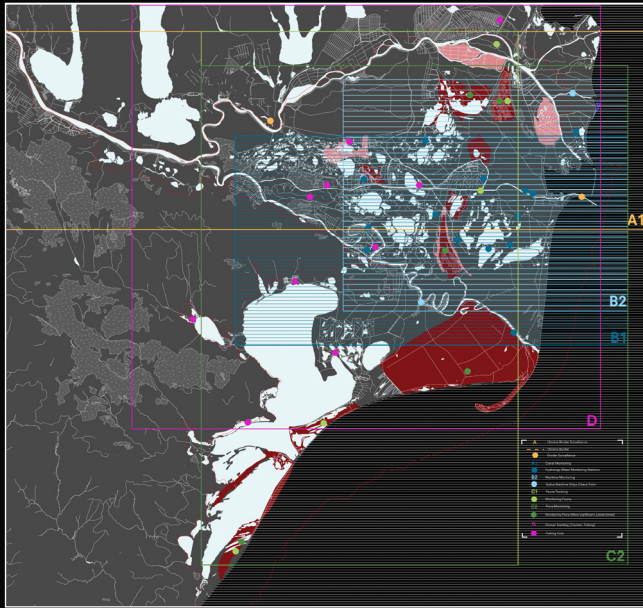
A4 – Finalization and Curation: Preparing drawings, models, and visualizations for presentation, illustrating relational strategies, negotiation zones, and architectural mediation across the Delta.



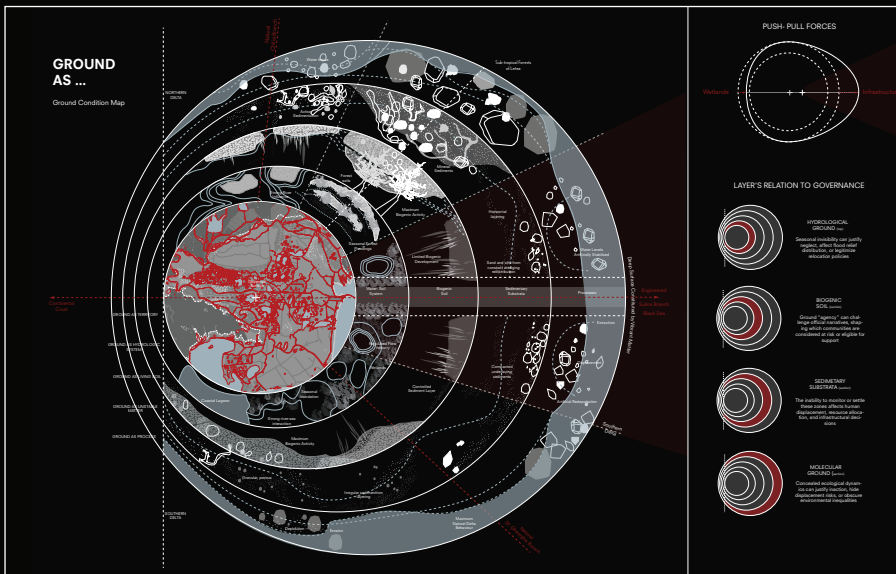
Snippets from Fieldtrip (July 2025)
Images showing the different settlement in Northern region:
Crisan (top), Sulina (middle), Letea (bottom)



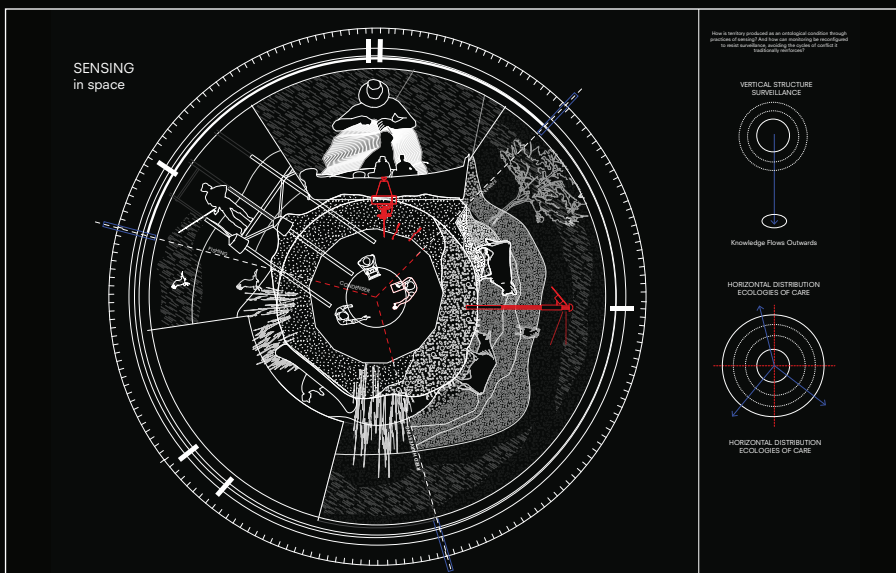
Short Film: Of Shifting Beds and Silent Hands
Assembling documentary fragments, cinematic sequences, and
archival materials to unsettle dominant narratives of the Danube
Delta through the perspectives of those who inhabit it



Mapping Datafication of Territory
Monitoring and Control in the Danube Delta

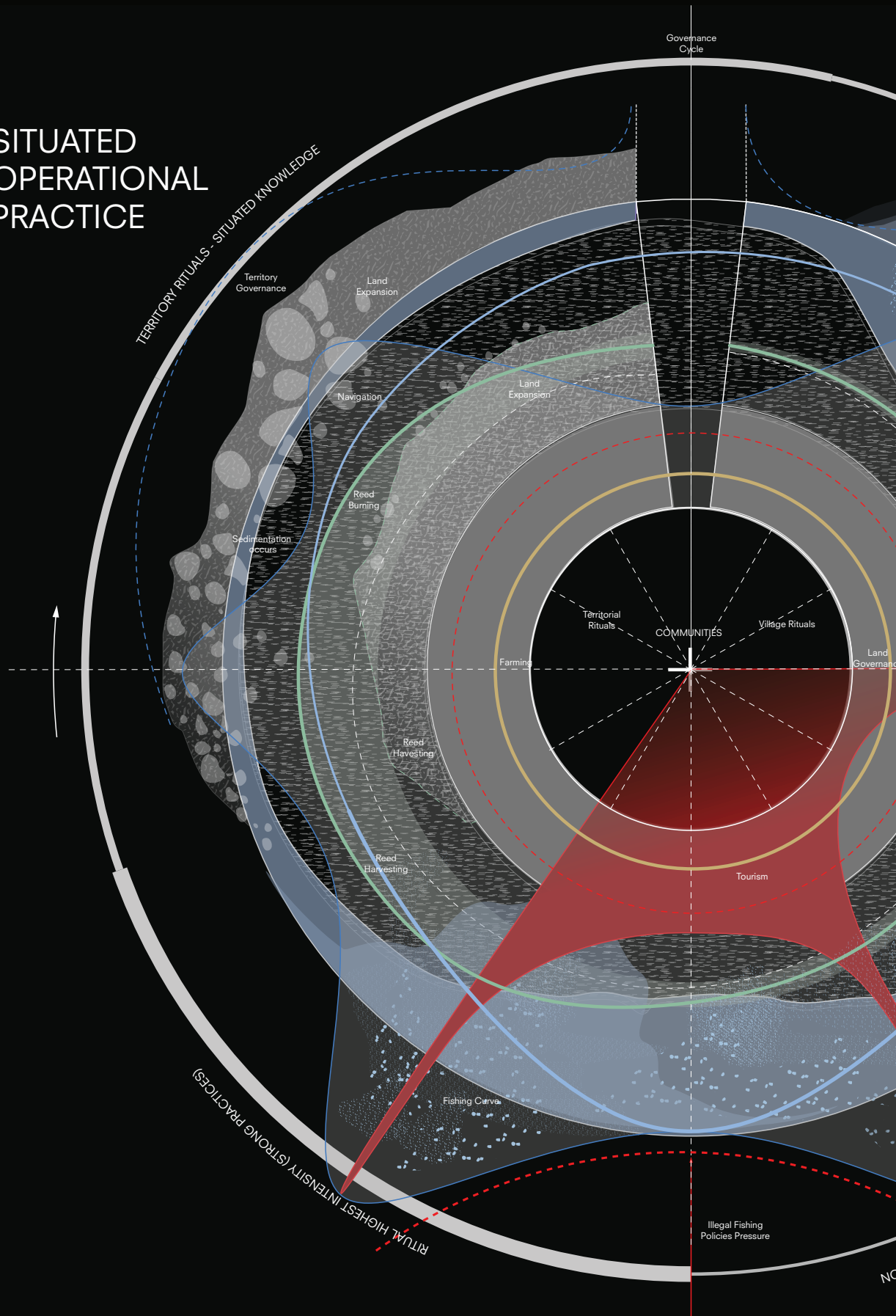


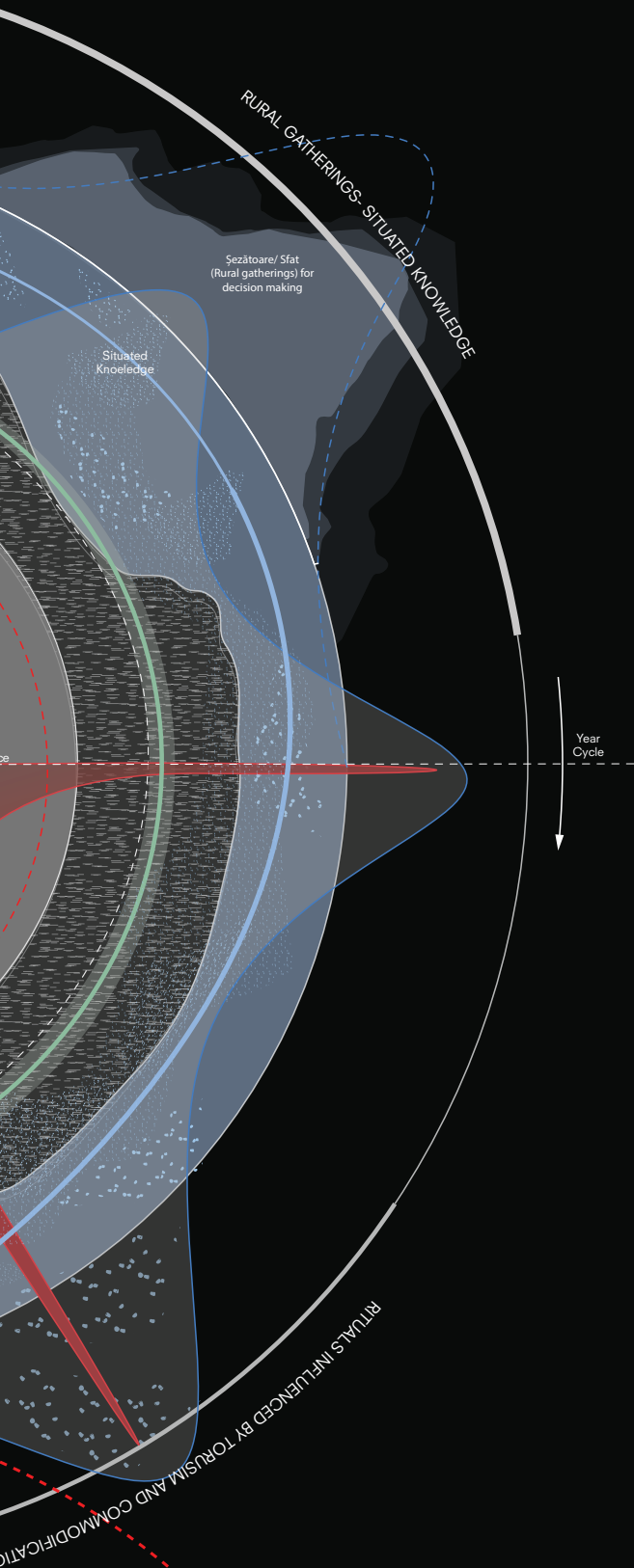
Map of Ground Condition
Shifts in Ground Composition and Processes between the three
branches of the Danube River



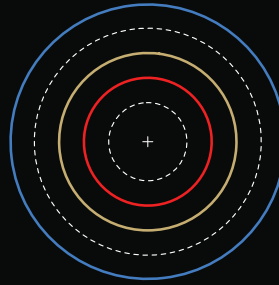
Dispersed Agency
Relation of Data and Local Practice

SITUATED OPERATIONAL PRACTICE



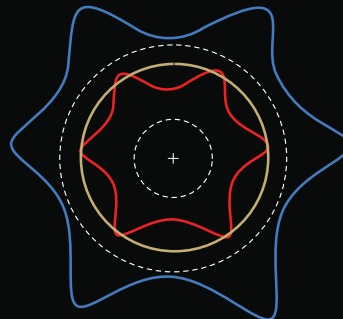


LAYERS OF PRACTICES



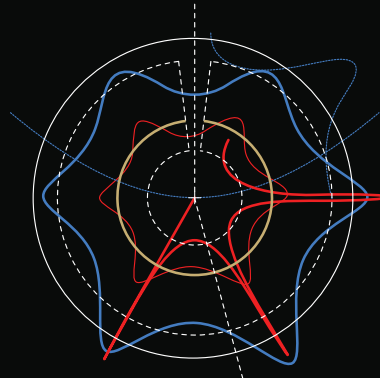
Local practices, tourism, governance) happen in separate cycles

STRIATED SPACE



An 'ideal Delta' with seasonal modulations

SMOOTH SPACE

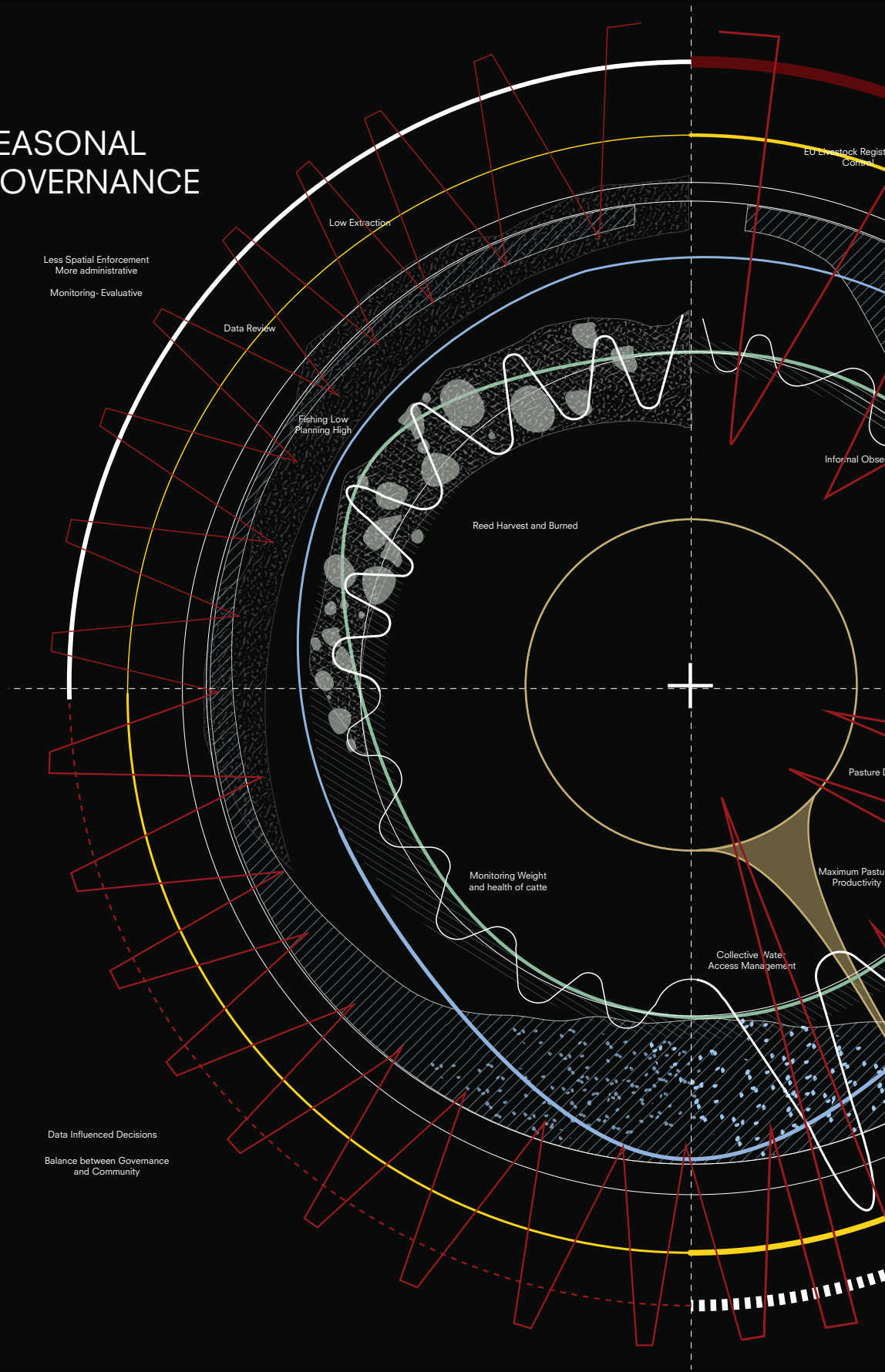


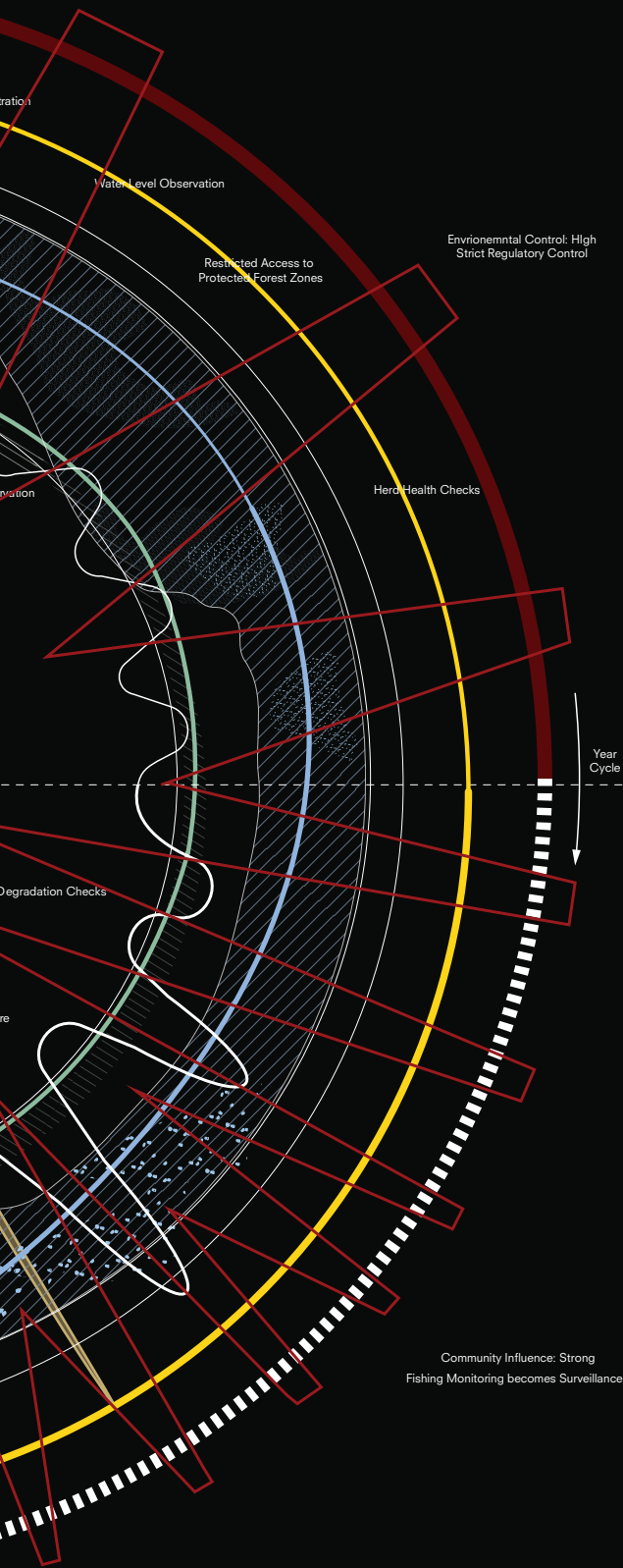
Current realities impacted by geopolitics, control, tourism (and lack of agency)



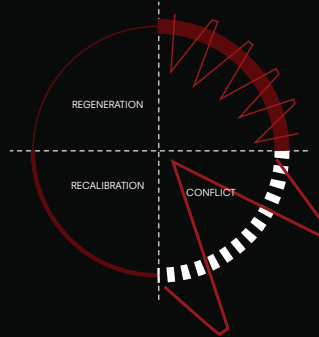
Map of Practices
(Intensities and Relations)

SEASONAL GOVERNANCE

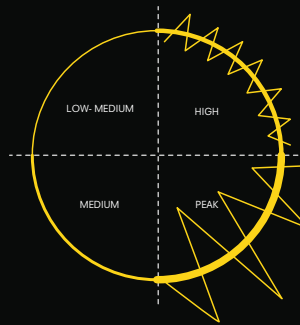




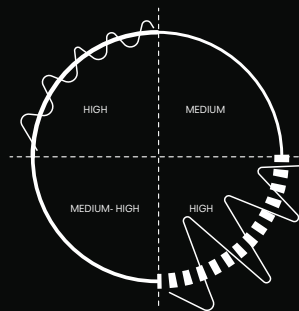
TYPES OF GOVERNANCE



MONITORING INTENSITIES

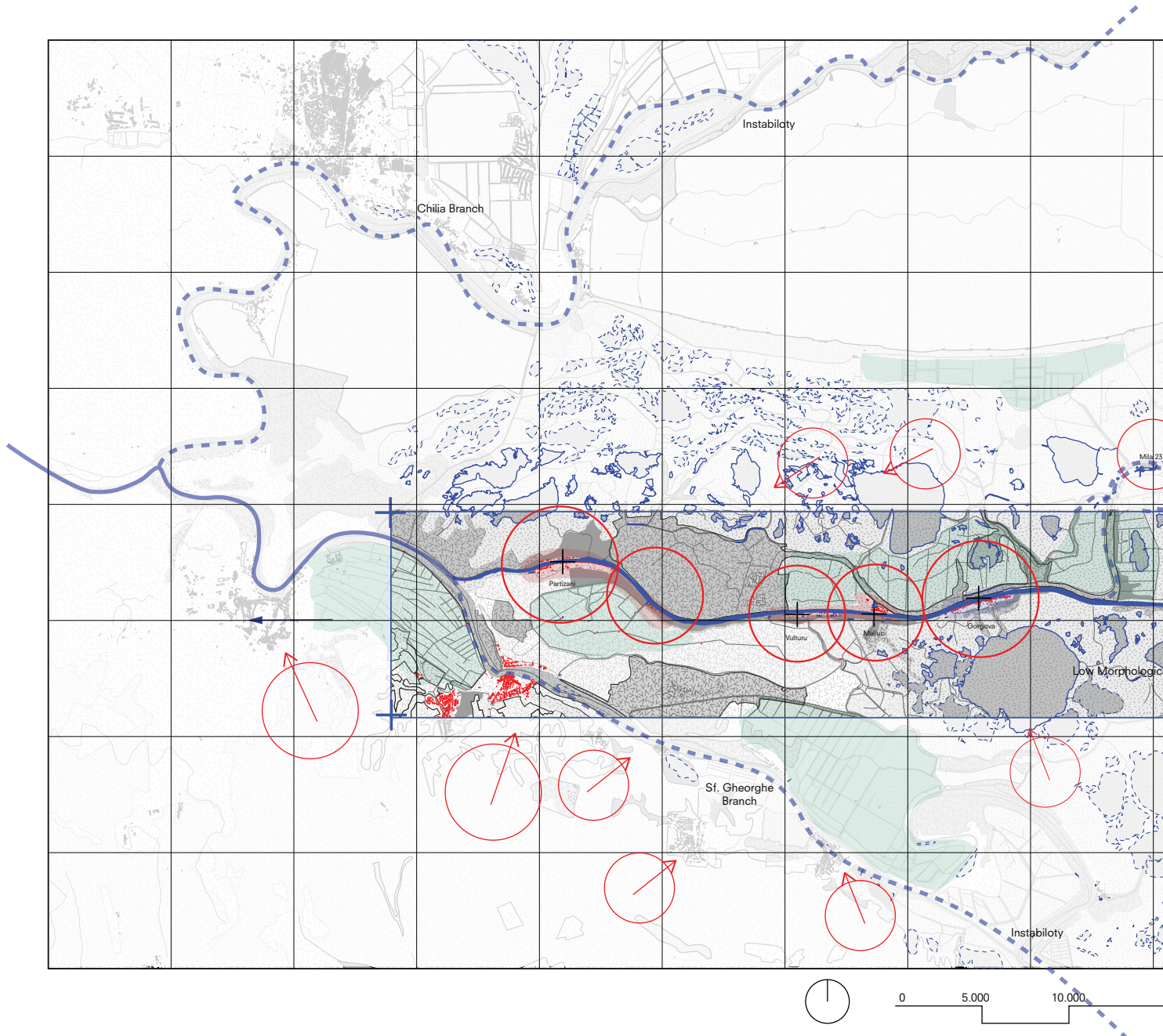


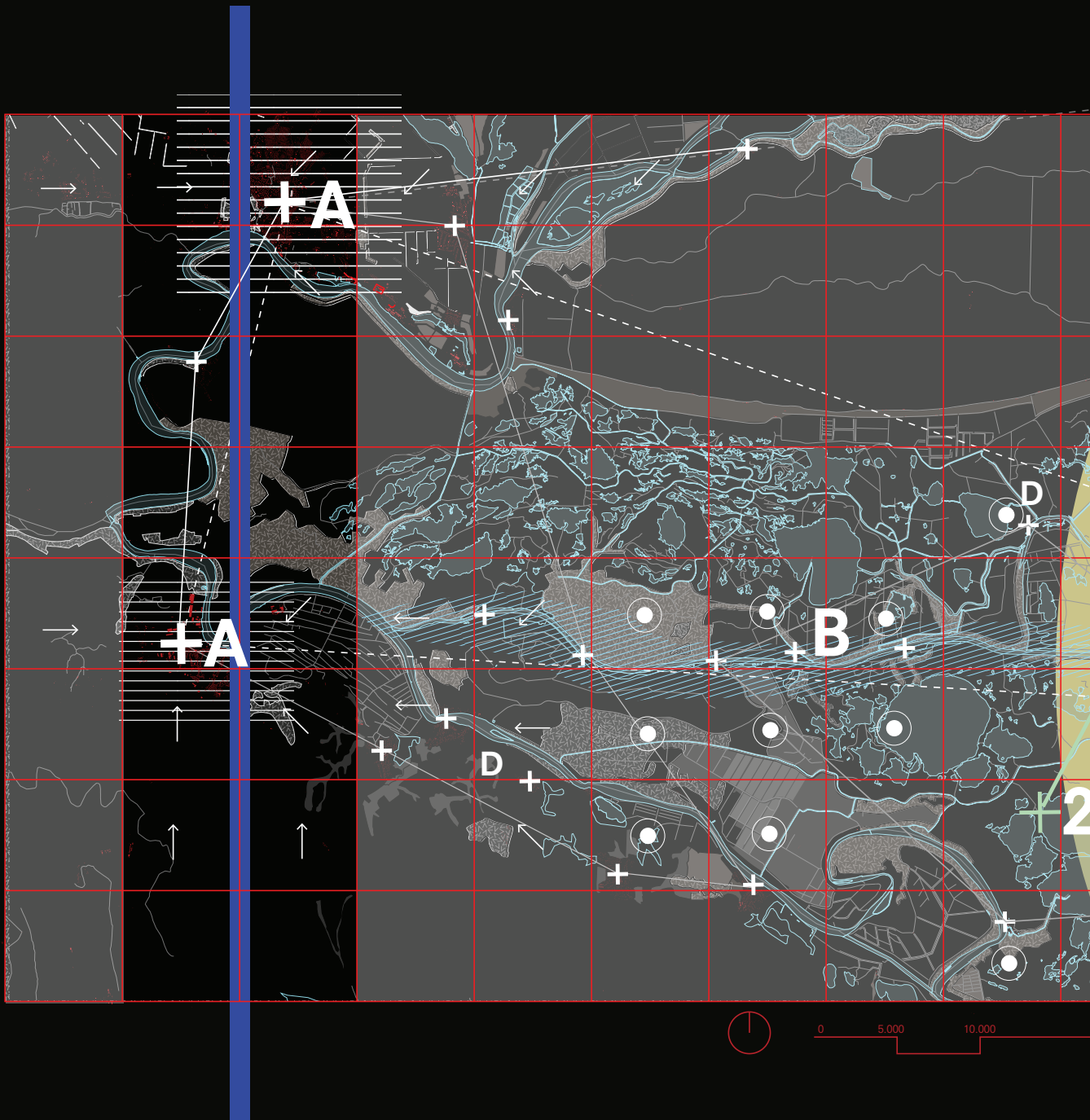
COMMUNITY INTENSITIES

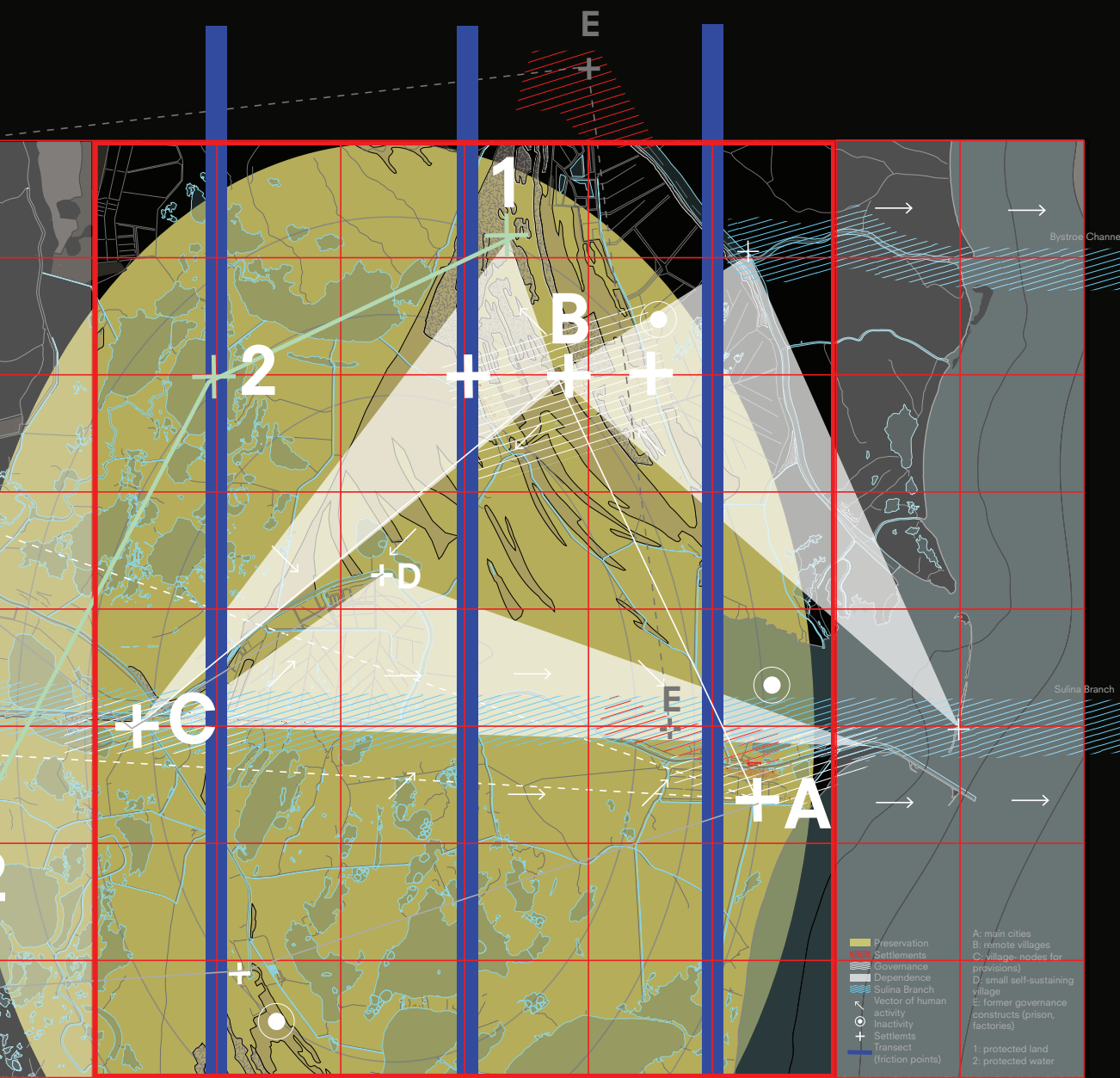


- Locals' Agency (Water)
- Reed Harvesting and Burning
- Farming (Cattle Keeping)
- Community Agency
- ▣ Friction- Local Resistance
- Governance Intensities

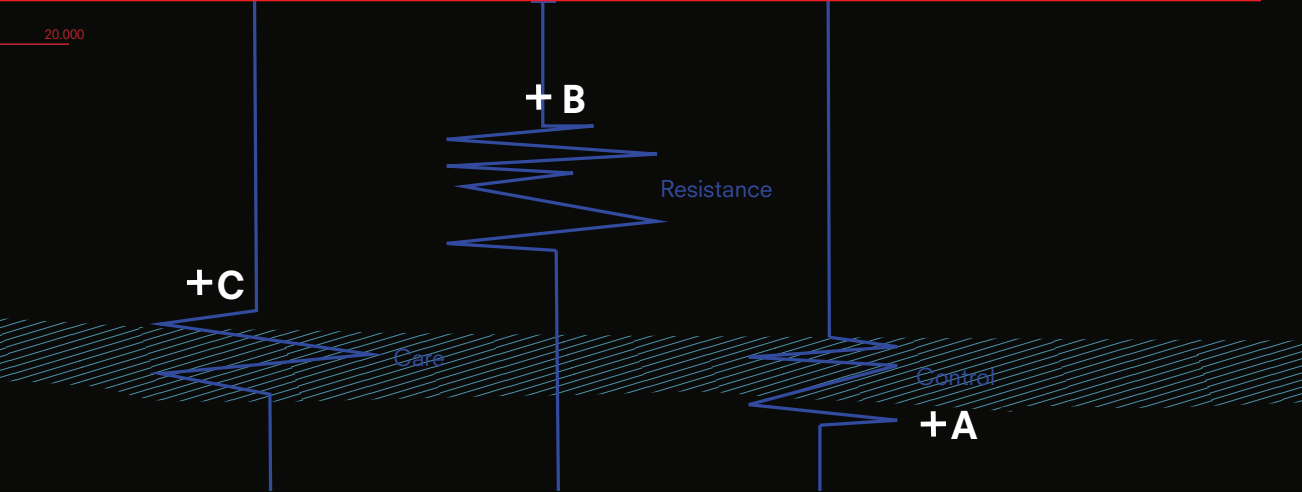
Governance in the Delta
 Shifts in Abstract Governance Enacted through Authorities
 (Monitoring, Tacit Knowledge, Resistance)







20,000



Map of Friction Points
 Locating Possible Sites of Intervention in Crisan, Mila 23,
 Letea and Sulina

Design Methods

Environmental Sensors

The design methodology operates across multiple scales and is grounded in a theoretical framework informed by case studies. Rather than treating interventions as isolated objects, the project positions them as relational components within a distributed territorial assemblage. It begins at the smallest scale, focusing on sensors as precise forms of infrastructural “acupuncture,” where localized interventions generate broader territorial effects. Their placement emerges from existing spatial practices, allowing design to operate with, rather than upon, situated conditions.

Across scales, the methodology integrates environmental sensing with vernacular knowledge, producing a networked system of monitoring, signalling, and adaptive governance. Crucially, this network is not oriented toward centralised control, but toward forms of situated use: data is produced, accessed, and interpreted locally, becoming a resource embedded within village life rather than extracted from it. In this sense, sensing is reframed as a shared territorial practice, supporting environmental literacy, decision-making, and collective negotiation at the level of the community.

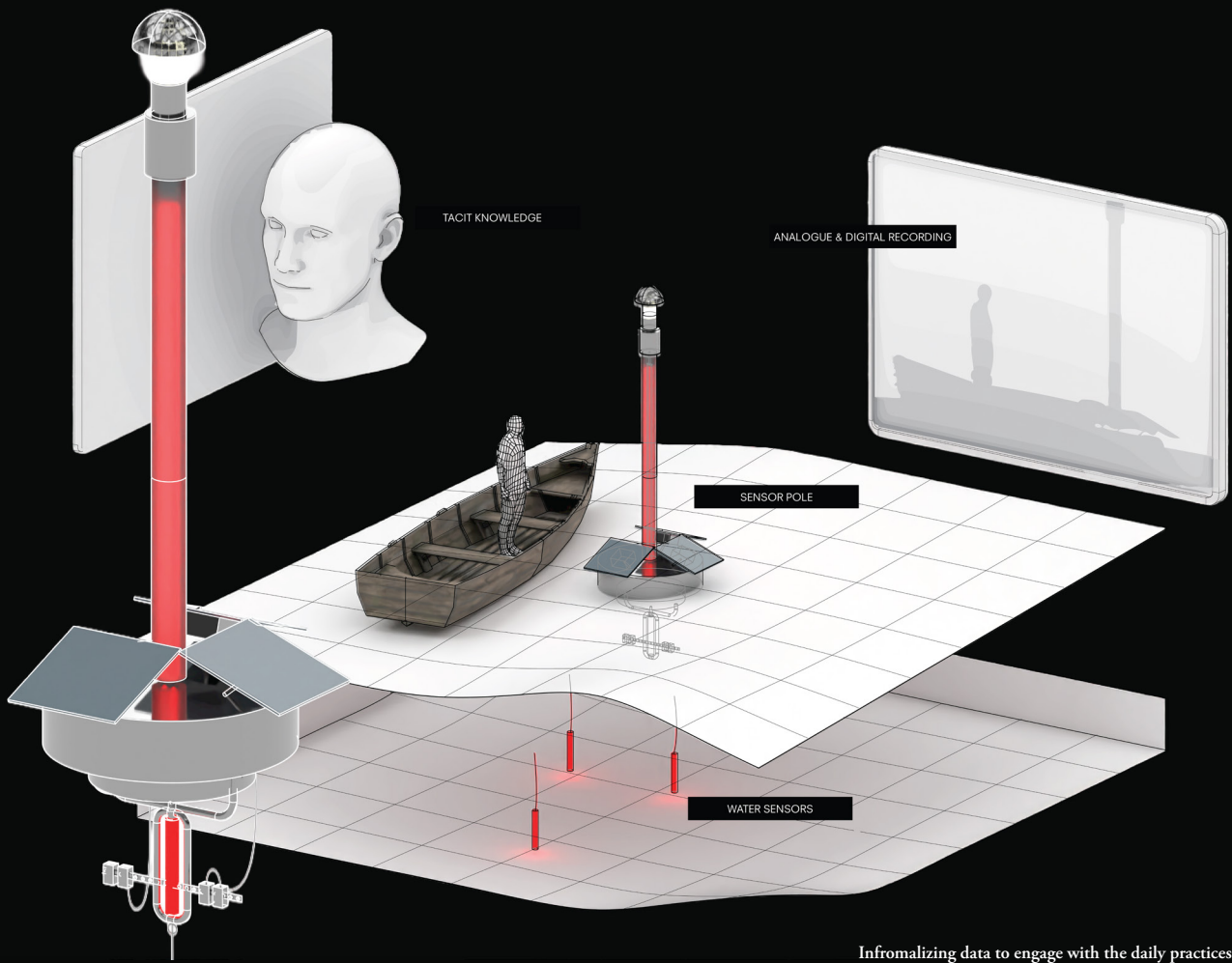
A key concern of the research is therefore not only how data is collected, but how it is distributed, appropriated, and made operative within everyday life. Following Marina Otero Verzier’s (2020) notion of data ecologies, data infrastructures are understood as material and territorial apparatuses that actively produce forms of governance, inclusion, and exclusion. The question becomes how these infrastructures might be reoriented so that their primary site of operation is not distant institutional control, but the inhabited territory itself.

Within the Danube Delta, existing data ecologies, hydrological monitoring, biodiversity tracking, and environmental risk modelling, tend to operate through abstraction, translating lived environments into regulatory indicators. Seasonal practices such as fishing, navigation, and reed harvesting often remain outside these regimes of legibility. The research therefore positions architecture as a mediat-

ing interface that reconfigures sensing as a local commons: a spatial and technical framework in which data supports village-level agency, rather than primarily serving higher-order institutional governance.



Fig. 04: The Synergy between Technology and Ecology in Marina Otero Verzier's Work.
 Photo by Claudia Paredes.
 Source: KoozArch, 2024



The Fishing Satellite

The fishing satellite is conceived as a monitoring device that critically repositions the notion of surveillance. Rather than operating through centralized observation, it establishes a localized framework in which tacit knowledge and sensor-based data are brought into relation. Monitoring is approached as a spatial and collective practice in which analogue and digital modes of knowing coexist and continuously inform one another. The intervention thus operates as an interface through which environmental conditions are not simply measured, but interpreted and negotiated.

Methodologically, the project emerges from a reading of existing infrastructural conditions within the delta, particularly the absence of spaces that support gathering and exchange. By examining the dock, the church, and the local bar as primary social infrastructures, the fishing dock is reinterpreted as a site capable of spatial and political agency. The focus shifts from form-making to the operational question of how such a structure can organize interaction, visibility, and collective decision-making.

This approach is further developed through the reading of the Slow House project by Diller and Scofidio (1989), where architecture is framed as a mechanism that mediates rather than simply frames vision. Central to this project is the displacement of the “real” view by its representation: the monitor obstructs the physical window while simultaneously transmitting a mediated image of the same landscape. Vision is thus no longer immediate, but constructed through layered systems of framing, delay, and control (Diller and Scofidio, 1989).

The project engages with multiple regimes of vision that are constructed simultaneously- real, framed, and virtual- each articulated through distinct media. The drawing operates as an operative field in which collage, projection, and technical representation are combined to reveal how perception is assembled. The possibility of controlling the image through adjustable mechanisms further reinforces vision as a condition of spatial negotiation rather than fixed perspective (Domino, 2002).

Applied to the fishing satellite, this methodological frame-

work shifts attention from the view itself to its production and mediation. The intervention engages the entanglement of movement, observation, and data, examining how fishermen’s tacit, experience-based knowledge can be translated, extended, or contested through sensing technologies. Rather than reinforcing a binary between analogue and digital systems, the project positions them within a continuous field of negotiation.

In this sense, the fishing satellite operates less as an object than as a spatial protocol: it organizes how views are constructed, how knowledge circulates, and how environmental conditions become collectively legible.

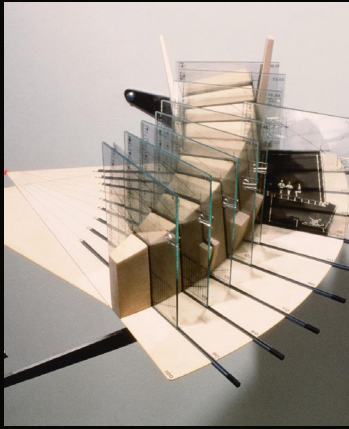


Fig. 05



Fig. 06

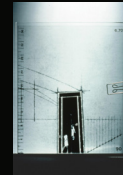


Fig. 07

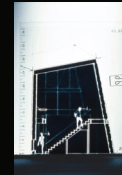
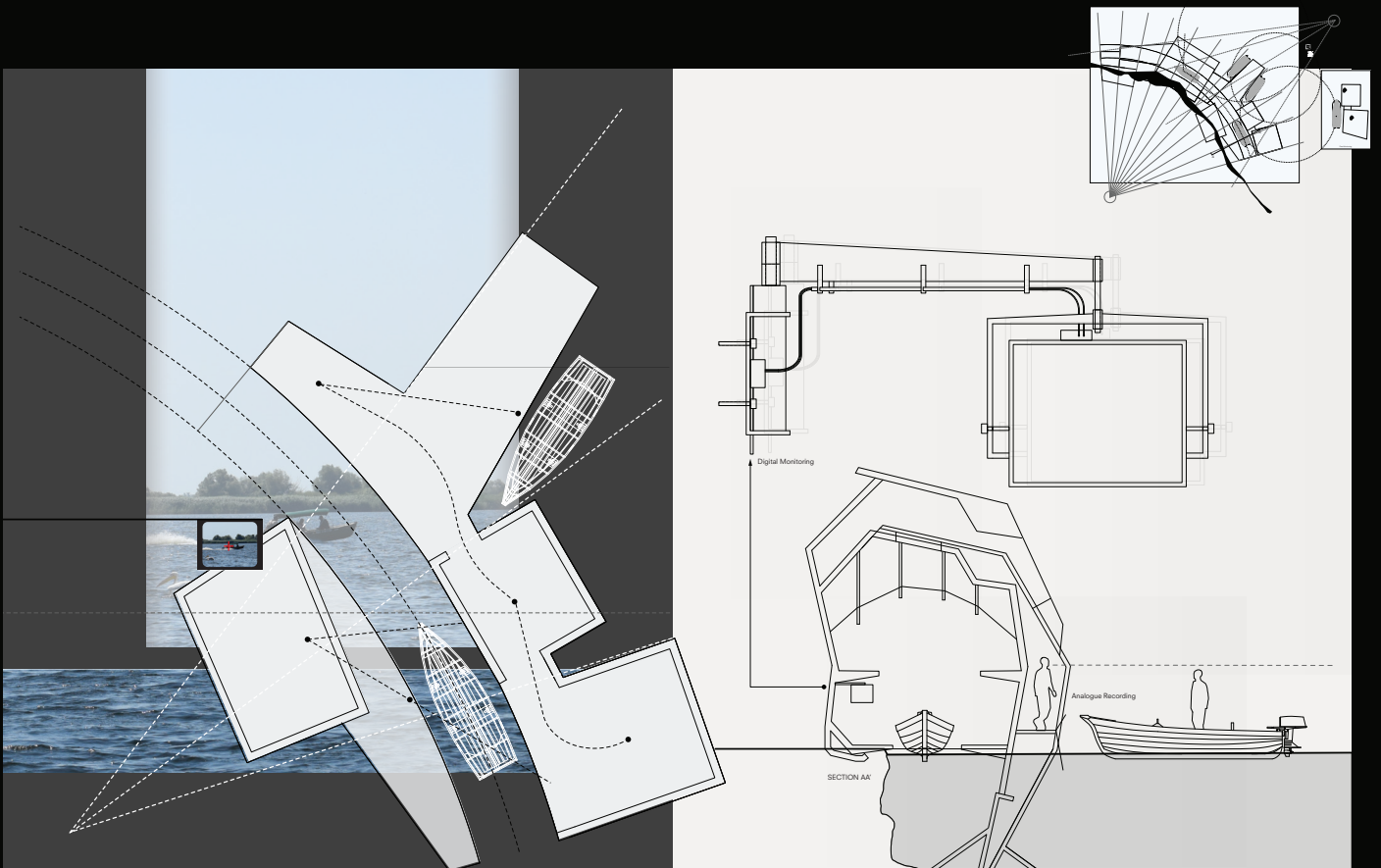


Fig. 08

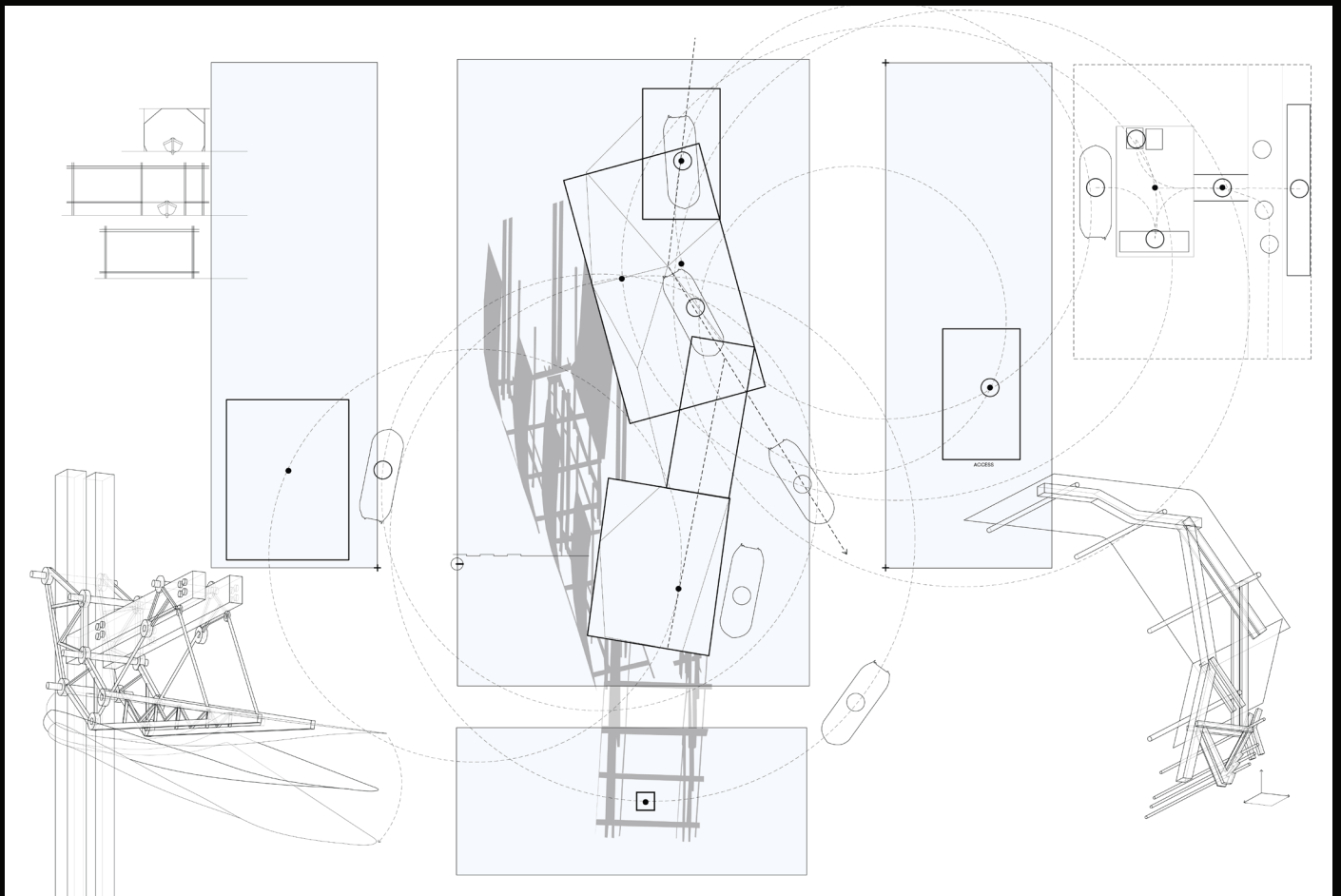
"The composite view to the sea, formed by the screen in front of the picture window, collapses the opposition between unmediated and mediated vision."

Diller Scofidio, 1991.

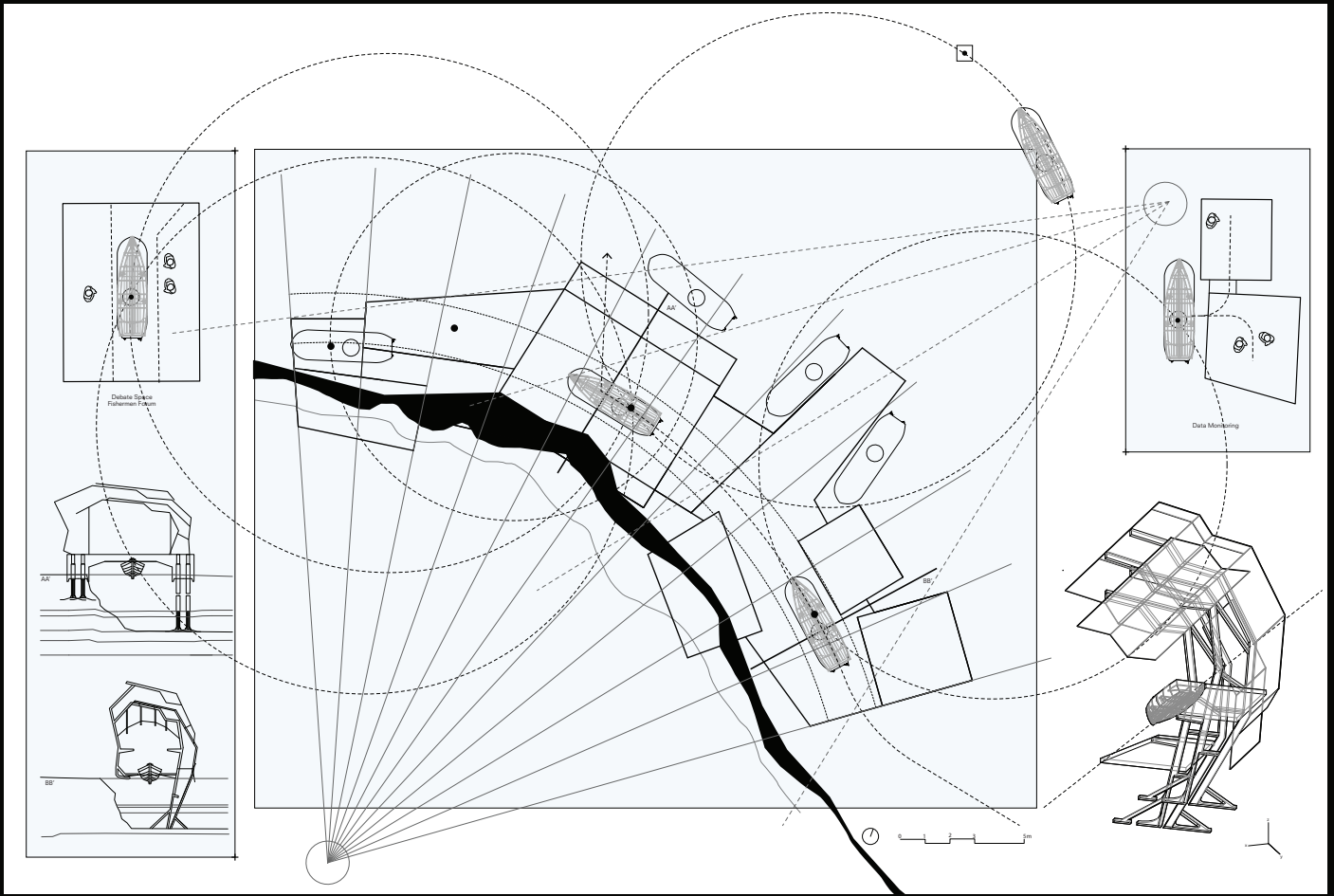
Fig. 05-08: Slow House, Long Island, New York, designed by Elizabeth Diller and Ricardo Scofidio.
Source: Diller Scofidio + Renfro (n.d.).



Architecture as Monitoring Device
How can tacit knowledge and data monitoring interact?



The Fishing Dock
Initial Sketch studying the architecture-boat interaction.
The boat becomes a unit of measure, a key element in organizing circulation and defining the massing



The Fishing Dock
Design development sketches exploring the interaction between the boat and the architecture, focusing on movement, docking and gathering.

The "Parliament" - Engaging with the Grey Heritage

The third intervention within the proposed system is articulated as a “parliament”: not as a representational civic building in the conventional sense, but as an infrastructural condition for gathering, debate, and the inscription of territorial processes. It operates as an interface where heterogeneous actors, locals, administrative bodies, and external parties, enter into a shared spatial field of exchange. In this sense, the parliament is less a typological object than a distributed apparatus for producing and archiving situated forms of governance.

The intervention is located in Sulina, the only port city of the Danube Delta, where logistical, industrial, and extractive infrastructures converge and intensify. Historically shaped by its position as a border zone and naval node, the city underwent a period of industrial expansion during the communist era. Following its collapse, this infrastructural density remained as an unresolved field of abandoned and underutilized structures, understood as a condition of suspended material agency. Within this context, the project operates through a logic of reactivation rather than replacement, engaging with the city's “grey heritage”. The methodological operation is grounded in a practice of profanation: a return of spatial and material systems from fixed, programmatic closure into open-ended use-value, where function is no longer prescribed, but negotiated through occupation and encounter.

Sulina's Development as Key Port on the Western Border



Fig. 99: View of Sulina port city 1906
Source: Filip, 2022



Fig. 11: View of Sulina port city 1900
Source: Wikimedia Commons, 2012



Fig. 10: View of the Administrative Palace
Source: Mustranu, 2019



Fig. 12: View of the Administrative Palace, in 1944
Source: Patrimoniul multietnic din Tulcea (n.d.)

"Today, the commission no longer corresponds to the circumstances; it is an archaic construct, an anachronism, an unprecedented exception, unique in the world.

Although provisional, it still endures; after all, it wasn't said in vain that nothing is more permanent than something temporary.

The motley population here, natives and foreigners alike, regard it with respect and timidity.

A silent struggle has lasted for half a century between the national authority and the international one."

Bart, 1933.

Europolis

The Canning Factory and the Water Sanitizing Facility in Sulina)



Fig. 13: Sulina's Fish Canning Factory (1951)
Source: Adhristal, 2025



Fig. 14: Water Treatment Facility, 1951
Source: Adhristal, ResearchGate publication, n.d.

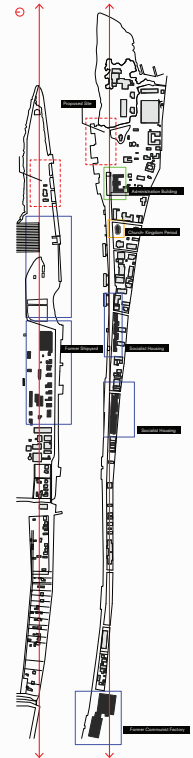
Current State: The City port with its Grey Heritage



Street in Sulina

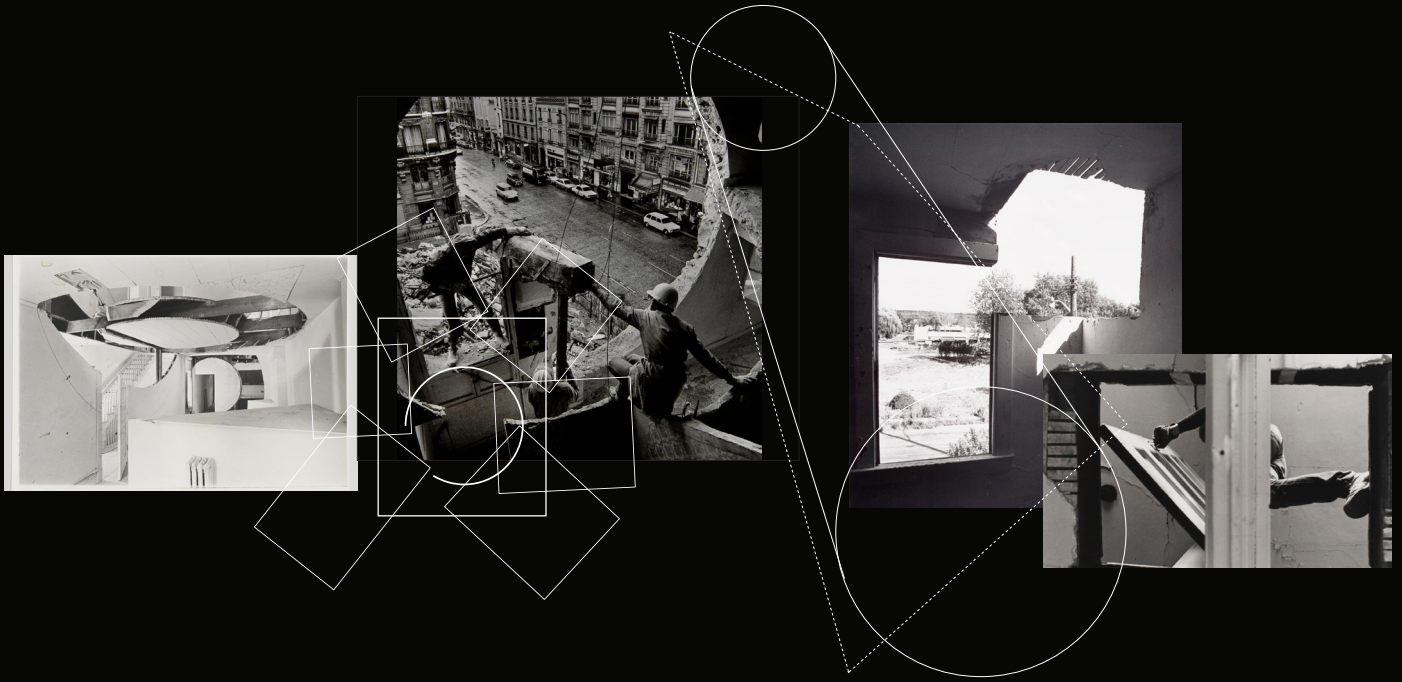


Foamen Shipyard



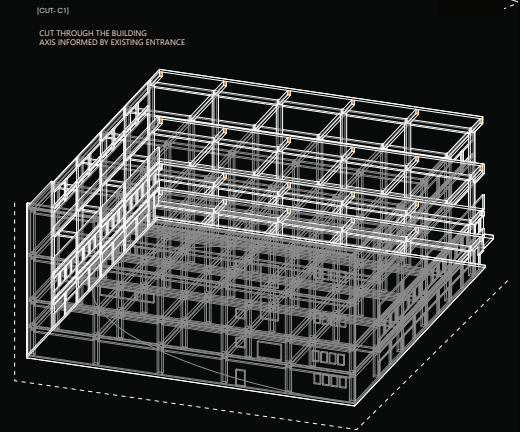
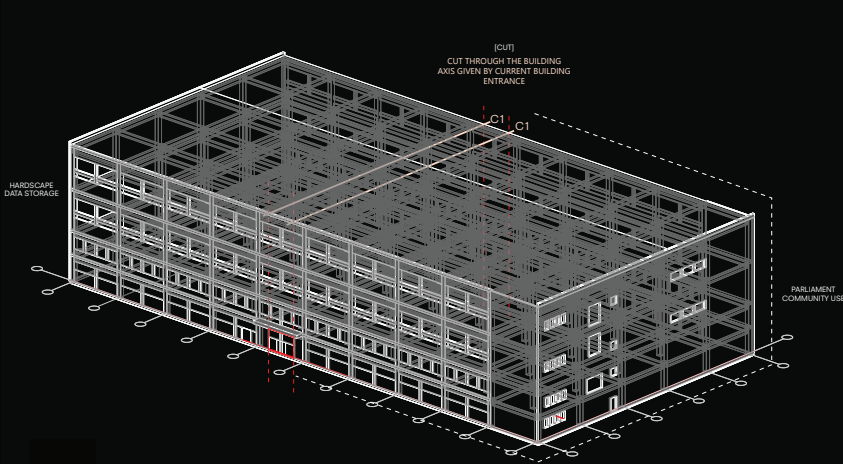
Design Methodology- Cutting

Central to this operation is the notion of the cut, informed by the practice of Gordon Matta-Clark. Here, cutting is not used as a formal or aesthetic gesture, but as a spatial tool that activates the building by dissolving its existing geometry and introducing another geometry that is even more precise. It does not simply break continuity; it reveals and strengthens existing qualities of the building, such as the corner, the threshold, and the structure. It produces discontinuities through which new relations can be articulated, between interior and exterior, body and infrastructure, matter and landscape. In this reading, the cut is understood as an operative breach that destabilizes the autonomy of the industrial structure and opens it toward its surrounding territorial and social field.



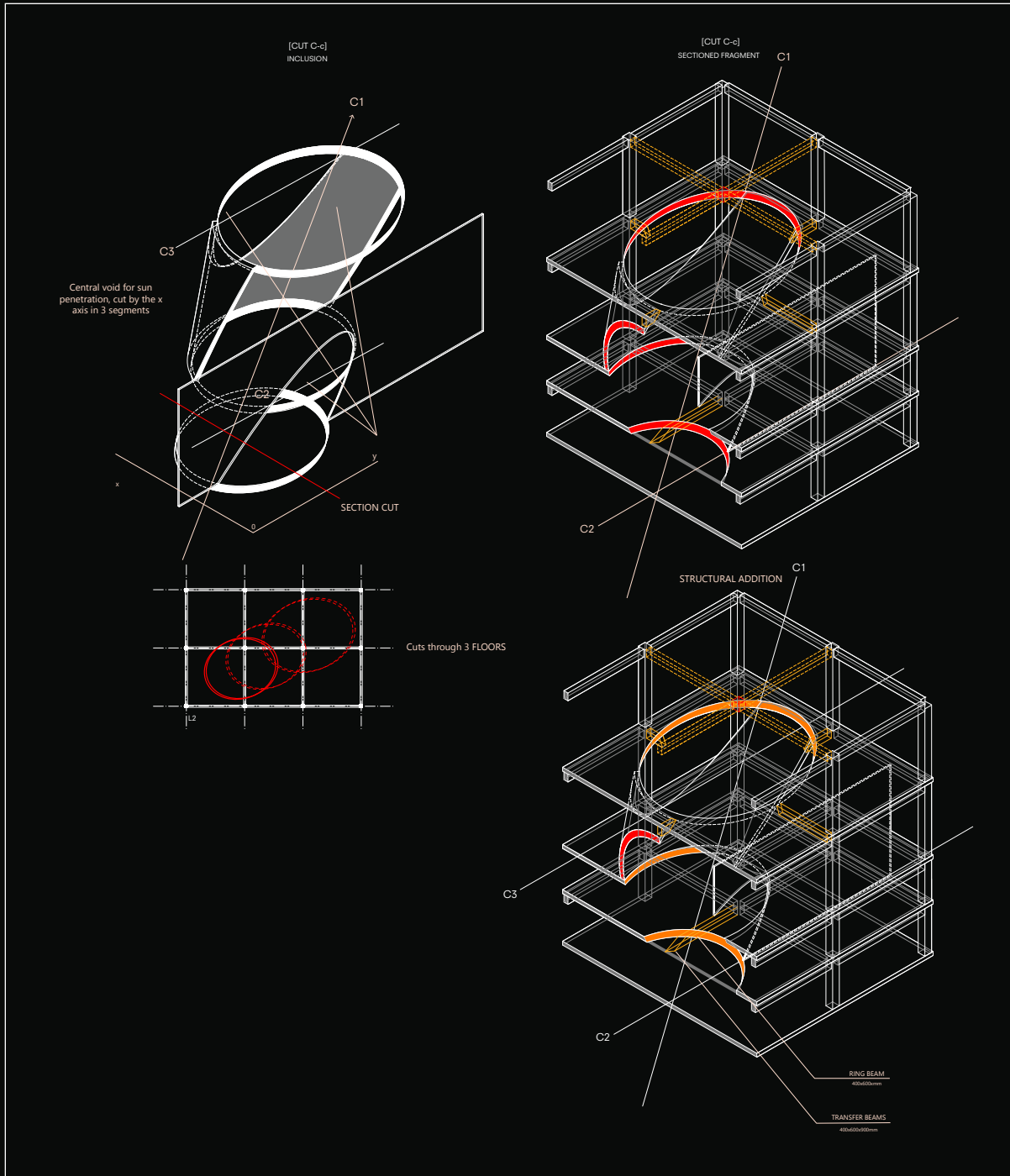
Gordon Matta- Clark's Cuts

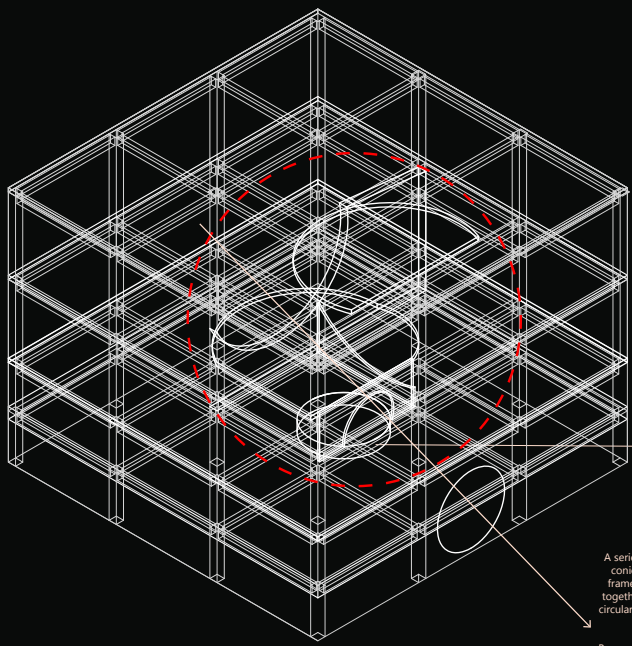
The refusal to let the solid dominate over the void



Fish Canning Factory Current Massing

Studies of Cuts



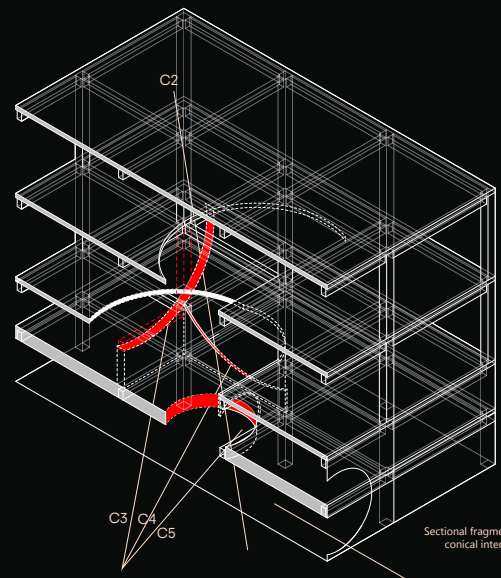


[CUT C-a]
NEGOTIATION

Ground floor ceiling lowered to enhance horizontal cut

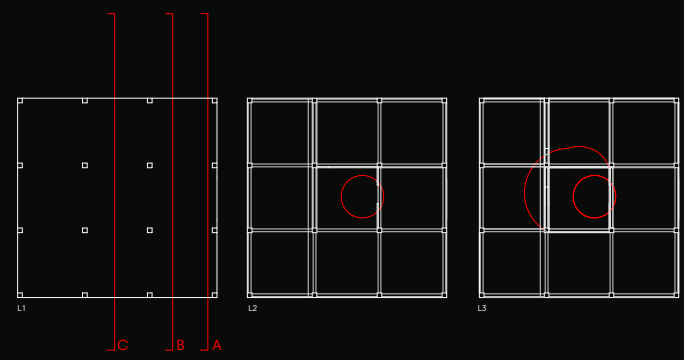
A series of cuts define a conical intersect that frames the waterfront, together with the facade circular cut on the ground floor.

Beams are kept to provide support. The roof is left intact. One column is removed and needs additional support.

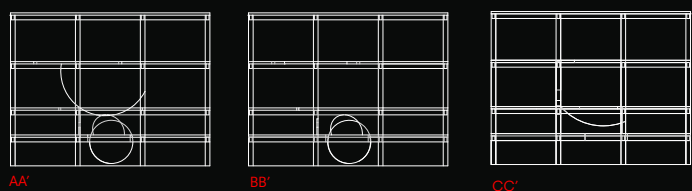


Sectional fragment of the conical intersect.

C1



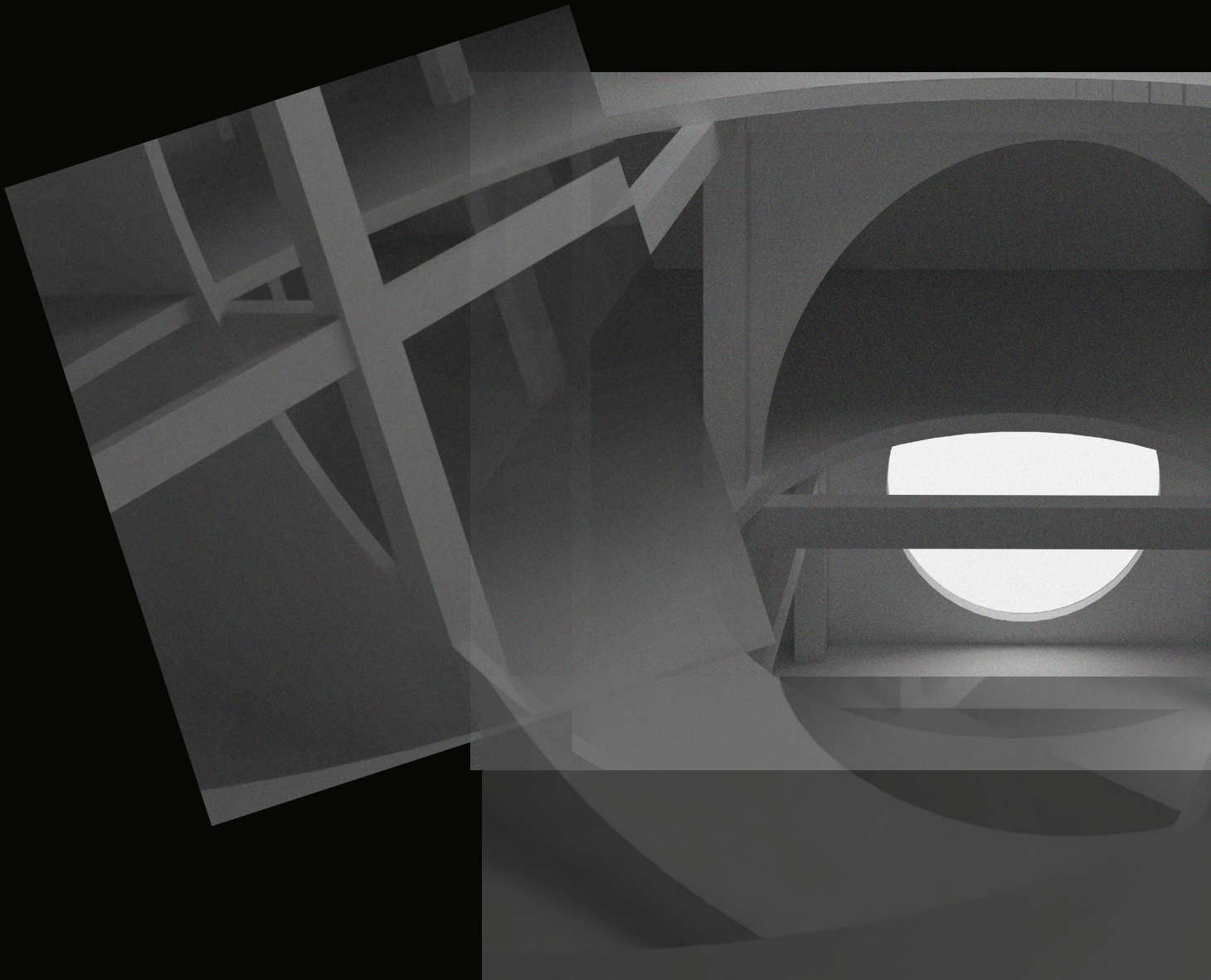
Horizontal cuts in 3 floor slabs.
Walls are added to enhance the conical intersect.

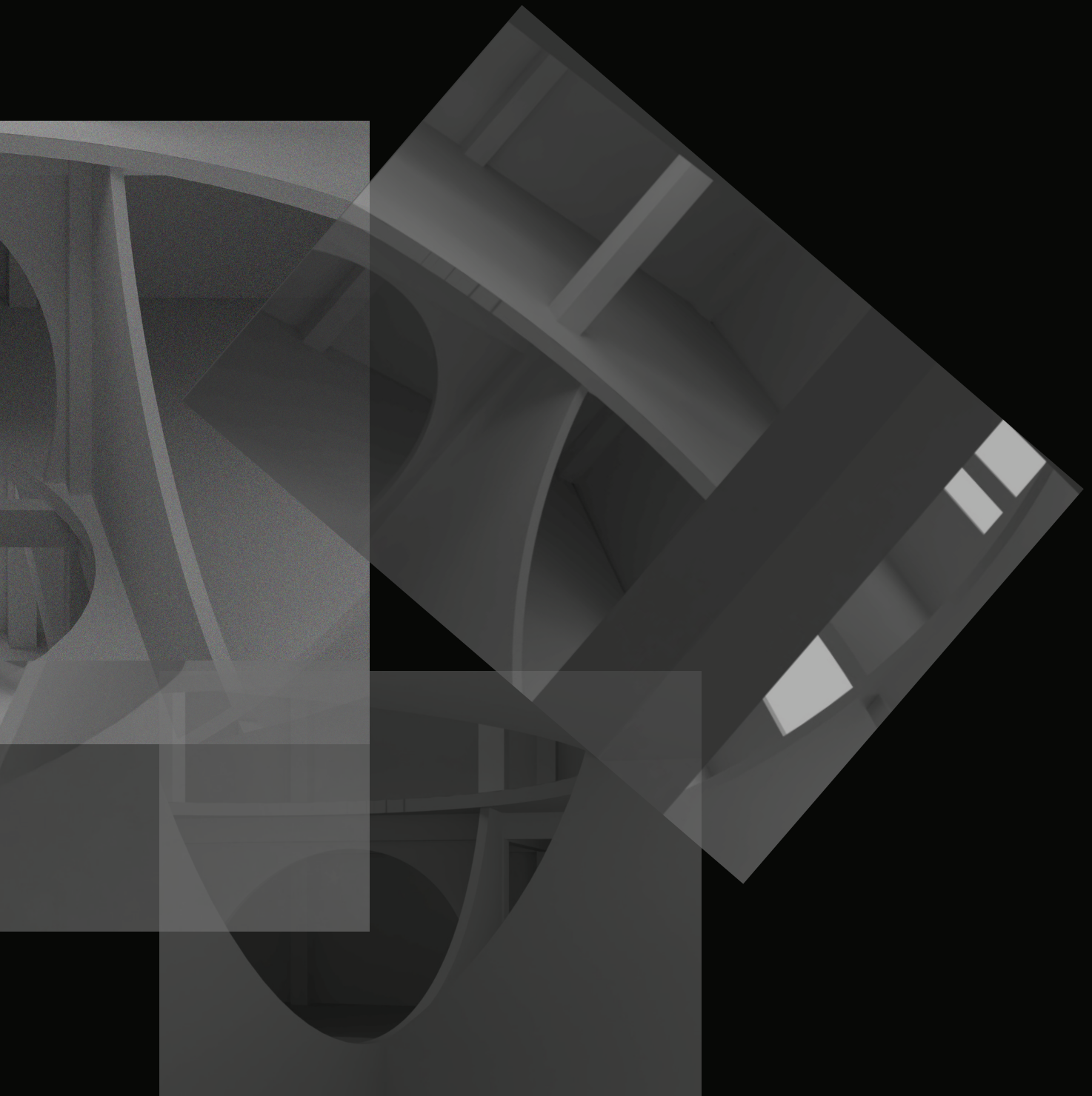


SECTION

Studies of Voids

Conical Intersect Cuts in the Fish Factory





Studies of Voids

Conical Intersect Cuts in the Fish Factory

Theoretical Framework

The project is framed, and the program brief introduced, through the theories of game and play, positioning both as tools to explore and generate new meanings within the political and territorial realm. The "Chess and Go" theory reveals the dynamics between codified authority and adaptive practice, while Agamben's notion of play and profanation (2007) shows how regulated spaces can be creatively reappropriated. Together, these frameworks guide design as a spatial field of exchange between governance, everyday practice, and ecological processes, where rules are not fixed constraints but conditions that can be inhabited, reworked, and transformed.

Territory as Process: Chess and Go

Deleuze and Guattari's distinction between Chess and Go (1987) offers a framework for understanding how territorial order is produced through contrasting logics of power and movement. "Chess is the game of the State; Go is the game of the nomad" captures a fundamental tension between striated and smooth space. Chess enforces hierarchy, codification, and fixed positions: the board is defined, pieces are differentiated, and each move follows strict rules. Space is segmented, monitored, and stabilized, it is made legible for governance. Power is concentrated, centralized, and predictable.

In the Delta, striated logic manifests through zoning plans, environmental protection laws, border controls, and administrative oversight. Space is mapped, regulated, and optimized according to ecological indicators, cadastral boundaries, or institutional priorities. In this framework, lived experience is secondary to legibility and control; territories become surfaces for intervention rather than fields of practice.

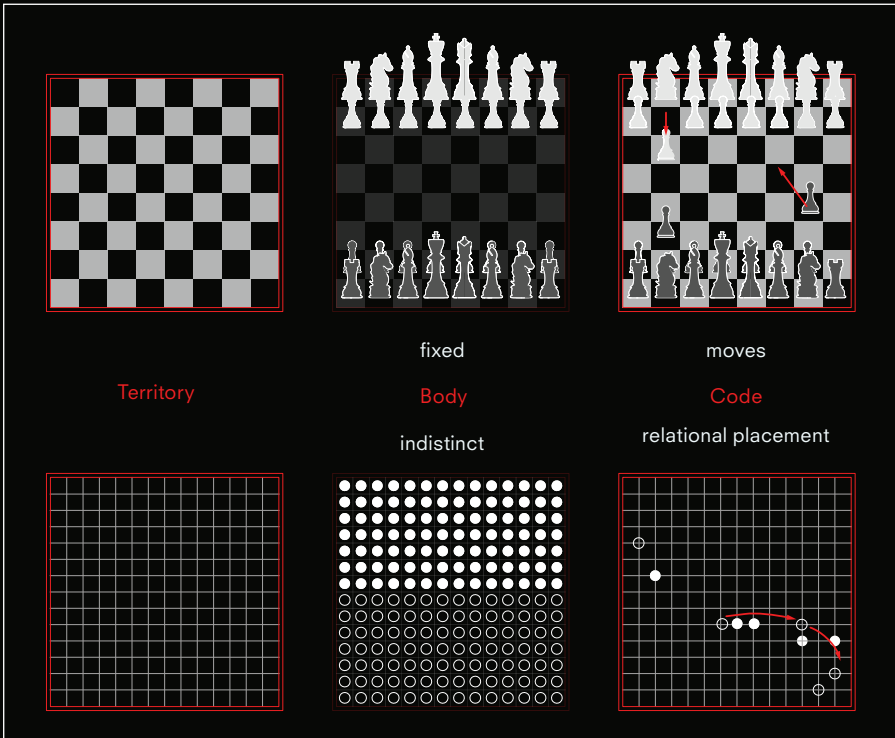
Go, by contrast, unfolds through relational, contingent, and adaptive logic. The board is open, pieces are equivalent, and strategy emerges through occupation, proximity, and temporal negotiation rather than pre-established hierarchy. Space is smooth: it is continuously produced, flexible, and responsive to conditions. Power is distributed, situational, and negotiated. The Delta's everyday practices, shifting navigation routes, seasonal fishing, adaptive

settlement, and reed harvesting, operate according to this Go logic.

These practices do not reject regulation, but navigate within and alongside it, exploiting gaps and moments of flexibility. Striated structures and smooth practices coexist: the Delta is both regulated and lived, codified and improvised. Chess and Go, taken together, describe the field in which architecture operates: between fixed authority and adaptive practice, between the abstract rules of governance and the tacit knowledge of those who inhabit and move through the territory.

**"Chess is the game of the state."
Go is the game of the nomad.**

Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 352.



Smippets from Fieldtrip
 Images showing the different settlement in Northern region:
 Crisan (top), Sulina (middle), Letea (bottom)



Fig. 14. Bertolt Brecht and Walter Benjamin Playing Chess
 Source: Jacobson, 2016.

Fig. 15. Gilles Deleuze Playing Chess
 Source: Christiansen, n.d.



Fig. 16: Human chess game being played in Palace Square, former Leningrad (now Saint Petersburg), in 1924
 Source: Open Culture, 2025

Profanation, Play, and Community Agency

The theory of profanation is central to the project, functioning both as a structuring principle of its conceptual framework and as a mode of engaging material conditions and systems of power. In this context, profanation is not understood as a critique of authority, but as a method of working through existing structures from within, rather than opposing them from the outside.

Giorgio Agamben describes play not as an escape from the mechanisms of power and enclosure that define the present condition, but as a way of subverting them from within, by reworking the rules themselves, much like the internal logic of a game that can be bent, reinterpreted, and turned against its own structure. In this sense, the project does not seek fixed solutions to political systems, but instead explores how they can be engaged differently, through shifting forms of use that adapt, reconfigure, and diverge from established rules, much like the logic of a game.

Within this framework, profanation is understood as the act of “playing with the law as children play with discarded objects, not to restore them to their original purpose, but to permanently free them from it” (Agamben, 2005, p. 64). It is neither resistance nor restoration, but a mode of reuse that reopens existing systems to new forms of life and use. Fixed functions are suspended, and spaces of regulation are loosened, allowing alternative forms of occupation and interpretation to emerge.

In the context of the Delta, regulatory systems define spatial order, restrict access, and assign fixed purposes. Everyday practices do not simply reject these rules; instead, they operate through them, within them, and alongside them. Fishermen, navigators, and reed harvesters act as agents of profanation, continuously reworking spatial conditions through use, repetition, and adaptation. Regulation is therefore not removed, but rendered flexible, negotiable, and lived.

Architecture extends this logic by mediating between regulation and use, between formal systems and informal practices. The proposed dispersed system follows this ap-

proach: it challenges how data can be placed in the hands of villagers, how surveillance can be replaced by monitoring, and how an administrative office can be reworked into a communal assembly space. Governance is no longer concentrated in a single structure but distributed across spatial practices and everyday interactions. In this way, architecture shifts from enforcing fixed functions to enabling experimentation, and collective agency.

**One day humanity will play
with law just as children play
with disused objects,
not to restore them
to their original use,
but to permanently
free them from it for good.**

Agamben, 2007.



Theory of Profanation by Giorgio Agamben

Fig. 17: Power of Humility: Imagine Sailing Away
Source: Epicoco, 2024

PART 3. RESULTS (WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED?)

Research results

The project is structured through three interconnected interventions operating across different scales: territorial sensing systems, a prototype satellite, and a central civic condenser. Together, they reframe governance as a distributed condition embedded within everyday practices and ecological processes.

Data Sensors: From State Instrument to Local Infrastructure

Local knowledge systems become a critical point of departure for the design of a dispersed fisherman–fish factory network. Within this system, water sensing infrastructure is developed explicitly for the use of fishermen, linking everyday practice with environmental observation and territorial awareness. The sensing apparatus becomes a key element in structuring the relationship between river, labour, and governance, enabling real-time feedback between ecological conditions and fishing activity.

The water sensors are composed of four elements: a pole designed with a light cap and a signal indicating in real time the water pollution level (1), a floating platform supporting a solar panel (2), underwater sensors detecting water velocity (3), and a series of small riverbed sensors tracking fish migration and transmitting data to the main unit beneath the floating platform (4).

In response to the persistent threat of wild animals, particularly jackals, villagers install radios on elevated wooden poles to produce sound deterrents. This vernacular strategy informs the development of a new hybrid pole typology. Constructed through a combination of timber and metal, the pole integrates a light element at its apex, extending its visual and spatial reach across the landscape, while its lower section houses sensing devices that monitor ground conditions. The object thus oscillates between deterrence, observation, and measurement, mediating relationships between human, animal, and environmental actors. While this approach builds on existing local practices of playing radios overnight to generate continuous human-like sound and keep jackals away, it improves effectiveness through targeted, responsive activation.

Additional sensors can be integrated to monitor ground conditions within the natural preserve, such as ground-based sensor poles inspired by serges sensors. These sensors can measure variables like soil composition, moisture levels, and gas emissions (e.g., methane), providing valuable data on environmental health and ecosystem changes.



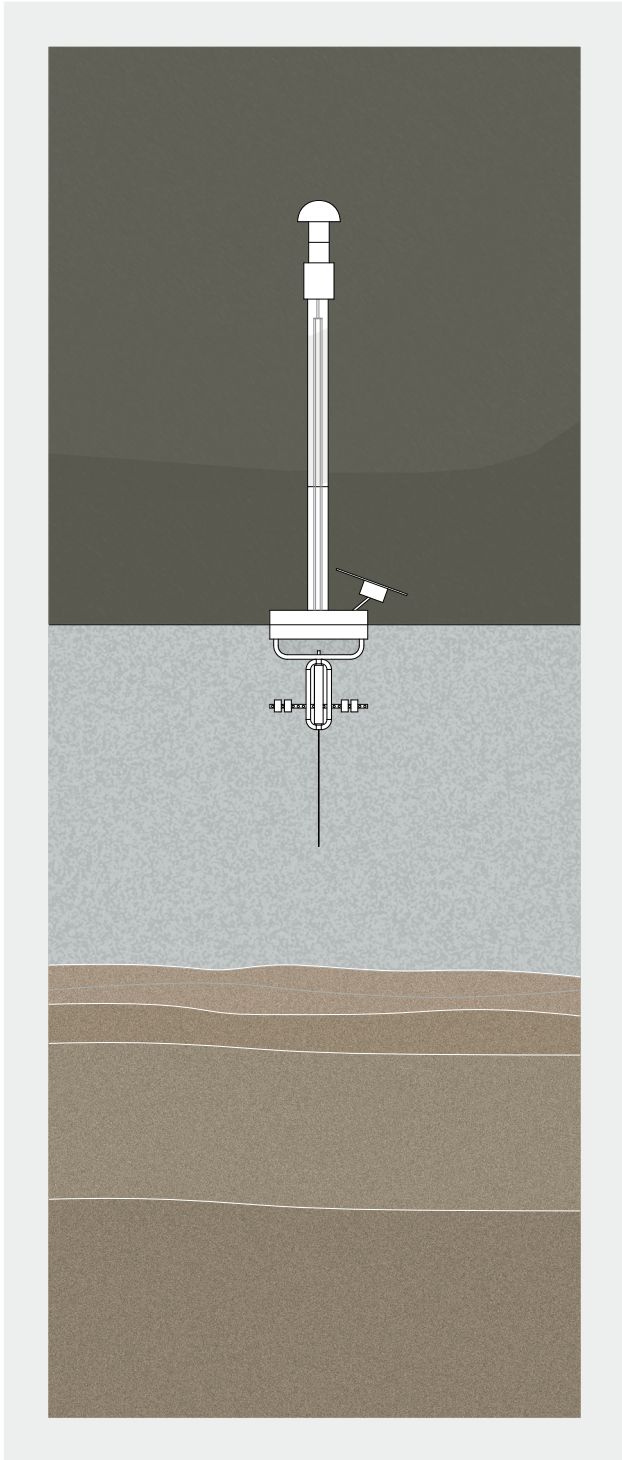
Render: Sensor in Meadows (in the Natural Preserve Protected Area)



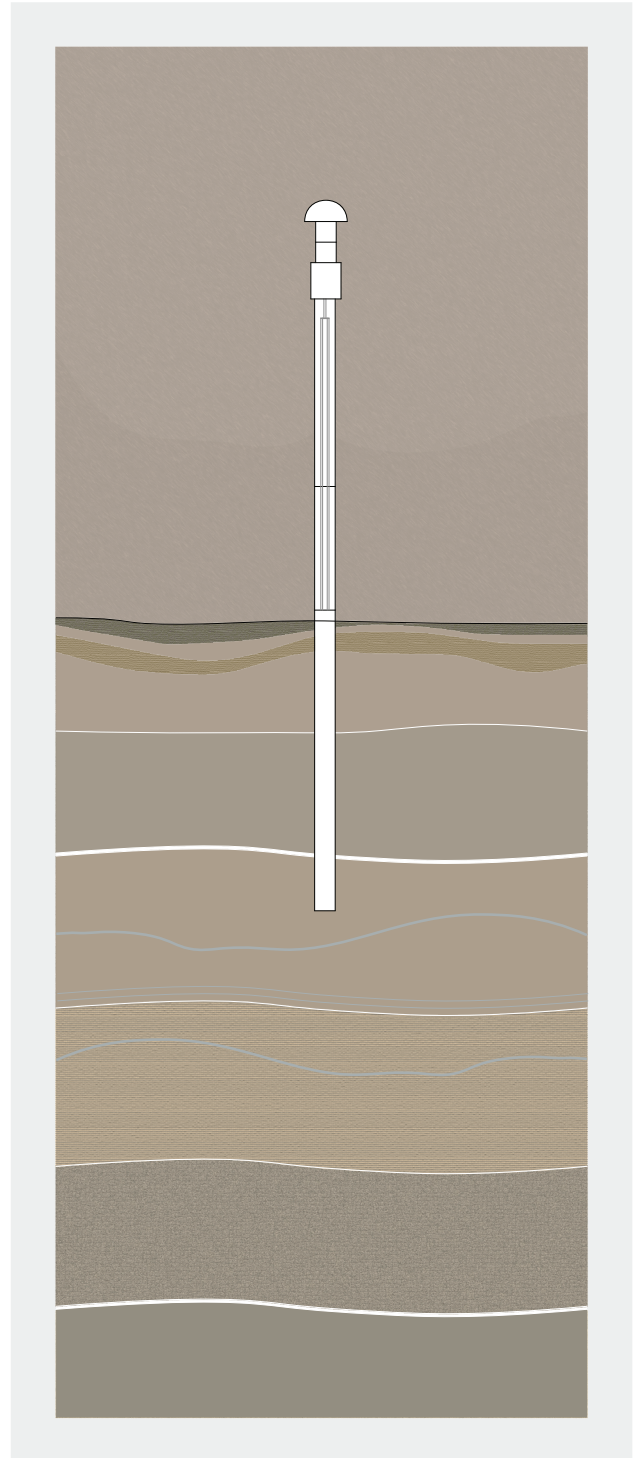
Render: Sensor Registering Water Pollution



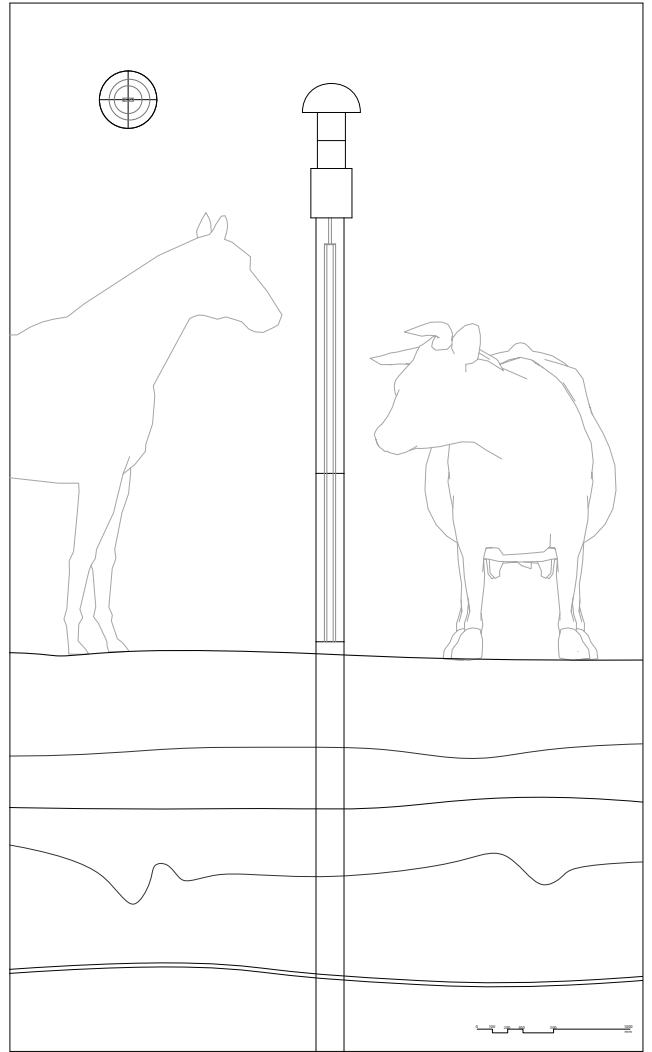
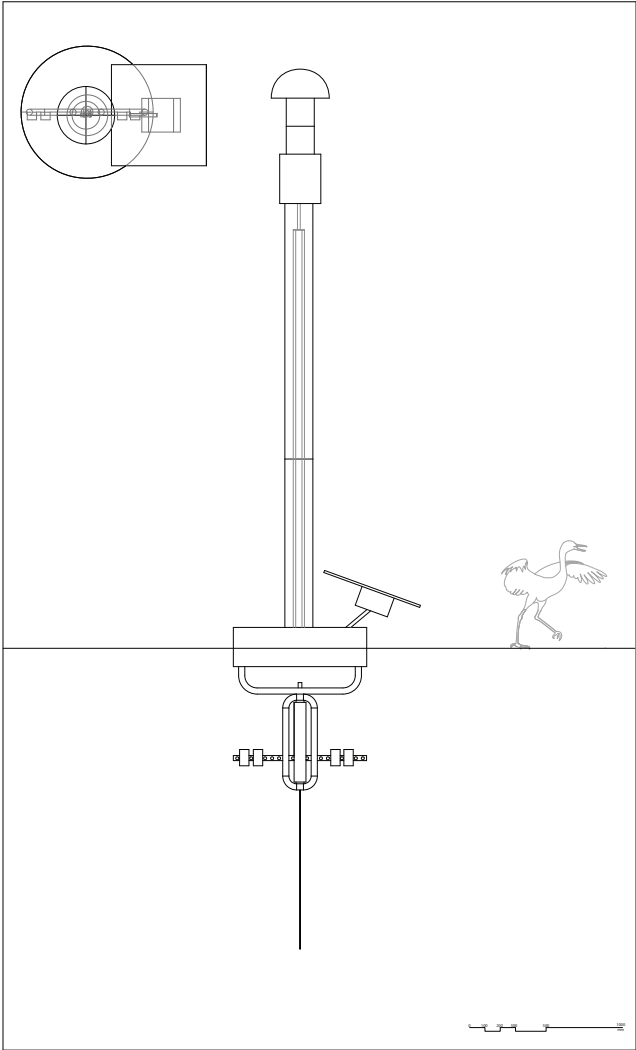
Render: Sensor Poles in Villages



Water Pollution and Fish Migration Sensor



Ground Sensor



Fishing Dock Satellite: Prototype for Situated Governance

Located at the Crişan–Caraorman node, one of the main river branches and the most frequently used fishing channel in the Northern Danube Delta, the Fishing Dock is developed as a response to the ecologies of the river edge, positioning architecture within the fluctuating conditions between land and water. The proposal emerges from the idea of the dock as the primary gathering point in the Delta: an extension of the domestic sphere, where the boundary between house and river is continuously extended into everyday practice. The project asks how this familiar condition can be rearticulated along the rivers where fishermen operate, translating domestic extension into the spatial and infrastructural conditions of work.

Rather than treating the river as a boundary, the project engages with the ecologies of "the edge", as an active surface of exchange, where movement, resource extraction, and environmental monitoring intersect. The building is partially grounded on land while extending over water, embedding it directly within these shifting territorial conditions. Its section expands both vertically and horizontally, producing mezzanine levels, side niches, and small docks oriented toward the channel that support acts of monitoring, observation, and informal use.

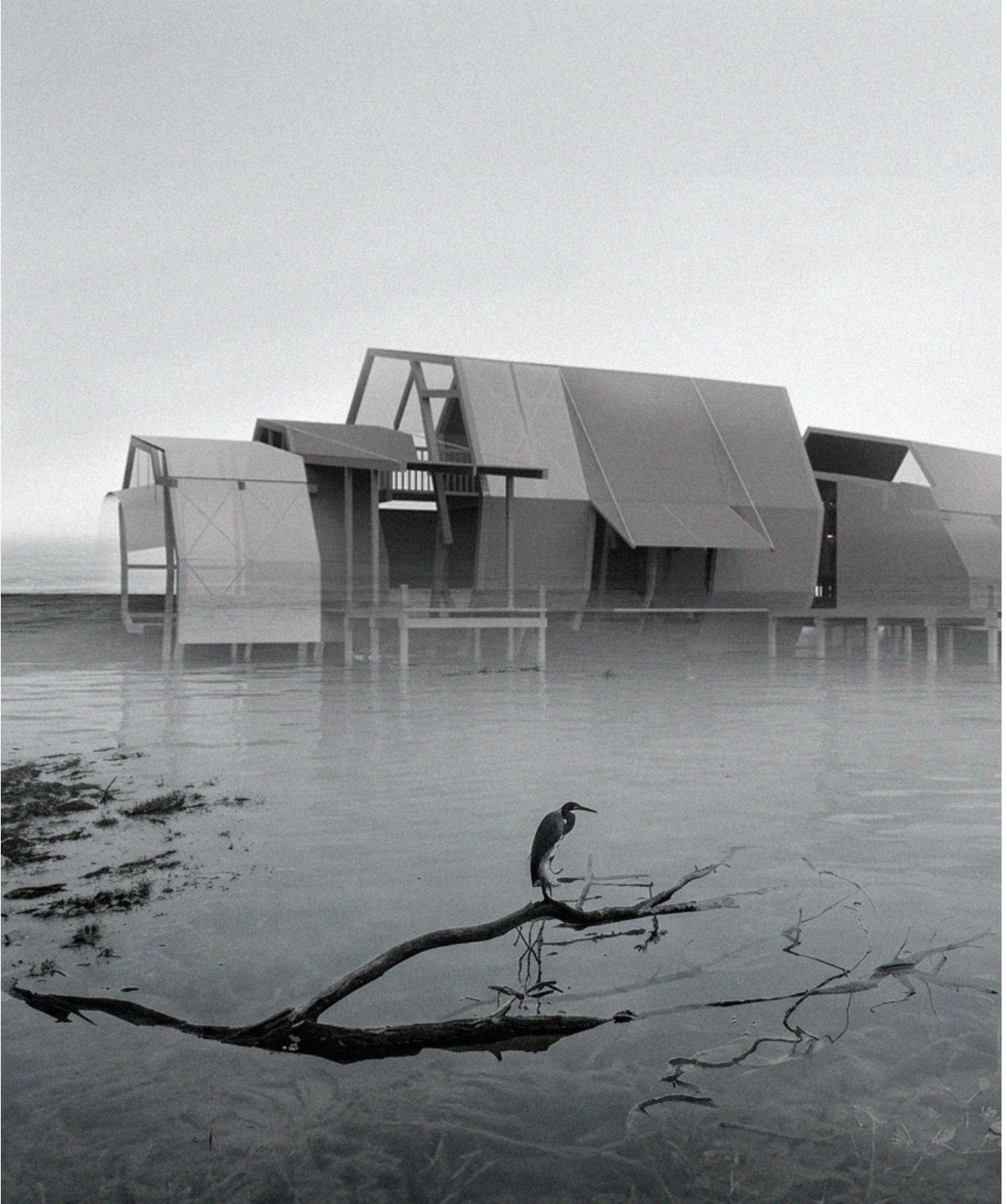
The Fishing Dock demonstrates how governance can be embedded in use rather than separated from it. Structure is understood as a mediating device that supports adaptation across different practices while maintaining a consistent spatial logic of sensing and exchange. In this way, the dock operates as a transferable model for situated agency, extending forms of localized governance across the territory.

It is composed of three interrelated elements: boat access and monitoring, the forum, and the workshop. These zones are connected through a system of docks, forming a continuous spatial sequence. The building functions as a gathering point, where boat trajectories and docking movements directly inform the configuration of the structure.

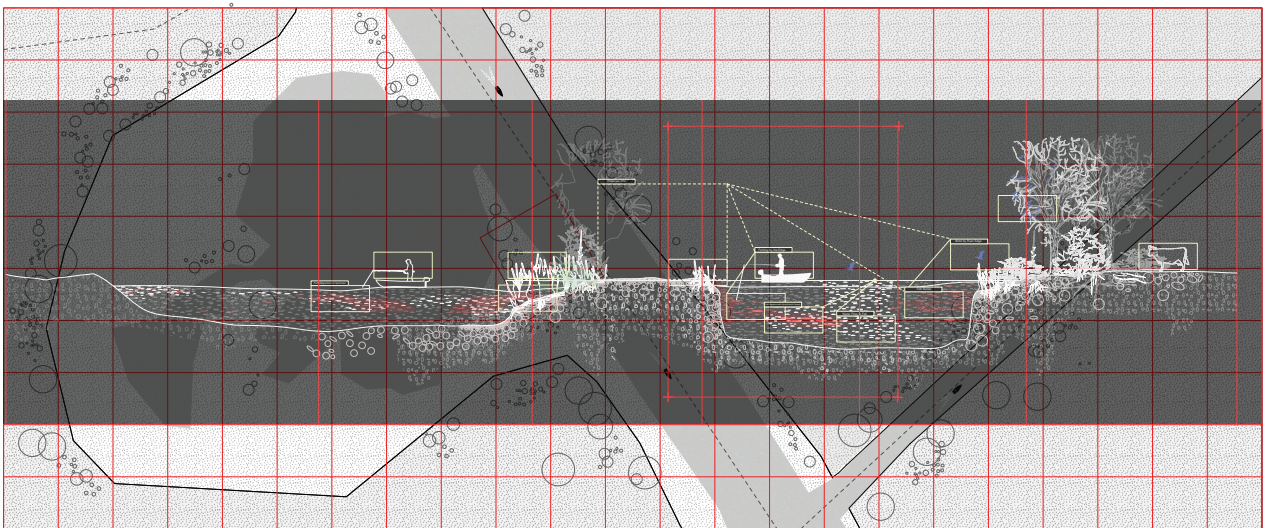
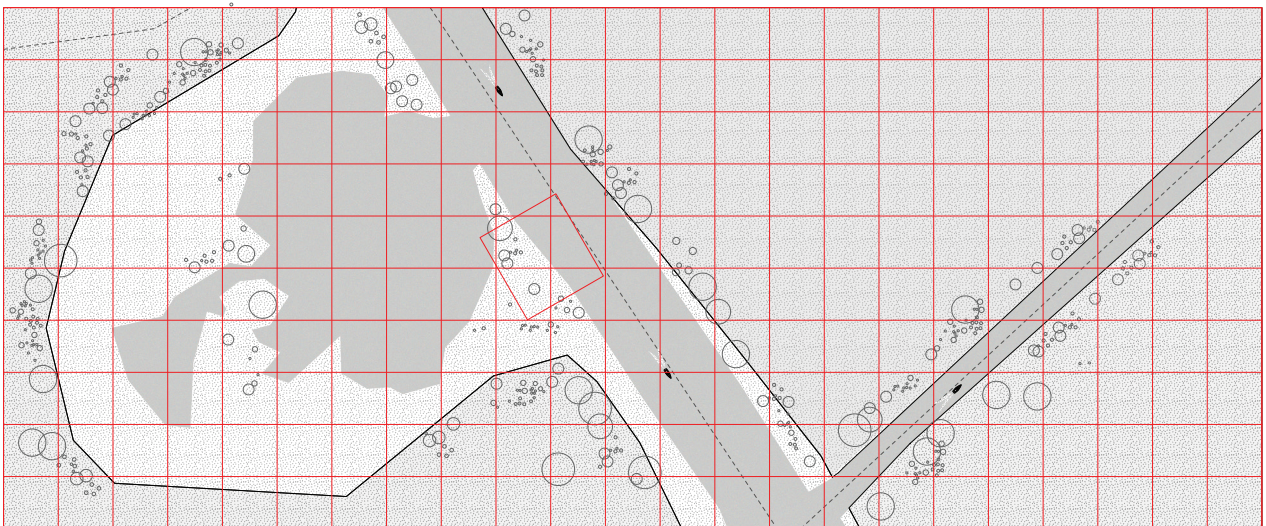
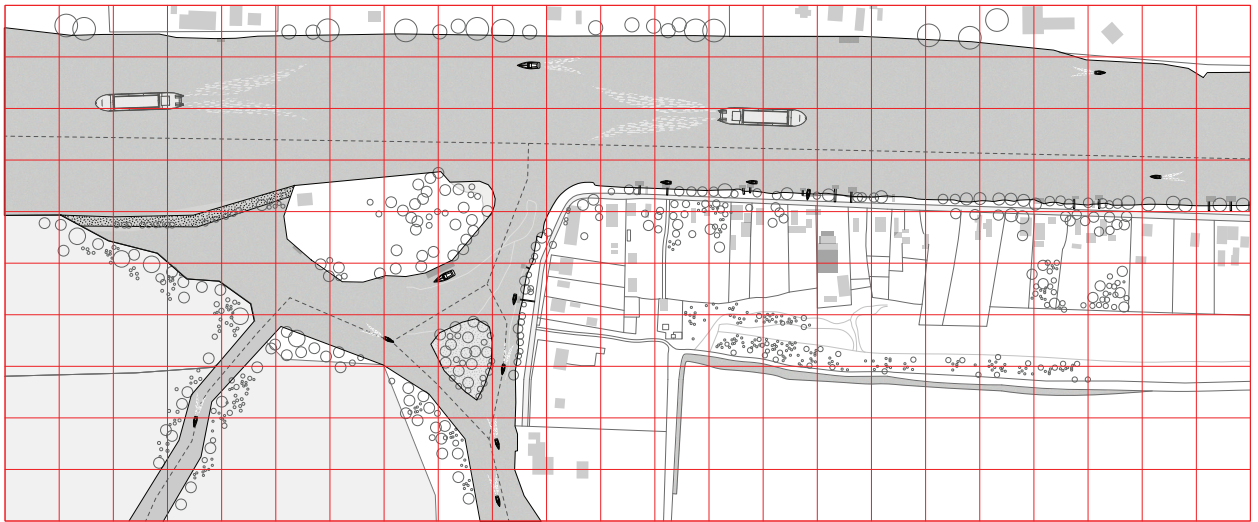
The boat access and monitoring zone is dedicated to the

digital observation of environmental conditions, connecting to sensors deployed across rivers and lakes. Small screens are placed on a mezzanine level, where fishermen can follow and interpret the dynamics of the delta in real time. The forum operates as an open civic space for exchange and discussion, allowing a boat to pass through the building while maintaining its continuity as a space for debate and encounter. The workshop provides a shared working environment for repairing nets, maintaining boats, and adjusting equipment, acting as an informal assembly space where fishermen gather throughout the day between fishing activities.

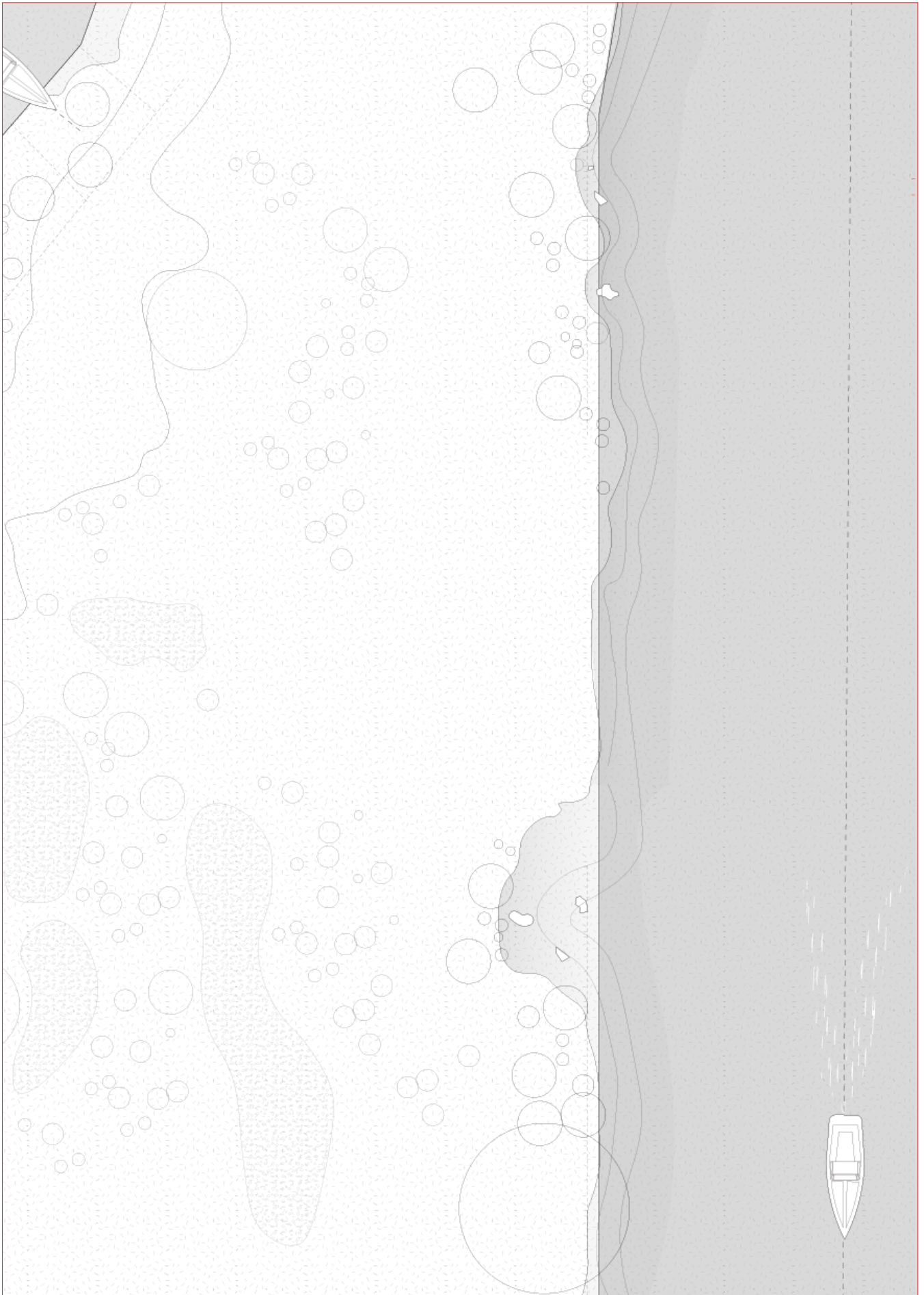
The three programmatic zones are designed to be interchangeable, allowing the structure to adapt to different territorial needs. Depending on context, the Fishing Dock can function as a monitoring station, a forum, or a workshop, ensuring flexibility in response to local conditions.



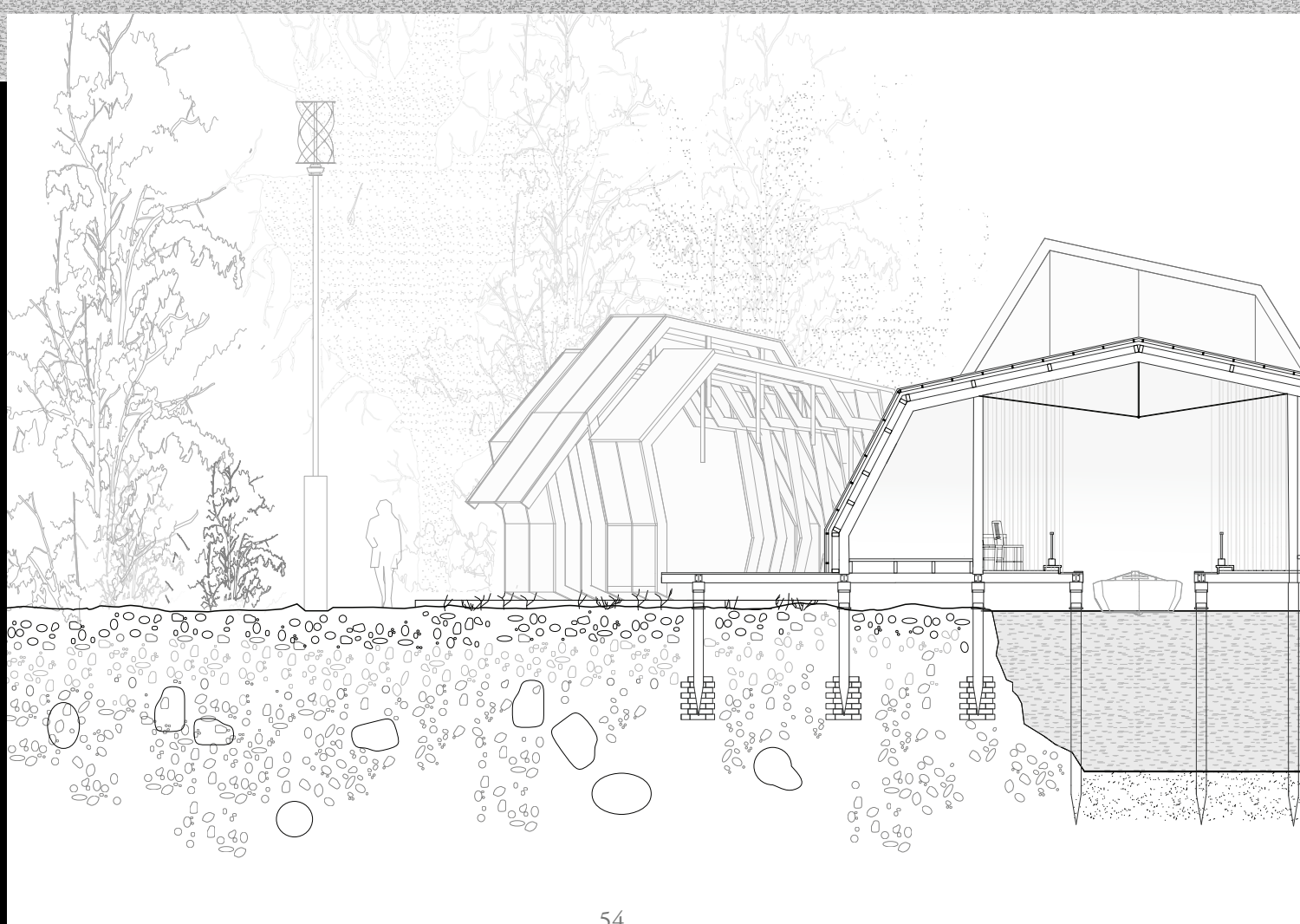
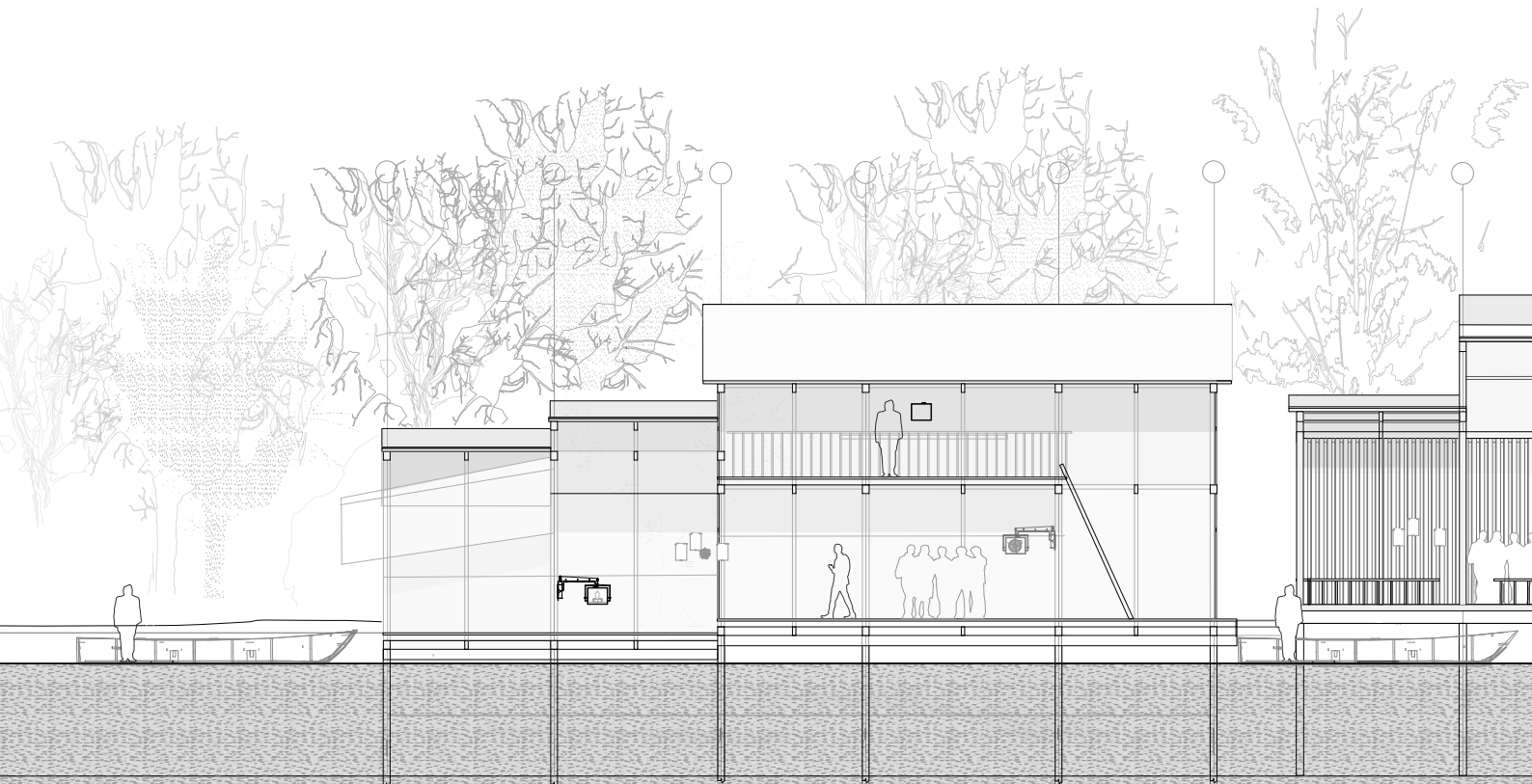
Render: The Fishing Satellite

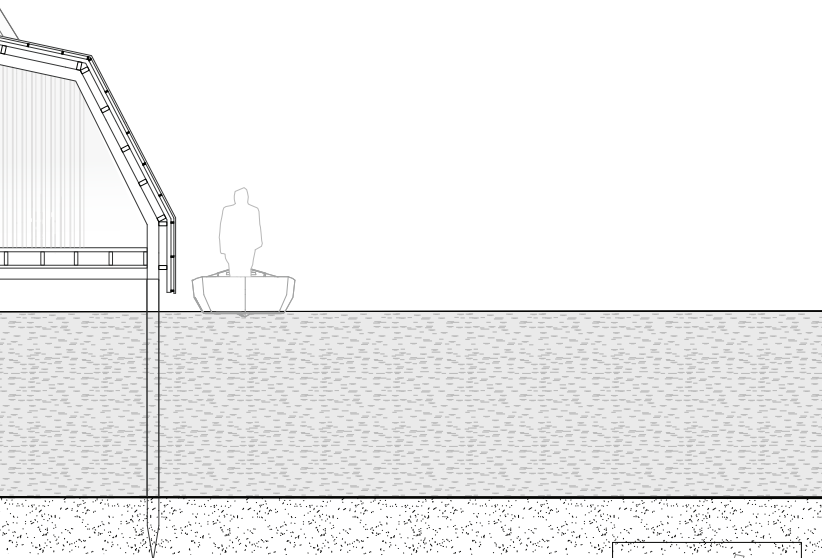
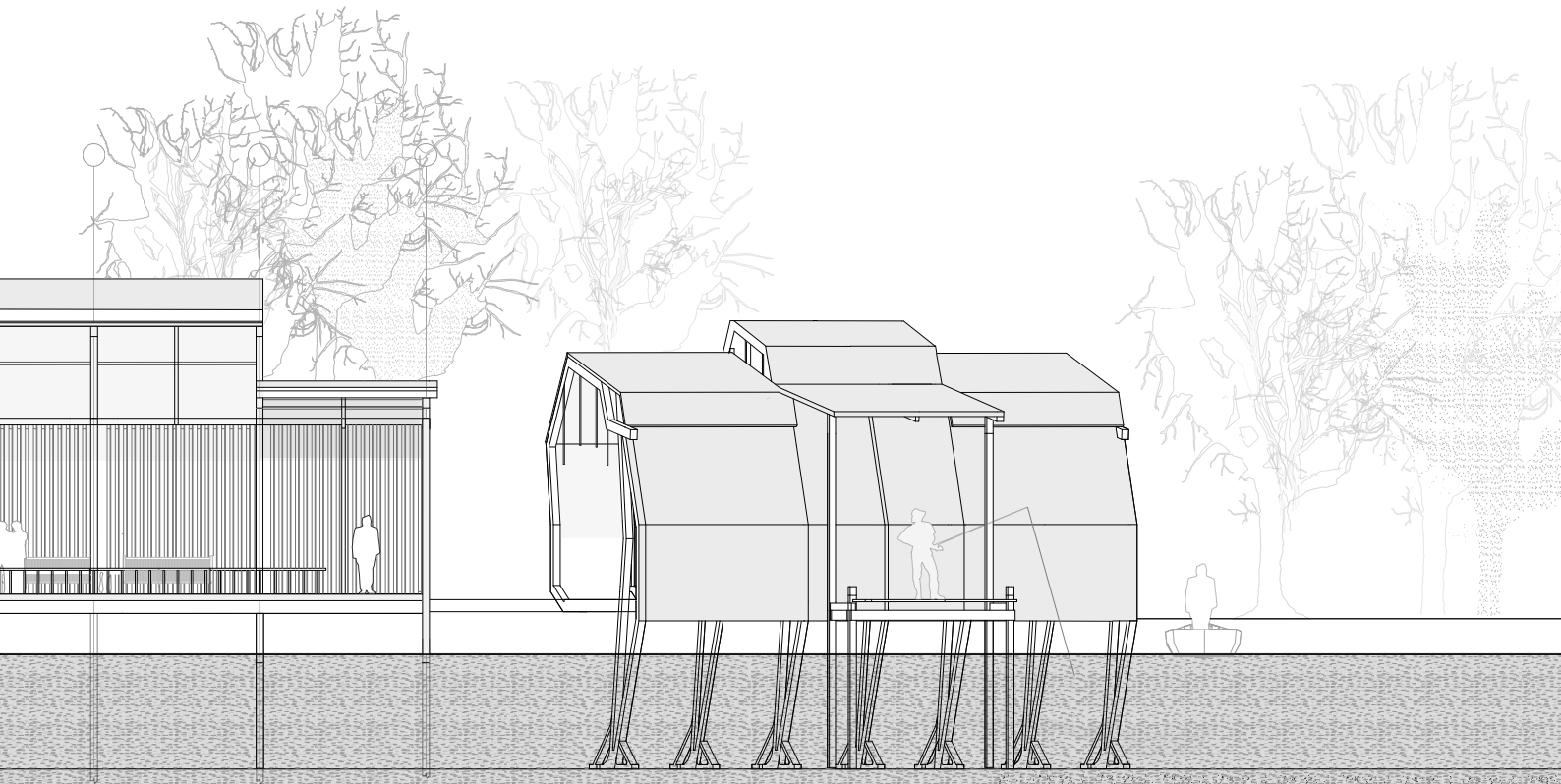


Satellite Context: Crisan-Caraorman River
Satellite Intervention's relation to Crisan Village

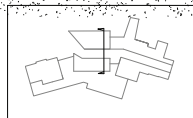


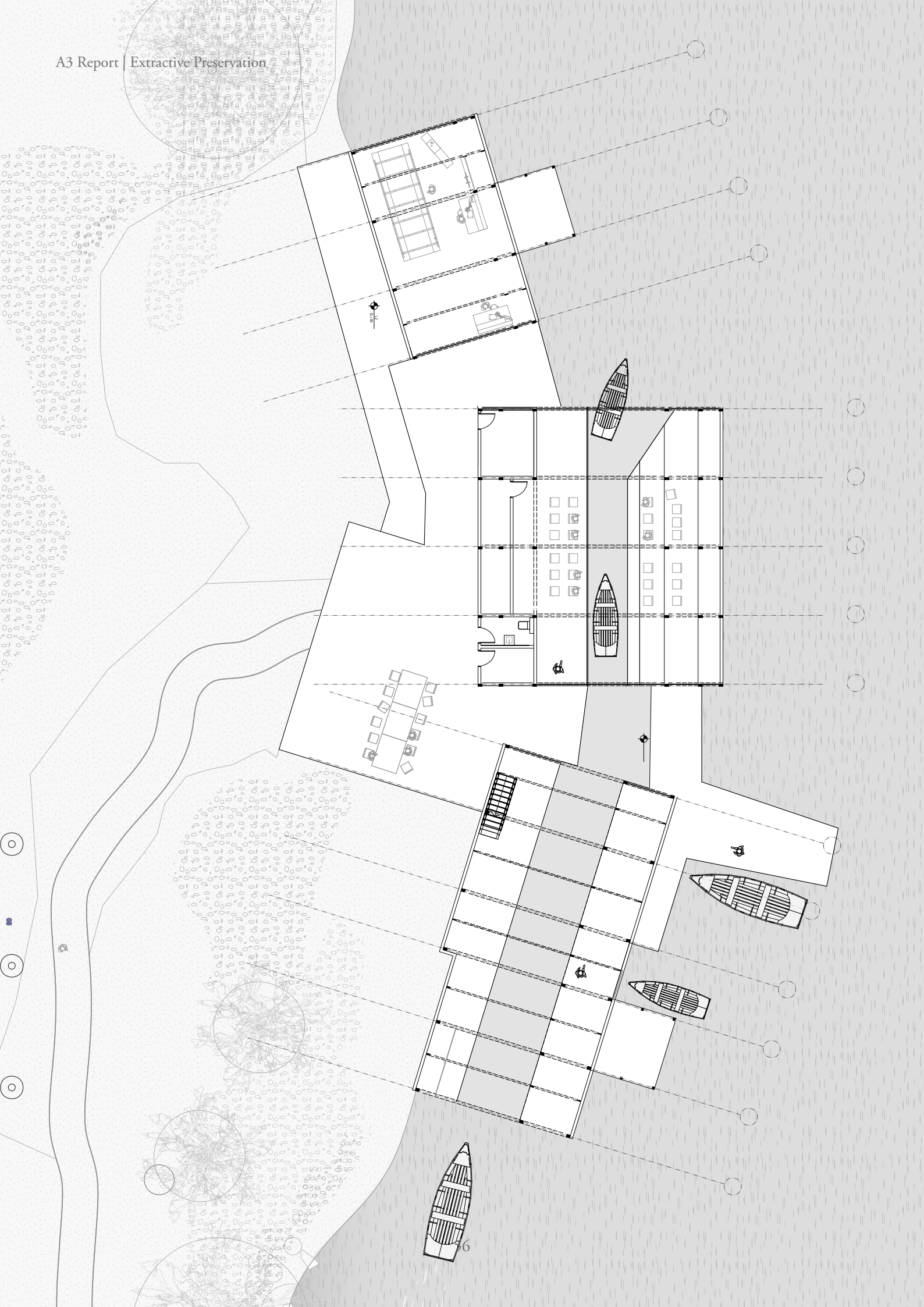
Site Context: Crișan- Caraorman River Branch

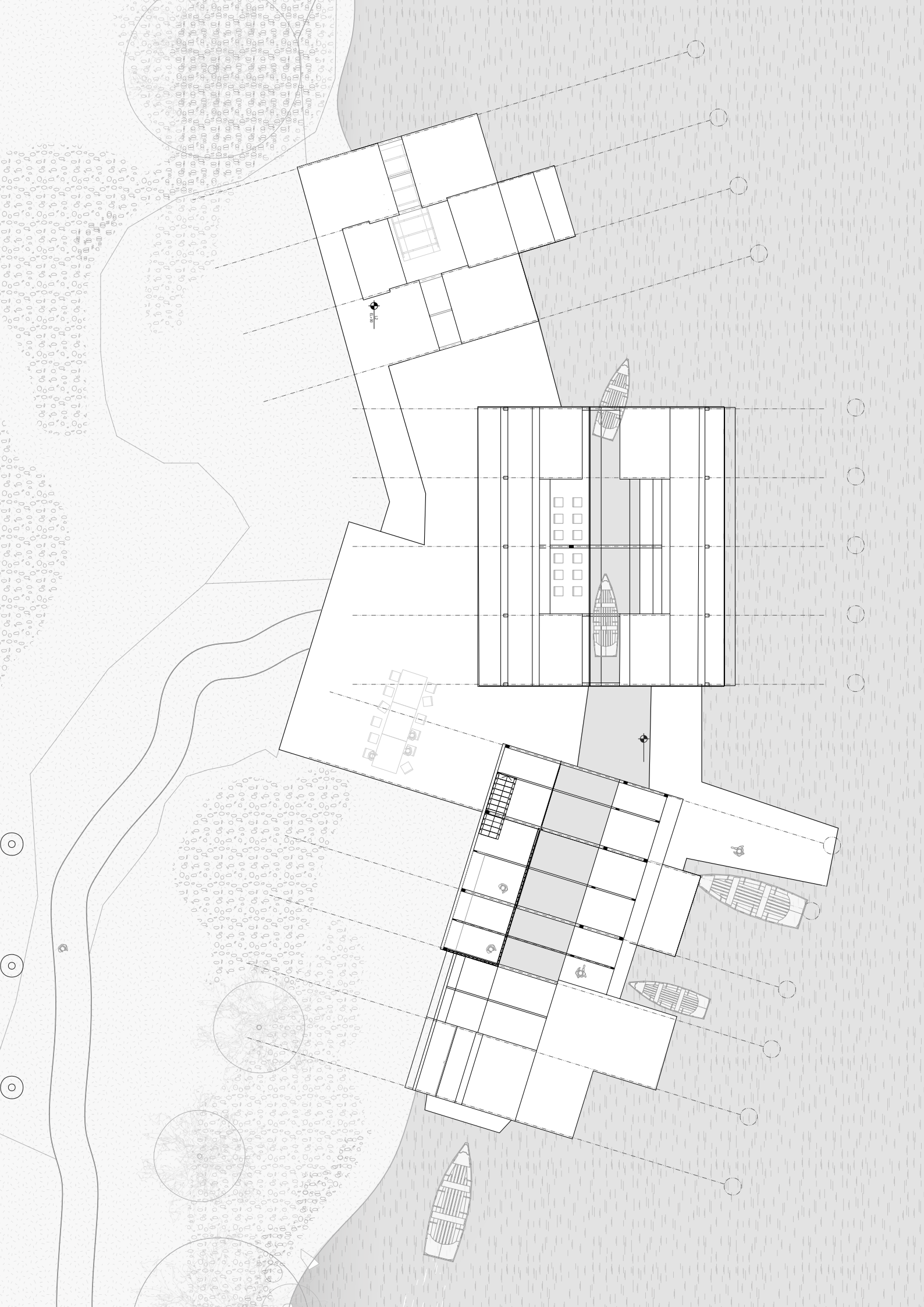


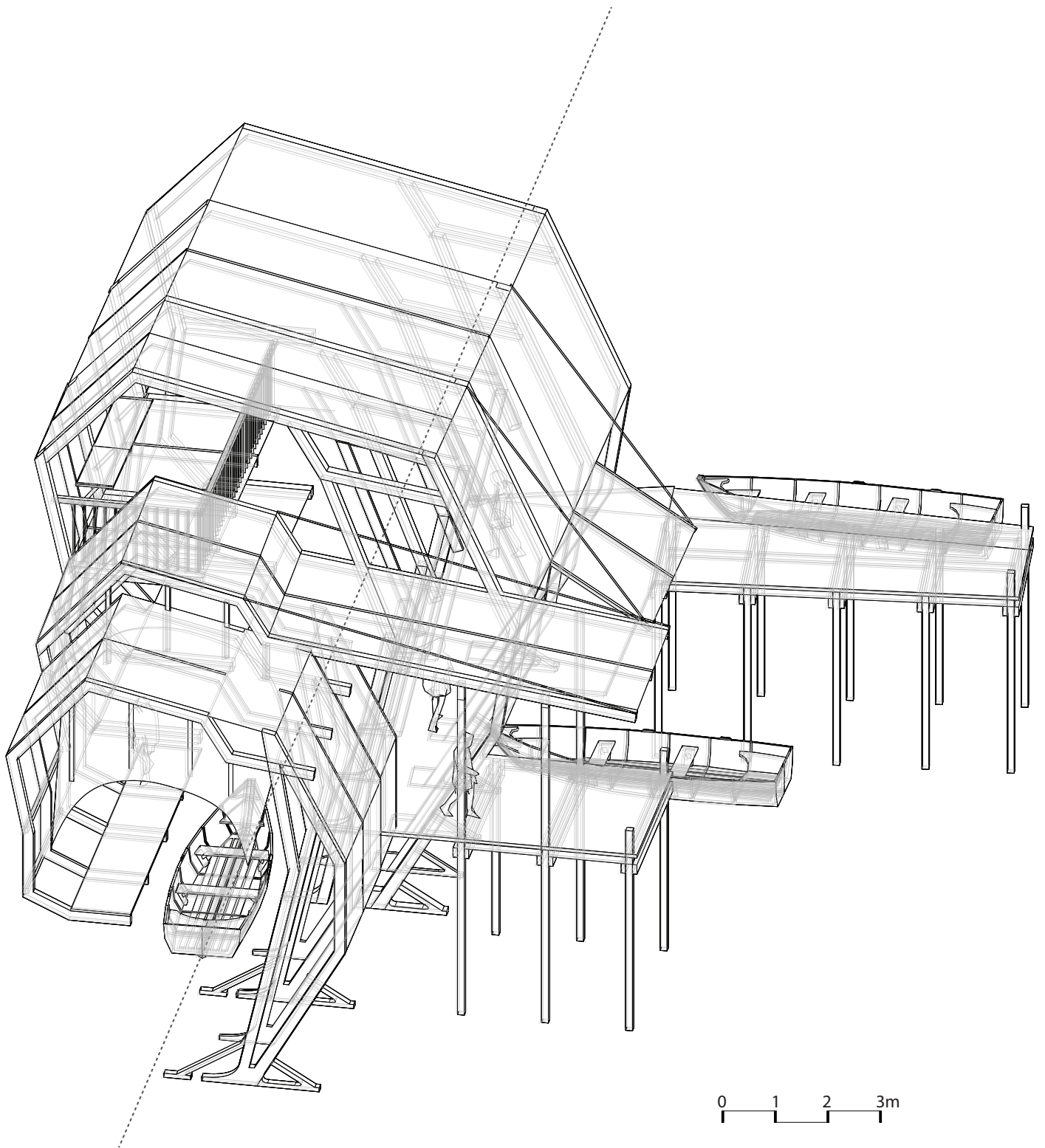


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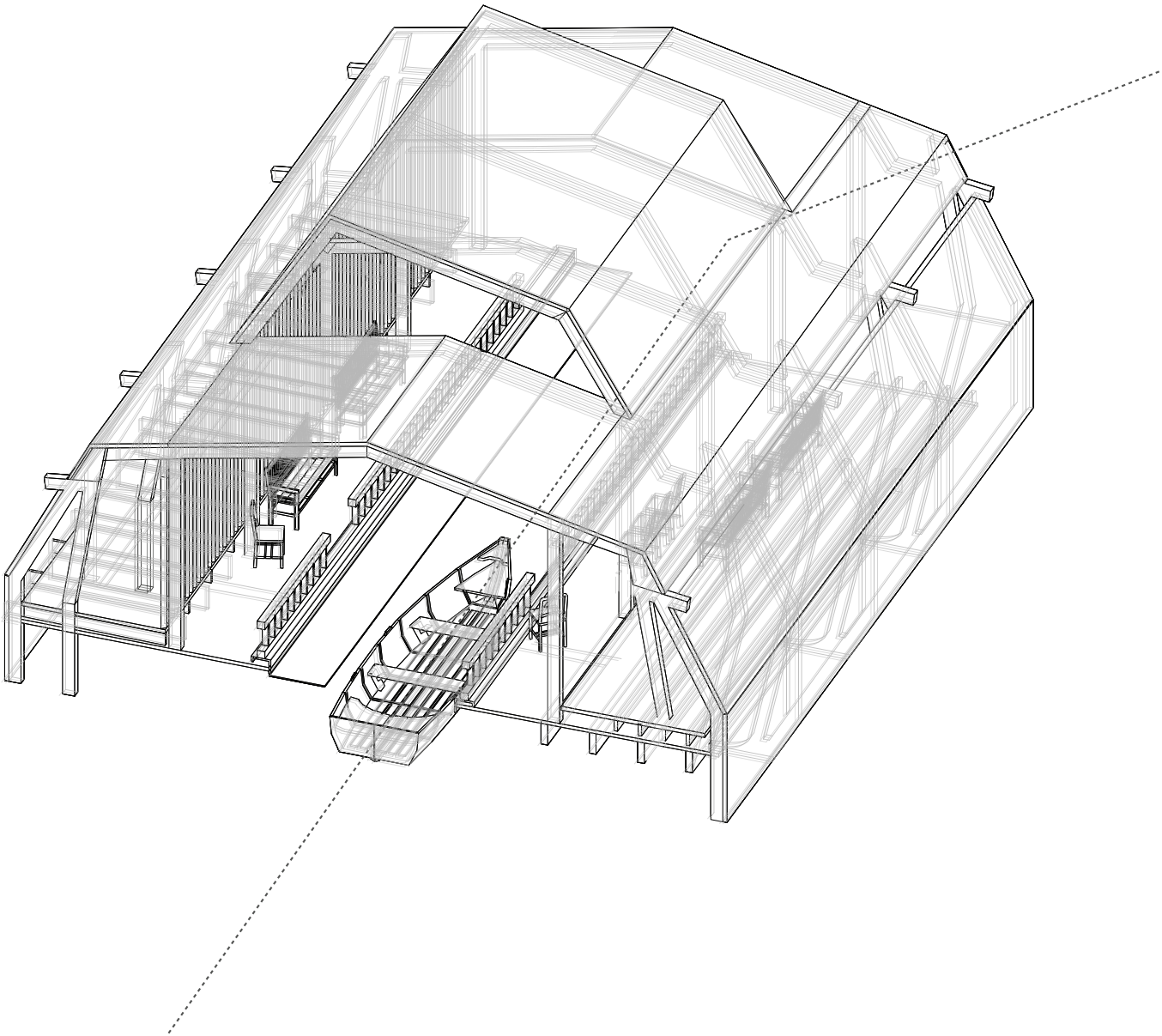




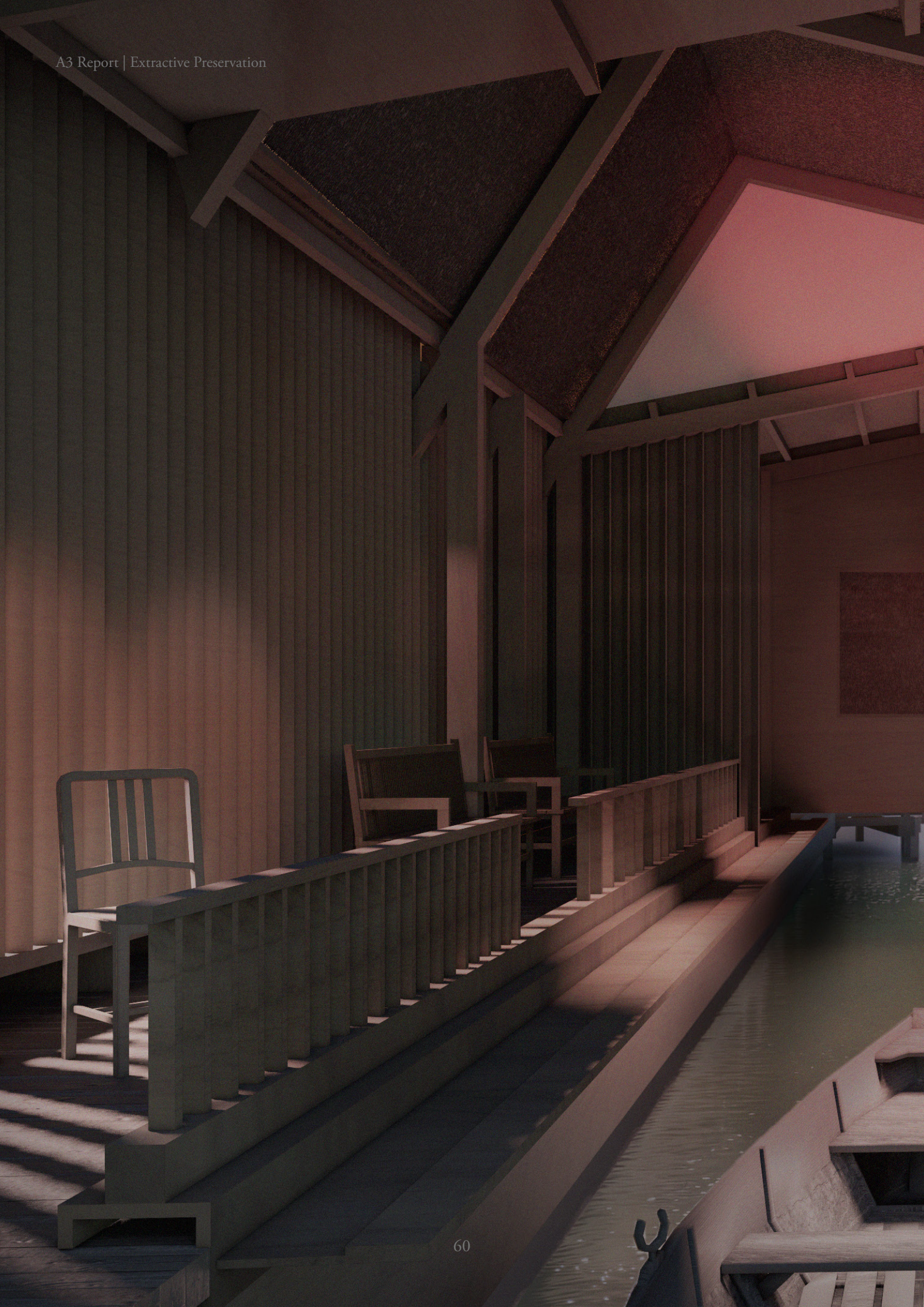


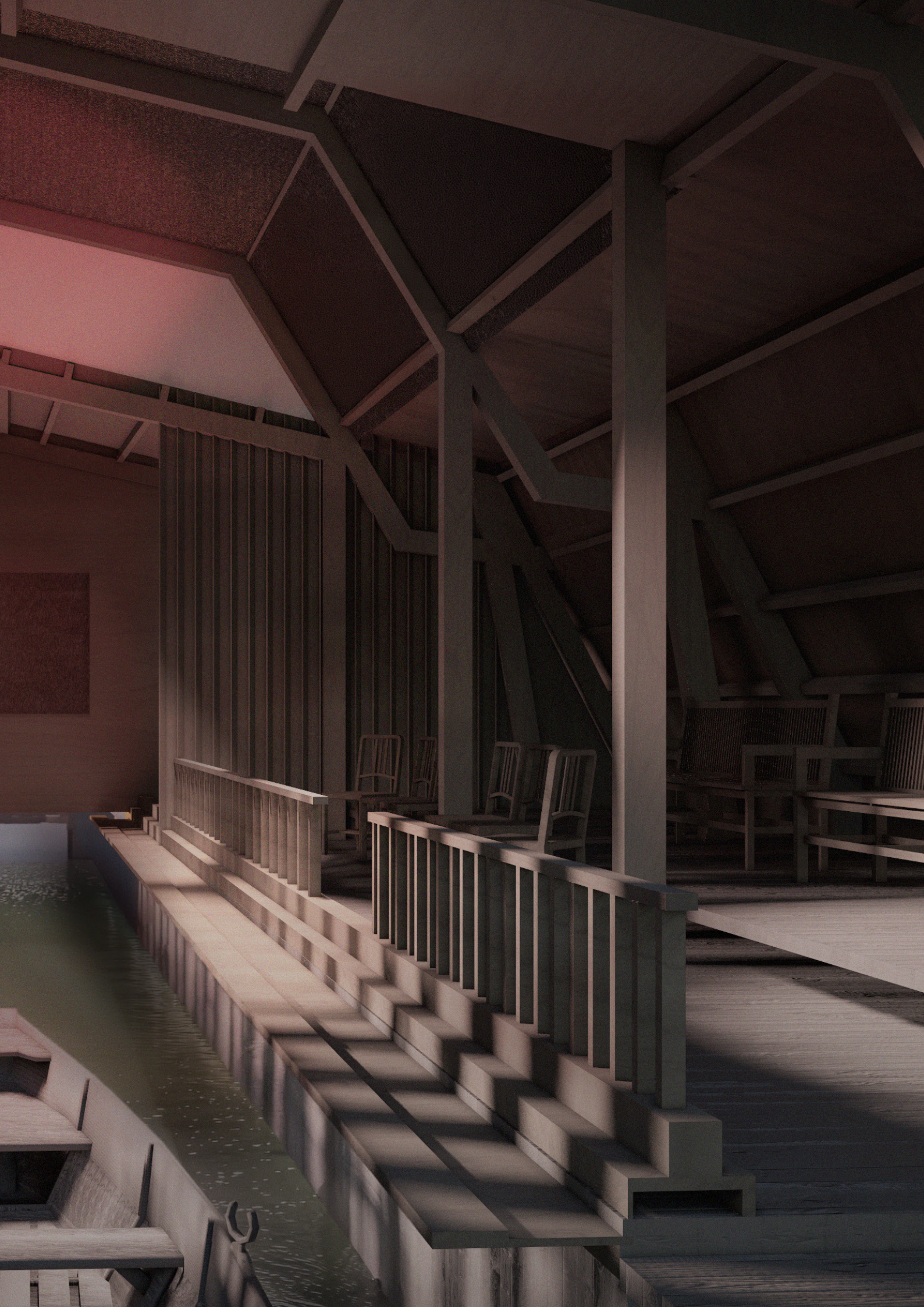


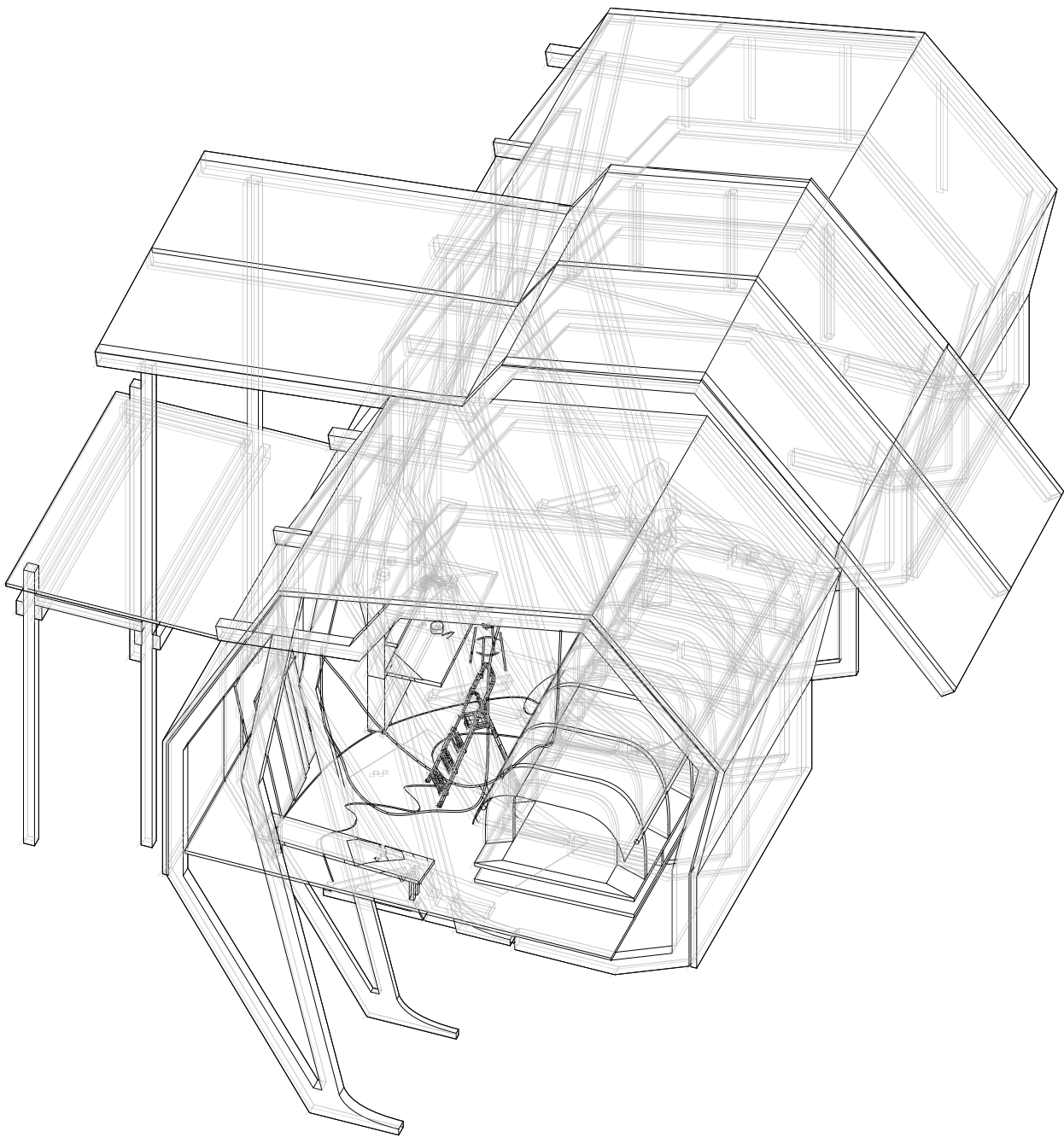
Boat Access and Monitoring Building Fragment

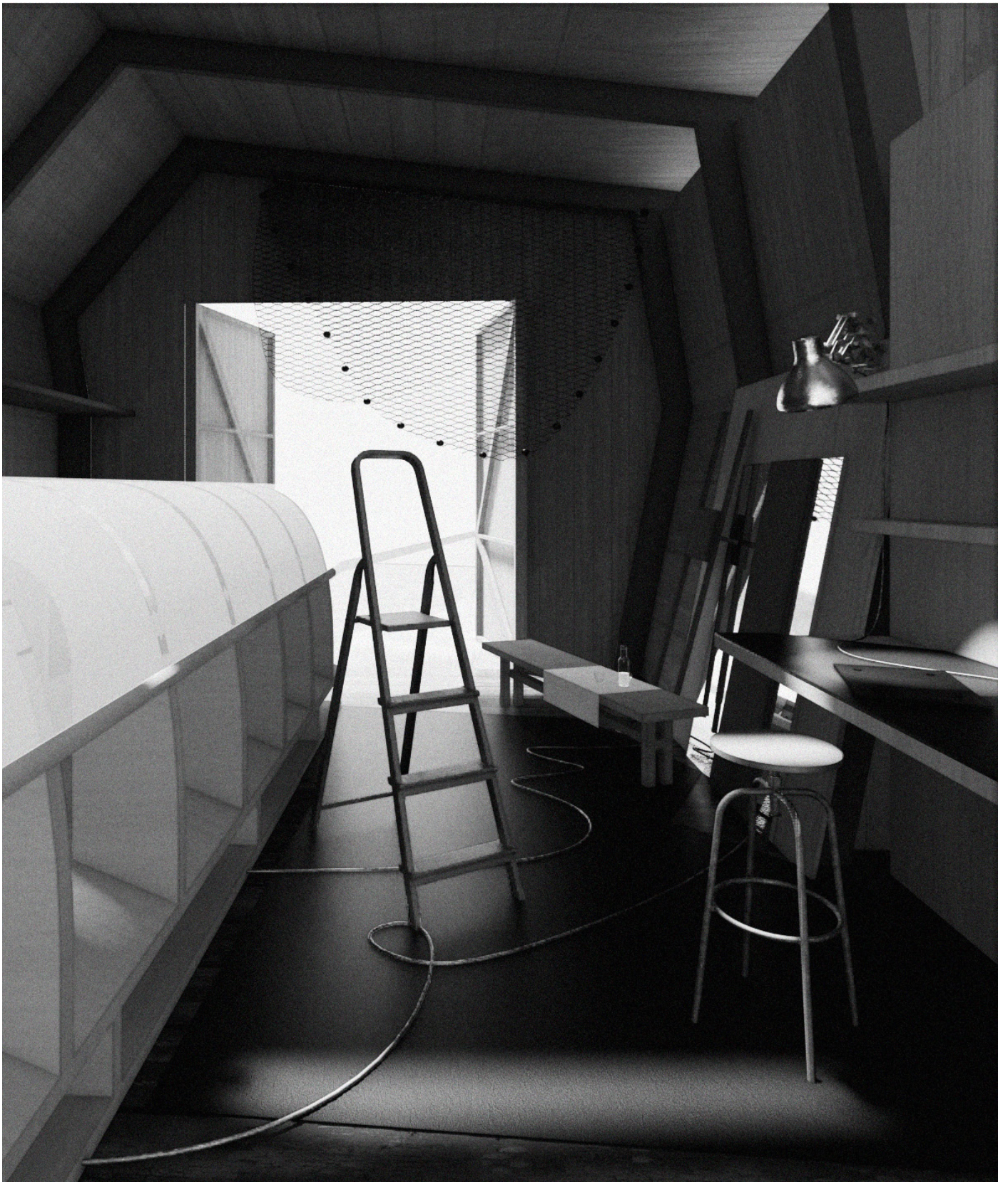


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Building Technology

Structure and Materiality

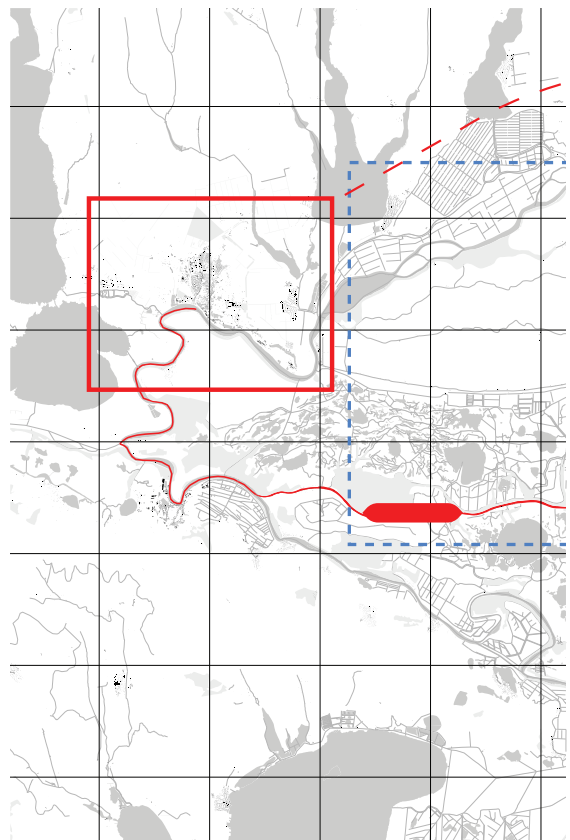
The structure is conceived as a lightweight, prefabricated timber assembly based on a series of portal frames, manufactured off-site and transported by boat. This construction approach responds directly to the logistical constraints of the delta's context, embedding water-based transport and access into the architectural process.

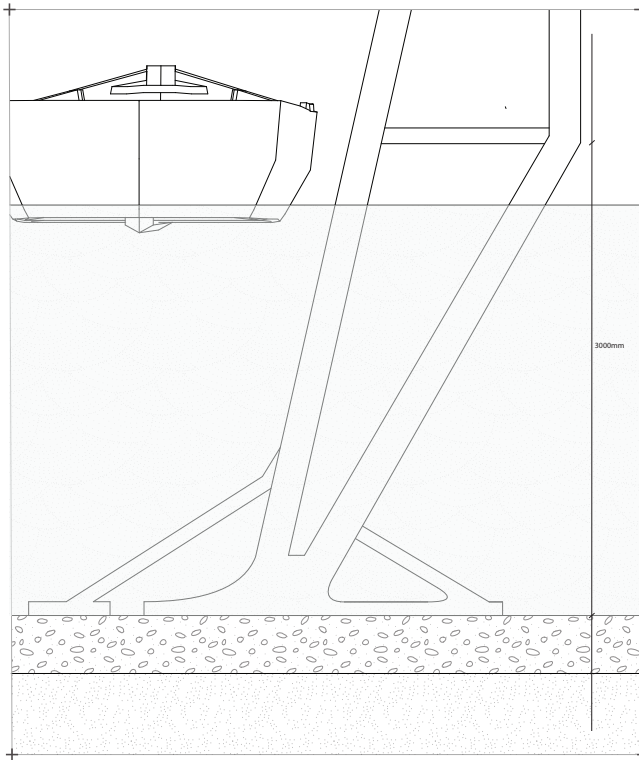
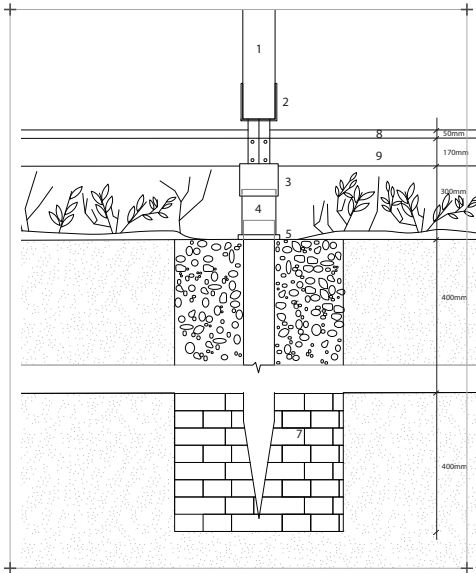
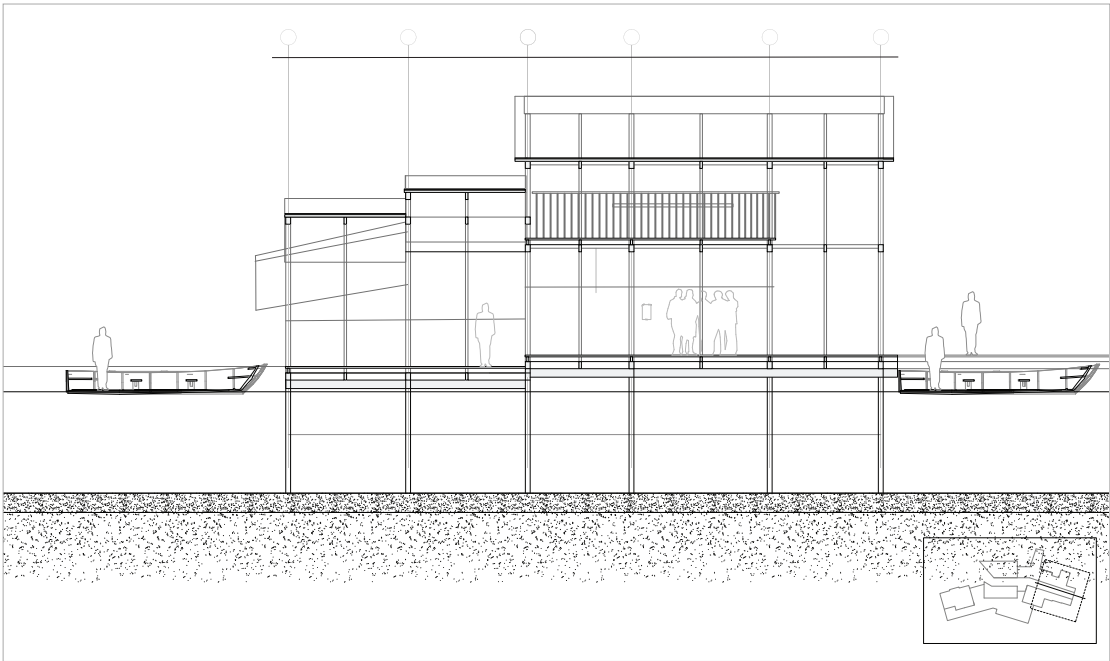
The specificity of the intervention derives from its position at the river's edge, occupying a threshold condition between land and water. The building is conceived as a hybrid structure that simultaneously engages both terrains: the forum and boat-repair workshop are anchored on land, while the boat-access facilities extend directly over the water. This dual relationship establishes a continuous connection between the activities of the workshop, the gathering point, and the river itself.

The substructure consists of timber piles elevated above the fluctuating water level. The timber elements are treated to enhance their durability in a humid environment and to mitigate deterioration associated with alternating wet and dry conditions. Structural members are deliberately oversized (200 × 140 mm) to ensure that moisture penetration remains confined to the outer layers of the timber, preserving the integrity of the structural core and extending the lifespan of the construction.

Off-Grid Energy Infrastructure

Conceived as a fully off-grid intervention, the structure integrates a self-sufficient renewable energy system based on vertical-axis helical wind turbines. These turbines are selected in preference to photovoltaic panels to maintain the visual and functional integrity of the textile envelope and to avoid compromising the quality of filtered daylight within the space. Harnessing the consistent wind conditions along the river corridor, the system generates sufficient energy to support the building's monitoring systems, lighting, and operational requirements, enabling autonomous performance with minimal environmental impact.



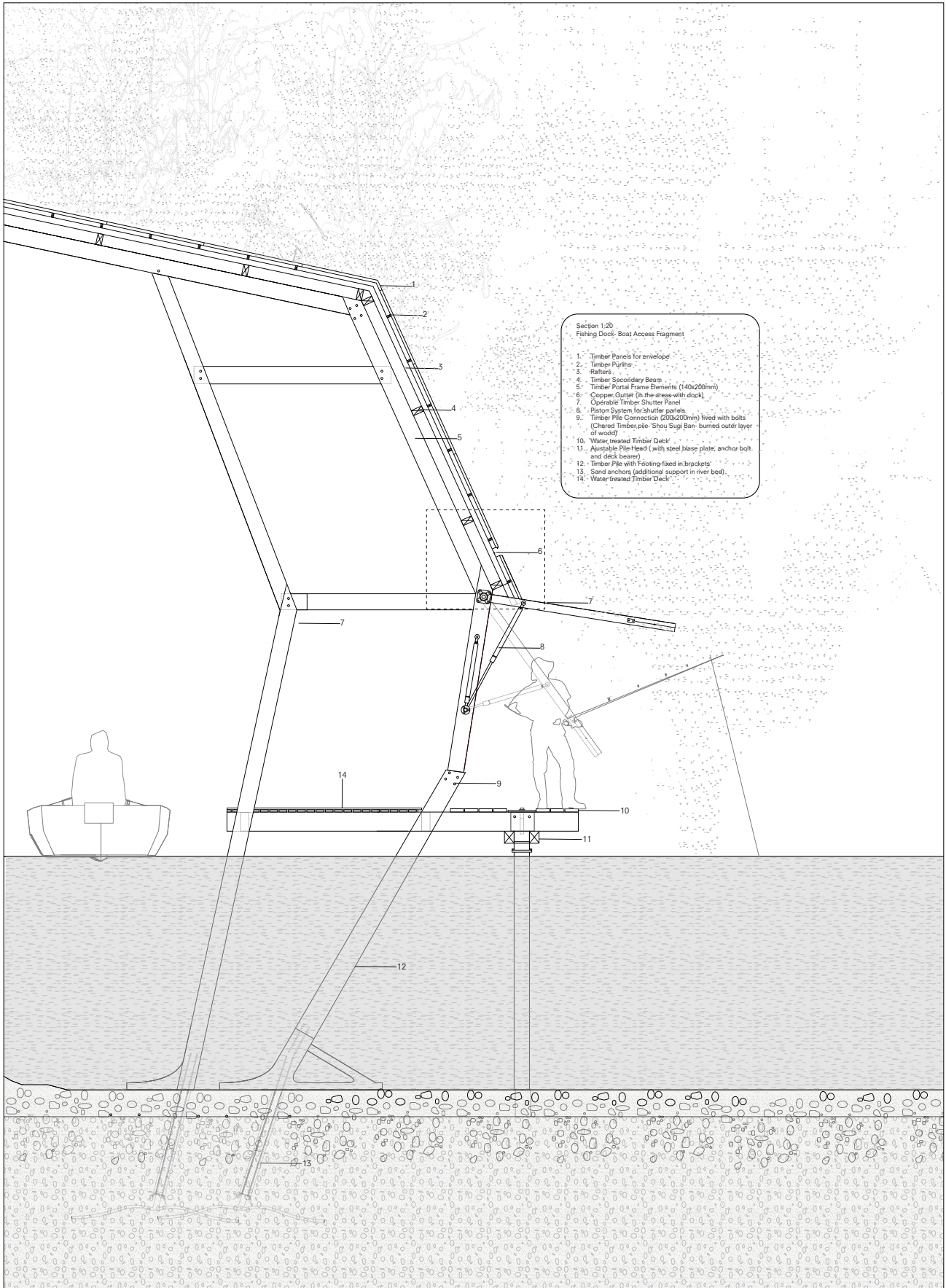


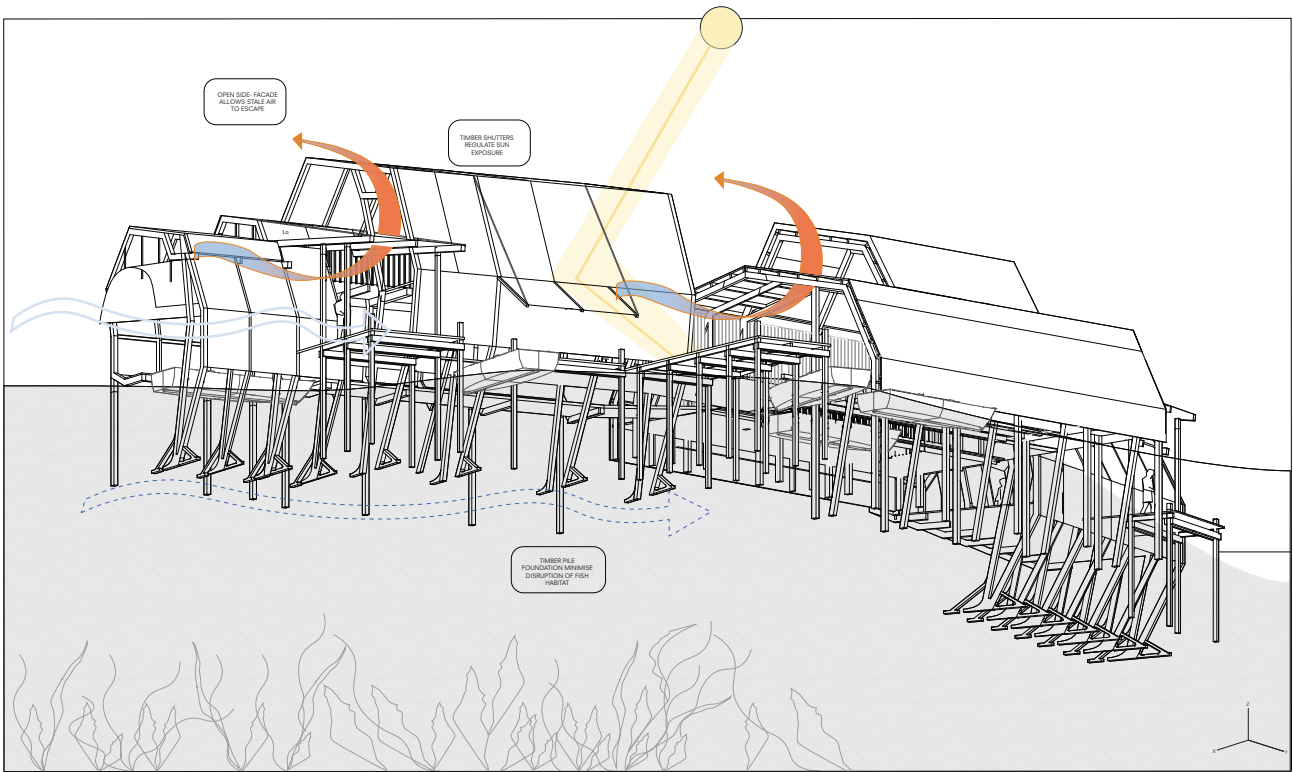
**TIMBER PILE SYSTEM
(ON GROUND)**

1. Timber Column (200x80mm)
2. Metal Bracket
3. x
4. Charred Timber Pile (Shou Sugi Ban)- burned outer layer of wood, reducing biological attacks
5. Galvanized Cap at Transition Point
6. Gravel Collar around Pile: reclaimed sand & gravels
7. Reclaimed Sand and Gravel
8. Treated Timber Deck
9. Timber Beam

TIMBER PILES (WATER)

1. Timber Frame
2. Timber Pile with Water Proof Coating
3. River Bed Timber Footing with Bracket Connection





ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE
 STRUCTURE DESIGNED TO MINIMISE
 EFFECT ON FISH HABITAT

Civic Reuse: The “Parliament”

The third intervention reoccupies the abandoned fish-canning factory in Sulina, a structure rendered obsolete following the collapse of the communist regime in 1989. Rather than erasing this industrial ruin through demolition or aesthetic sanitisation, the project engages it as a political and material residue of extractive governance. Its reuse proposes a shift from industrial production to civic formation: from a centralised apparatus of control to a situated and collective model of governance and gathering embedded within the ecological conditions of the Delta.

Referencing alternative institutional frameworks such as the Sámi Parliament of Norway, the project challenges the persistent association between political authority and monumental form. Governance is not staged through symbolic dominance or representational excess, but through the occupation and transformation of an existing structure already marked by labour, decay, and environmental exposure. The factory is neither restored as heritage nor replaced by a new civic icon; instead, it is reconfigured as an open and incomplete institutional framework in which political life remains spatially visible and materially grounded.

Situated within a residential neighbourhood and directly facing the river edge, the proposal also operates as a form of urban reactivation. Its position mediates between domestic life, industrial residue, and the fluctuating ecology of the Danube Delta, extending beyond the building itself to establish new public relations between neighbourhood, waterfront, and institutional programme. The intervention operates through openness, permeability, and continuous engagement with its surrounding urban and environmental context.

Cuts | The Voids

The first architectural operation introduces a system of terraces that reorganises the building into two primary zones: archive and assembly. These terraces function as continuous circulation and egress structures, connecting all floors

while introducing porosity into the former industrial mass. At the same time, they establish direct spatial and visual relations with the Delta landscape, operating both as infrastructural surface and environmental interface.

Building on this framework, a second operation introduces a series of cuts inspired by the spatial logic of Gordon Matta-Clark’s Conical Intersections, reorganising the building vertically and horizontally across its four floors. These incisions generate new conditions for gathering, exchange, and permeability throughout the structure.

The cuts are concentrated in two zones: on the eastern side within the archive spaces, and on the western side within the assembly halls. Within the archive, they open spatial and visual continuity across archival and administrative functions, allowing circulation and access to extend between otherwise separated systems. Within the governance areas, the cuts carve through assembly halls, producing interconnected civic spaces that support transparency, encounter, and collective use.

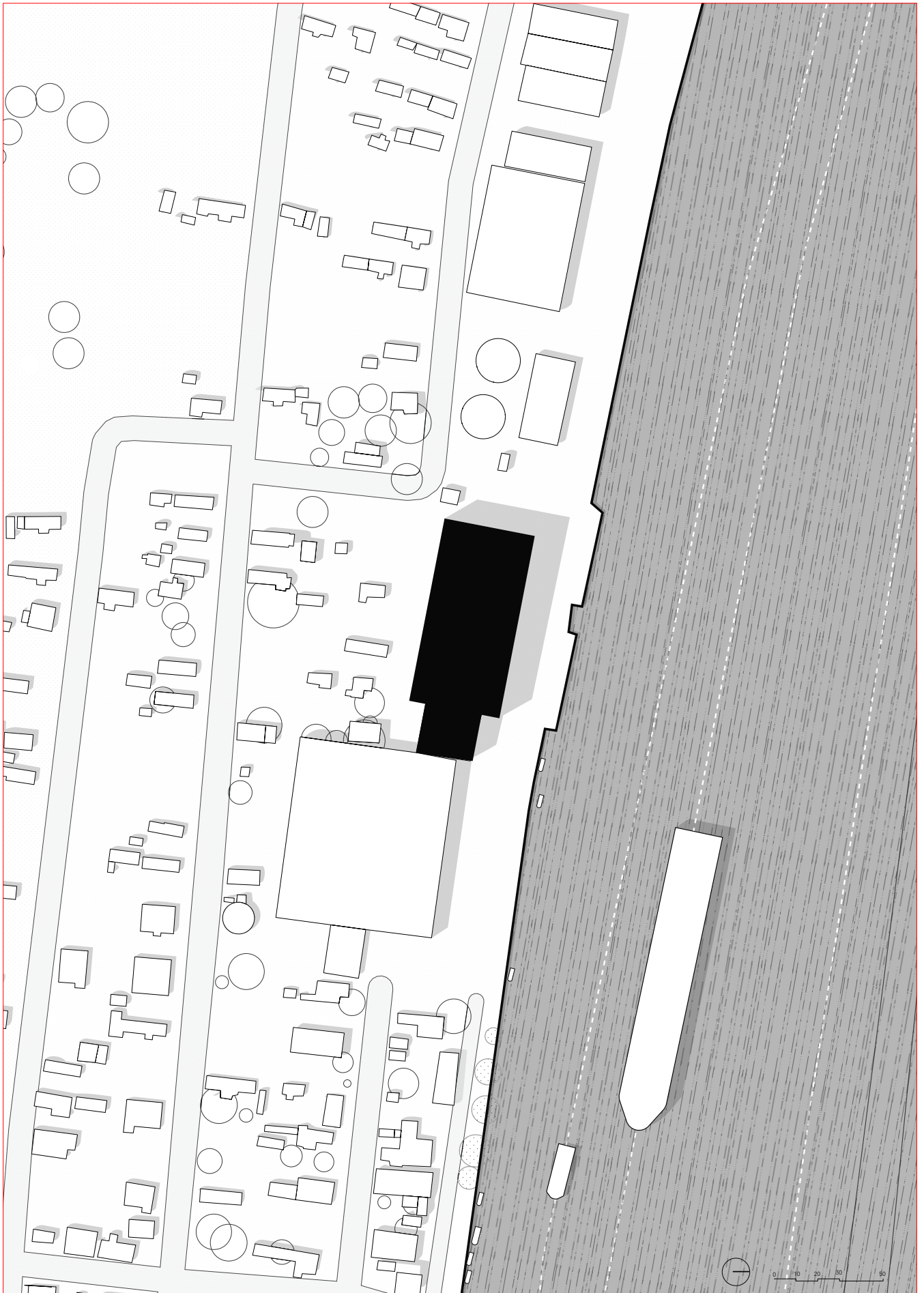
Together, the terraces and cuts transform the former industrial structure into an open field of civic and ecological relations, where circulation, observation, governance, and gathering are integrated into a single spatial system.

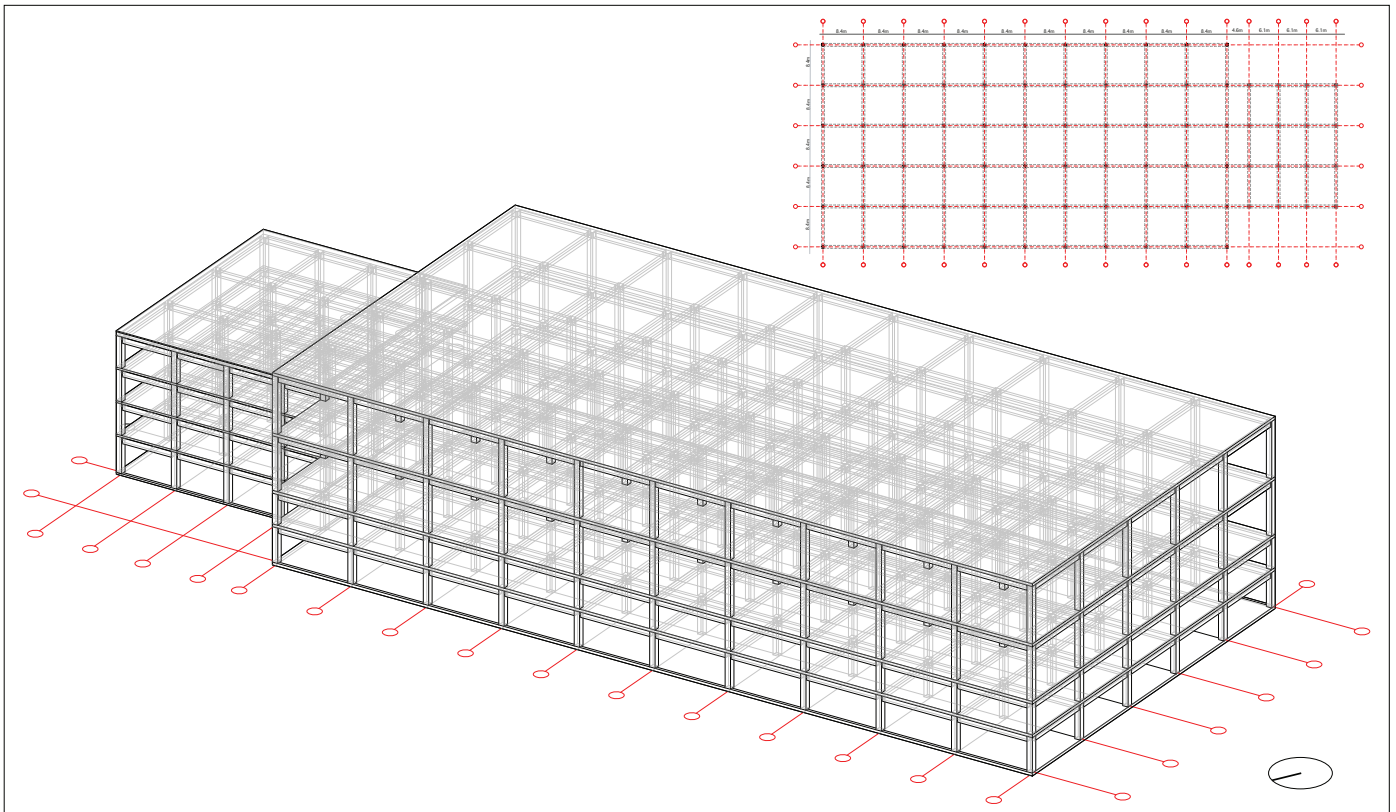


*Fig. 18: Image Above: Factories first years of production (in 1970's)
Source: Dezvalairi.ro, 2015*

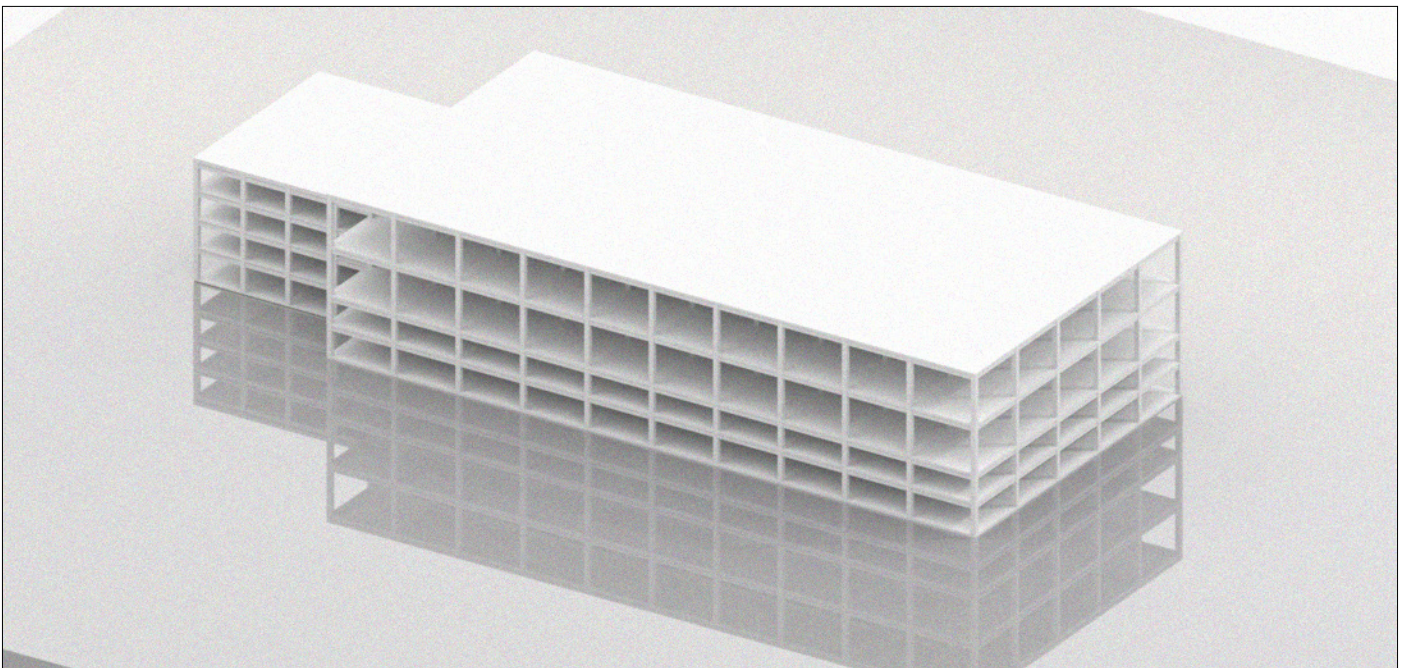


*Egaging with "grey heritage". Fish canning Factory in Sulina, Danube Delta
Source: by author*

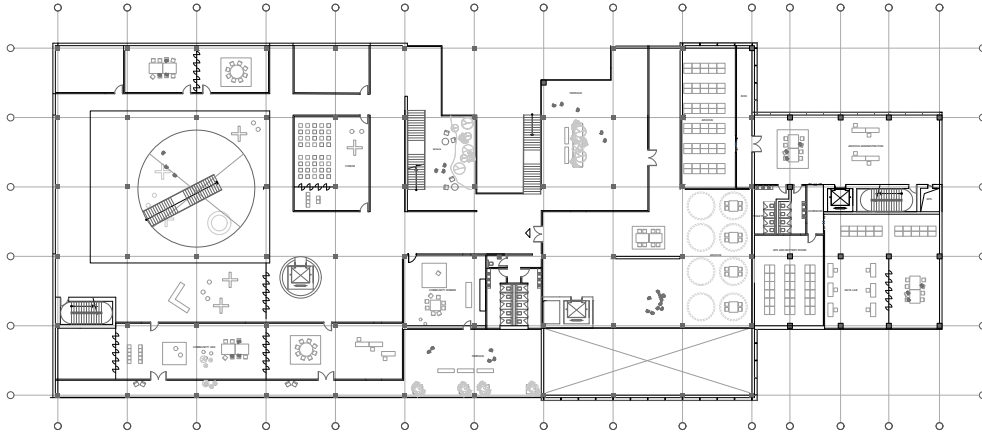




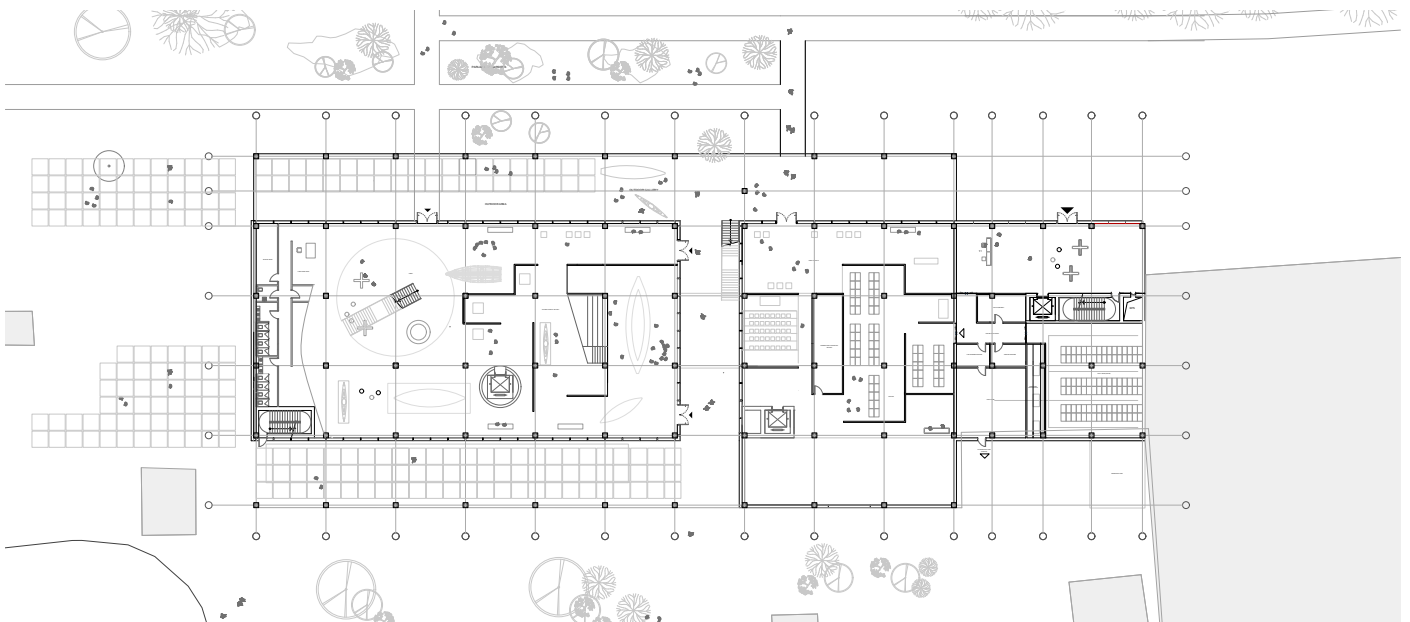
SULINA, DANUBE DELTA		PREVIOUS FUNCTION FISH CANNING STORAGE ACCESS ADMINISTRATION	[IN-SITU CONCRETE STRUCTURE] [MAIN BUILDING GRID: 8400mm x 8400mm] [COLUMNS: 600 X 600 mm] [BEAMS: 400 X 600 mm]	[FISH CANNING FACTORY]	FCF
					STRUCTURE



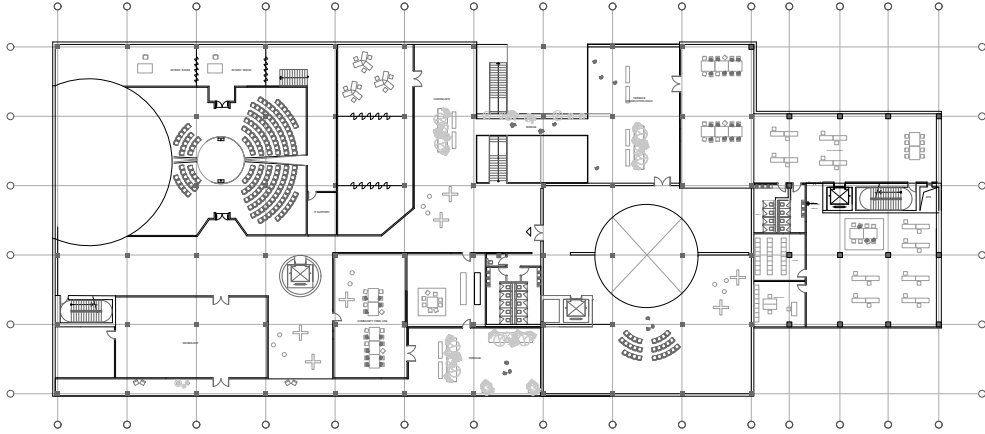
(Former) Fish Canning Factory
Load Bearing Structure (before design intervention)



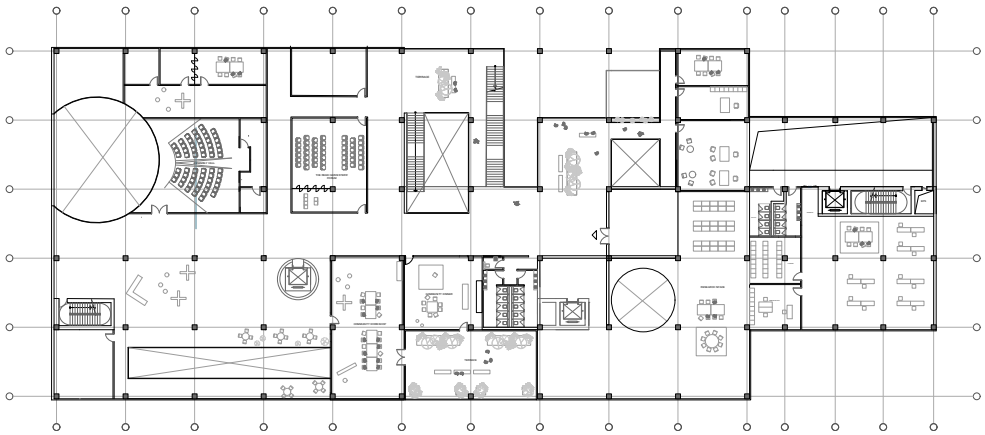
First Floor- Administration and Community Use



Ground Floor- The Archive and Fishing Literacy Gallery



Second Floor- The Parliament Hall



Second Floor- The Assembly Space

Spatial Organization

The spatial organization is structured through varying degrees of openness, accessibility, and environmental control rather than through a rigid institutional hierarchy. Instead of prescribing a fixed programmatic order, the project allows different levels of occupation, negotiation, and collective use to coexist within the former industrial framework.

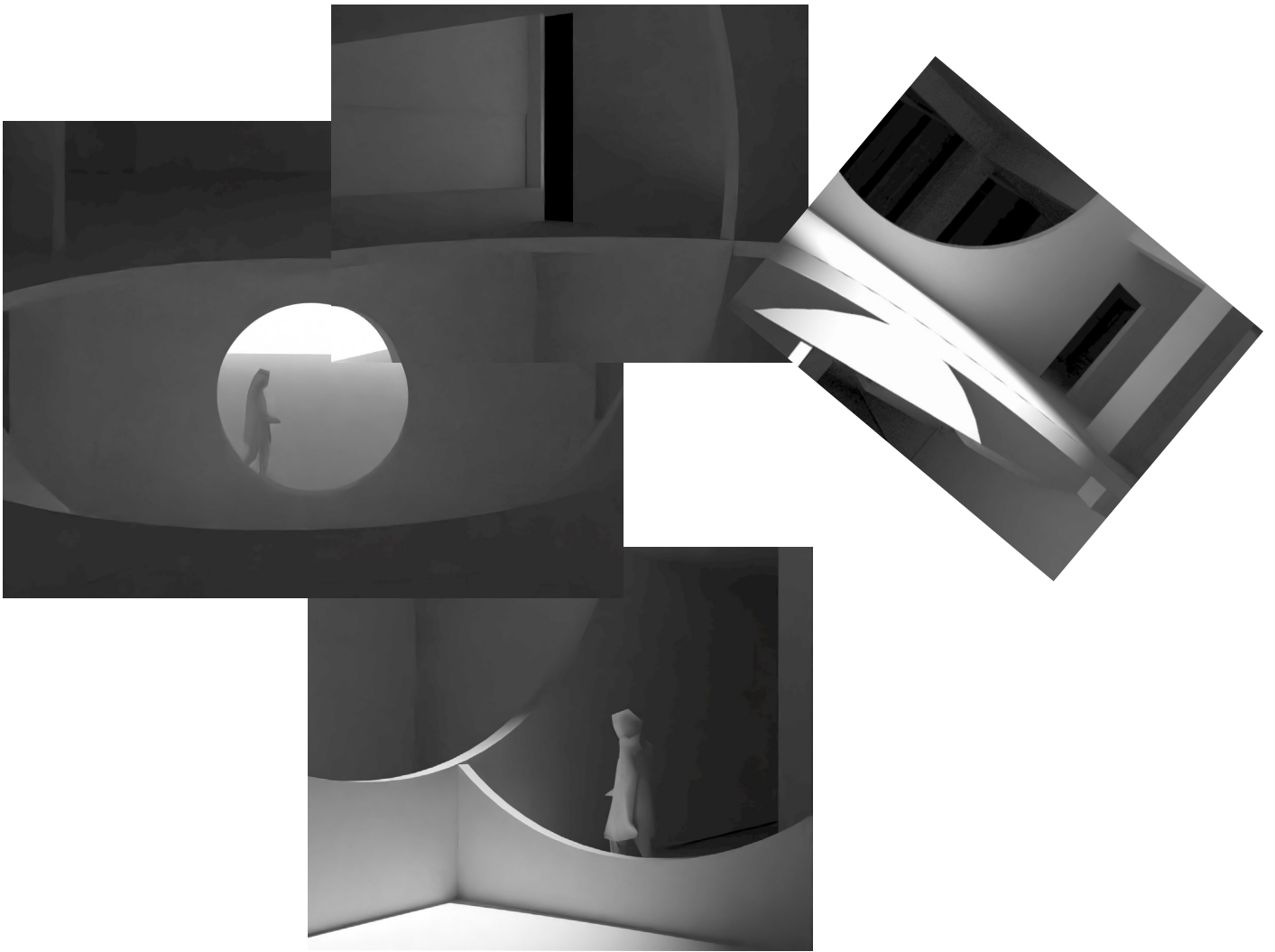
The data archive is conceived as a fully enclosed and environmentally controlled space in order to meet the technical requirements of preservation and data handling. In contrast, the material archive and fishing-literacy spaces operate as semi-open environments that enable local communities to engage directly with the ecological and cultural records of the Delta. Rather than functioning as isolated repositories accessible only through institutional authority, these archival spaces become shared civic infrastructures where knowledge can be collectively encountered, interpreted, and discussed. Their openness allows parts of the archive to extend into spaces of public learning, informal gathering, and community engagement.

The administrative areas occupy a more flexible intermediate condition between the archive and the assembly halls. Instead of reinforcing static bureaucratic structures, these spaces are designed to accommodate changing forms of governance, collaboration, and civic negotiation over time.

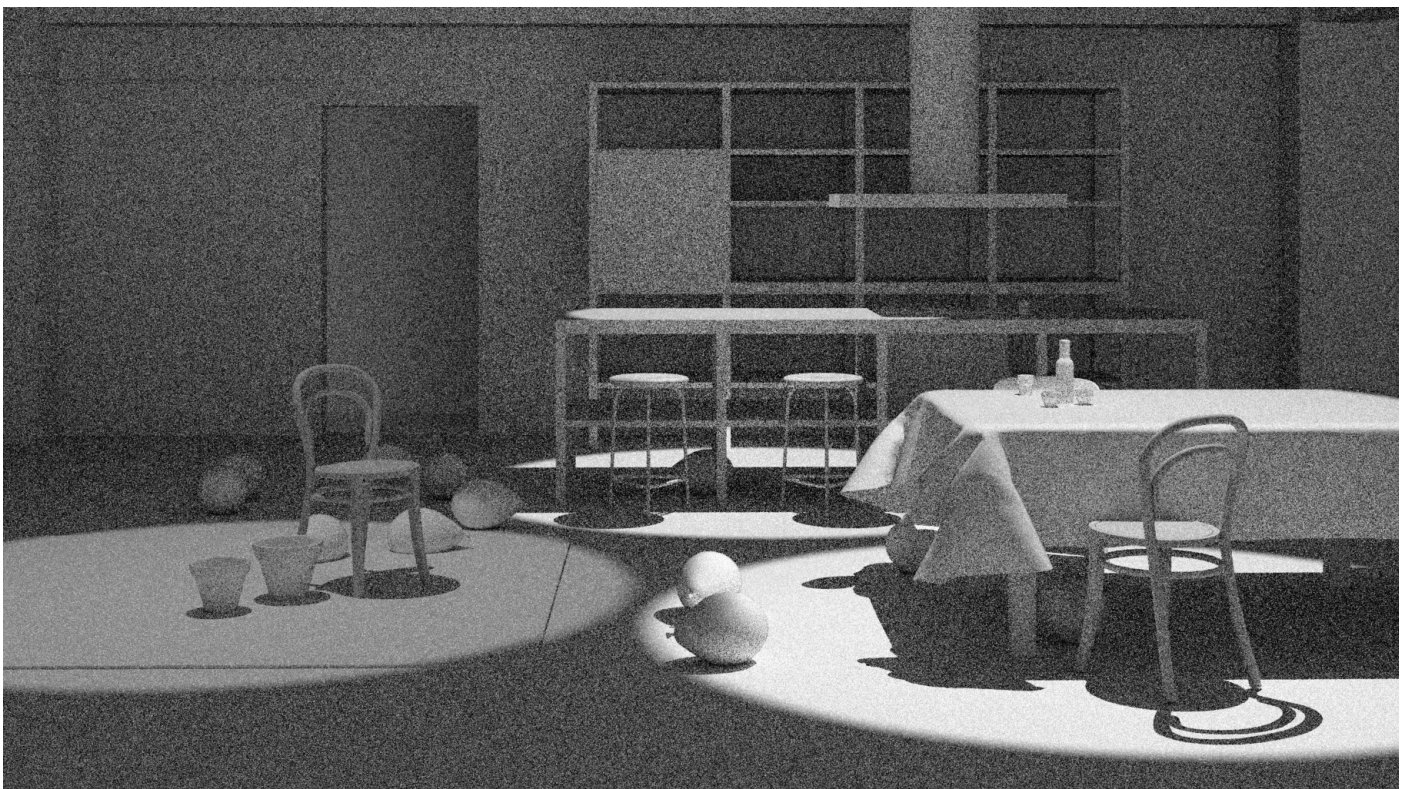
Importantly, significant portions of the building are intentionally left spatially indeterminate and open-ended. Rather than assigning every area a fixed institutional function, the project preserves zones of flexibility that can be appropriated by local communities for workshops, educational activities, temporary events, meetings, or informal gatherings. This deliberate incompleteness resists the over-programming often associated with civic architecture and allows the building to remain adaptable to evolving social and environmental conditions within the Delta.

The assembly halls form the most publicly accessible part of the intervention. Conceived less as ceremonial parliamentary chambers and more as common civic infrastructures, they support both formal assemblies and everyday

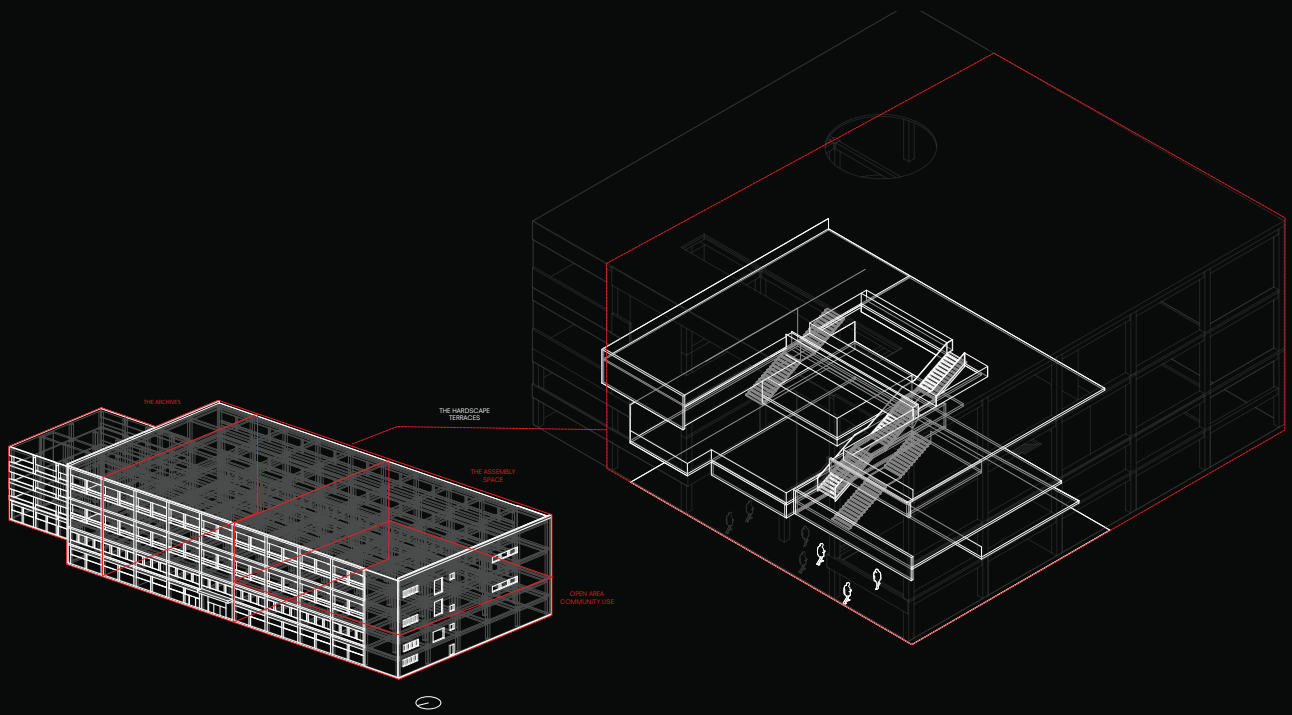
communal use. Through this spatial strategy, the project reframes governance not as a closed institutional process, but as an open and collective practice embedded within daily life, public participation, and ecological awareness.



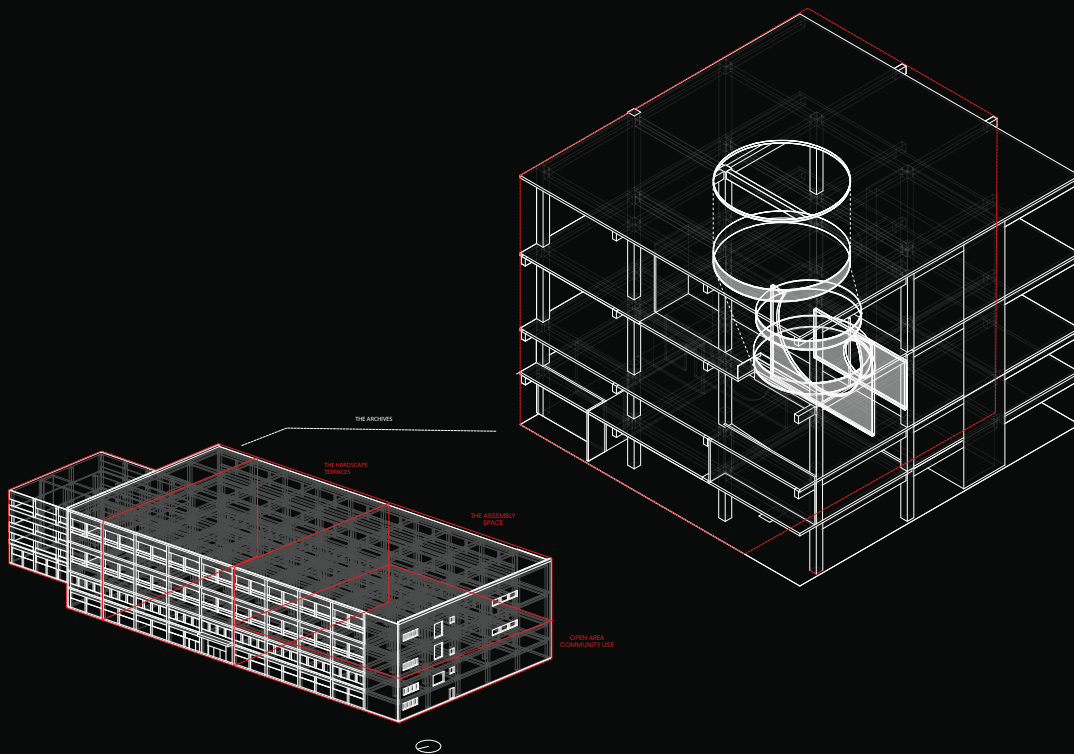
Cut 1: The Archive



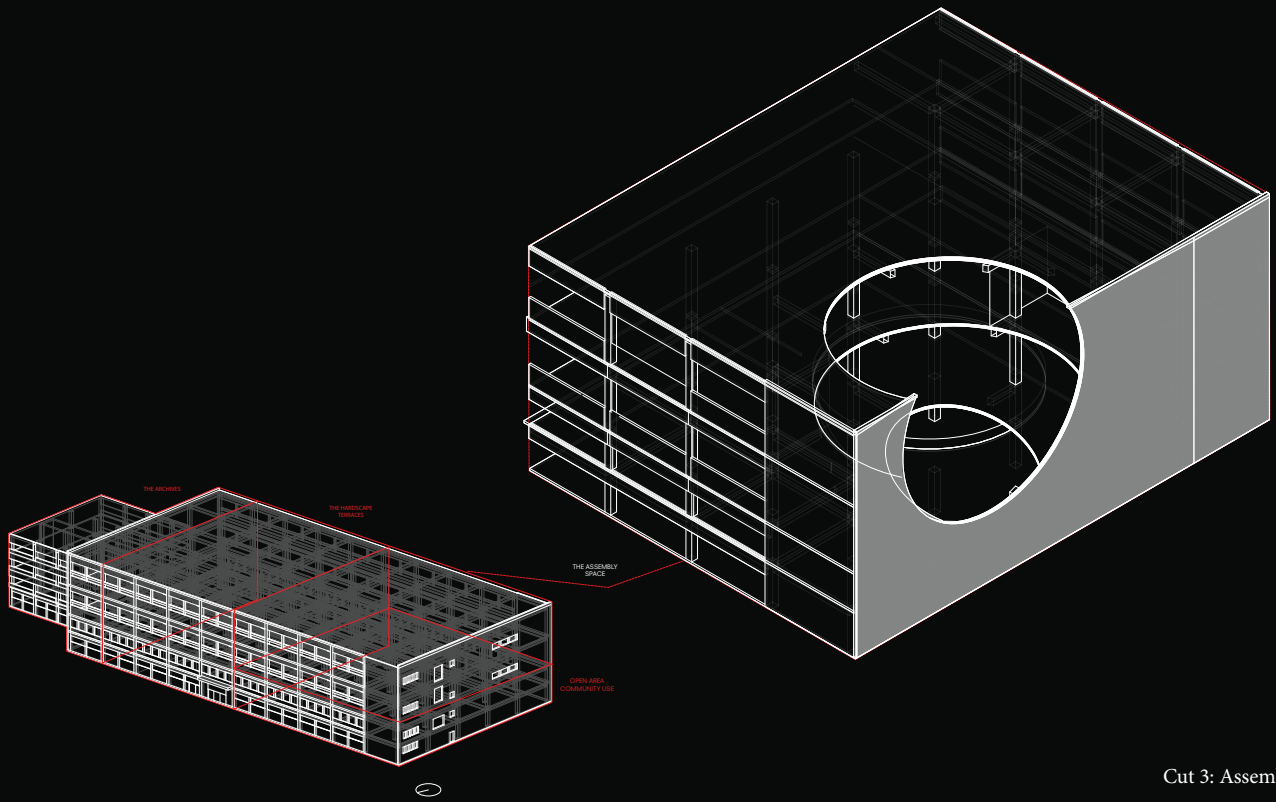
Schematic Render: Assembly as a Collective Dinner



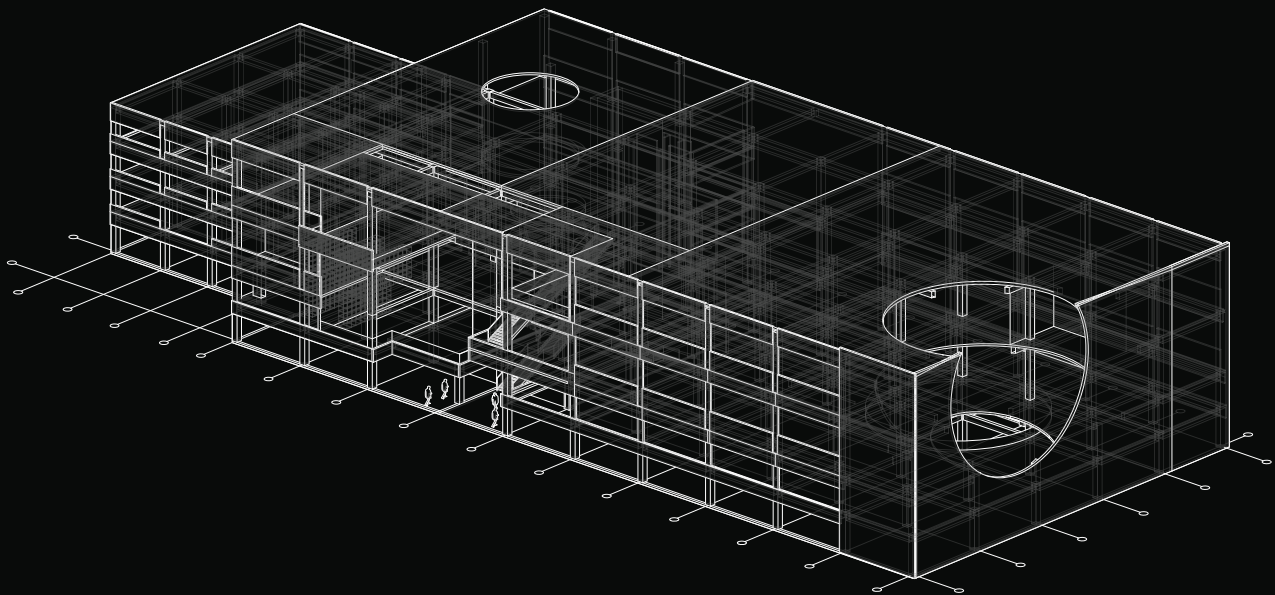
Cut 1: Terraces- Hardscape



Cut 2: Archive Space



Cut 3: Assembly Space





Hardscape
Cut 1 revealing a Series of Terraces facing Sulina River Branch



Further cuts inspired by Conical Intersections generate vertical continuity throughout the building, producing spaces for research, encounter and collective use. It engages with the western part of the building, the analogue and digital archive.

Within the part of the building, they open spatial and visual continuity across archival and administrative functions, allowing circulation and access to extend between otherwise separated systems.

On the first floor, the circular cut in the ceiling is doubled by a cut out wall that gathers a space for research and meeting of the communities. Chairs, some wooden tables and carpets offer the commonality of a structure previously used for heavy production.

The 8.4 x 8.4m grid use

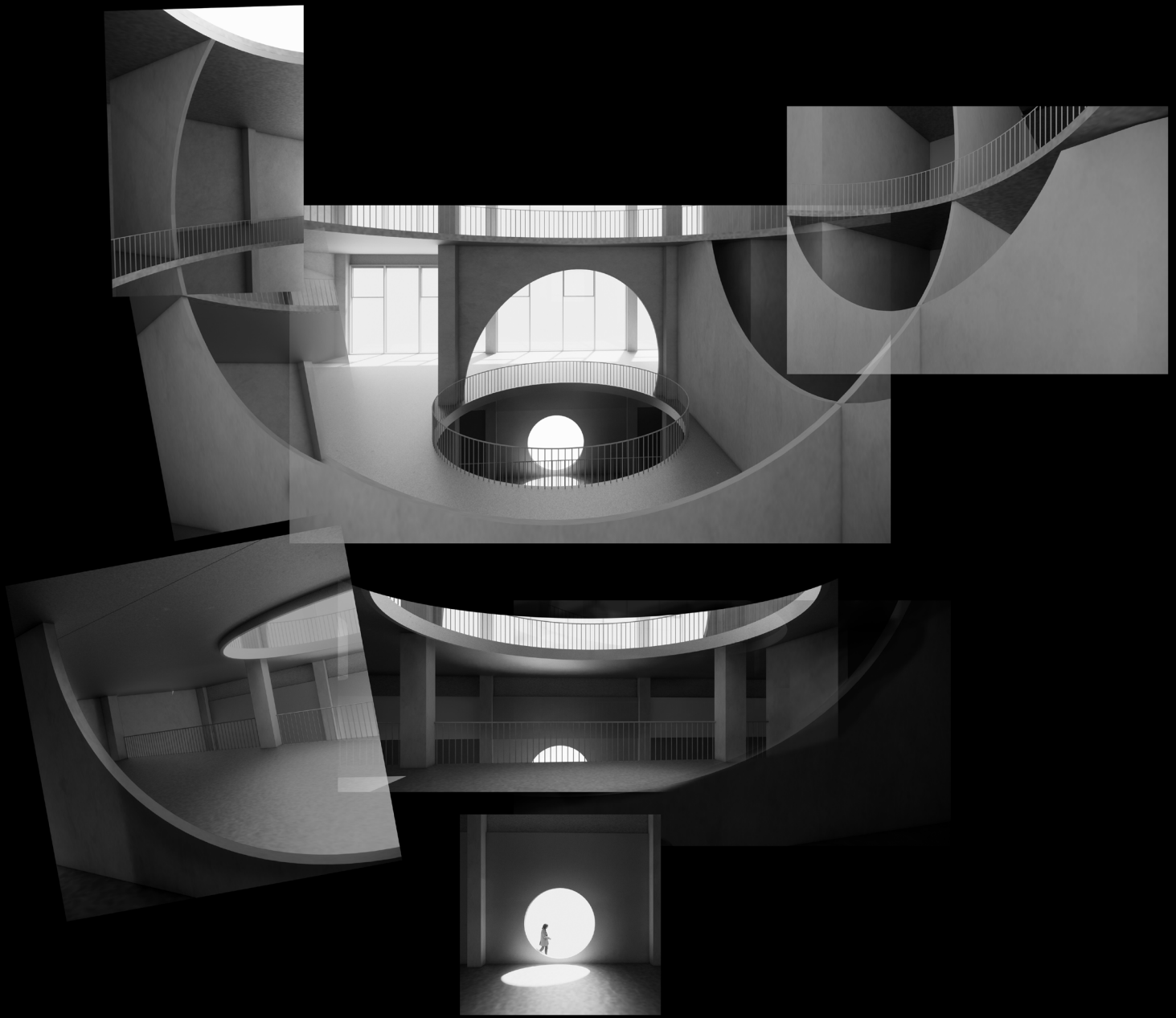
Parts of the building are intentionally left open, creating hardscape voids that break down the overall scale and make it more responsive to the needs of the Delta communities.

The structure is organized through a grid of 8.4 m × 8.4 m modules, some of which are occupied by communities, research groups, or NGOs as spaces for activities and workshops.

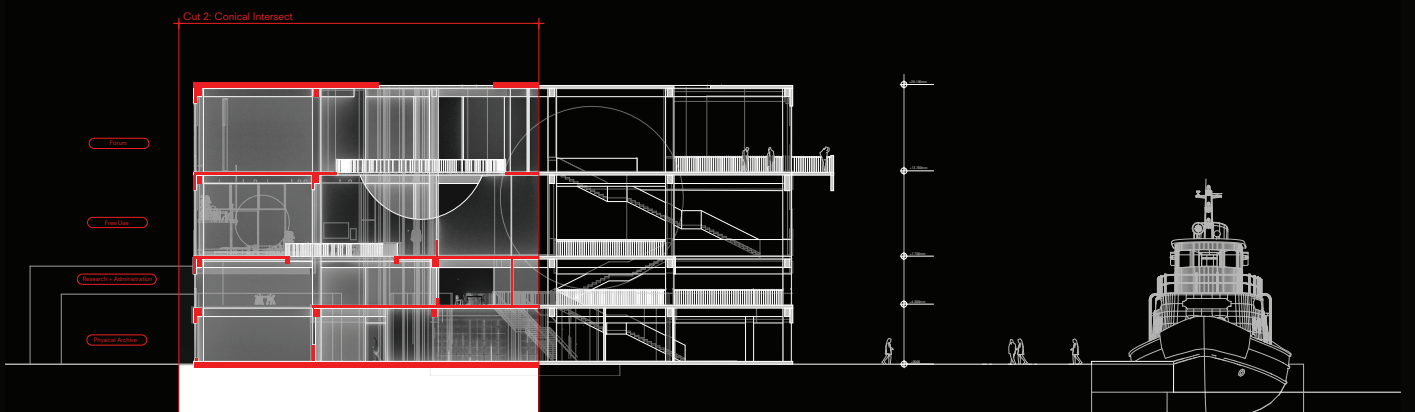
These modules can be appropriated by the community, allowing inhabitants to occupy, transform, and adapt them according to their own needs. Drawing on Agamben's theory of profanation, the project reconceives spaces of assembly as settings for informal encounters rather than formal institutions. In this way, everyday practices, such as a shared community dinner, can become spaces of assembly, where intimate conversations and collective discussions take place.

The interplay of materials, including exposed concrete slabs, timber ceiling infill, and metal elements, establishes a distinct character for each module. This material palette creates diverse spatial atmospheres, endowing individual

spaces with their own identity while maintaining a coherent architectural language throughout the project.



Conical Intersect in the Archive and Administration Area

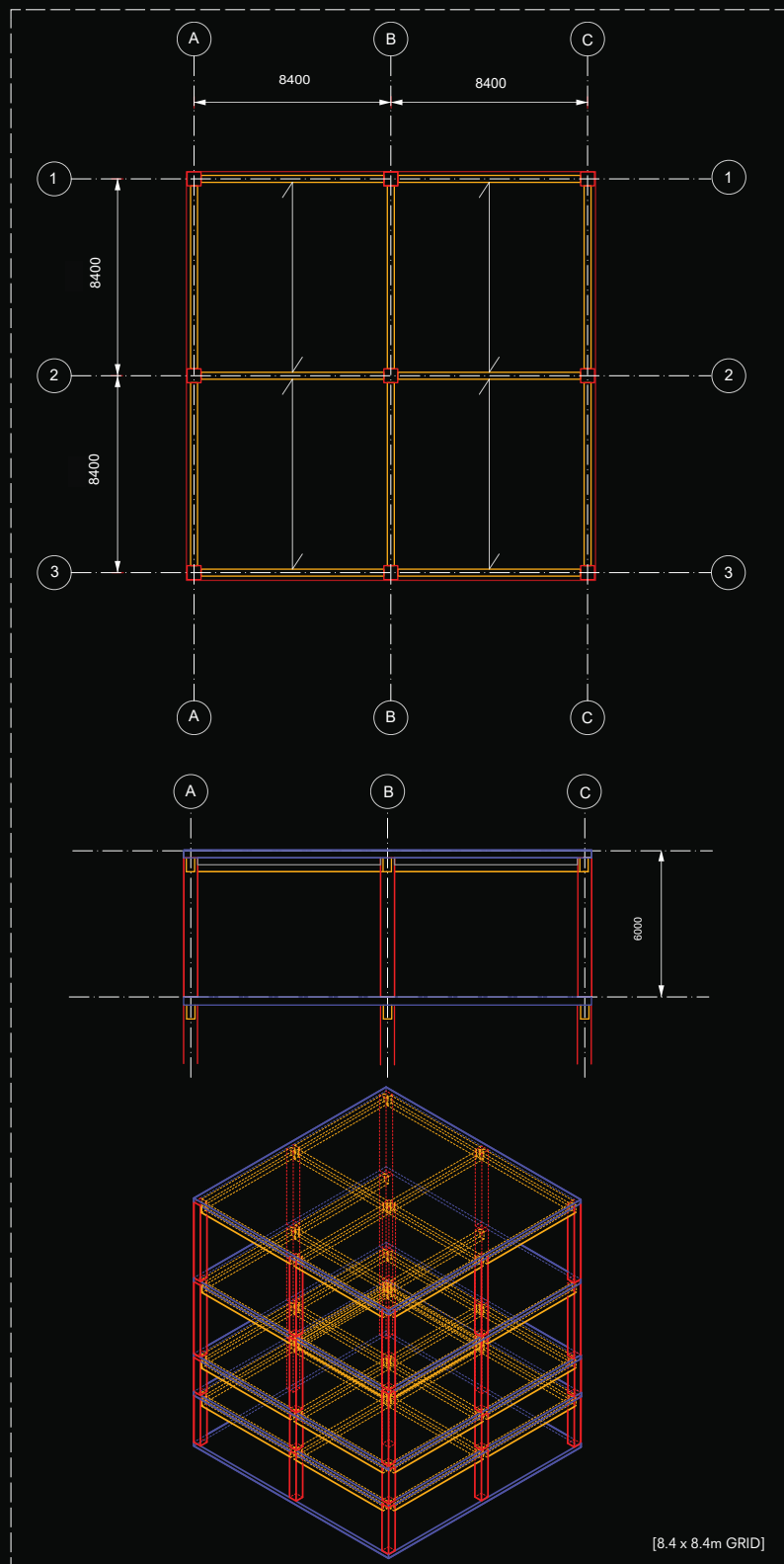


Cross Section through the Vertical Archive





ROMANIA
SEDINTA
MONITORIZAREA
CANTABILULUI CRISAN-
CARAGBMAN
rezervația biosferă
DELTA DUNĂRII





Render: Profanation of Assembly Space
The Community Dinner can host Politics

PART 4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION (WHAT IS THE IMPACT?)

Conclusion

This project sets out to problematize the disjunction between abstract frameworks of environmental governance and the situated practices through which environmental knowledge and collective decisions are produced. It challenges the conventional separation of governance from everyday life, proposing instead that both emerge through shared spatial and material conditions. Through its architectural and territorial interventions, the project explores how governance can be understood as a spatial practice, one constituted through proximity, negotiation, and direct engagement with ecological processes.

The final proposal does not aim to resolve the gap between institutional abstraction and lived reality, but to reconfigure their interaction as an operative field. Governance is understood as distributed and assembled through ecological processes, infrastructural systems, and situated participation, where decision-making emerges through exposure, adjacency, and everyday use rather than centralized authority.

Through this lens, architecture becomes an interface of negotiation rather than a fixed object. The reuse of the former fish factory operates as a key spatial strategy: not as a symbolic centre, but as a relational node embedded within broader ecological and infrastructural dependencies. This enables a condition where design emerges through iterative embedding rather than projection.

The project therefore reframes architecture as a form of spatial problematization, where governance, ecology, and territory are co-produced rather than separated.

Implications

The project proposes a shift in architectural practice from the design of stable institutional forms toward the construction of adaptive relational systems. Rather than producing fixed programmes or authoritative structures, architecture is understood as a field condition that enables relations between actors, environments, and institutional logics to emerge, persist, and reconfigure over time.

This has implications for how adaptive reuse projects, such as the former industrial fish factory, are understood. Rather than approaching such sites through a logic of addition, layering new programmes onto existing structures in a maximalist manner, the project emphasises removal, subtraction, and reconfiguration as equally operative design tools. In this sense, adaptive reuse is not about preserving or expanding the object, but about working through its material and spatial residues to open new forms of use.

Sites like the former fish factory are therefore not treated as static objects to be conserved or simply redeveloped, but as active infrastructural mediators within wider ecological and social systems. The proposal also highlights the importance of spatial composition as a tool for governance. Architecture does not resolve conflict but can render it operable, making tensions visible and productive within a shared spatial framework.

Design Challenges and Reflection

One of the central challenges of the project was the simultaneous development of the fishing intervention and the hub/parliament building. While initially conceived as distinct architectural propositions, the design process increasingly required them to be understood as interdependent components within a larger territorial framework. This raised both organizational and architectural questions: how could the two interventions be developed in relation to one another without reducing one, and how could their reciprocal dependencies be articulated spatially, programmatically, and representationally?

As the project evolved, the fishing intervention shifted from the relatively contained idea of a docking infrastructure towards a distributed monitoring device capable of producing environmental knowledge. This transformation expanded its scope considerably, moving it beyond a singular architectural object and towards a system of actors, technologies, and spatial practices. A similar development occurred with the parliament building. Rather than functioning solely as a civic institution, it became a mediating platform through which environmental data, local

expertise, and political deliberation could intersect. As a consequence, both interventions continuously exceeded their initial boundaries, generating new relationships and requiring additional layers of complexity.

This expansion also revealed a fundamental tension within the project: the challenge of working architecturally with systems rather than discrete objects. Unlike a building with clearly defined limits, a system inevitably extends beyond the scope of any single intervention. It raises questions regarding where the project begins and ends, what aspects of reality it chooses to represent, and which forms of complexity it can meaningfully engage with. Throughout the design process, there was therefore a constant negotiation between ambition and precision. The project does not seek to model the entirety of the ecological, economic, and political networks that shape the fishing territory; rather, it proposes a situated architectural framework through which these relationships can become visible, and collectively acted upon.

In this sense, the project remains less concerned with providing a complete solution than with establishing conditions for engagement. Its value lies not in the exhaustive representation of a system, but in the careful selection and spatial articulation of those points where environmental processes, governance structures, and everyday practices intersect. The difficulty, and simultaneously the productive potential, of the project was to determine the extent to which architecture can operate within such a field of relations without claiming to encompass it in its entirety.

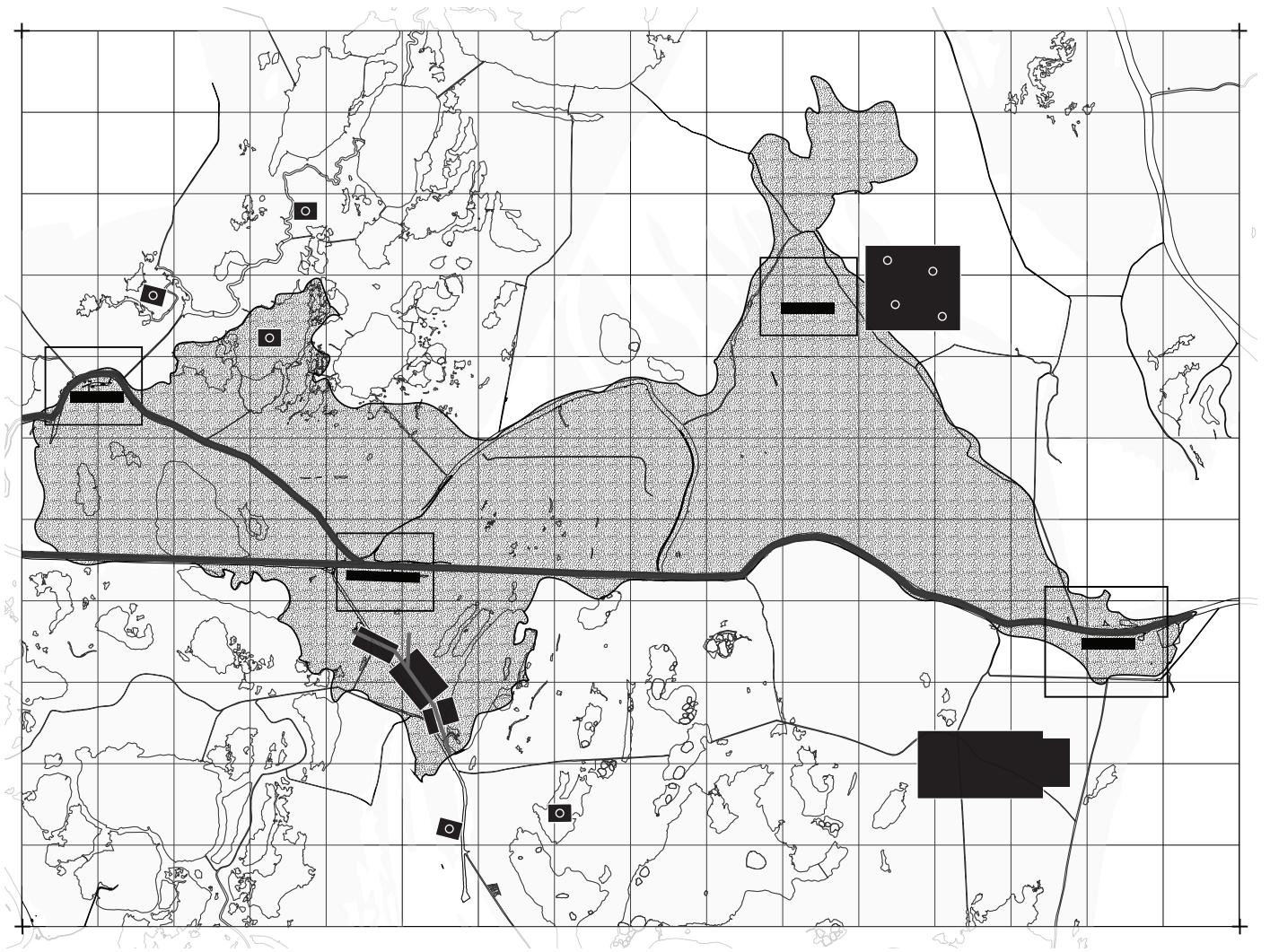
The process reframed design as an ongoing act of assembling relations rather than producing a final, closed solution.

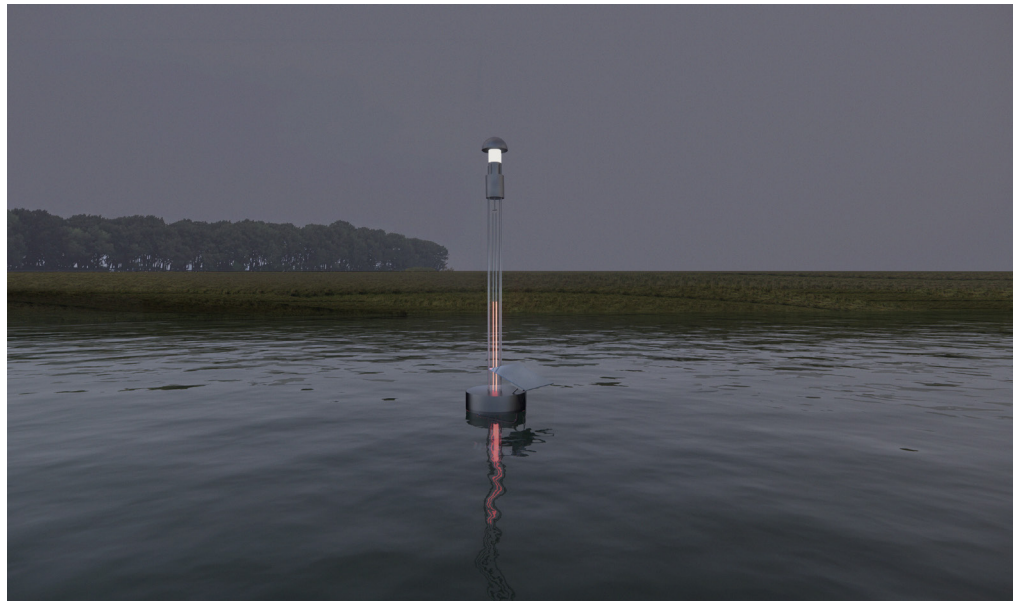
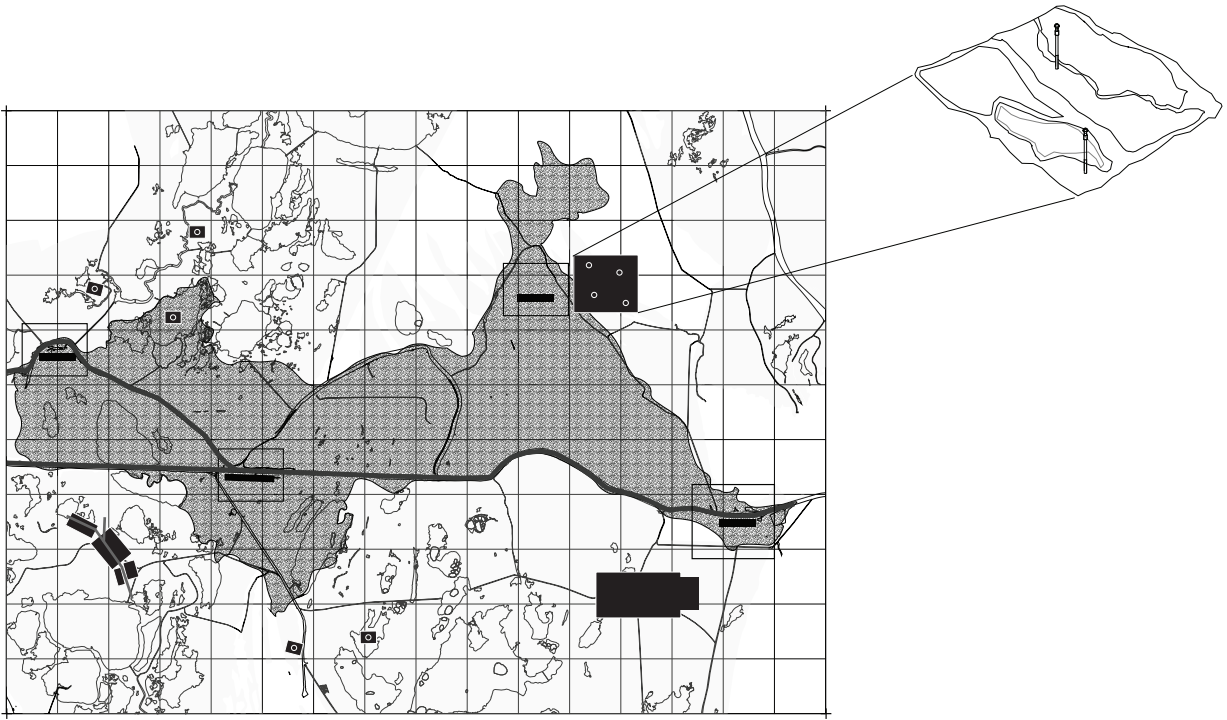
Final Statement.

What if environmental governance could only exist through the spatial and social practices it seeks to regulate?

“Extractive Preservation” questions how preservation and preservation actively produce the conditions of life within demarcated territories. Governance is not prior to practice, but emerges through the relations, constraints, and operations that structure everyday engagement with regulated environments.

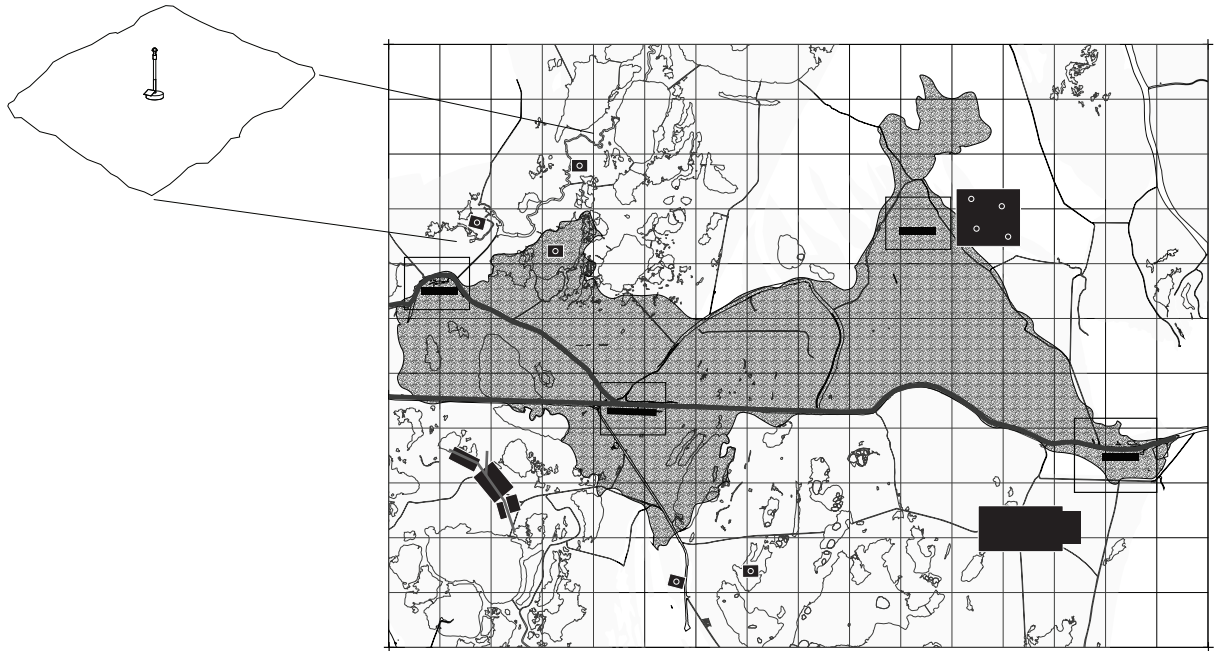
Profanation points to the latent capacity of situated practice: the potential of people to rework, redirect, and reassemble existing spatial and administrative logics from within; not as a rupture from the system, but as an immanent form of reorganisation that operates through it, revealing how even the most regulated territories remain open to continuous spatial reconfiguration.





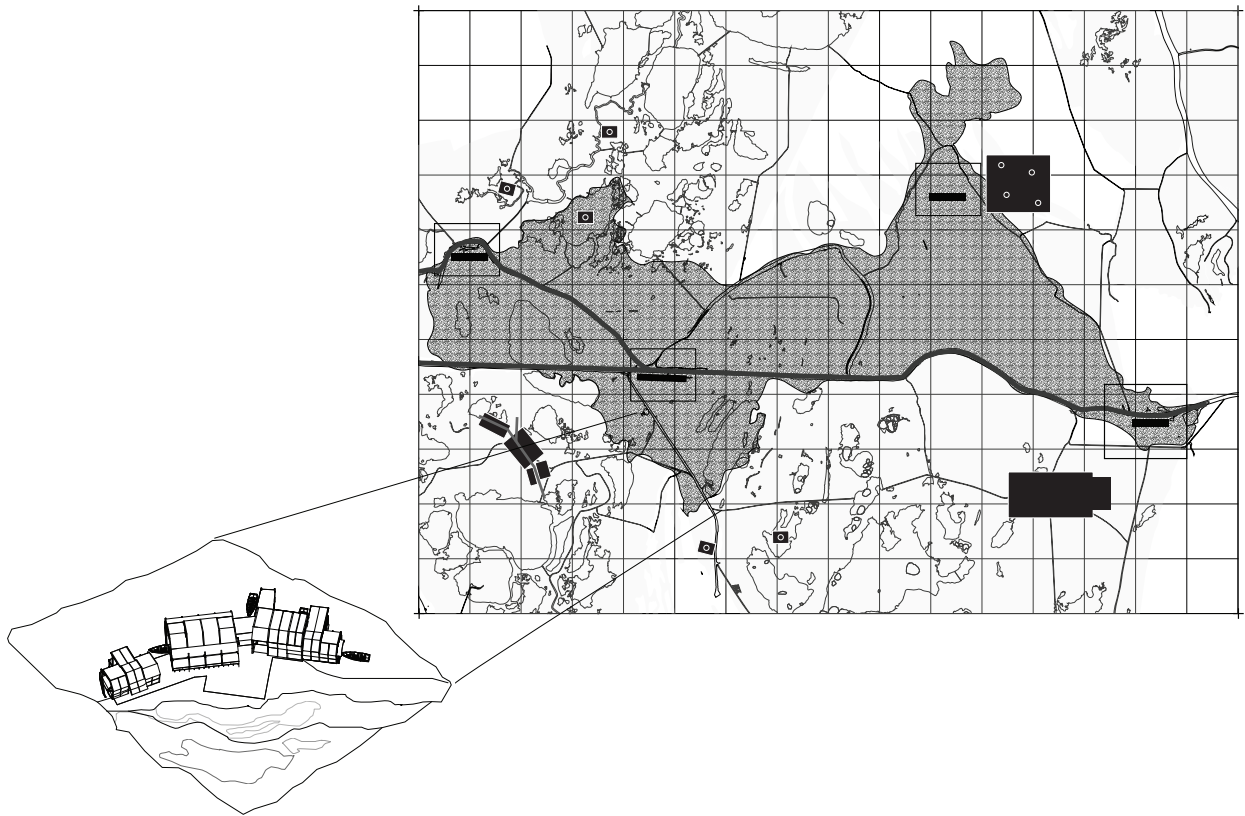
The Fishermen and the lakes

Sensor register declining water pollution

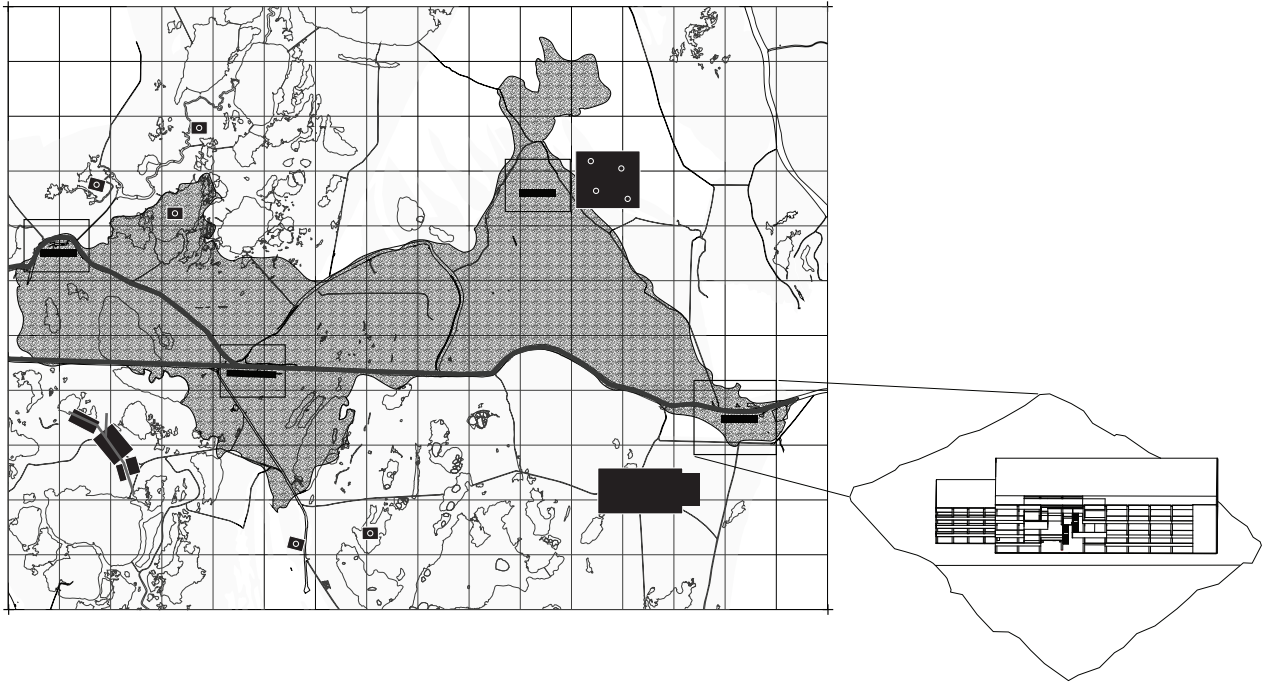


The Village and the Dry Meadows

Ground Condition | Cattle Monitoring



The Fishermen and their Forum



Profanation of a Parliament
Conical Cuts in the Archival Space

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Fig. 02: Historia. (2025). Grigore Antipa – 150 de ani. Available at: <https://historia.ro/sectiune/portret/grigore-antipa-150-de-ani-571033.html> (Accessed 10 November 2025).

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Fig. 09: Filip, A. (2022). Legends of the Sulina. Arhitectura 1906. <https://arhitectura-1906.ro/en/2022/08/legends-of-the-sulina/>

Fig. 10: Munteanu, D. (2019). Sulina cosmopolită. Povestea măririi și decăderii orașului cu 20 de nații și 18 consulat. Adevărul. <https://adevarul.ro/stiri-locale/tulcea/sulina-cosmopolita-poves>

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