INDEX

1_1.2 Map of Armenia showing cities/ places visited during the field trip.

1 INTRODUCTION

1_1 CONTENT ARRANGEMENT

The content of this booklet encompasses the three stages of the graduation project: the research phase, the interphase and the building design. They are interrelated and are here presented in a (con)sequential manner. The project started with the case study of the city of Yerevan in Armenia which became the main source for research documentation. The research phase was concluded with the final thesis involving the collected material. During the interphase the insights, discussed in the thesis, were then gradually translated into a more tangible matter via experimentation, model making and drawing. Consequently, the gathered material informed the beginning stages of the design proposal and were constantly re-introduced in the development of the building.

1_2 YEREVAN

The approach chosen to carry out the research became very much dependent on the field trip to Yerevan. It was based on capturing the accidental urban appearances in the city, thus the collection of the visual content and the immediacy of it were extremely important. The span of the area of documented material included several cities or places in Armenia including Yerevan, Garni, Gherard, Gyumri, Mount Aragats, Metsamor [1_2.1].

1_3 THE APPROACH

The major part of the exploration took place in Yerevan. Therefore, it inspired and determined the previously referred research approach the most. The city appeared to be very chaotic on many levels and that was its predominant charcteristic and value [1_3.1]. This very perceptible yet rather unsearchable quality became the main focus of the research. Yerevan chaos was lying in the odd overall composition of its urbanity

encompassing both the juxtaposed contradictory textures, materials, layers, patterns, and the disorganized circulation, the confused lifestyle. However, the research was chosen to be continued only on the visual information regarding the vivid urban-architectural appearances. The intrigue was lying in that moment of shift, in the threshold and the contrast of the juxtaposition. The result was achieved applying a particular photograpic manner - highly exposing the picture frame to light in order to emphasize the border between the contrasting matters leaving the less dominant one out [1_3.2]. The collected photographs also provided as the primary source for writing the essay 'Collage, Contrast, Abstraction.'


1_3.1 Yerevan in pictures showing its chaotic and collage-like urbanity.
<u>On the left</u>: excerpt from urban life.
<u>On the right</u>: panoramic view from Noragyugh.
<u>On the next spread:</u> view of Noragyugh in composition with Mount Ararat.

1_3.2 Examples of photographs highly exposed to light.
Above: two separate examples.
On the right: a collage of the majority of the photographs taken.
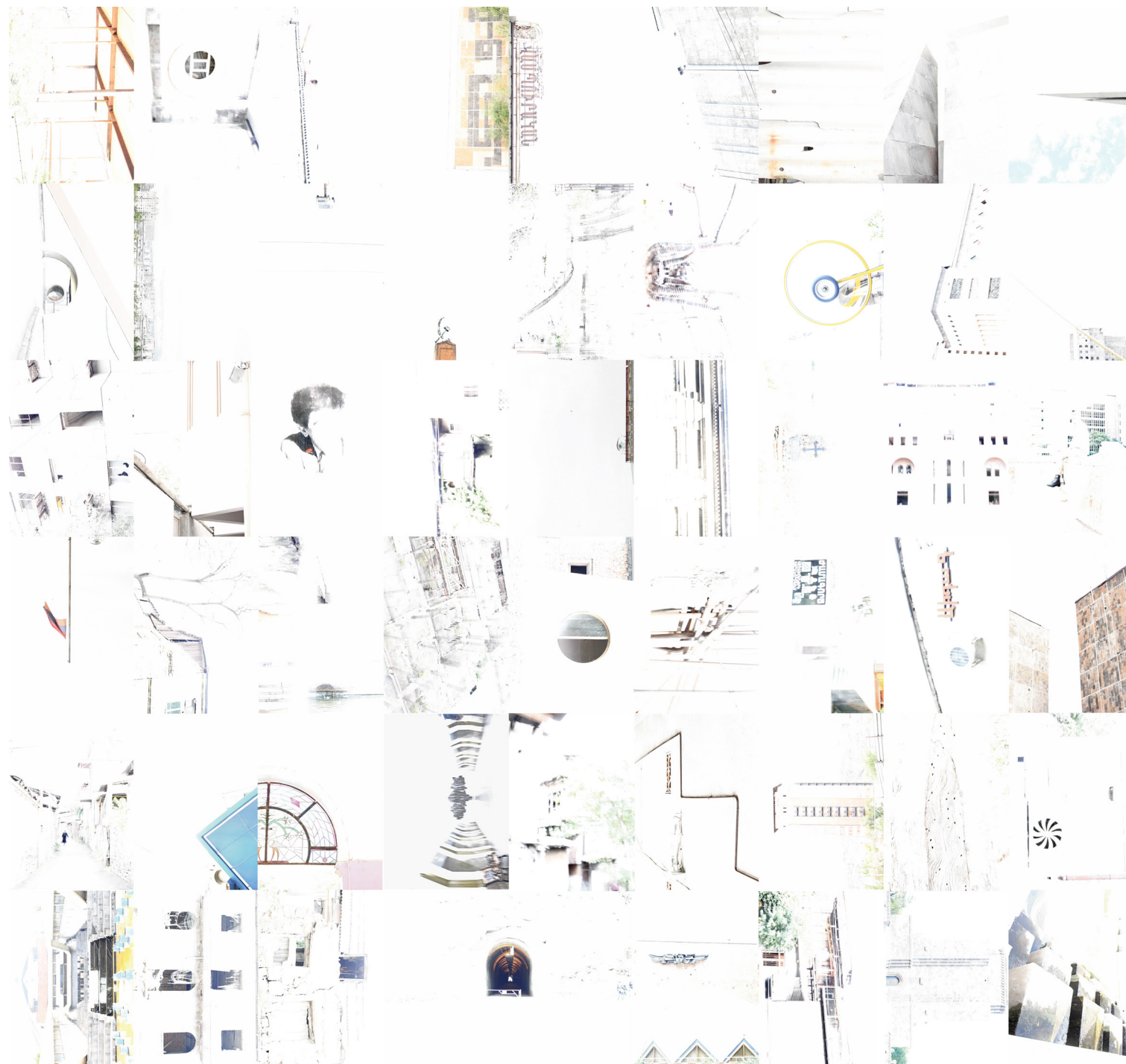
Corner, James. *Ideograms, Töölönlahti, Helsinki*. In *Collage and Architecture.* New York: Routledge, 2014.

2 COLLAGE, CONTRAST, ABSTRACTION

[This introduction comes from earlier stages of formulating the seminar paper topic; it slightly changed now yet some important points regarding the topic are present in this paragraph; some notions, structure, some references are kept in this document as to show the process of developing the topic; the main writing starts under the name "Paper"]

Eligibility Of A Collage As A Technique To Assess Urban Characteristics: What Qualities Come Out Of The Value And Ambiguity Evoked By The Collage?
[the title is to be reformulated too]

Collage is a widely used creative technique that incorporates various methods, materials or styles in one art piece that usually carries a particular message behind itself. It has been adapted by many artists and art forms including painting, poetry and architecture. Considering the latter one, the appropriation of the collage is, in turn, rather broad as well: whether it is used to analyze a particular urban scape, in architectural representation or in designing[1]. It seems that evaluating a city through a collage, however, might be the least appropriate of those mentioned appropriations since it brings about a sense of vagueness and confronts a personal experience against factual knowledge or even excludes/emphasizes the former one over the other. Thus, a question of accuracy arises. Or, more importantly, the need for accuracy in this quest for urban characterization. Yet, if the need is already questionable what is left out of the analytical collage as a positive value? What role does the matter of subjectivity play in here?..

In this paper the research object is the collage as a technique to "read" or "learn" a city. More importantly, through this process a further/deeper

investigation is revealed upon the fragile matters in architecture (commonly a rather pragmatic art form): a matter of individualization, a matter of accident, a matter of interpretation or, more intriguingly, the accumulation of interpretations and its meaning towards continuity.

Therefore, the question is whether the level of value exceeds the uncertainty or ambiguity in the outcome of urban assessment; and whether that ambiguity or polysemy does not actually become a value itself.

Kahnweiler (The Frame and the Mirror: On collage and the postmodern. Thomas P. Brockelman):

These painters turned away from imitation because they had discovered that the true character of painting and sculpture is that of a *script*. The products of these arts are signs, emblems, for the external world, not mirrors reflecting the external world in a more or less distorting manner. Once this was recognized, the plastic arts were freed from the slavery inherent in illusionistic styles. (*Model*, p. 74)

Collage was a certain discovery in arts in the beginning of the 19th century that no longer dealt with the matter of representation (mirror) but rather "signs for the external world."

STRUCTURE:

1. Introduction:

a. Definitions of collage, assemblage (?), framing urban scene, abstraction, contrast, gist, representation.

2. Main body:

a. Methods/techniques of collage-like urban photography (analyzing examples of Ulrich Wüst, Michael Schmidt, Wolf Jobst Siedler, Elisabeth Niggemeyer): setting up a particular scene (opposite of the gist scene); abstracting (minimizing) the representation of the "external reality" in the picture; expressing certain continuities (in patterns, lines, textures) that reveals contrasts and therefore elevates certain qualities...
b. Basically, what this technique reveals (pros&cons) or, critically speaking, why it should or should not be more useful than any other technique in terms of urban understanding? What are the positive and negative values of it? What does losing pictorial architectural representation mean?

3. Conclusion:

a. Abstraction in order to preserve qualities; timelessness for the city;
b. When abstracting the place certain things, objects, lines, etc. and their arrangement, composition, relation to each other belong to a plane from which it can be then materialized, concretized according to any different associations, interpretations, etc.

In the end, maybe architectural (urban) depiction without representation reveals more or deeper? Or it simply drowns in this wide range of interpretations never being completely or at all understood? Here comes the abductive approachexpressed through rather endless process of evaluating a particularly framed (or collage-like) photograph which might not end or end in some magnificent conclusions.

Abductive reasoning – starts with an observation then seeks to find the simplest and most likely explanation (chance operations that you start reasoning).

Abstraction in collage -> Abstraction in a city collage -> Disclosure of timeless qualities within the city

BOOKS AND REFERENCES:

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2. Michael Schmidt. *Berlin Kreuzberg.*
3. Ulrich Wüst (Autor), Wolfgang Kil (Intro). *Berlin. Mitte.*
4. *Urban memory and visual culture in Berlin– framing the asynchronous city.* Simon Ward. (Contemporaty urban photography and the museal gaze)
https://books.google.nl/
a. Museal gaze vs synchronic gaze; asynchronic city
b. Improtance of framing
c. Collage-like photography examples and conclusions
5. Reinhard Mucha
6. *The Frame and the Mirror – On Collage and the Postmodern.* Thomas P. Brockelman.
https://books.google.nl/
7. Gist scene phenomenon http://cvcl.mit.edu/Papers/Oliva04.pdf
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PAPER

INTRODUCTION

The picture or photograph stands here as a particular moment of gaze to emphasize certain qualities of it in a two-dimensional understanding, be it a deceptive shadow that all of the sudden rises from being the secondary source of information to the primary one, or, more importantly, an alternative one (reality is perceived as we created it and as we planned the entire perception of it; it already provides a step further for the interpretation or the (potential of the) imagination of the creator); or the appearance of the accidental juxtaposition of different families of materials.

Why it is called collage-like photography? It is because of its clear odd composition or sometimes inability to translate the spatial qualities as well as the lack of any logical references, etc. However, what is described about the photograph is valid for the act of observation too.

It is a method free of prejudice, pre-judgement, pre-knowledge and, thus, implying to result in numerous, sort of endless ways. How it is, though, advantageous if at all and not misleading? Is the quality of being misleading also an advantage? If yes, then how? What is the meaning behind the continuous or never-ending interpretation of the place?

PHOTOGRAPHIC DISCOURSE

In the most common practice, documentation of a site, place or a city in an architectural understanding begins with photography. It either manifests, supports and expands on what has been researched so far or rather acts as a primary source over the researched knowledge and, consequently, detaches from any prejudice, preliminary statements or formulations and epistemic outcomes. In the latter example, the role of photography or, more precisely, the meaningfulness behind the particular photographic decisions is essential. The answer to what is, thus, important to depict in a photograph most probably derives from the actual study of photography and the meaning of its appropriation as well as theoretical imprint. In her writings On Photography Susan Sontag mentions the general function of a photograph to critically assess the information that is to be seen in it and, in turn, leave the distracting or irrelevant objects or themes out of the image frame. "While a painting or a prose description can never be other than a narrowly selective interpretation, a photograph can be treated as a narrowly selective transparency" (Sontag, 1973)[2]. In that sense, the task of the photograph is then to disclose a thing or a theme at its most vulnerable, transparent or intimate. It already implies what there is to seek in taking a picture. If then a frame is left out with certain narrowly selective meanings, the series of photographs consciously taken this way introduces a reconstructive approach to perceive or treat things alternatively. "In a world ruled by photographic images, all borders ("framing") seem arbitrary. Anything can be separated, can be made adjacent to anything else)" (Sontag, 1973)[3]. "Any photograph has multiple meanings; indeed, to see something in the form of a photograph is to encounter a potential object of fascination. The ultimate wisdom of the photographic image is to say: "There is the surface. Now think—or rather feel, intuit—what is beyond it, what the reality must be like if it looks this way" (Sontag, 1973)[4].

The meanings, on the other hand, are not necessarily specific in their content but rather suggestive and open since for a message to be evident the photograph is always followed by its title or description (Sontag, 1973)[5]. Moreover, when it comes to revealing the presence of those meanings the ability to manipulate the camera as well as photographic conventions becomes critical. The moment or the way to take a picture is dependent on the successfulness of the idea it further conveys. One such example of manipulating the camera in order to strengthen the argument was successfully depicted in "Chris Marker's film, Si j'avais Quatre Dromadaires (1966), a brilliantly orchestrated meditation on photographs of all sorts and themes, suggests a subtler and more rigorous way of packaging (and enlarging) still photographs. Both the order and the exact time for looking at each photograph are imposed; and there is a gain in visual legibility and emotional impact" (Sontag, 1973)[6].

- More on other ways to manipulate the camera, with examples; fragmentation; zoom; light; composition;
- The absence of the gist scene phenomenon in collage-like photography and the importance of it; not trying to understand or explain the place but rather "forget" about it in its representational terms and focus on the very verge of the contrasts, the juxtapositions, the meanings behind them…
- Concluding paragraph;

There are ways to manipulate the camera and photography in order to juxtapose objects, themes, ideas of different kind that being composed several in one frame might trigger certain discussions or recall particular global or local concerns, etc. Therefore, the composition of the picture has a key role in this case. It is the main constraint for further appropriation of camera effects and techniques. It has mostly to do with the matter of observation itself and the ability of the observer to see or, better, foresee those triggering, intriguing and informative appearances in the city. Then, the effects like zoom have a secondary importance to help frame that particular composition targeted by the researcher (see Pic.1). Light adjustment (e.g. long exposure), on the other hand, deals with the exclusion or inclusion of compositional elements within the picture or, in other words, the reduction of information in order to clarify the message (see Pic.2).

All these technical aspects simply help provide the photographer with the desired outcome. However, the importance or the strength of the capture here is its insufficiency or uncertainty of reference unlike in regular photography. In other words, the idea is to lose the gist of a scene as for what it is and provide the scene with alternative, unfamiliar or other meanings instead creating a range of possibilities for a place to become rather than to be. The "gist of a scene" phenomenon is about the ability of an observer to gain the primitive and basic information from only a glance at the real-life scene (Oliva, 2005)[7]. Even

Pic. 1 (Com)-positional technique to make collage--like photography. From author's archive.

Pic. 2 High-exposure technique to make collage-like photography. From author's archive.

Even though this phenomenon is more about the time factor of seeing the picture, the idea of immediately perceiving and subconsciously relating a view to what it is about limits its potential to be interpreted, regenerated, to become and to be continued. The so-called collage-like photography represents a rather different concept that triggers a deeper, further reflection, interpretation and speculation towards the received visual information rather than inducing automatism of response.

THE ACT OF OBSERVATION
However, for an architectural research of the urban environment, photography, even being very specific in its use, or collage-like, still acts as a medium to document the environment or as an evidence of a particular urban gaze. Therefore, one could state that more important than the act of photographing the surroundings and framing the discussed particularities, is the moment of the observation itself.
[Conclusions based from the excerpts of the book Urban Memory and Visual Culture of Berlin: Framing the Asynchronous City (Simon Ward)[8]]

Köster's commentary on Wüst's photographs formulates an important dimension of the museal urban gaze.

Images only speak to the person who first of all trusts his own eyes. Anyone, on the other hand, is already finished with things when he can say their name or finds his prejudice about them confirmed, overlooks the freedom on offer here to fill the scene with actions and to let himself be told history ['Geschichte'].[64]

Köster here formulates two forms of gaze: the instrumentalizing gaze that reduces the object to what it signifies and another gaze that opens out the image as a process and involves the paradigmatic loss of control.

Thus, as previously discussed, the view that is being looked at in an alternative, reality-disengaged manner is more progressive in a sense that it encourages continuity and evolvement of objects, subjects, themes, ideas, thoughts as well as of thinking itself. However, for such observation to be efficient or, at all, to be achieved, one has to prepare the eye and the mind to particularly look for and capture those frames in reality that

has depth and potential to grow into something. "The line of sight engendered by the spatial metaphors of hidden meaning, whether single or doubled, whether expressed in space or spatialized time, sets the critic in search of origins, essences, intentions, motives, causes, for these are the things that lie behind appearances" (Evans, 1984)[9]. Yet, beside the importance of noticing that information in the picture frame either lying behind/within or at the clashes of the elements, the time factor is as much significant and impactful. Not only is it the leading criterion for evaluating the observed real-life "collages" but also it adds a level of chance in the act of observation that makes a particular gaze unique and at the same time expands the possibilities of thought in other set of space and time of now a slightly different gaze.

Kil contrasts the abstract calculations of the synchronic urban gaze with the effect which Wüst's photography achieves:

What was created was photography, inspired by general knowledge about the phenomenon of the city, but driven by the very concrete experiences of one's own – urban – existence [...] as if the mountain of stone and concrete, of numbers and facts and geometries had gradually been cleared away and enabled the gaze to grasp a wider terrain.

He then explains the quality of Wüst's museal gaze upon the city: it is no longer simply observation (*Betrachten*) but seeing (*Schauen*), which implies something more 'profound', a perception of the process of time, for in Wüst's photography reality is no longer being 'documented in concrete detail' but as a 'fleeting fragment' – 'the moment becomes important, with everything that it evokes – atmosphere, mood, subjectivity.'[68]

Speaking of the former role of time as a key criterion when reading a two-dimensionally conceived view: "The face-to-face relationship, no longer possible across time, is replaced by an equivalent arrangement in which the present is construed as a projection of the past, an accessible reality offering evidence of previous events that can only be recovered through it. Extending from the past it eclipses, the present is turned into the facade of history" (Evans, 1984)[10]. In this case, after capturing a carefully selected view, the frame of it as well as its frontal position acts as the main constraint for further contemplation. "Aspects of reality that cannot be thought of in terms of this privileged orientation become more recalcitrant to interpretation because no clue is given as to where we should stand or what we should look toward. As it is, the spatial metaphor leaves us in no doubt; it leads under the skin, beneath the surface, through the frame, behind the stage, beyond the facade" (Evans, 1984)[11]. When an observer sees that particular frame (even before taking the decision to photograph it) they see it as a frontal projection on a two-dimensional plane. Technically, it happens in human's vision apparatus yet after the signal reaches the brain the flat picture gains another dimension in its perception; in other words, the brain automatically assigns it to a certain meaning, be it a perspective, a shadow, a contrast etc. However, successfully appropriating camera or manipulating photographic principles the sense of depth can be detached from the view and acquire quite an alternative perception. On the other hand, that two-dimensionally conceived view still carries information that is "imprinted" either in the very verge of the two mediums or in the exclusion of one and so on. That information mostly occurs at the juxtapositions of matters or throughout the entire picture as a result of the accumulation of all the concealed informative layers of any kind.

Robin Evans talks about the informative projection of an object and the critic's relation towards it which he calls face-to-face (or equally treated) relationship: "Yet it is the face-to-face relationship between the critic and his subject that has the greatest effect because with it comes the idea that the phenomena which are presented to us through our senses are presented as frontages, facades, things that signify what they stand in front of. So it is that the critic may look at his subject as if it were some kind of projection whose meaning is assured by the fact that it is addressed toward him" (Evans, 1984)[12]. Therefore, what this kind of observation, then reading, then evaluation suggests is the non-hierarchical relationship between the observer and the framed view since the former one is as much responsible for how they interpret or expand the visual composition with more comprehensive understanding as the latter is important for what it suggests within itself to be interpreted. It therefore triggers the intellectual part of the brain each time to re-read or reconsider the view on more levels than the first impression or any prejudice might suggest. Likewise, in John Hejduk's work Object/Subject the object is perceived as a tangible form that provides the observer with the source to interpret on the immaterial contents of it. His goal was to make the philosophical, social or any other thought be contemplated on the ground level rather than the abstract plane because in this way it is more likely to provide some answers to those thoughts (Mertins, 1996)[13].

This illustrates that Wüst's architectural photography is directed not towards our acknowledgement of what is being represented, but we are required to pay attention to the ways in which we recognize and are asked to recognize the urban environment around us.

THE AMBIGUOUS QUALITY OF COLLECTED INFORMATION

The critique or the ambiguity of using this strategy or rather observation guideline for the

sake of gathering data and learning about the built environment for the researcher would be the quality of information (sometimes even the quantity since not all of the image frames simply "speak" anything) that they gain from it.

    • Elaborating on Sontag's point: "The limit of photographic knowledge of the world is that, while it can goad conscience, it can, finally, never be ethical or political knowledge. The knowledge gained through still photographs will always be some kind of sentimentalism, whether cynical or humanist. It will be a knowledge at bargain prices—a semblance of knowledge, a semblance of wisdom; as the act of taking pictures is a semblance of appropriation, a semblance of rape."
    • Elaborating on the question of subjectivity in this case; is it a disadvantage or a quality?

In Sontag's thoughts On Photography that previously mentioned critique is elaborated to an extent that the photograph is able to express only limited information that has mostly to do with sentiments and proves abortive to social, cultural or political epistemic contexts. There arise a couple of contradictions. First, even if the interpretation or the reading of collage-like photography is false, it still proves rather the argument of now the new issue (perhaps a more global one) carried within the picture frame that was captured by the observer

and, in that sense, it opens the theme to more interpretations (interpretation made, then seen, heard or read and re-interpreted again) which brings about the quality of continuity and timelessness. Then the view, the composition as well as the discussed objects and subjects in it acquire this enduring value that exists as long as the interest is there. On the other hand, it is, in general, the interest itself that this whole research process is about to maintain. Second, if not disclosing the complex epistemic clods this kind of observation and data collection is for the researcher's sake of being triggered by the occurring themes, ideas, problems and being provided with numerous possibilities of them. With that being said, one could argue that the advantage or the quality of it is then found not in the precision of information gained but in the enduring value and the encouragement of the matters notified within the picture and at the same time the preservation of the particular moments of the view (which, in other words, is a city or a place) that can actually bring about endless opportunities rather than being generally condemned as irrelevant or obsolete, etc.

CONCLUSION

    • What can one learn from the city seeing it that way?
    • A matter of subjectivity and personal interpretation of the collage-like photography on what carries which meanings;
    • In the end, does it become an additive or a quality that allows the observer/researcher

while researching the city to simultaneously summarize certain ideas, exclude certain points, formulate an interest; and by giving certain interpretations on phenomena or things already be in the intermediate state between the research phase and the design phase?

On the technique ["Collaged" from the excerpts of a paper written by the author on specifically this research methodology]:
Thus, what it suggests is a kind of endless potential of things (constituents of the city) to become meaningful to a certain extent and, then, the meaning, again, re-interpreted and attached to another essence etc.
It is generally interesting how a particular object or subject assigned with a meaning suddenly proves its significance and, therefore, on the other hand, is really dependent for its enduring value on the way it is perceived or interpreted which also describes the enduring value of the city itself.
However, with the discussed urban observation, interpretation and investigation or the actual seeking for the qualitative value the city is likely to gain a new attitude towards its contents rather than them being condemned or rejected in a social, political or, say, historical context and then both conceptually and physically demolished.
Consequently, the method implies a sense of continuity in the city through its transformational capabilities to convert what is typically considered irrelevant in the city due to, for instance, the current pace of development or, to the contrary, the negative memories from the remnants of a complicated past, into a rather fresh concept. Not only it helps to understand the city on a deeper level without any extrinsic assessment or prejudgment of it but also to make more objective assumptions about it.

even though through a completely subjective body. The continuity, in turn, evokes yet another notion – the timelessness to which the city gets closer (though never reaches it) when every time being re-interpreted and, therefore, moved forward.

On materialization:

Therefore, with the collection of these urban gazes and gained new attitudes towards the obsolete issues the observer not only acquires an alternative <u>reading</u> of the city and, consequently, a rather different <u>understanding</u> of it but also is suggested with how to imprint that knowledge of continuity in the "<u>writing</u>" of the city as well. All the intriguing contrasts noticed, compositions revealed, subjects found may be reinterpreted and manifested in the new architecture or urban appearances which reason those matters in yet another way and, more importantly, instead of denying rather preserve them and appropriate them to the continuous pace of development, therefore, imply timelessness in the existence of the urban identity in the natural processes of transformation.

And, again, this another dimension found in the potential of the technique – the new use of the repurposed abstract urban appearances – provides with numerous possibilities for it to be accomplished.

It might be achieved either in literal terms regarding the visual cohesion and the appropriation of the instances or results of the discussed technique to the new spatial constructs; or in ideological terms imprinting the inherited knowledge from the observation in the process of building.

The most important quality about it remains the triple sequence: the particular reading of the city that provides alternative understanding about it which results in the reinterpretation of the urban frames. Therefore, it represents the method of regenerating or extending the city with respect to its unique image, characteristics and cultural heritage which are re-read, re-interpreted, then modified and adapted to fit the modern era.

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4. *Ibid.*

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7. Aude Oliva, "Gist of the Scene", in *Neurobiology of Attention* (2005). http://cvcl.mit.edu/Papers/Oliva04.pdf

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9. Robin Evans, "Traces That Leave Nothing Behind" (1984) in *Architecture Theory since 1968,* ed. K. Michael Hays (London: The MIT Press, 1998).

10. *Ibid.*

11. *Ibid.*

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13. Detlef Mertins, "The Shells of Architectural Thought" in *Hejduk's Chronotope*, eds. K. Michael Hays and Centre Canadien D'architecture (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996).

More references and readings used on exploring the topic are mentioned in the draft pages at the beginning of the essay.

excerpts from e-books

roughly cut quotes from readings

author's notes and outlines

author's text

Final word

The suggested writing manner at the beginning of this paper raised the question about the quality of the written outcome at different stages of engagement on the topic. To elaborate on that, being able for the author to interrupt themselves, to add, to compare and to witness the development of the topic and the progress of thought already suggests a continuity in that thought or interpretation and keeps the discussion constantly variable, therefore - timeless..? Purposefully or not, these are the matters that have to do not only with the structure of this essay but also with the content of it that simply adds up to the overall argument here.

3 TRANSITION PHASE

Translating research findings into an architectural design proposal

3_1 INTRODUCTION

The explicit research about how framing a particular urban moment to be non-referential and abstract evokes a rather alternative understanding of a place (see essay 'Collage, Contrast, Abstraction'), introduces a method to gather background information for an architectural design proposal. The method is based on the 'rewriting' of certain, sometimes obsolete yet intrinsic urban moments into a completely new program. Therefore, the design is intended to maintain urban continuity in a different, almost *subconscious-driven*, manner with respect to the unique character of a city, instead of applying the monotonous, often radical modern tendencies to a rather resistant environment.

3_2 METHOD

1. Collecting abstract urban appearances in a form of a photograph.

In common practice, photography is one of the key tools to collect primary information about the analyzed subject. If properly controlled (as described in the essay above) the urban gaze converted into a photograph might extend this practice for it to be involved in the design process as well. The collection of those urban appearances in photographs becomes the ultimate source in the further development of an architectural idea or concept.

Therefore, the method started with the restricted observation of the urban surroundings simultaneously capturing as many of those gazes as possible.
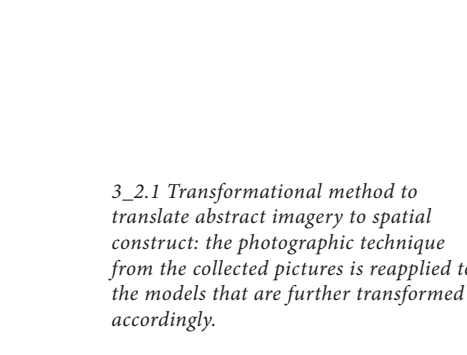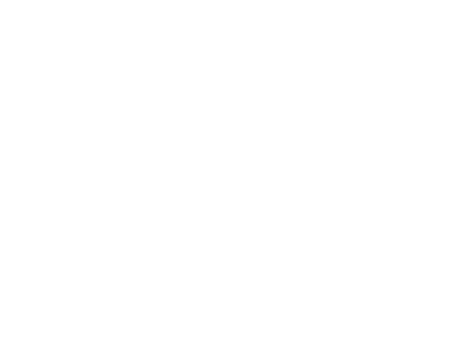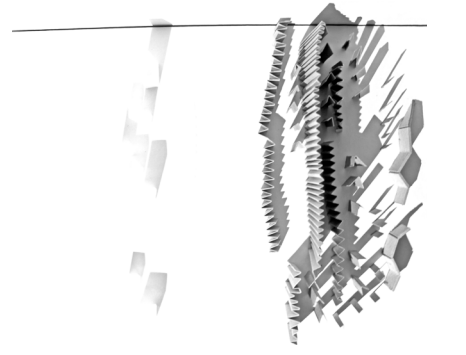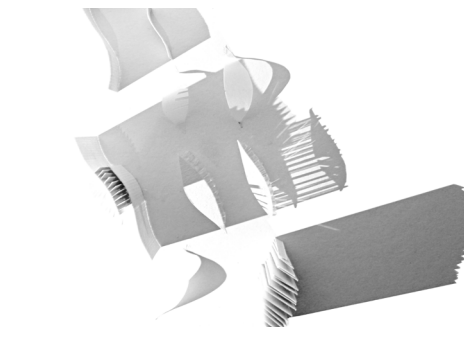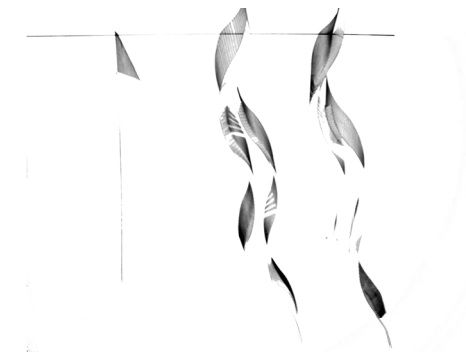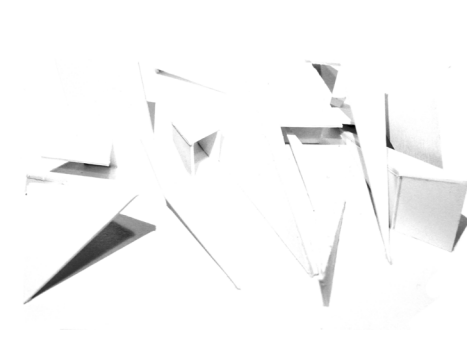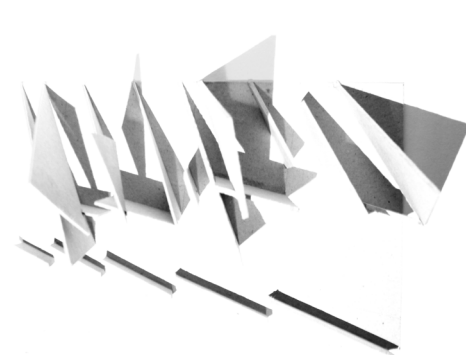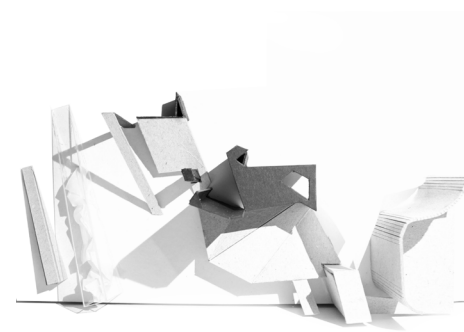
3_2.1 Transformational method to
translate abstract imagery to spatial
construct: the photographic technique
from the collected pictures is reapplied to
the models that are further transformed
accordingly.

2. Searching for spatial qualities within each abstract photograph.

As much as the quality of abstraction revealed with the photographic manner of high exposure to light ignores the nearby context, it opens up numerous possibilities or ways to be interpreted and, therefore, reproduced. The spatial reproduction of these abstract appearances was manifested in the form of a compositional-architectural model. In the first attempt to translate the abstract two-dimentional images into spatial phenomena, each photograph was assigned to be a projection of the further generated structural configuration. Then, the new structure would be applied again with the same photographic manner and re-modelled according to the same principle. It represented a transformational method that would produce infinite results of con(sequential) compositions [3_2.1].

However, due to the issue of incompleteness of the process in the first attempt and the lack of conclusions, another volumetric experiment of translating the abstract appearances was carried out. In this case, the chronological sequence of the photographs was taken into account. The model combined the geographical characteristics as well as cognitive experience of the taken route with the particular abstract moments captured along it. The result was a tightly enclosed volume that revealed its inside spatial construct through several viewing holes that differently constrained the field of vision [3_2.2].
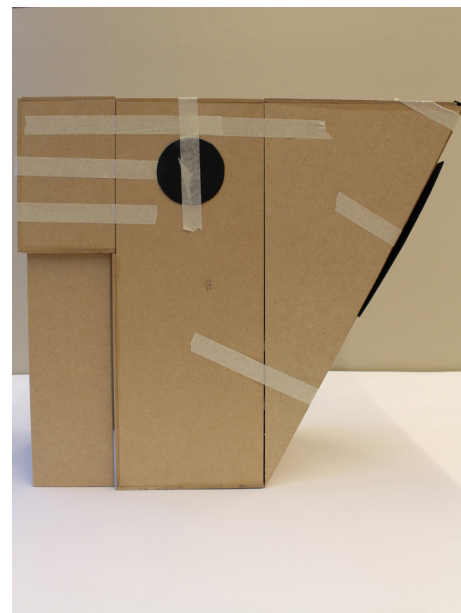
3_2.2 (left page) Experimental model that combined spatially translated imagery of chronological order, geographical conditions and cognitive memories.
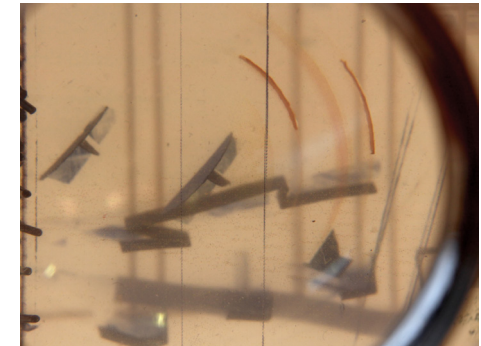
3_2.3 (right page) Experimental model in which any context was made irrelevant in order to achieve total abstraction.
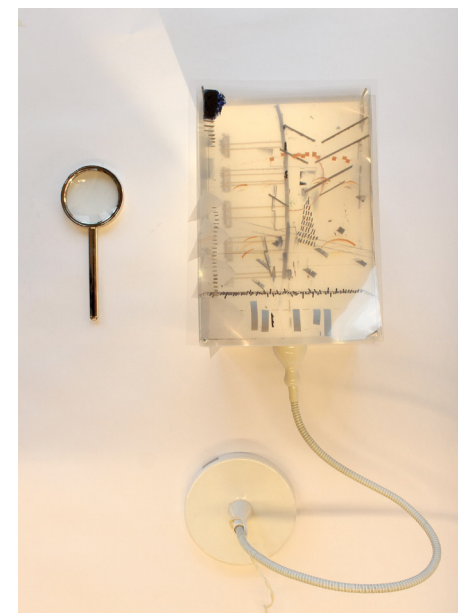
Nevertheless, the programmatic sequence that included the physical, atmospheric and abstract attributes of the place appeared to be rather contradicting to the initial aim of the research that focused on non-referential or indirectly referred urban appearances. For that matter, another experimental model was designed that compiled the volumetric constructs of several abstract images without referring them to the place or any material basis [3_2.3]. Furthermore, it revealed an intriguing spatial potential within the superimposition of several abstract photographies. This model by essence influenced the following critical shift in the development of the project.
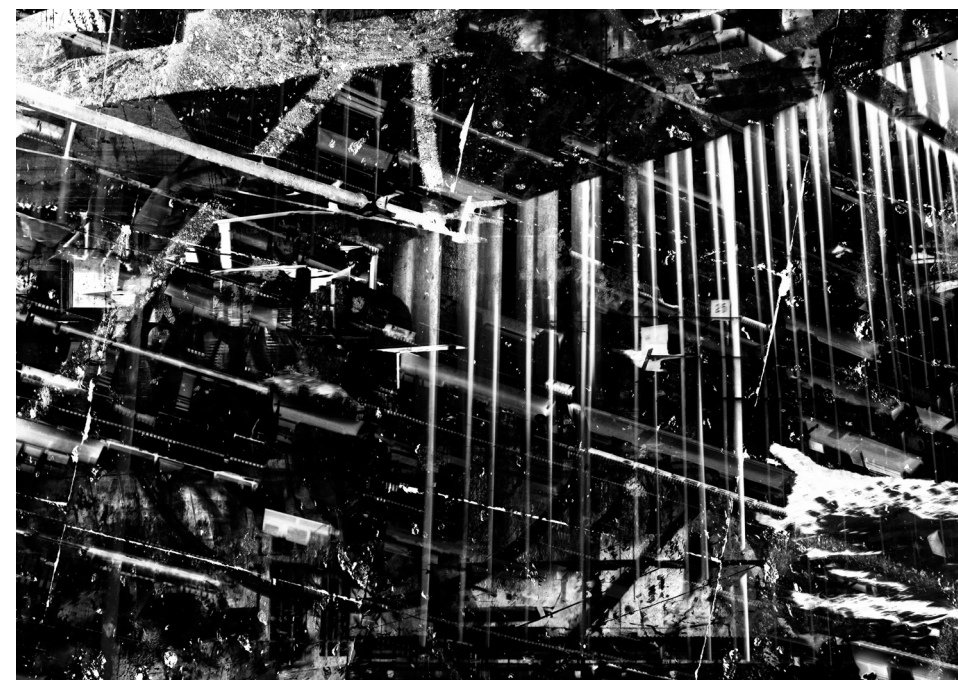
3. Compiling all photographs to discard any contextual references to pursue more abstraction.

In the same manner as the latest described model the compilation of all the collected abstract images was created. The process followed the chronological sequence of the photographs that were converted into black and white drawings beforehand [3_2.4]. Later, the compiled image was used as a basis to test out several compositions disclosing different and exciting spatial potential every time [3_2.5].

4. The final composition of the selected abstract photographs.

However, since many of the collected abstract urban appearances were noticed due to their texture, material quality or color, the original version of the photographs was restored and the same process of selective compilation was repeated again which resulted in a final single drawing that contained the most appealing spatial and visual potential [3_2.6].

3_2.6 Compilation of the selected original abstract photographs composed to achieve the highest potential in both spatial construct and character.

5. Extracting 2.5-dimensional potential spatiality.

Since the final drawing was constituted from spatial nuances, the next logical step was to indicate them, study the relationship among them or speculate on them. In other words, if the context had been refused in order to achieve abstraction and non-referential content to be interpreted in infinite ways, then, in this case, by extracting spatial elements in the drawing, completely new contexts are adapted with unrelated original meanings.

After reducing the drawing to a certain level, the emerging structure was reorganized according to intuitive logic [3_2.7, 3_2.8].
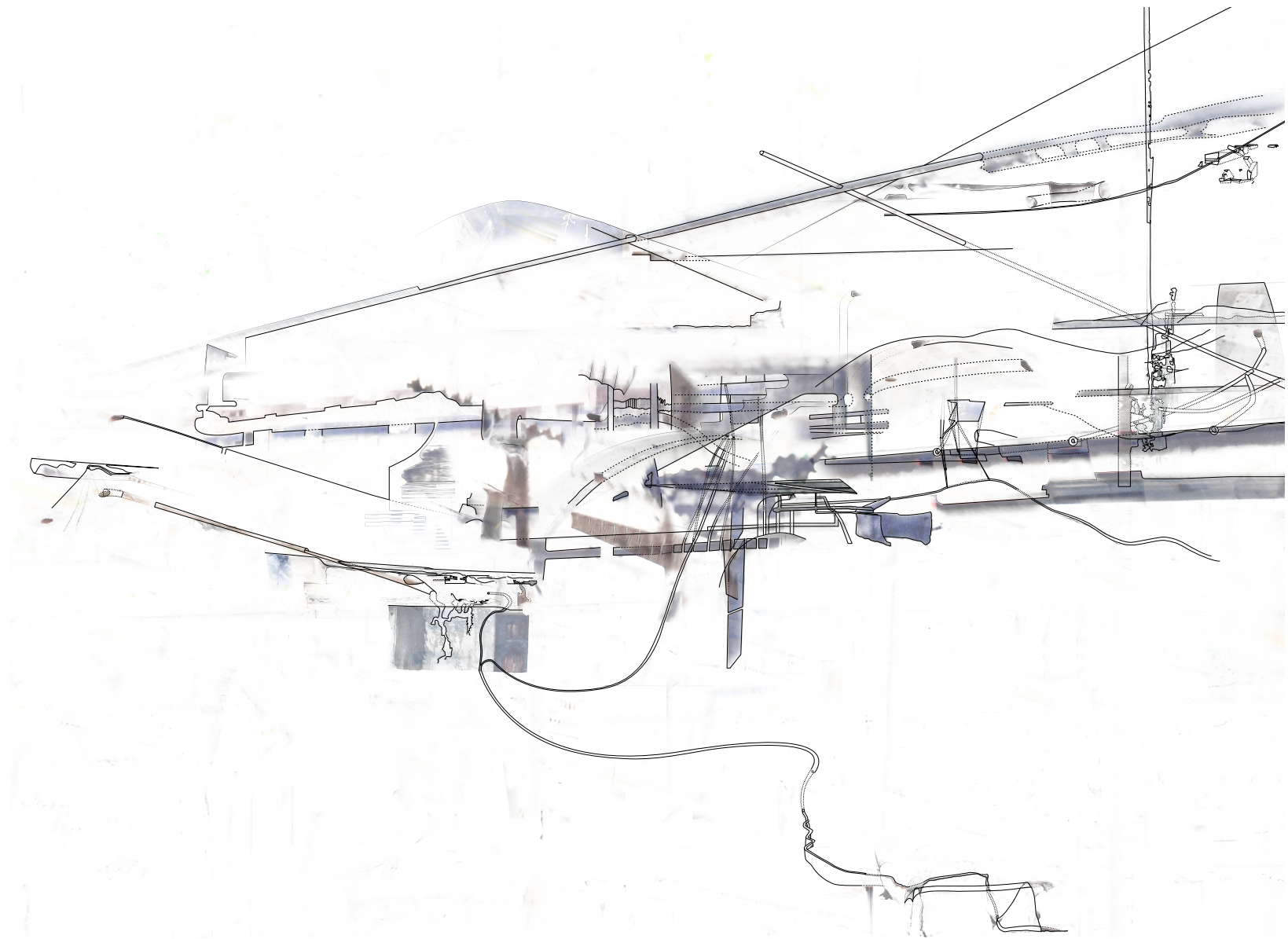
3_2.7 Indication of different kinds of spatiality lying within the drawing.

3_3 CONCLUSION

6. Final material for direct translation into a design proposal.

The final configuration of the drawing not only reached a peak of its spatiality but it also gained a unique architectural character as well as a rather convincing arrangement on a speculative site. Therefore, the drawing was rendered by hand using a single technique in order to connect its distant parts and simultaneously adapt it to the emerging natural, geographical, sometimes even local speculative conditions [3_3.1].
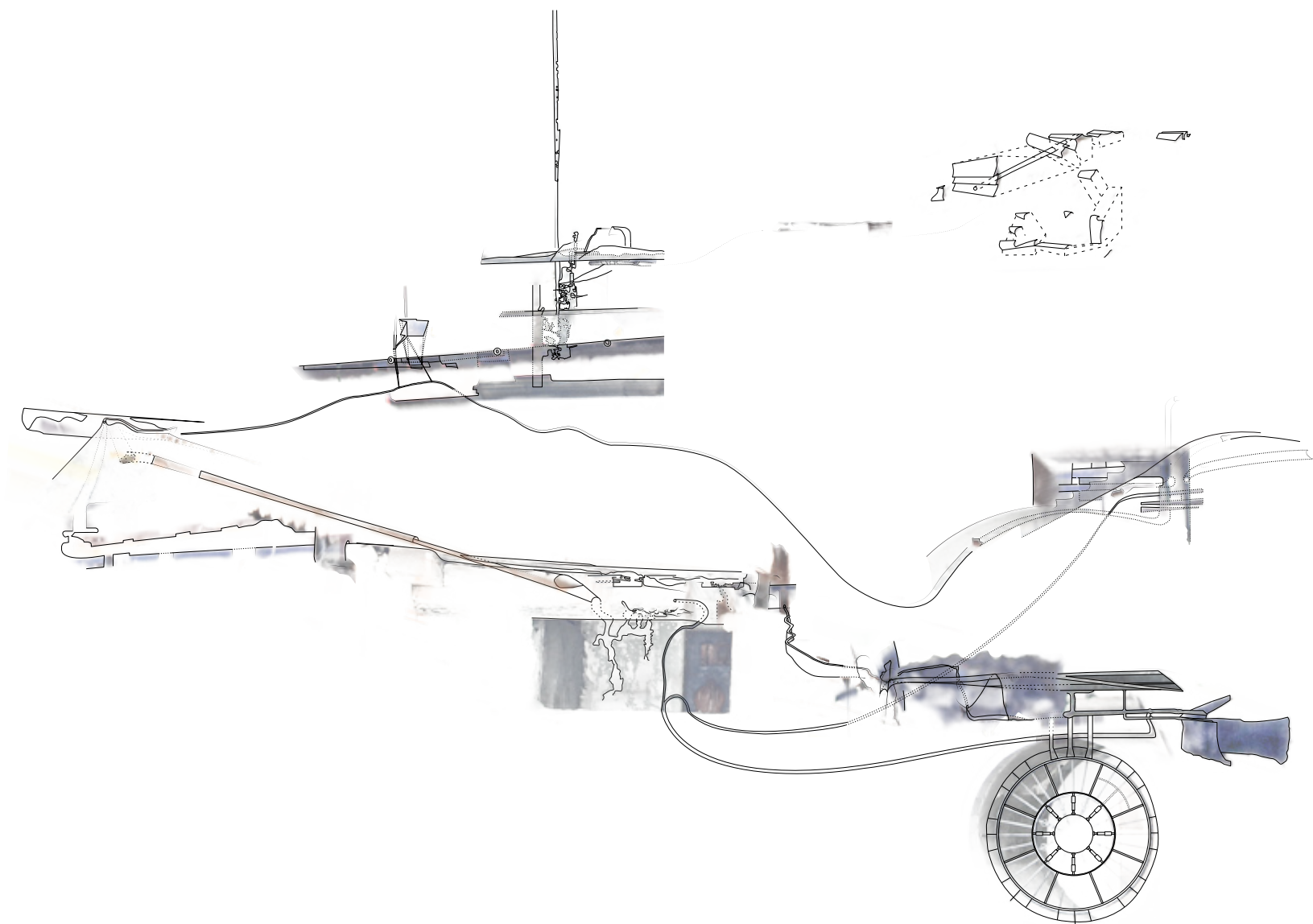
3_2.8 Rearrangement of the final structure to provide certain arhcitectural meaning and integrity.

(next spread) 3_3.1 Final hand drawn render of the entire structure carefully planted on a speculative site.
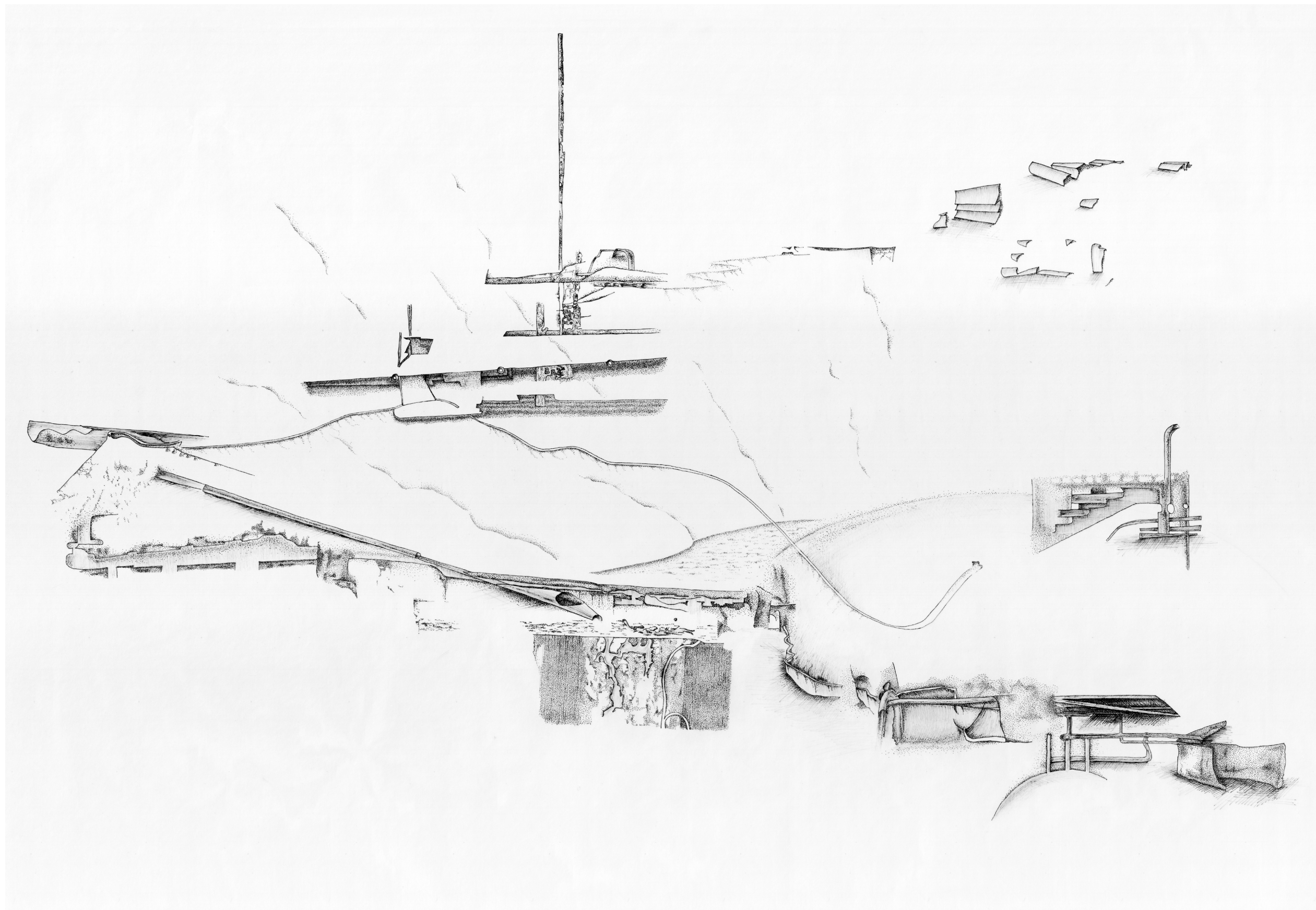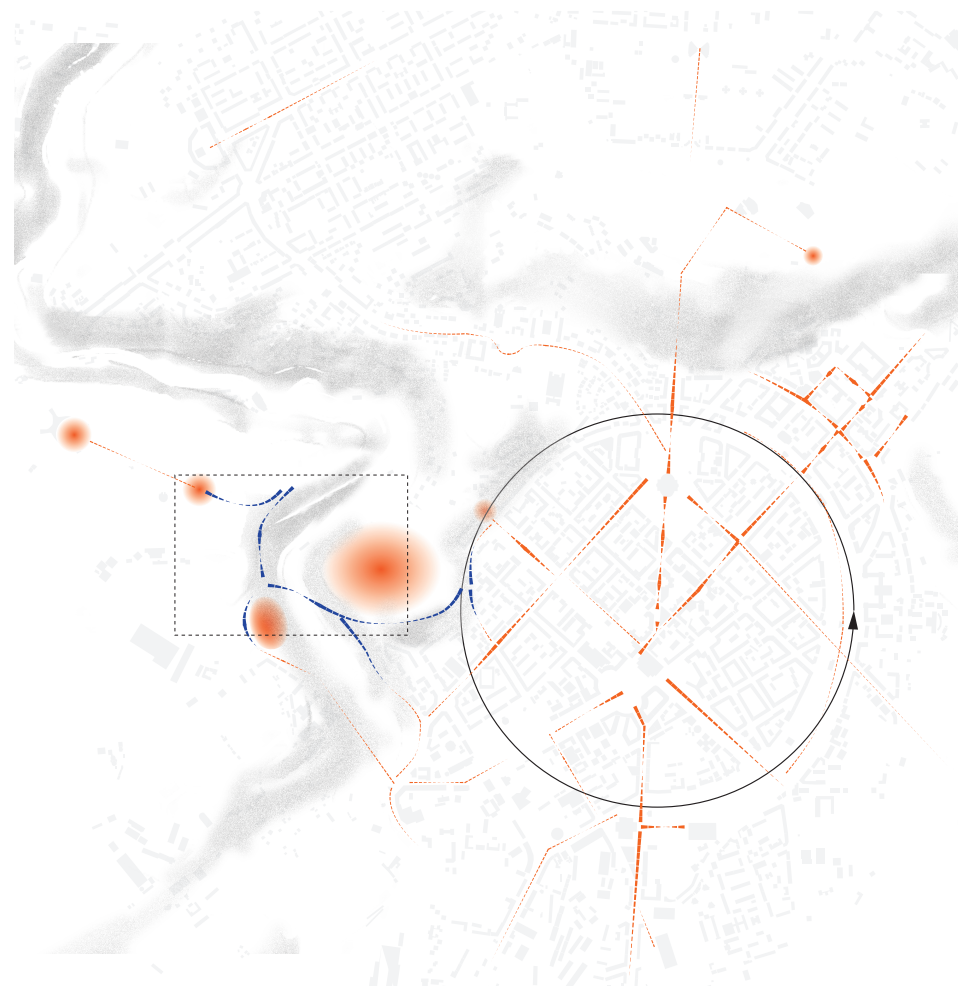
4_2.1 Movement acceleration diagram

4 PROPOSAL

4_1 INTRODUCTION

The translation of the final drawing into an architectural concept and idea was carried out through a sequential thinking process. As mentioned before the drawing already suggested certain connectivity to a speculative land and site with some hilly landscape, riverside and valley. Moreover, it revealed another dimension regarding the ground - the vertical continuity between the below and the above. This implied a new concept that was lying in the drawing - the amplitude of interchanging positive and negative, overground and underground, appearing and disappearing. Consequently, these subjects were finally formulated into a concept to be elaborated on - a cycle.

4_2 LOCATION

The design proposal started with the search for the location. Continuing on the pictorial insights of the drawing the territory for an architectural intervention was suggested accordingly - taking into account the valley, the river, the hills. For a more precise location there was an analytical diagram made exploring the circulation and movement acceleration around the city. The subject was chosen in order to prove or disprove the hypothesis that the urban energy outside the cycle of Yerevan fades out and exchanges only within its boundary. The movement acceleration here stands for the intensity of activity of the actors of urban life in Yerevan regarding the balance between the public integration and the functional operation of the city. The results proved the hypothesis right,

therefore the attempt was to search for those 'open ends' of the highly decreased urban energy and lift it up with certain urban interventions (as if urban accupuncture). The area at the west part out of the central circle was chosen in order to break up that closed loop and release or continue the circulation outside of it. It encompassed several territories to be applied with this urban accupuncture that marked the important mo(nu)ments or the potential public integration spots: the Armenian Genocide Memorial, Sport/Concert Complex, Hrazdan Central Stadium, Kond district and the Main Post Office [4_2.1].

4_3 THE PROGRAM

The suggested territorial integrity and the diversity of the areas for intervention reflected on the programmatic choices of the design as well. The different elements of the drawing were treated as separate buildings altogether constituting a building complex of a single theme. That theme, as well regarding the previous findings about continuity and cycle, was chosen to be the 'Animal Life Cycle Center'. The name already implies that animals are the main target of the project. Humans, on the other hand, become the secondary figure when it comes to making desicions in the design. Also, in order to maintain the idea of public integration and the continuity of circulation beyond the closed circle of the city center, the complex involves the accessibility of the public, yet on a very subtle and discreet level, keeping

in mind the dominance of the animal figure here.

The *'life cycle'* concept here suggests an alternative understanding to the usual life-death cycle. Not only it includes the intermediate parts to it that deal with the enhancement of the quality and expectancy of the animal's life but it also introduces a perception of an afterlife of the animal in the form of taxidermy art. The animal is then transformed into some other life form, an abstract and transcendental one, that continues its being.

The entire campus consists of four departments:

1. Carcass Re-Production Department.
This is one of the main branches of the complex that deals with the very threshold between life and death of the animal that is given a possibility to relive. The department connects with zoos globally which inform about the very ill, near-death animals that are being brought here after. They are provided required shelters, solitude and care for the time they still have. After their death, the bodies are being dismantled distributing parts for either taxonomic, genetic research or taxidermy.

2. Breeding Department (Natural Habitat Simulacrum for Animals).
This section represents the part of the life cycle that concerns birth and biodiversity. To be more specific it is responsible for maintaining the balance of different animal species that are endangered in the Caucasus region which is one of the most threatened areas for this cause in the world (see Appendix 1). The

department mainly consists of a huge natural area that incorporates the most diverse landscape with the rocky hills, the forest, the river, the valley, etc. Together with built structures it recreates a natural habitat for various animal species so that they can eventually breed in the environment as close to the wilderness as possible. That includes the 'Bird Tower' that works as a simplified deconstructed tree for bird breeding [4_3.1], the 'Fish Tank' that utilizes part of the damed Hrazdan river and the 'Breeding Hill' constructed for large mammals to be provided with climbing possibilities and caves [4_3.2]. The rest of the related matters are taken care of at the Research Department, including the storage of necessary medical equipment or food as well as the scientific procedures, etc.

3. Research Department.
The department is responsible for any research matter that is concerning the center [4_3.3]. It accomodates the evolutionary genetics laboratory as well as other labs that deal with medical improvement, the huge animal tissue archive/library, the educational department, etc. It is also closely interconnected with both the Breeding Department and Carcass Re-Production Department since these sections are constantly exchanging knowledge and material as well as the actual animal tissue samples for the entire center to operate as efficiently.

4. Taxidermy Workshop.
The workshop is concerned with providing spaces for taxidermy artists to work with animal hives and bones and

bring them to new life through a certain art form. It is closely connected to the Carcass Re-Production Department for it is supplying the artists with the actual material to work with.

The design of the buildings was achieved by carefully translating the spatialities of the finalized drawing into architectural objects [4_3.4].

The more profound program of the 'Animal Life Cycle Center' is provided in the Appendix 3.
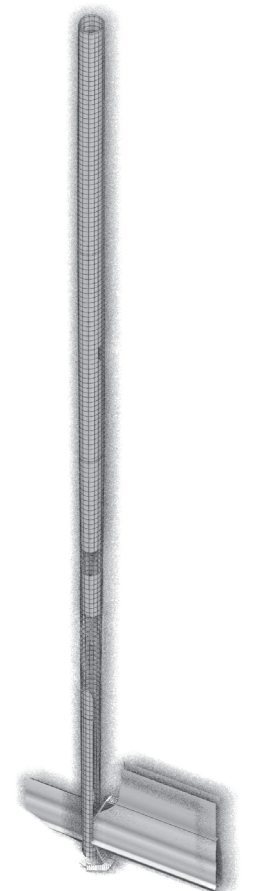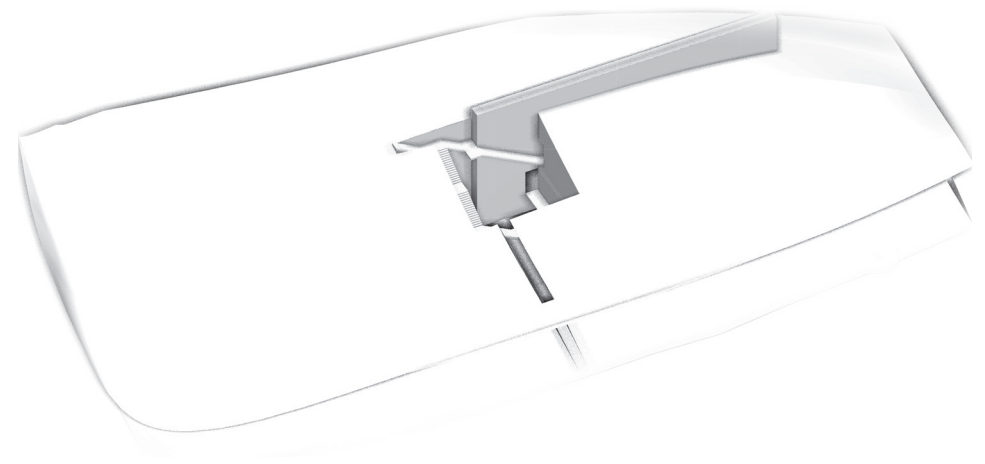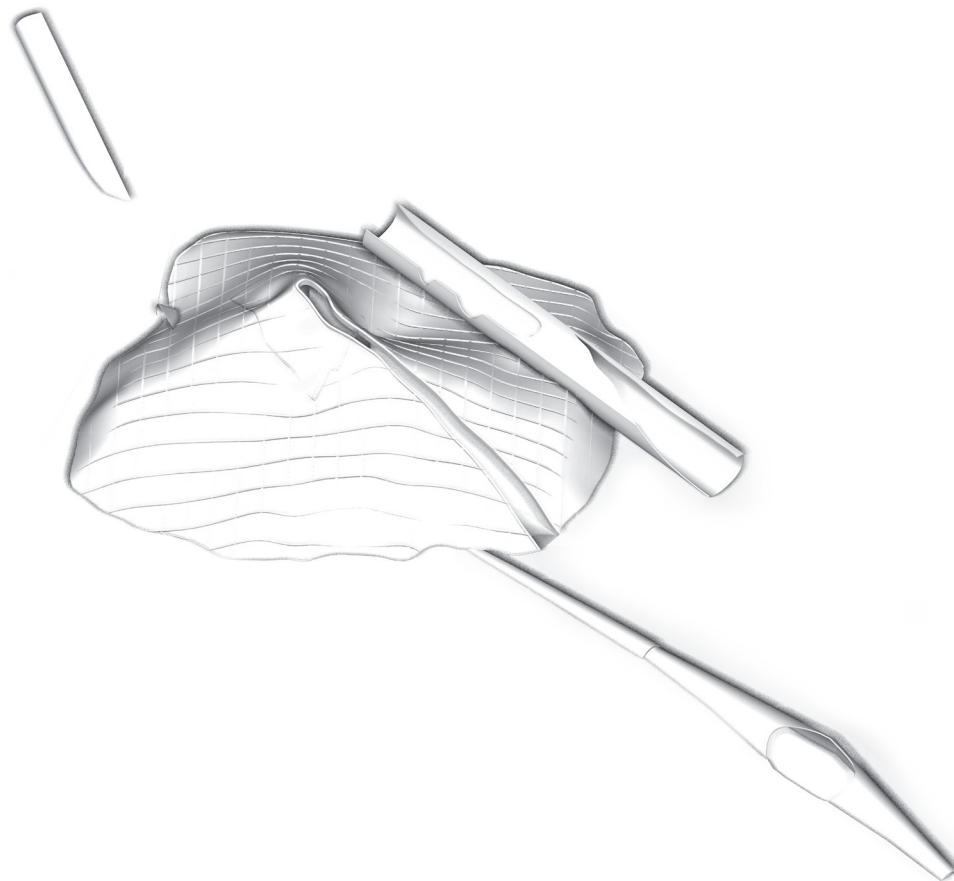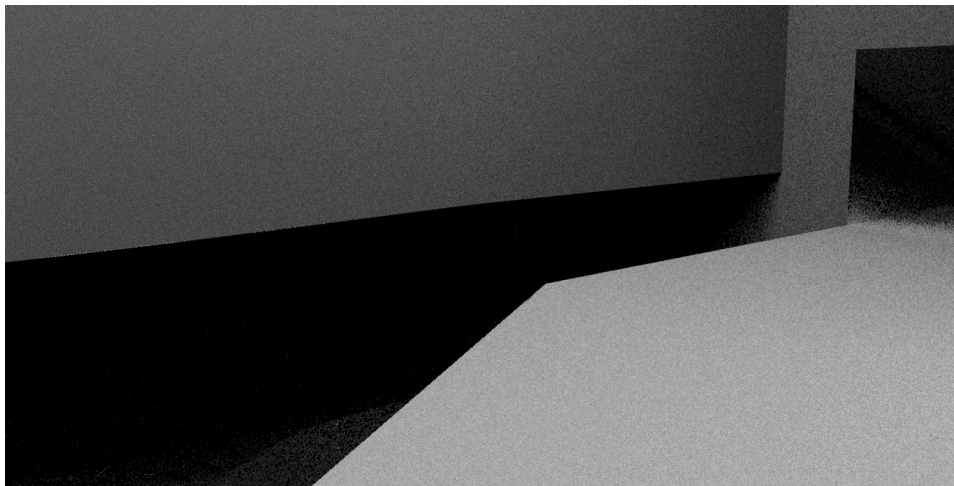
4_3.1 (bottom, right) Bird Tower. The bird's-eye view.

4_3.2 (on the left side, at the top) Breeding Hill. The interior view of the pedestrian path/tunnel crossing the hill.
(on the left side, at the bottom) Breeding Hill. The bird's-eye view of the structure.

4_3.3 (on the right side) Research Department. The bird's-eye view of the structure.
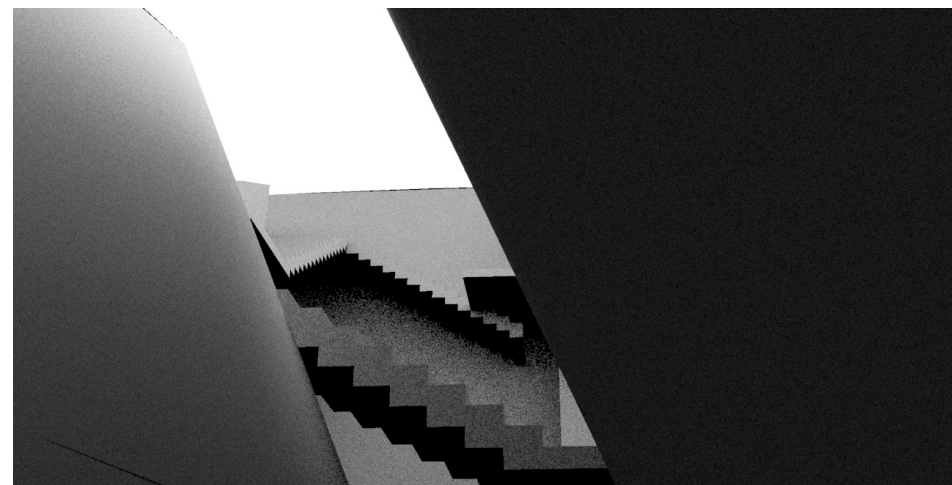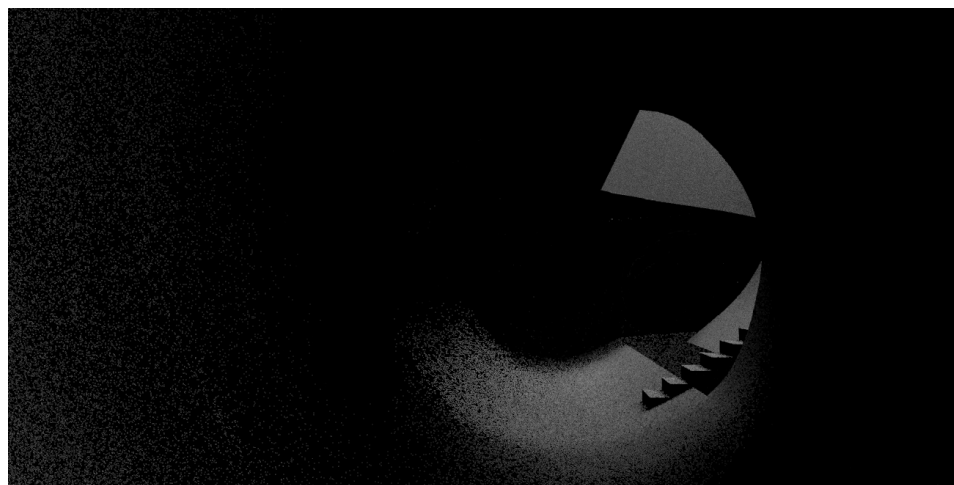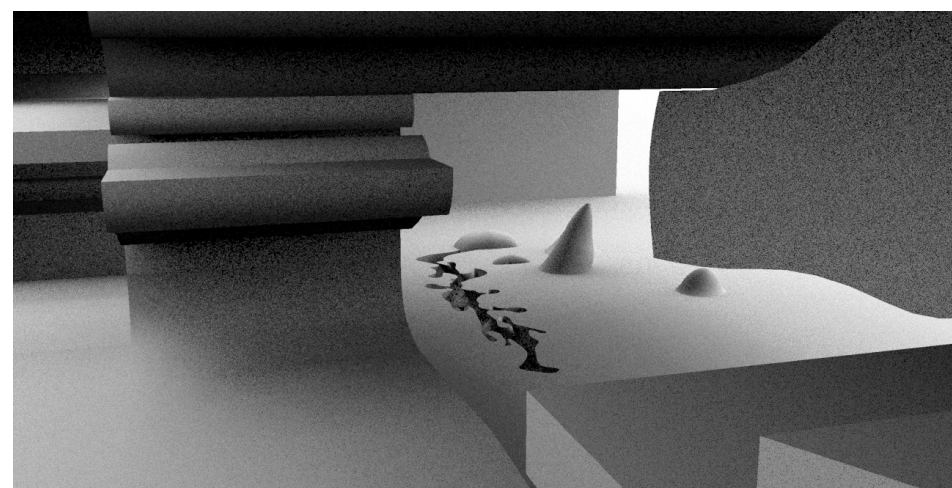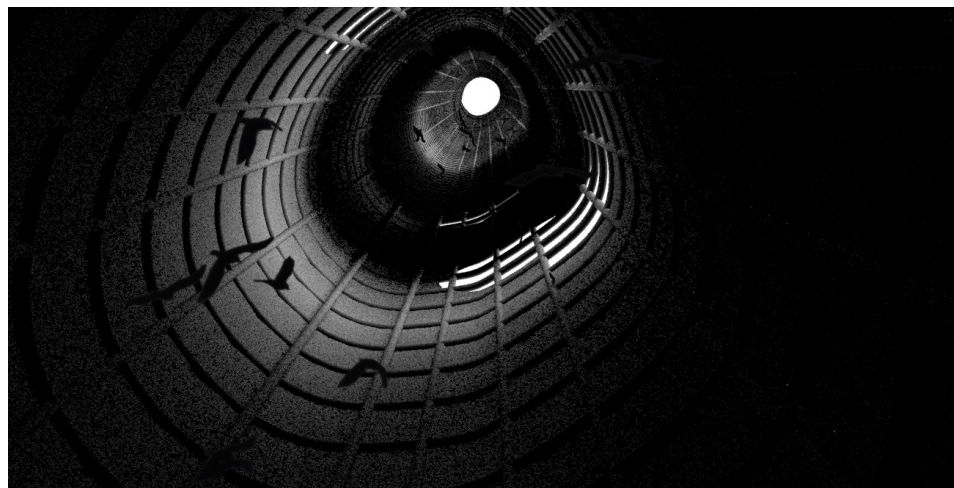
*4_3.4 The interior views of the buildings
of the campus:
(top, left) Bird Tower
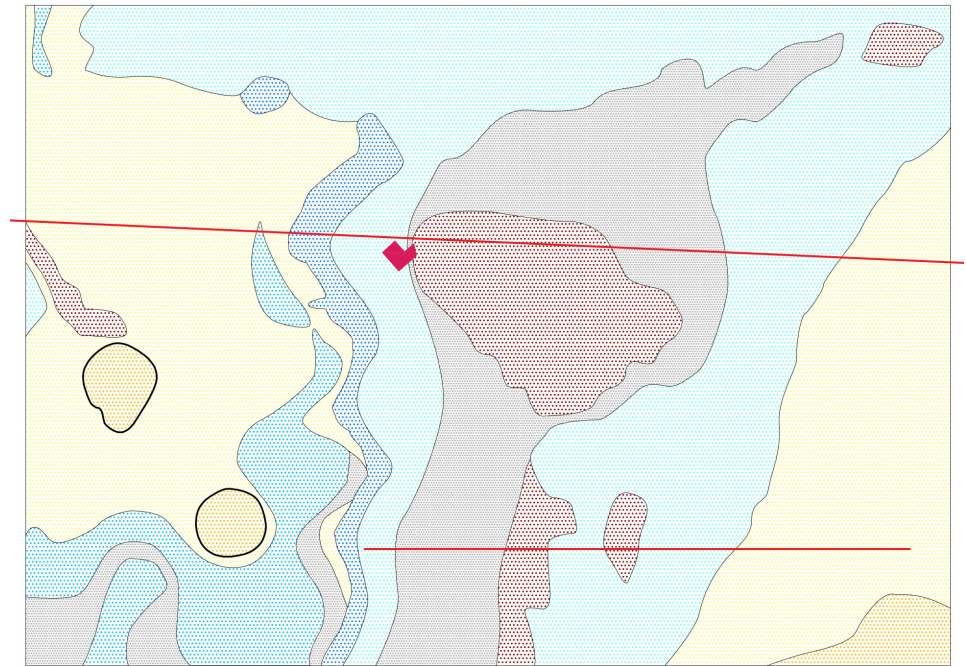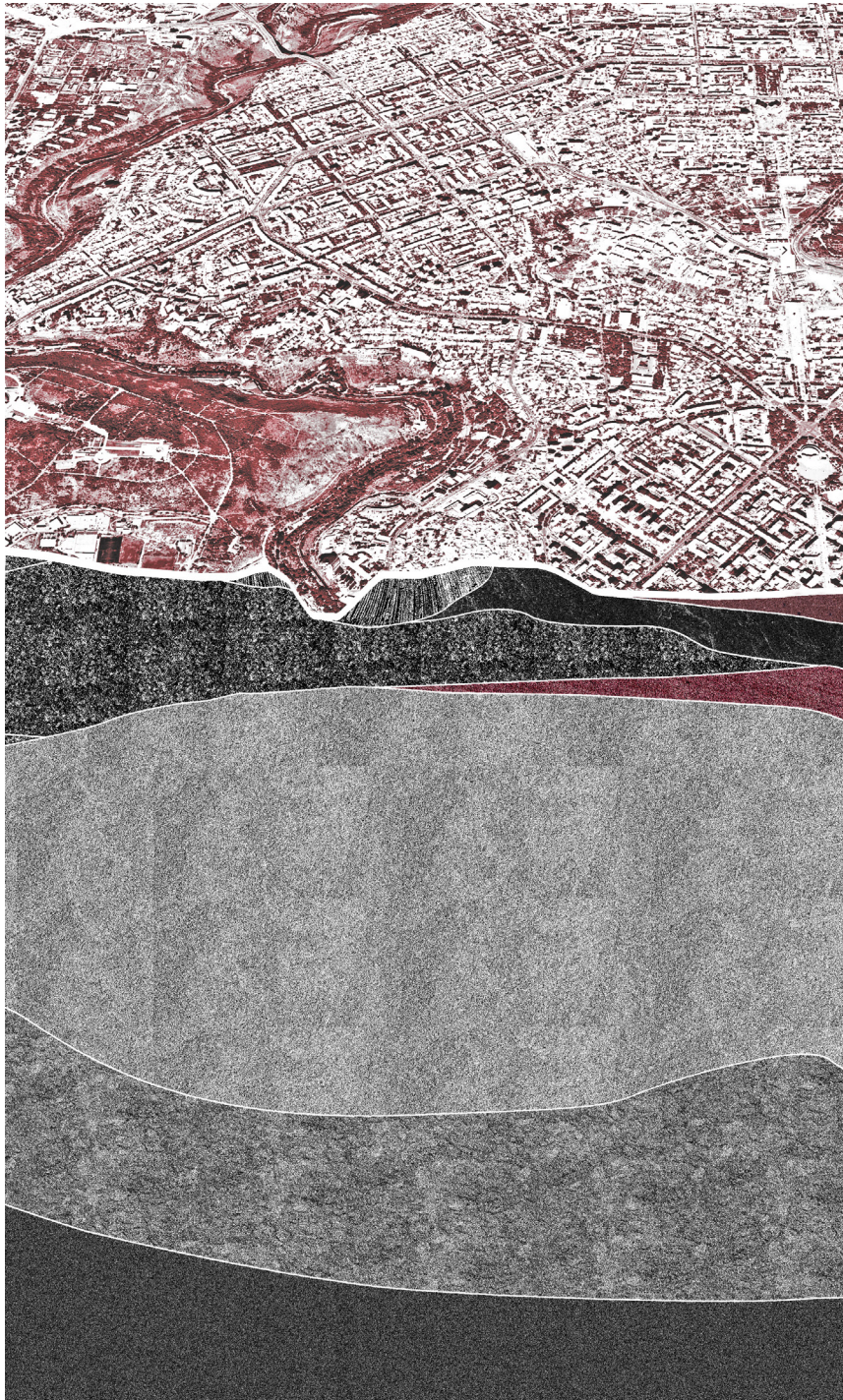(top, right) Fish Tank
(bottom, left) Breeding Hill
(bottom, right) Research Deaprtment*

5 PRODUCTION

The development and detailing of the Carcass Re-Production Department of the campus.

5_1 SITE

At the stage of location analysis the provided area to place the Carcass Re-Production Department was meant to be the very threshold between the closed cycle of Yerevan center and the stagnated area surrounding it. Searching for the site, the most applicable situation appeared to be the stretch (or, in this case, the stitch) from the parking lot at the bottom of the Main Post Office and the vast green plot at the riverside of Hrazdan. The territory was very clearly conditioned by one of the highlights in Yerevan - the pedestrian tunnels of Kond. The two were initially constructed for traffic, yet eventually due to new urbanist ambitions the pedestrian area was rather chosen to be expanded converting the tunnels into an access for people. However, the relation of the building with the ground, imposed in the final research drawing and discussed before, required a more profound research on the geological situation of the site imposing that the building will be partially underground [5_1.1]. The analysis showed that the main land constituent of the chosen area is basalt rock. Therefore, excavation was implied as a building method. Moreover, in order to learn how mastering or manipulating the technique can affect the spaces that are created, a series of experiments were done. Excavating brick or wood gave completely different spatial and atmospheric results that were later on incorporated in the design of the building [5_1.2]. Moreover, the experiments were continued on implying the uncontrolled method of excavation where the material is washed out by the constant flow of liquid [5_1.3].

5_1.1 Geology of Yerevan:
(left) Geological section view
(right) Geological map

Ignimbrite tuffs of Yerevan type (up to 10m)

Marly clay limy sandstone with inter-layers of oolitic limestone coquina and combustible shale

Basaltic andesites of the Getamech-Argavand flow (up to 25m)

Basaltic andesites (columnar) of the Arzni flow (35m)

Doleritic basalts (up to 100m)

Gypsum-saliferous clay sandstone aleurolite with strata of rock salt gypsum and anhydrite of augitic basalt sill deposits(up to 1000m)

Clay aleurolite speckled clay conglomerate

Clay aleurolite gravelite tuff sandstone with spheroidal partings clay(gypsiferous clay) (up to1000m)

5_1.2 Experiments on the excavation
technique of building.
(left) Sculpting brick.
(right) Sculpting wood.
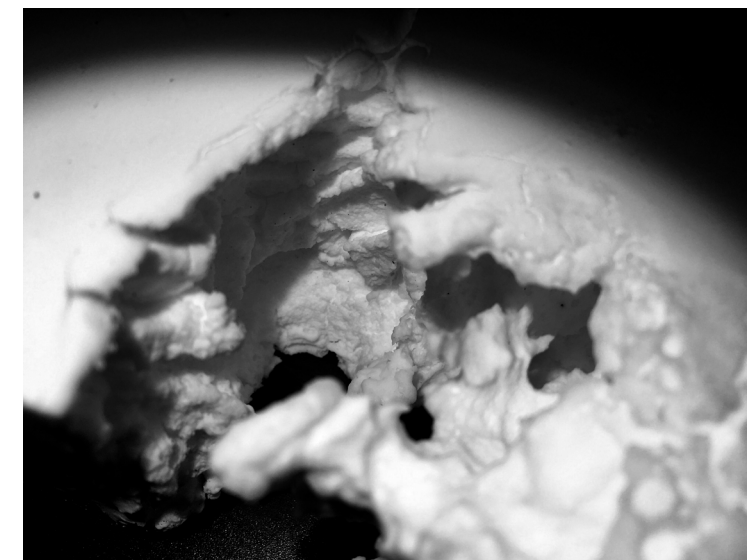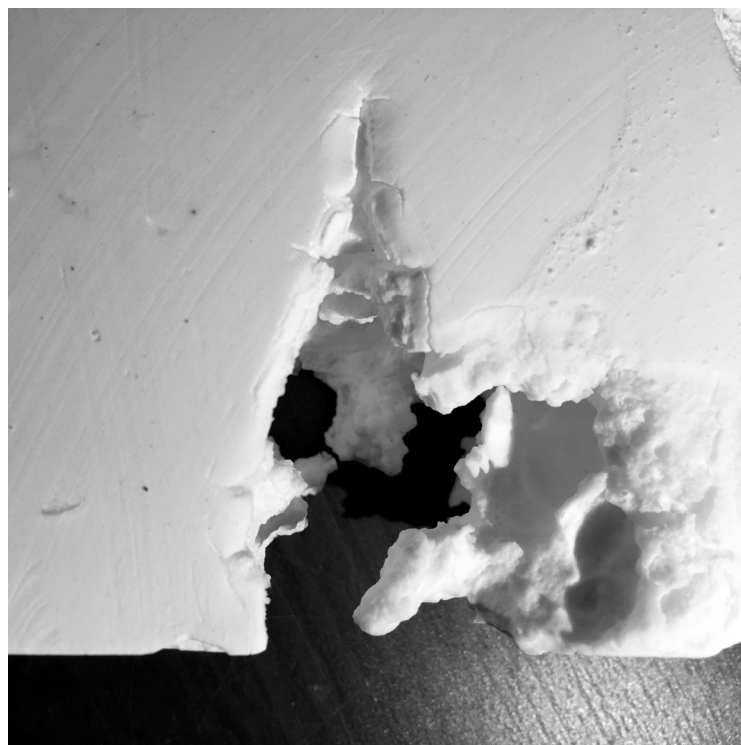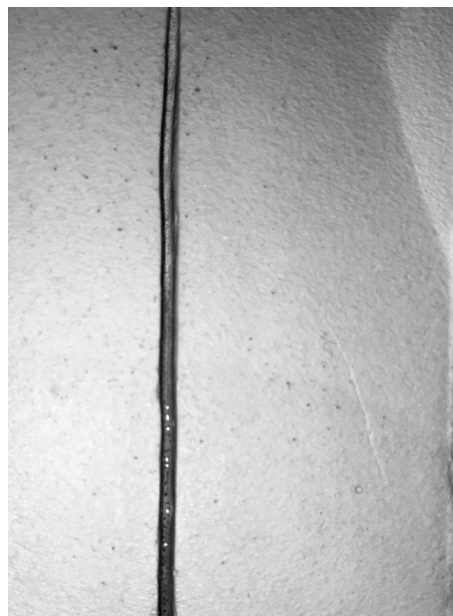
5_1.2 Experiments on the excavation technique where space is naturally excavated by the flow of a substance.
(top, left, right) Vinegar on gypsum brick.
(bottom, left, right) Vinegar on magnesium brick.

5_2 THE DESIGN

Compiling the experiments, the researches carried out, the knowledge gained, the final building design was accomplished almost intuitively.

The programmatic distribution of the department was highly affected by the two pedestrian tunnels that were in fact utilized as the main axes for circulation. The park at one end of the tunnels was assigned with accommodating the arriving near-death animals. The shelters for the animals were supposed to be provided individually according to the atmospheric and comfort needs of the specific animal. These can be found at the back of this booklet, in Appendix 2. The other end of the tunnels, which lies in the center of Yerevan is the main part that deals with the arrival of the animals and providing medical care to them (building above ground) as well as the procedures after their death (building below ground, excavated spaces). The tunnels, representing the two entities, two directions and, in fact, two phases (one being used, the other being closed), are immediately assigned with the circulation of the people in one tunnel and the animals in another. However, at certain moments of that circulation there is a juncture introduced emphasizing the human-animal relationship, mingling them with as well some expressive architectural gesture. The structure as well as the entire campus, both visually and programmatically, is finalized or celebrated with a monument-playground assigned for both animals and humans. Its odd scale and compostion represents the independency from one species to another as well as the freedom for both animals and humans to use it differently.

5_2 THE CONSTRUCTION

The excavation procedure of the building is a sequential one alternately using different equipment such as diamond saws, boring machines, etc. The excavated space is immediately supported with a built structure if necessary. The residue from the excavation process is partly used up in the construction of the external part of the building as well as the internal walls. According to specific sterility and atmospheric standards the floors and walls are coated with resinous materials in order as well to keep the spatial quality of the excavated rock. The climate conditions are maintained mostly via earth tubes that are incorporated in the monument part of the design, where the fresh air is taken and heated to the necessary temperature, carrying the necessary amount of humidity.
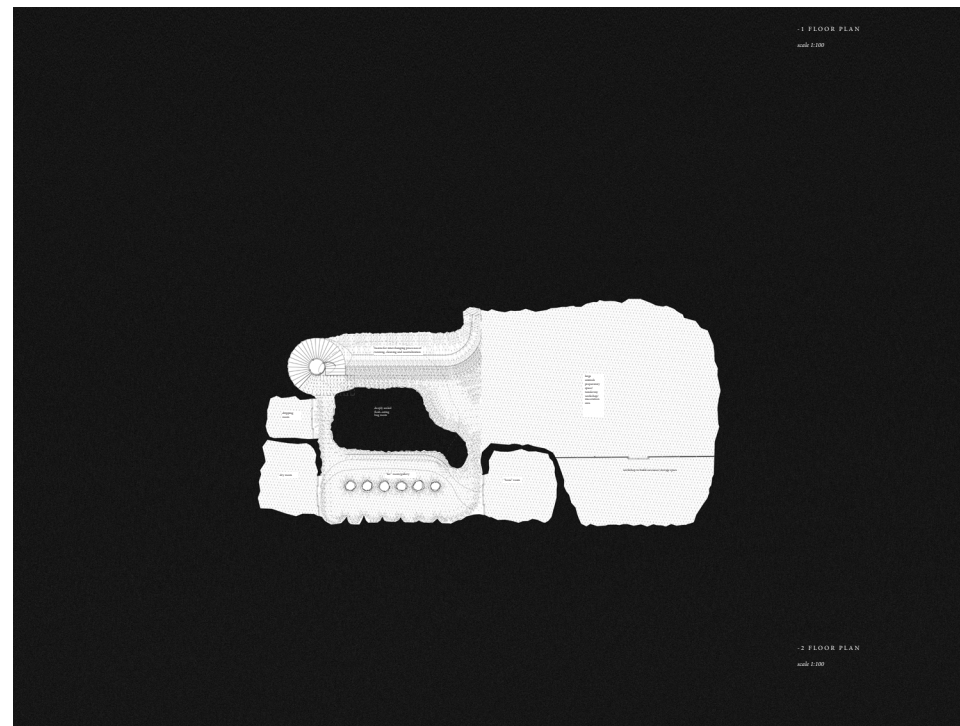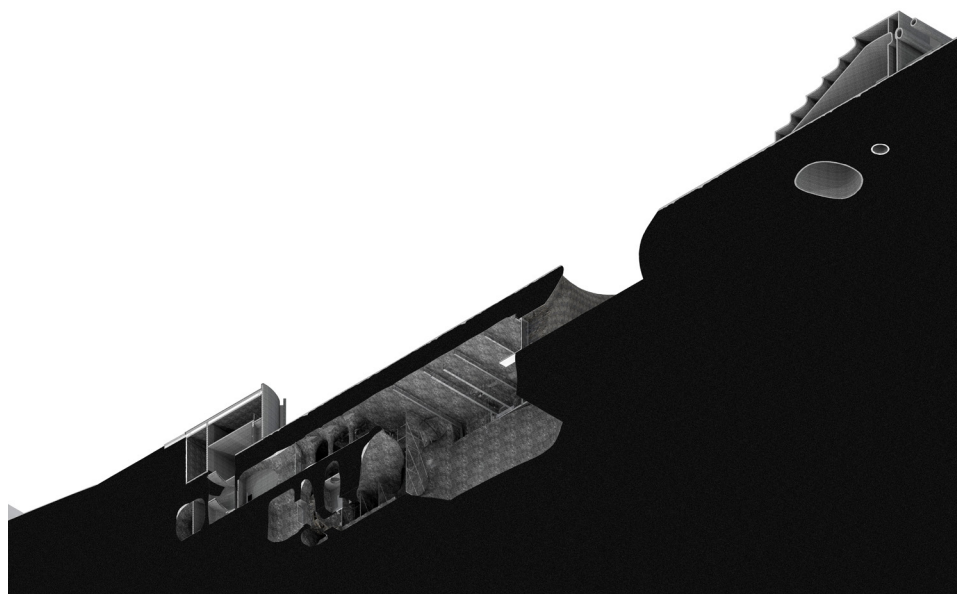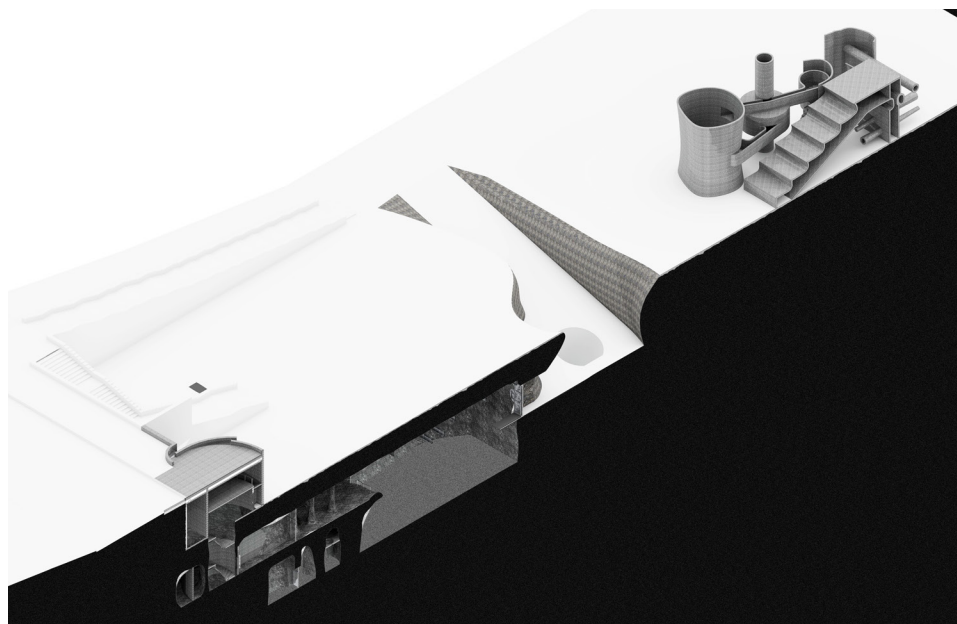
(right) The close-ups of the ground floor plan.
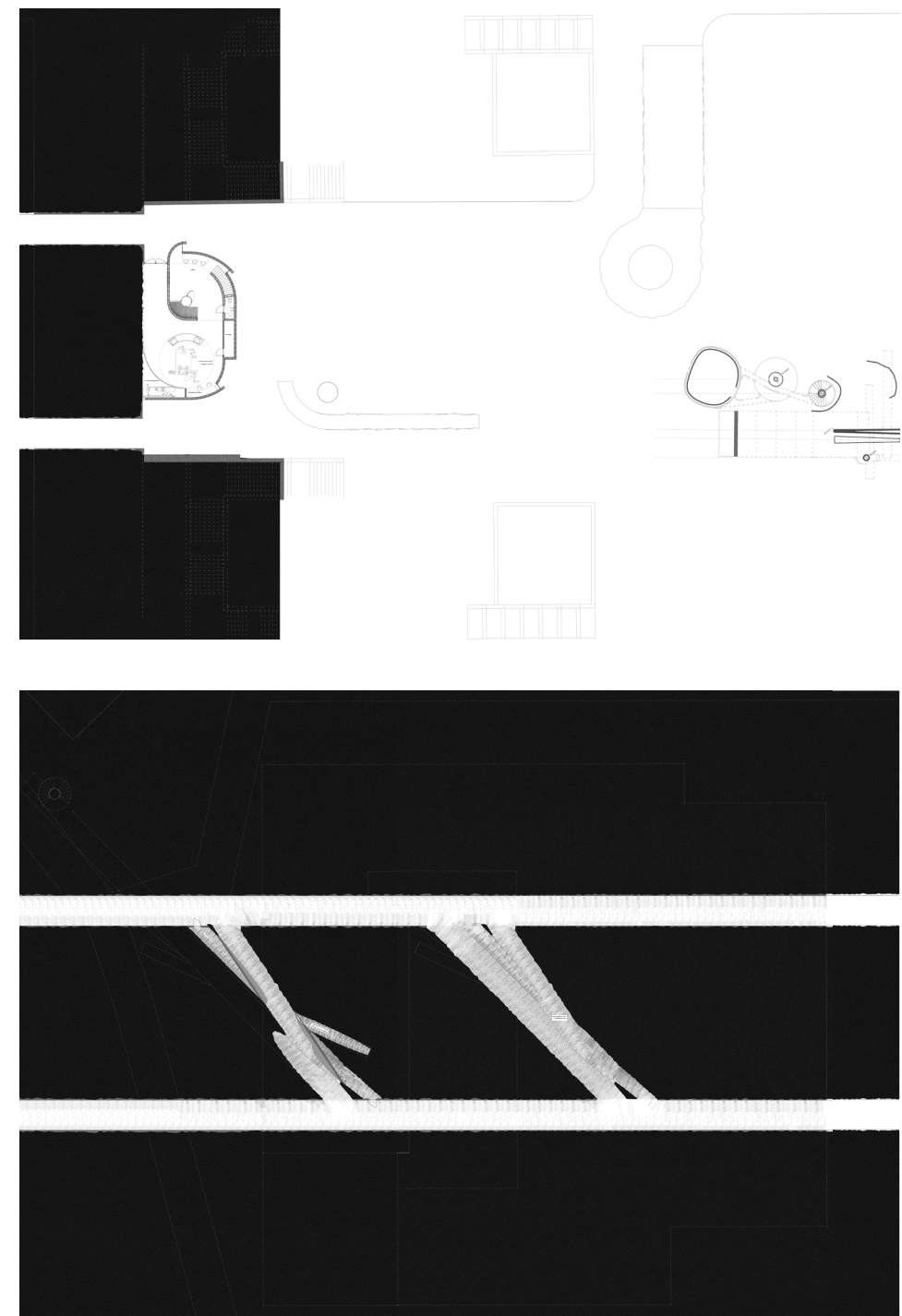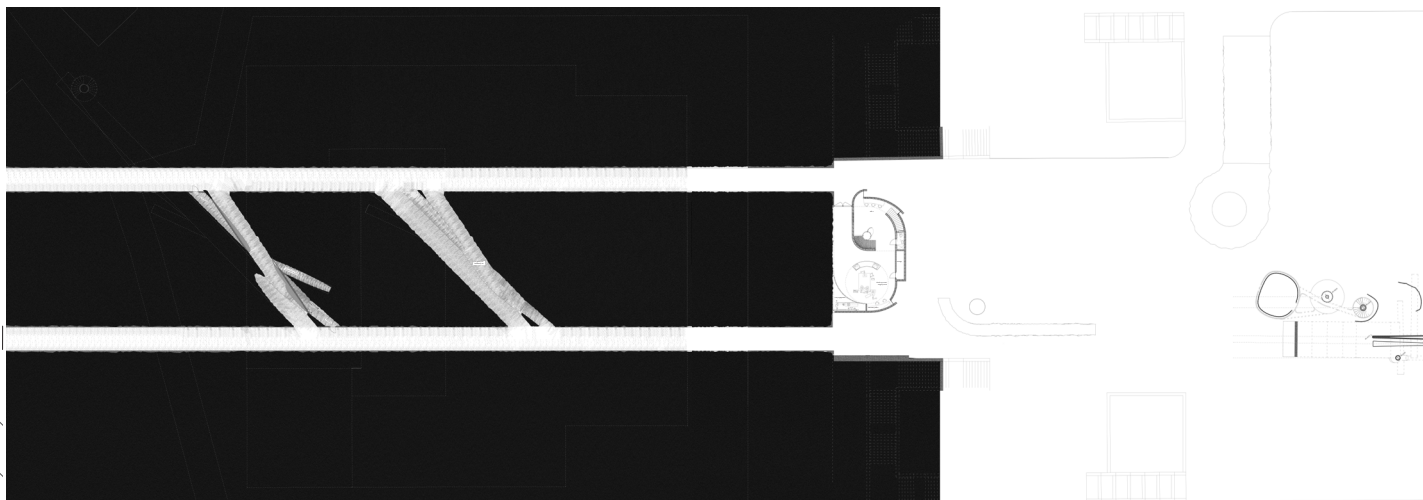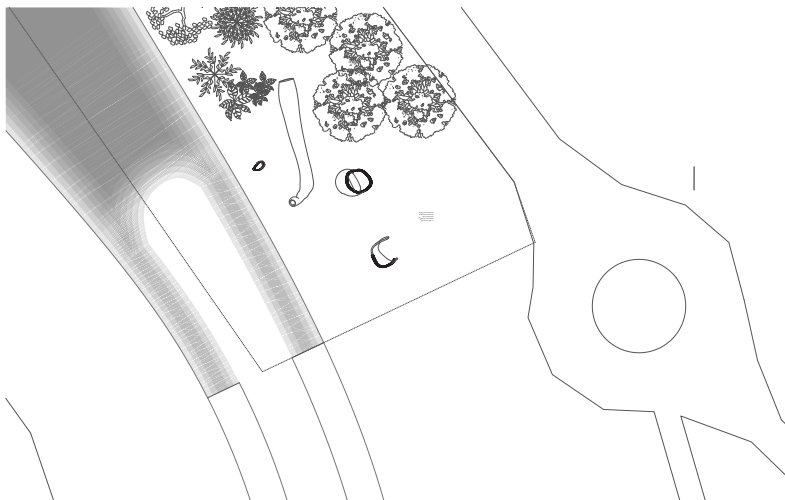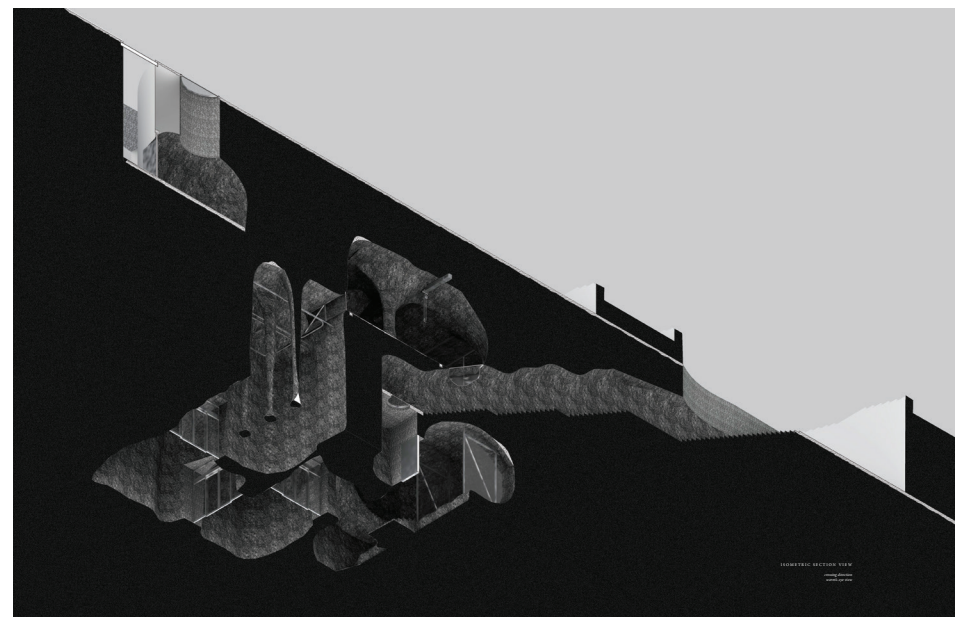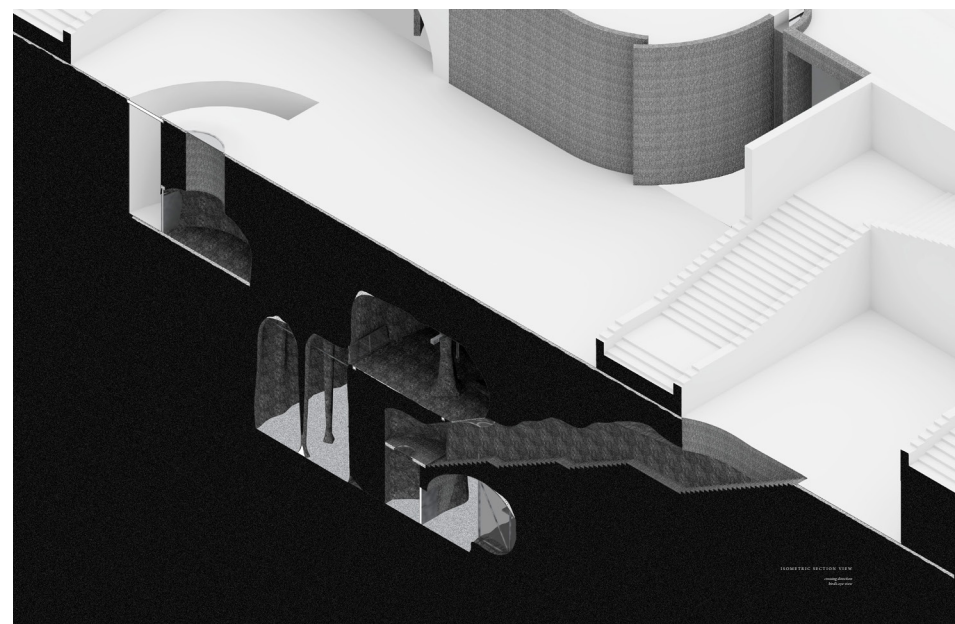
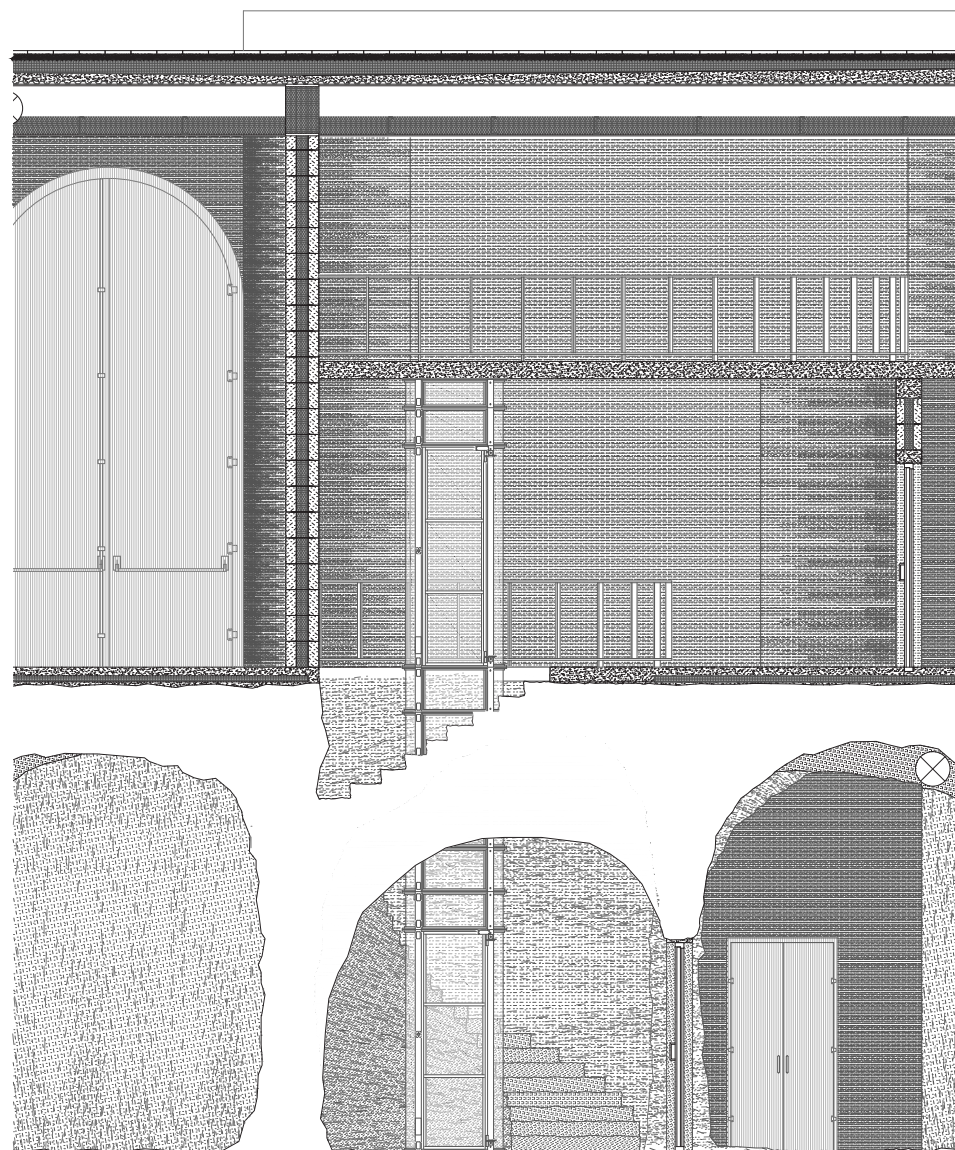*Ground floor plan*
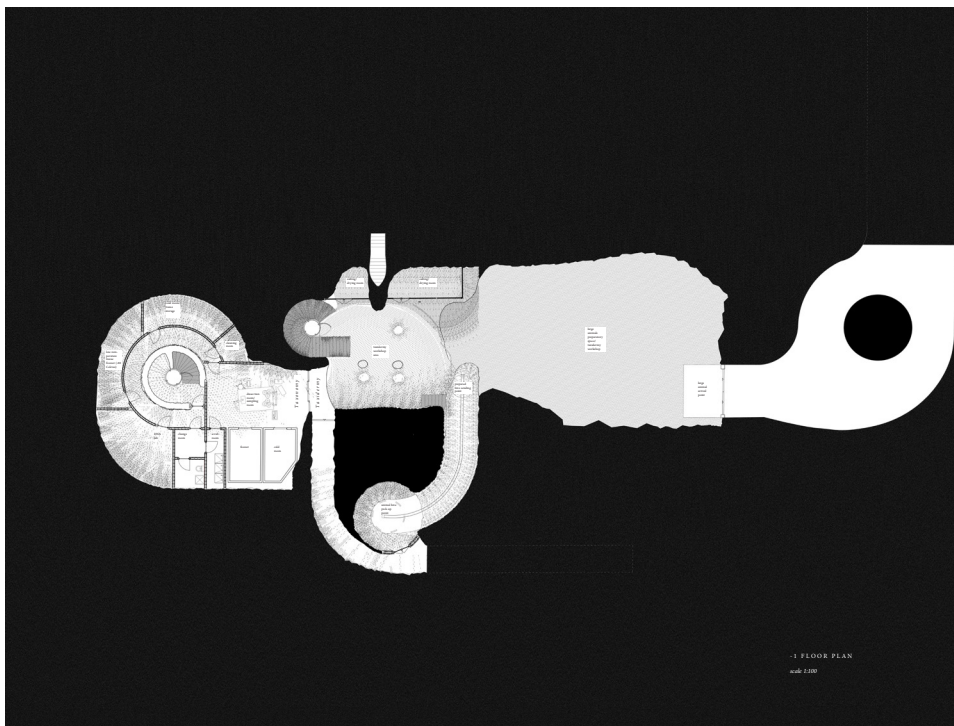
-1 floor plan

-2 floor plan

Isometric longitudinal section
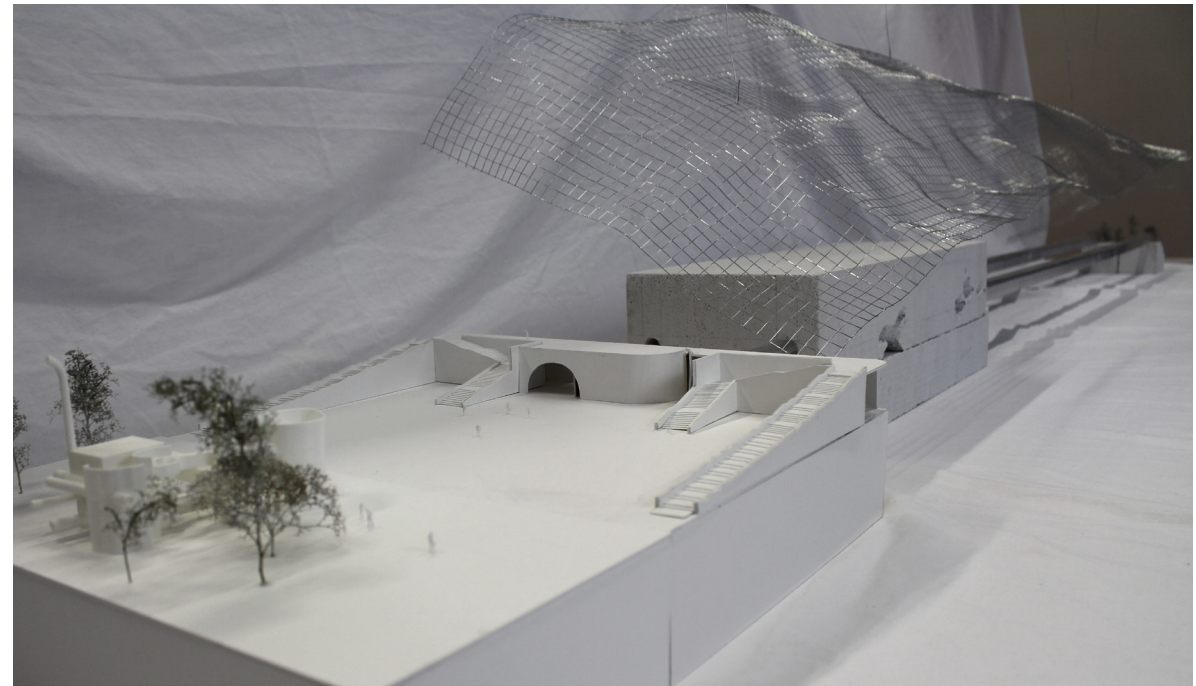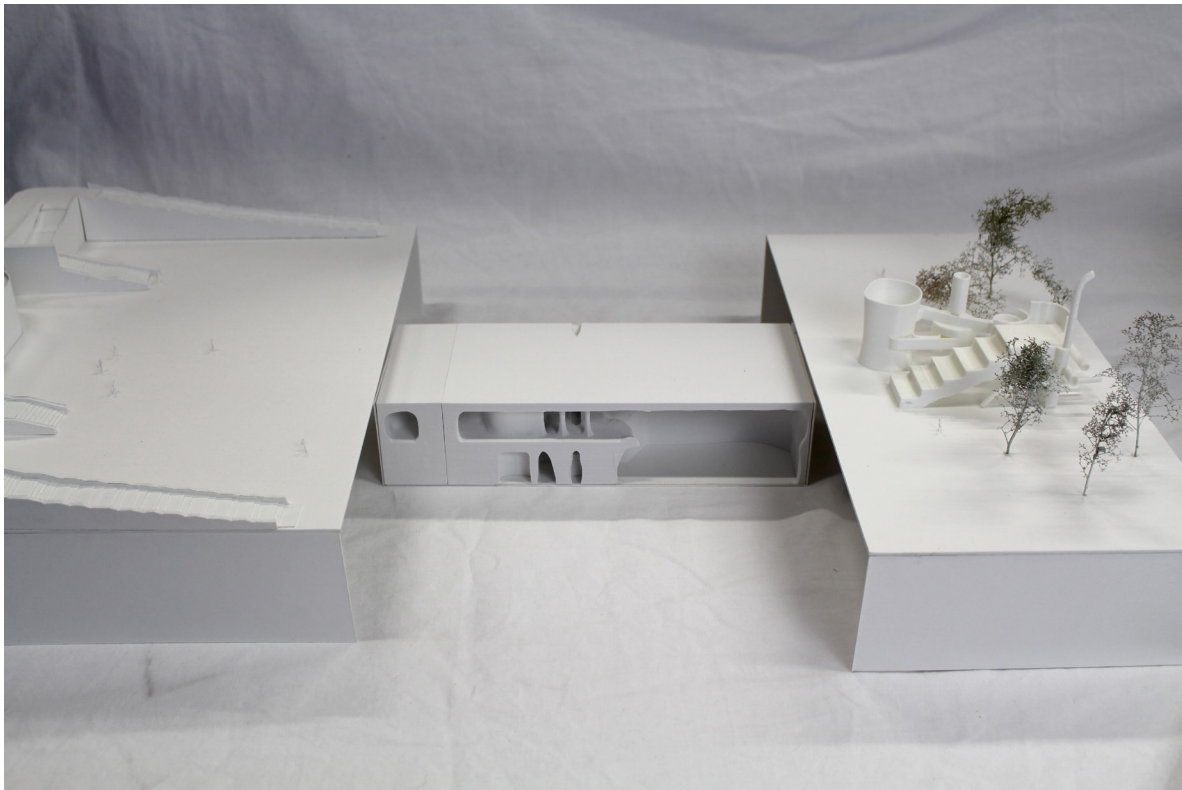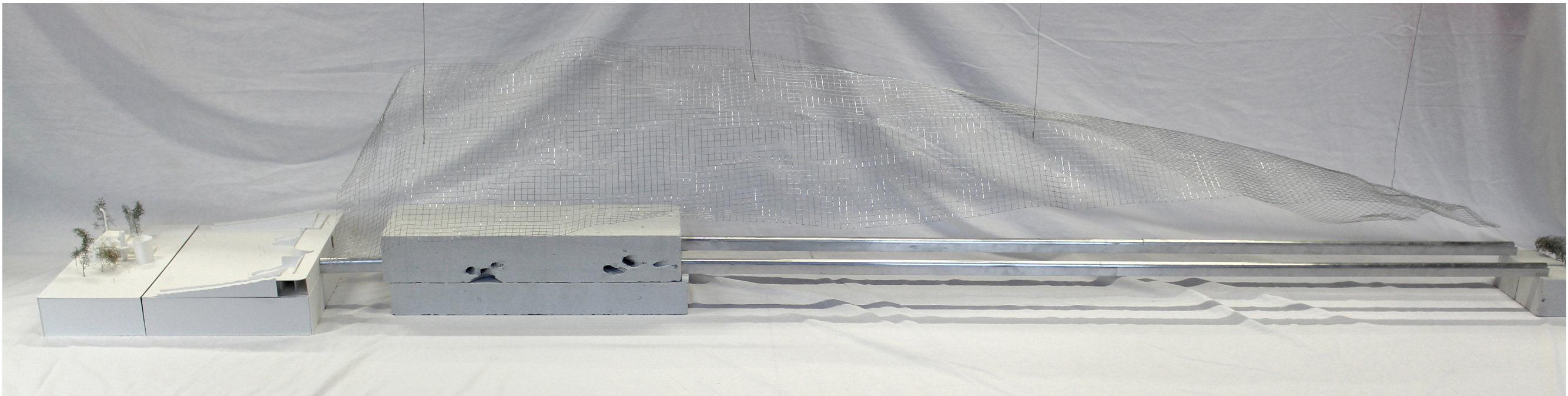*(above) bird's-eye view*
(below) worm's-eye view

Isometric cross-section
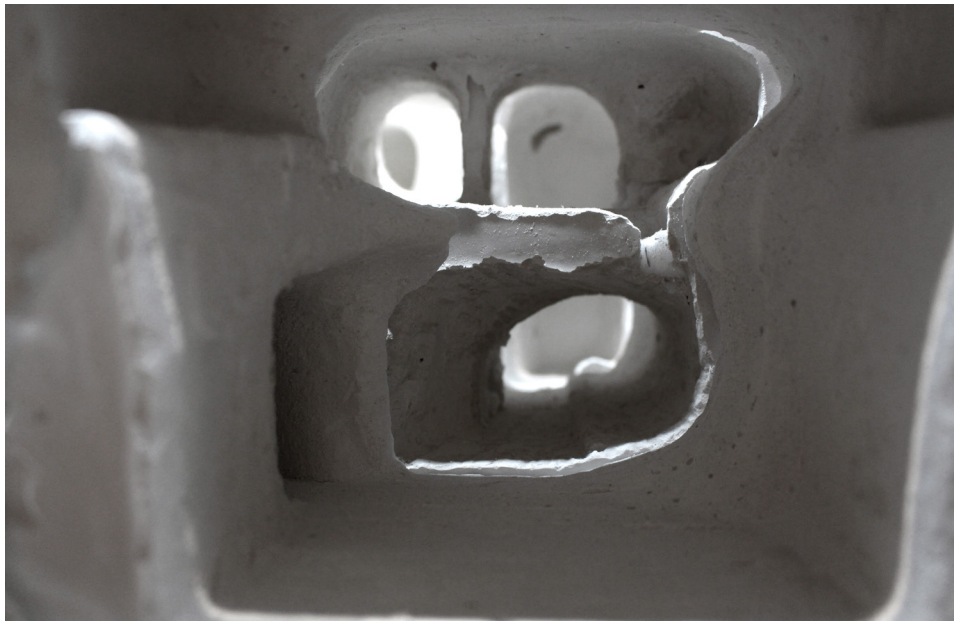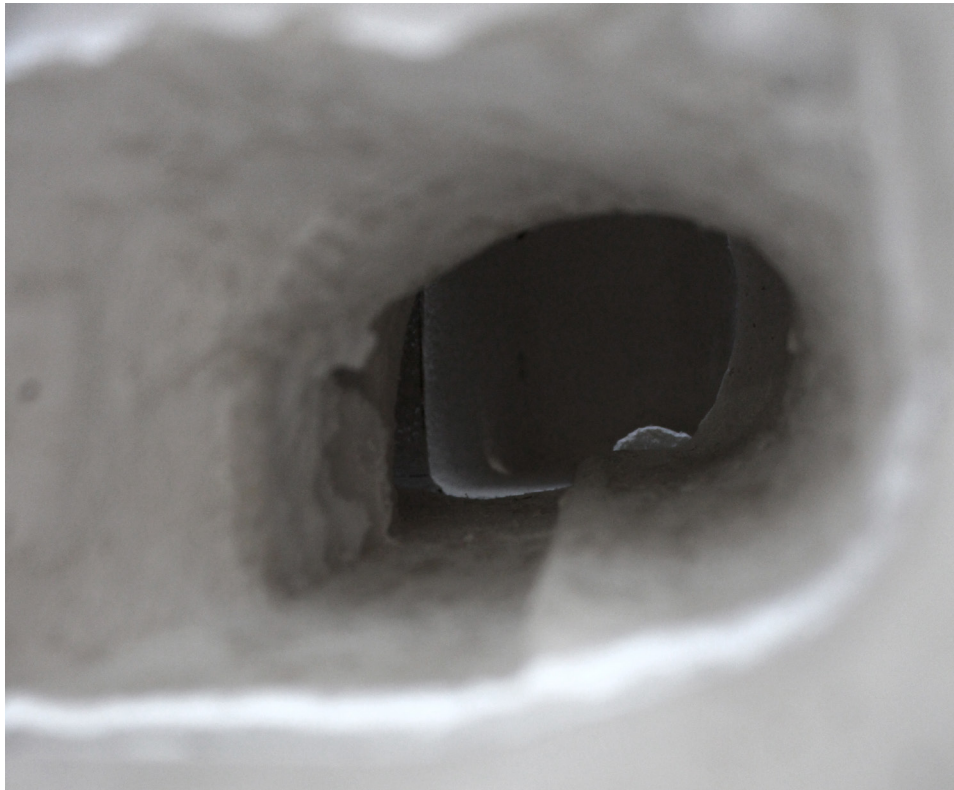*(above) bird's-eye view*
(below) worm's-eye view

(left) Detail
(right) Model pictures

Model pictures

Model pictures