

Kaimei Zhu



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Multidisciplinary designer

EDUCATION

Rhode Island School of Design (RISD)
Bachelor of Architecture
Concentrations in
Nature-Culture-Sustainability Studies (NCSS) and Drawing

HONOR

RISD Architecture Thesis Award 2026
RISD Student Honor Roll

EXPERIENCE

EazoAI
Interactive Content Designer/ Visual Designer
US Remote, Aug 2026–Present

Ryan McCaffrey Architect
Research Assistant
Boston, Jan 2026–May 2026

Kengo Kuma & Associates (KKAA)
Architectural Intern
Tokyo, Jun 2025–Aug 2025

Harvard CAMLab
Exhibition Design Intern
Boston, Jan 2025–Aug 2025

3SixO Architecture
Architectural Intern
Providence, Jan 2025–Feb 2025

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Under Rashomon

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ARCHITECTURE CONSTRUCT
THOUGHTS

Type:	Architectural Thesis
Location:	Shen zhen
Term:	Fall 2025-Spring 2026
Format:	Thesis Project
Collaboration:	Individual Project
Advisor:	Christopher Bardt Shou Jie Eng

This thesis examines how architecture can construct spatial experiences shaped by memory, perception, and overlapping realities. Using Shenzhen as a context of rapid urban transformation, the project investigates how continuous cycles of erasure and replacement produce feelings of estrangement and instability within the contemporary city.

Drawing from the Rashomon effect in the writings of Ryūnosuke Akutagawa and the films of Akira Kurosawa, the thesis proposes architecture as a medium for materializing multiple and conflicting perceptions of reality. The project imagines an intervention within a generic office tower, where hidden spaces embedded inside repetitive architectural systems reveal alternative realities, fragmented memories, and uncertain spatial conditions.

Through this proposal, the thesis explores how architecture can destabilize fixed notions of reality and create spaces suspended between familiarity and ambiguity.

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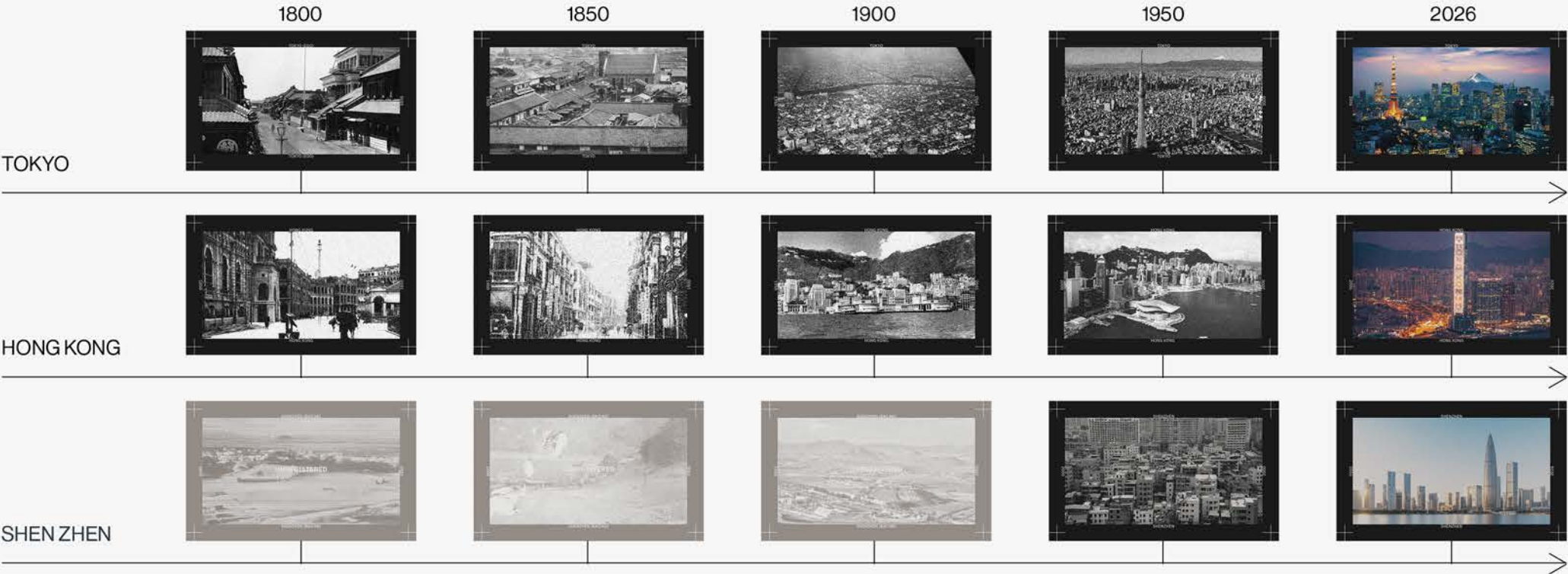
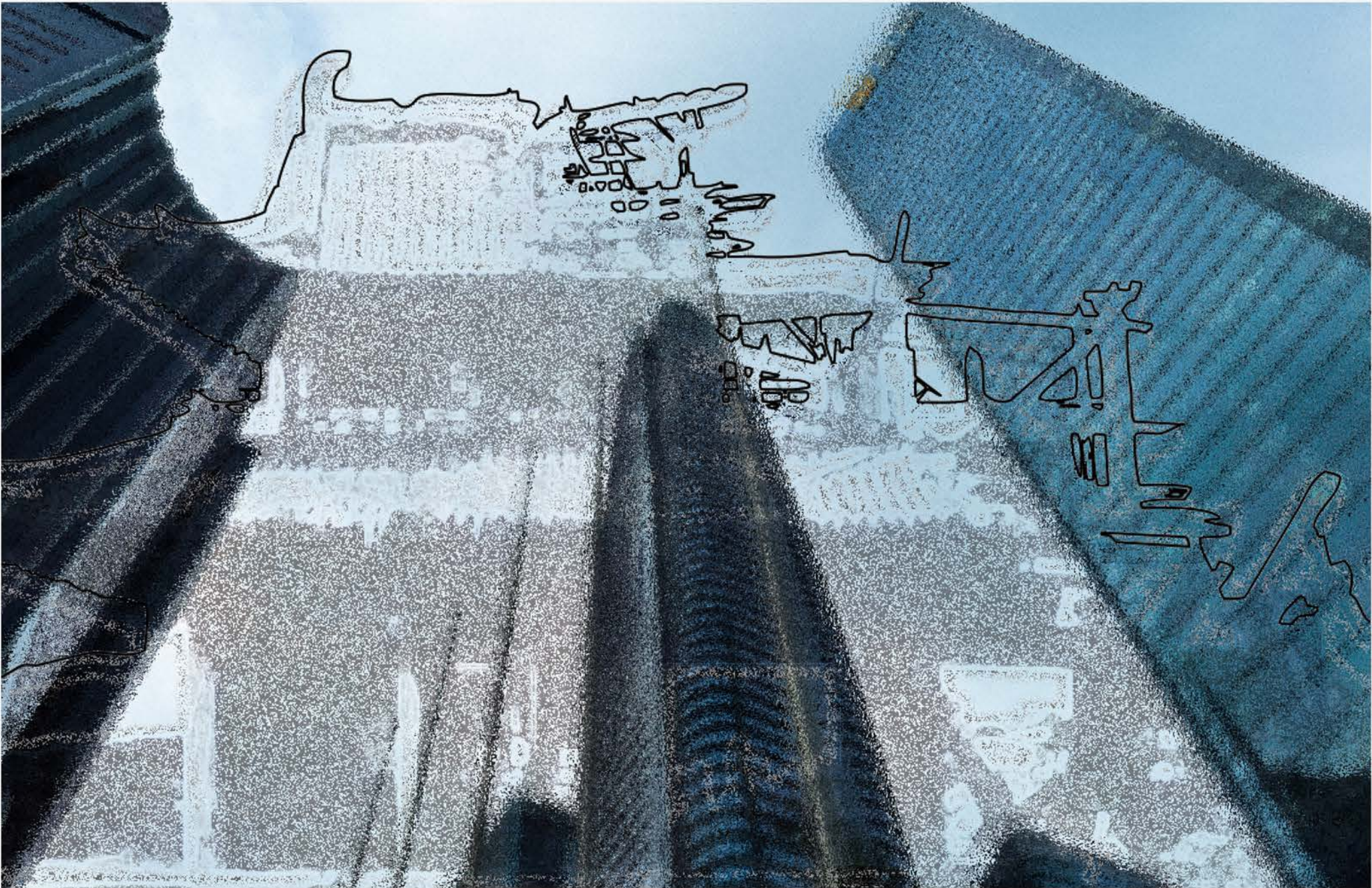
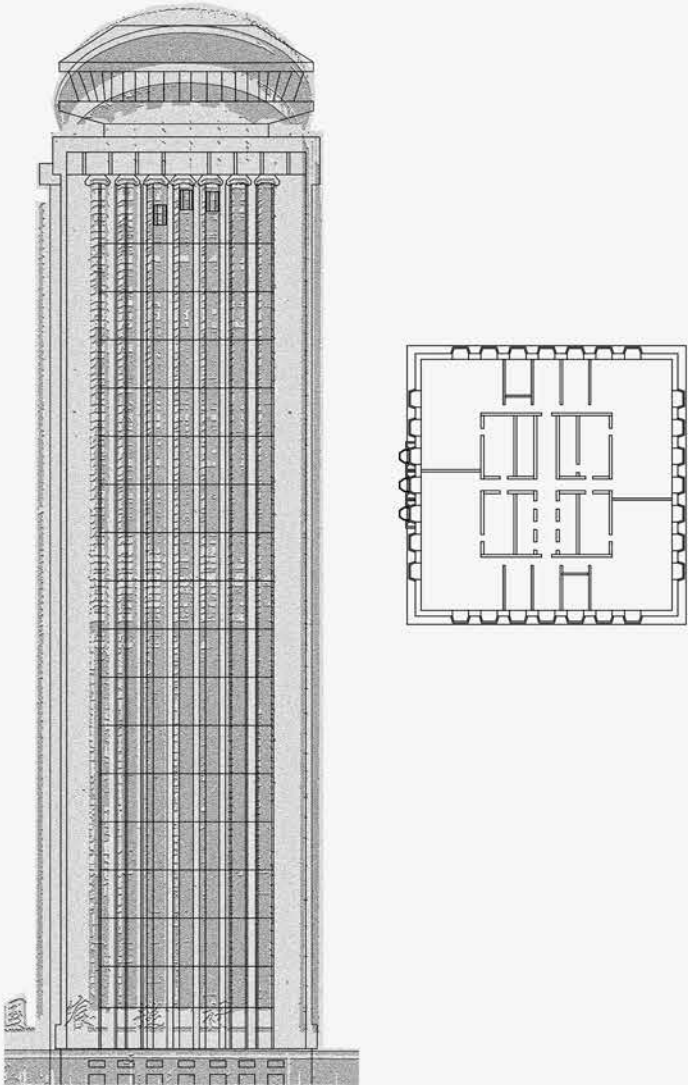


A City Without Yesterday

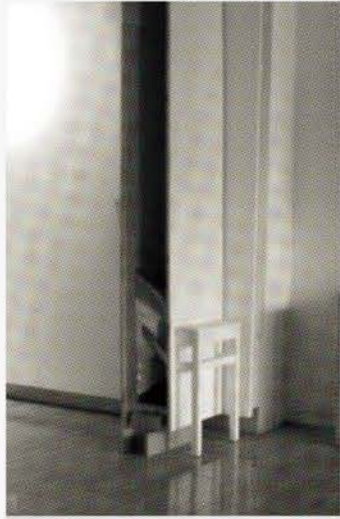
Shenzhen became a global metropolis within only a few decades. Its rapid transformation continuously replaces buildings, neighborhoods, and collective memories, creating the illusion of a city that exists only in the present. Compared with cities such as Tokyo or Hong Kong, whose histories remain physically layered, Shenzhen feels strangely detached from its own past. This sense of estrangement became the starting point of the thesis.

6 Akutagawa's Rashomon and Kurosawa's adaptation question whether a single reality can ever truly exist. Instead, every memory, testimony, and perspective constructs its own version of truth. This thesis extends the Rashomon effect beyond narrative, interpreting it as an architectural state where multiple realities coexist within the same physical space.

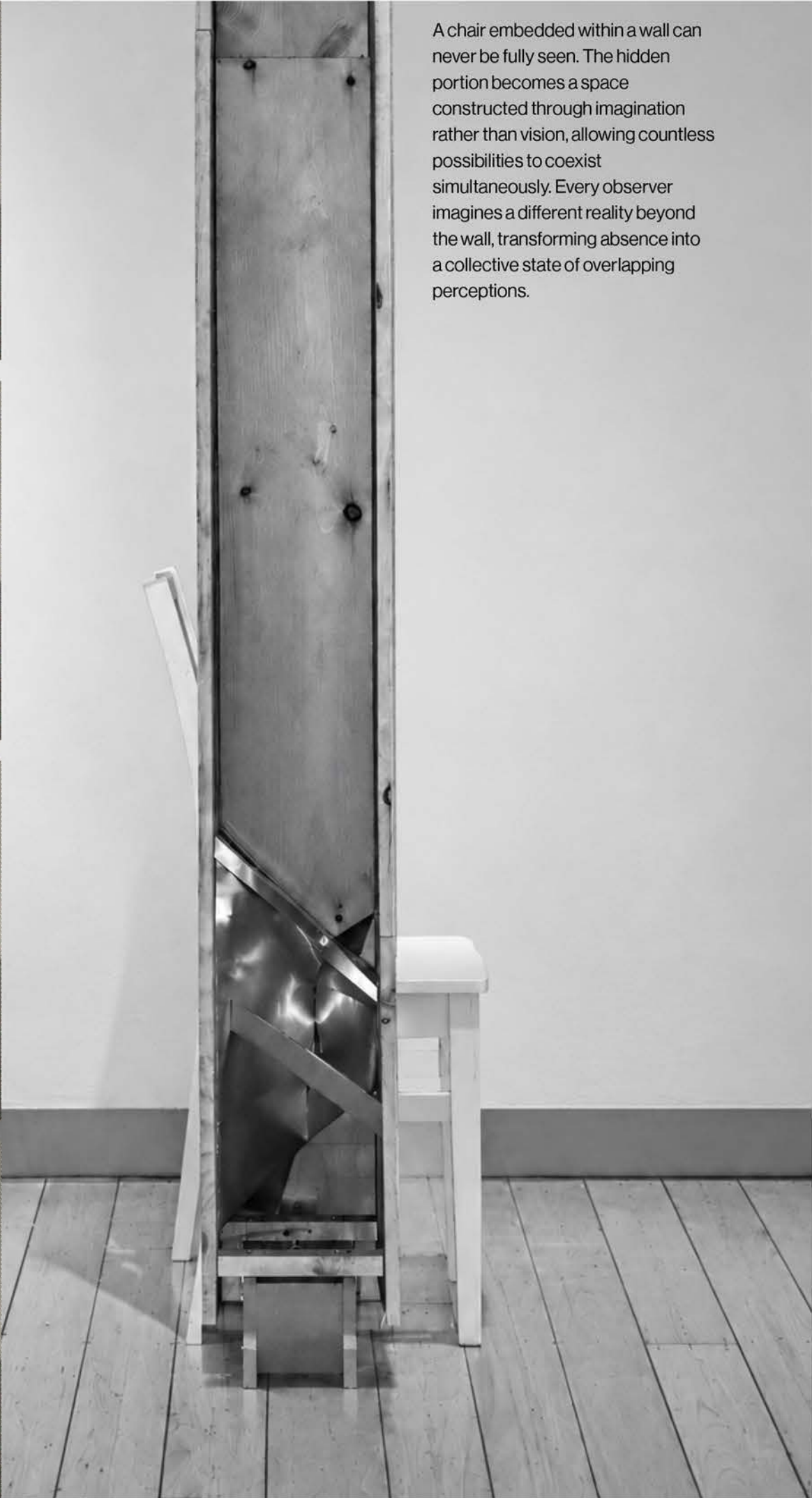
Guomao Tower is chosen as Shenzhen's Rashomon. Once a symbol of the city's ambition and modernization, it now exists between memory and obsolescence. Surrounded by ever-taller towers, the building remains familiar yet increasingly invisible within the city's rapid transformation. By inserting Rashomon into this ordinary office tower, the thesis proposes that the ghosts of a city are not found in monuments, but within the anonymous spaces we repeatedly overlook.



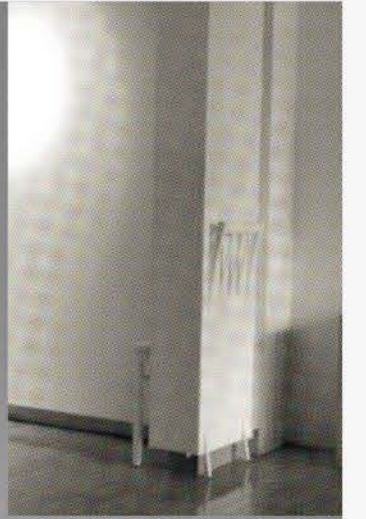
8



A chair embedded within a wall can never be fully seen. The hidden portion becomes a space constructed through imagination rather than vision, allowing countless possibilities to coexist simultaneously. Every observer imagines a different reality beyond the wall, transforming absence into a collective state of overlapping perceptions.

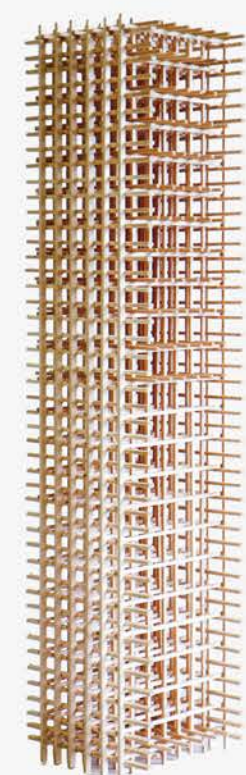
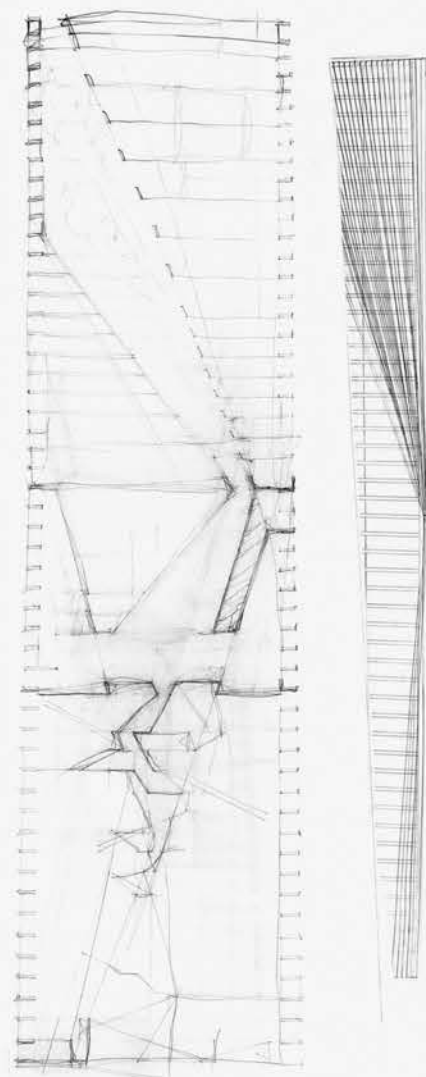
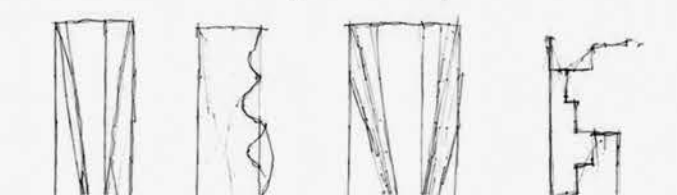
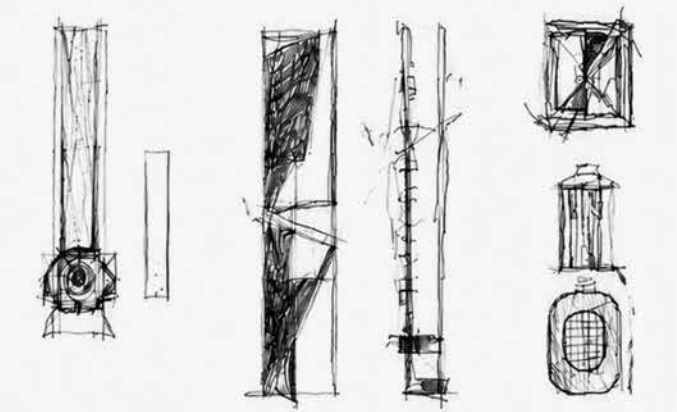
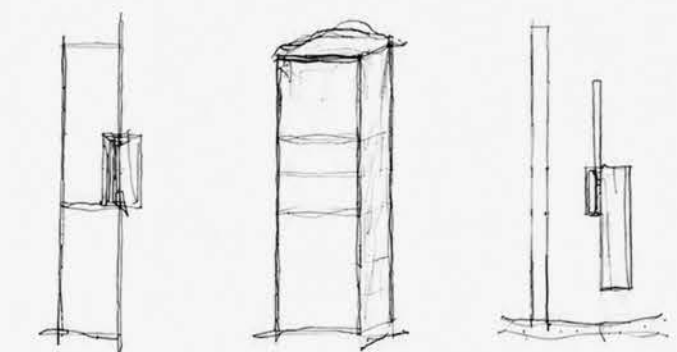
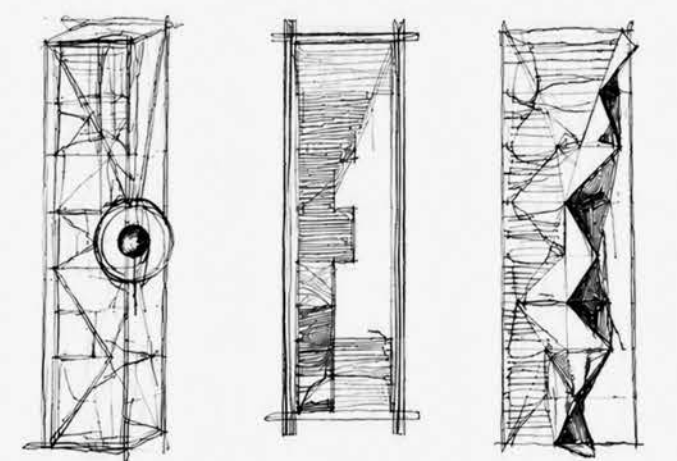
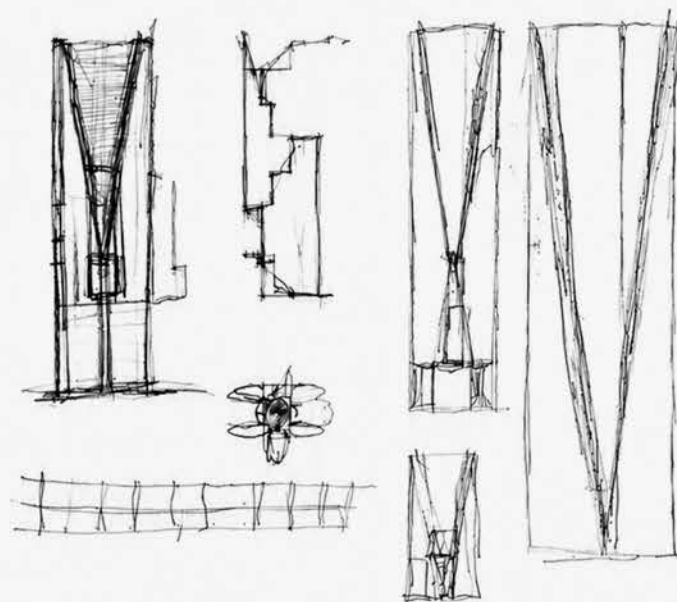


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Through sketches and physical studies, familiar office tower elements are repeatedly transformed, fragmented, and reconstructed. These experiments search for an architectural language capable of expressing instability, ambiguity, and the uneasy presence of the unknown.

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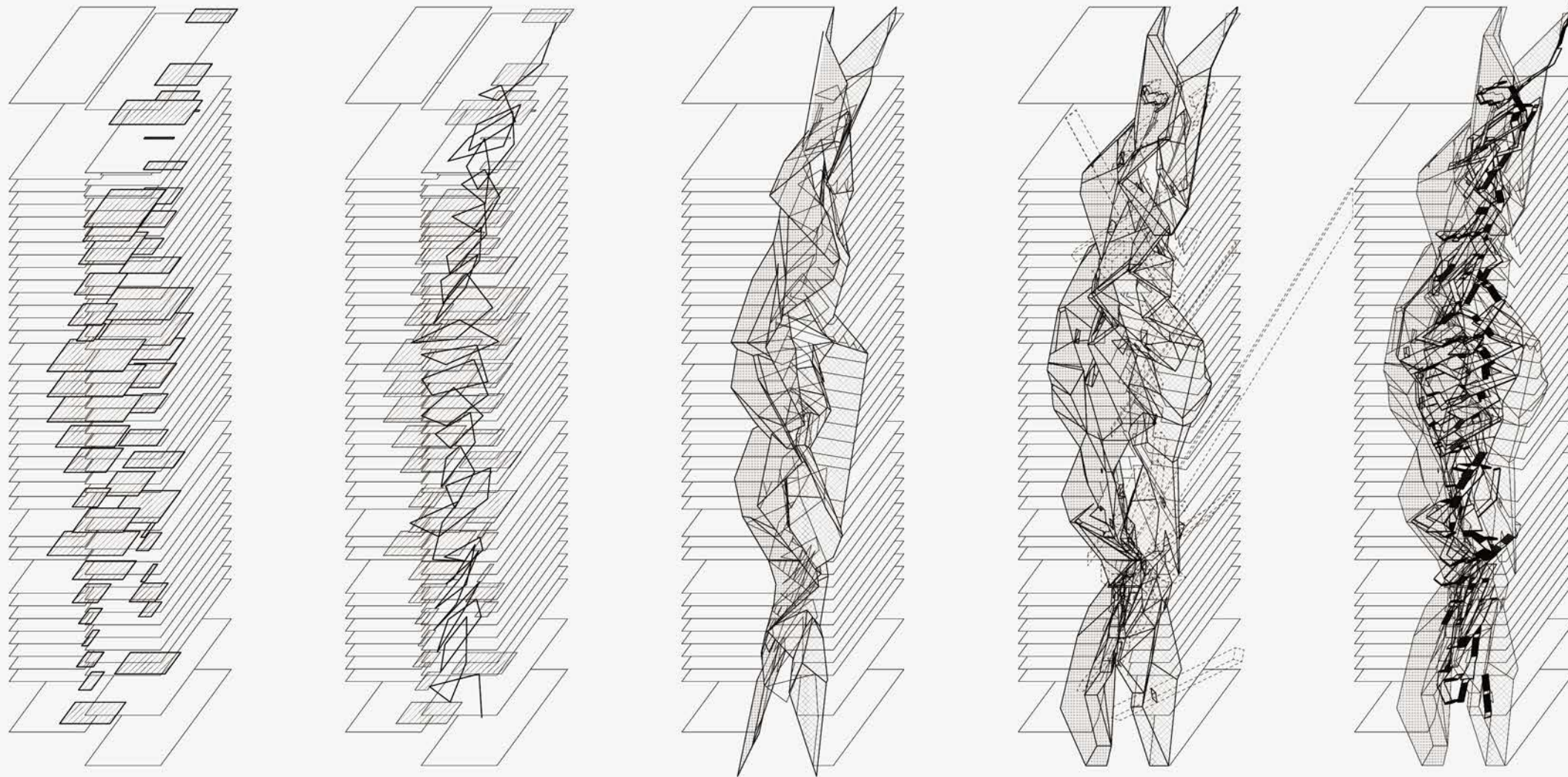


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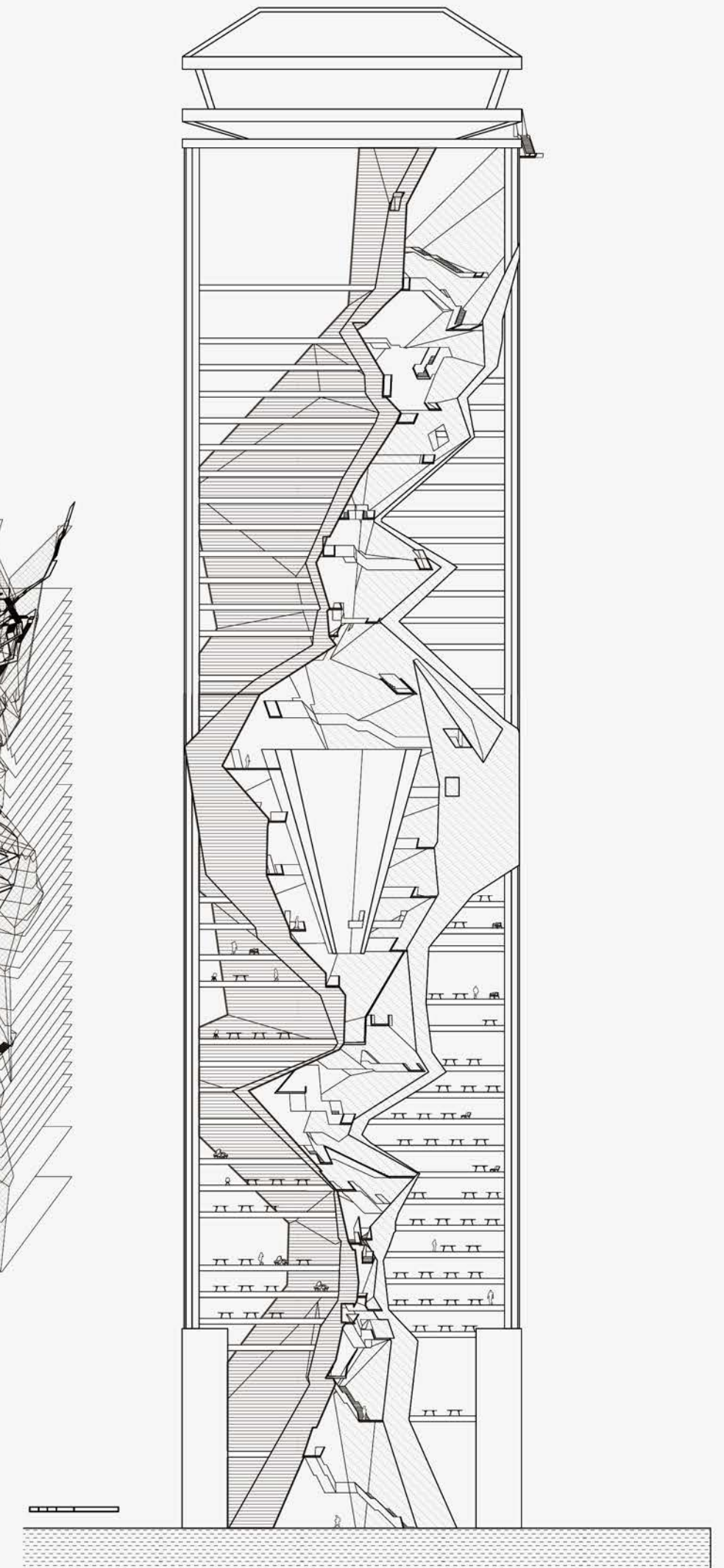


The office tower is divided, shifted, and reconnected through a continuous circulation path derived from the angle of a stair. Influenced by temple rituals and the spatial presence of death, a vertical sequence of staggered rooms emerges between the two halves of the tower. A continuous wall separates these spaces from the surrounding offices, constantly suggesting unseen worlds beyond its surface.

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Embedded within a generic office tower, Rashomon becomes a vertical architectural landscape where memory, uncertainty, and multiple realities continuously overlap.

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Biking Network

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PUBLIC BICYCLE INFRASTRUCTURE

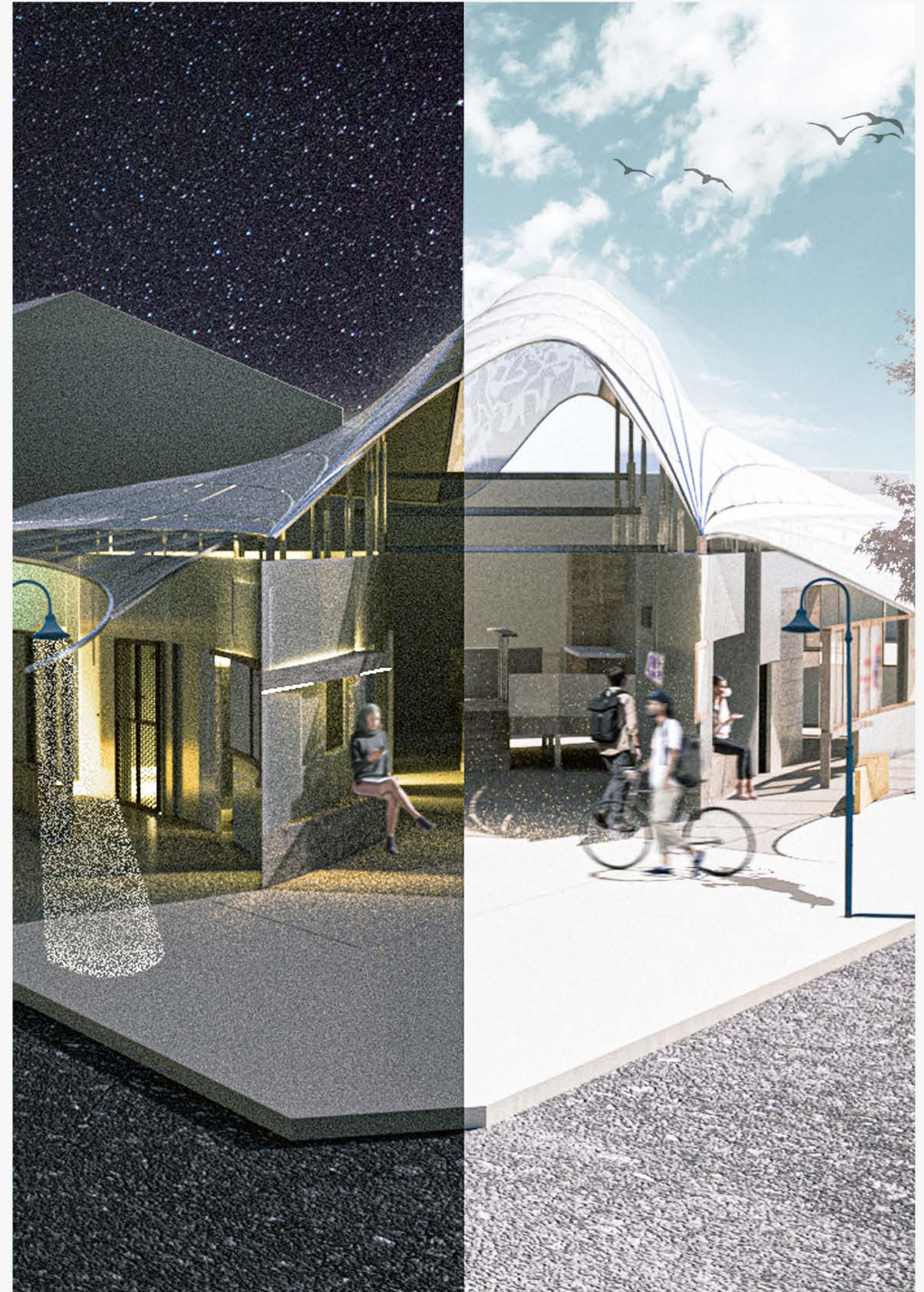
Type: Public Infrastructure
Location: Martha's Vineyard
Term: Fall 2024
Format: Studio Design Work
Collaboration: Individual Project
Advisor: German Pallares Avitia

Biking network is a new biking system for Martha's Vineyard improves the existing bike routes, connecting them to bus lines and key destinations. It serves both permanent residents and visitors, making transportation more efficient and accessible.

The system includes three main bike stations as central hubs, linked to smaller rental and storage booths across the island. These stations provide route information, bike storage, and repair services.

Beyond tourism, the project addresses the island's everyday mobility inequities. The design considers the immigrant workforce, who rely on bikes and buses for daily commutes, often late at night. By integrating seating, lighting, and safe waiting areas to support both efficiency and dignity in daily travel.

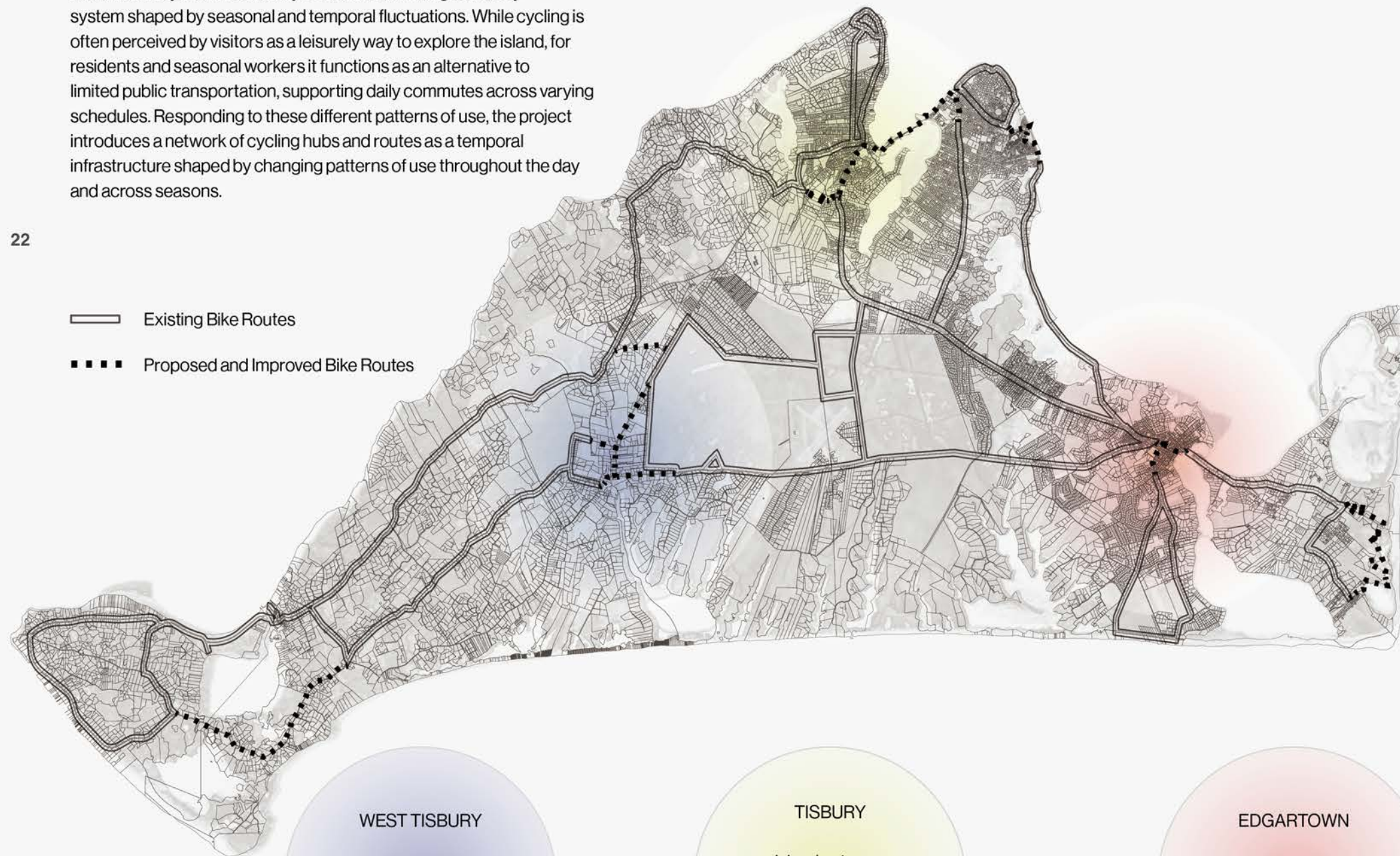
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Martha's Vineyard relies heavily on tourism, creating a mobility system shaped by seasonal and temporal fluctuations. While cycling is often perceived by visitors as a leisurely way to explore the island, for residents and seasonal workers it functions as an alternative to limited public transportation, supporting daily commutes across varying schedules. Responding to these different patterns of use, the project introduces a network of cycling hubs and routes as a temporal infrastructure shaped by changing patterns of use throughout the day and across seasons.

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- Existing Bike Routes
- ■ ■ Proposed and Improved Bike Routes



WEST TISBURY

Local community hub

Highest share of year-round residents
Agricultural & service workers
Repair · Workshop · Storage

TISBURY

Island gateway

Main ferry arrival point
Mixed resident and visitor flows
Rental · Café · Exchange

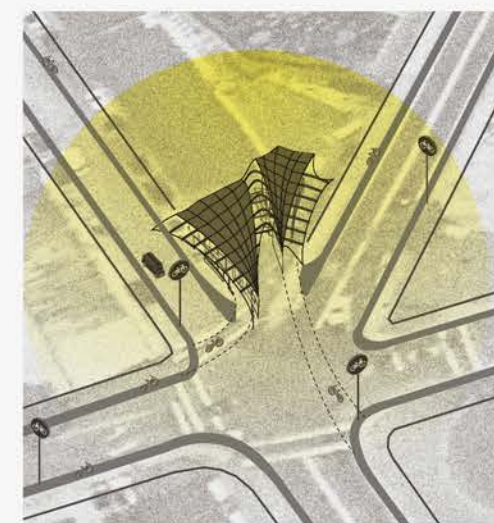
EDGARTOWN

Tourism center

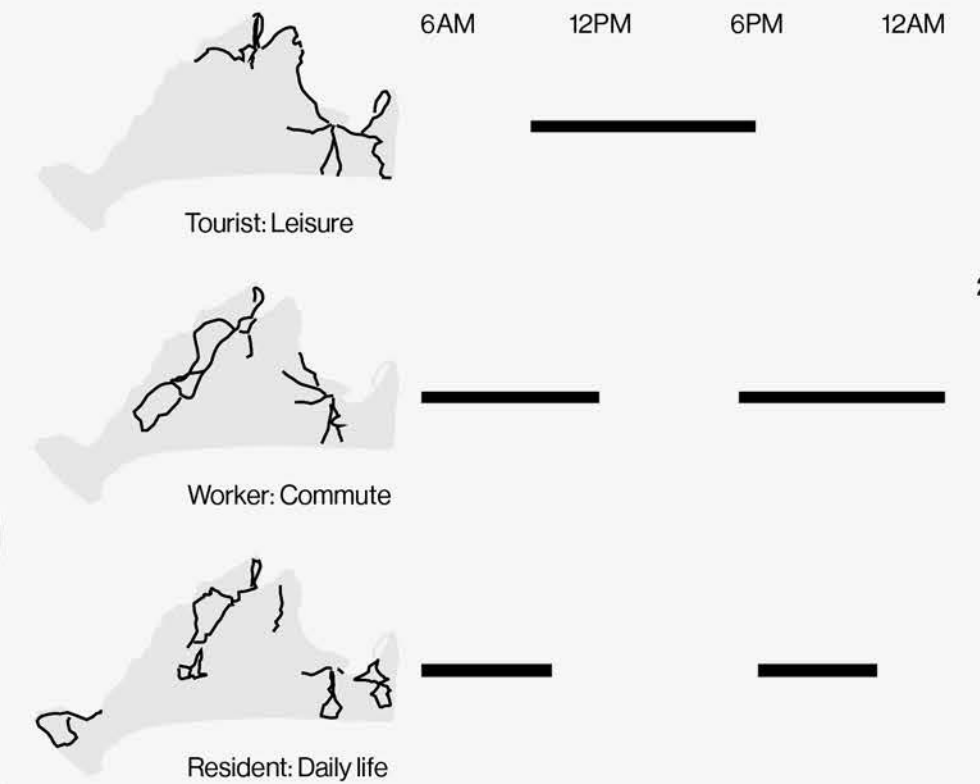
Highest concentration of visitors
Seasonal commercial district
Café · Rest area · Rental

The proposal consists of three main centers across Martha's Vineyard and a series of smaller bike stations along existing routes. Each center responds to a different group of users and local conditions. **West Tisbury** supports everyday commuting and local residents, **Edgartown** serves tourism and commercial activities, and **Tisbury** connects ferry arrivals, workers, and visitors. The following design focuses on Tisbury as the main transportation hub within the network.

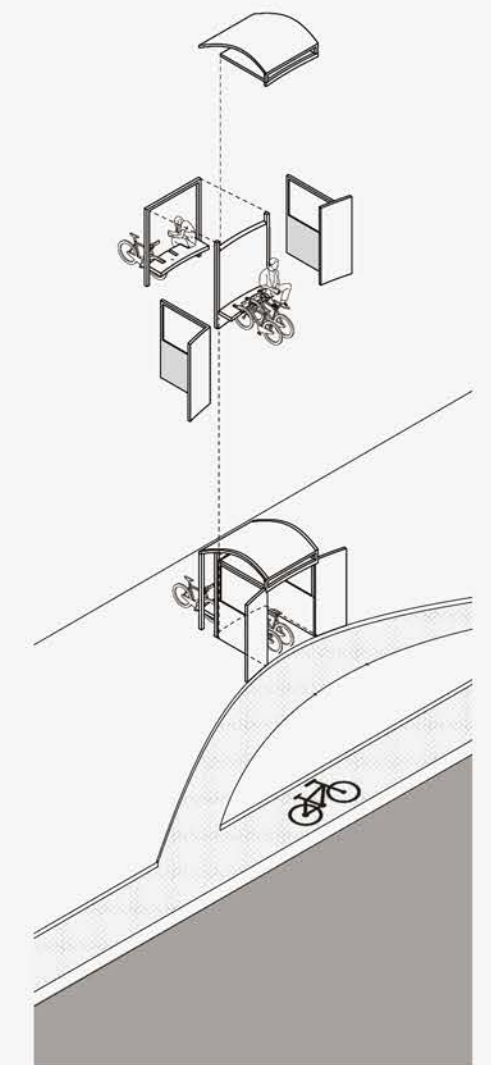
* The following design proposal focuses on the Tisbury hub.



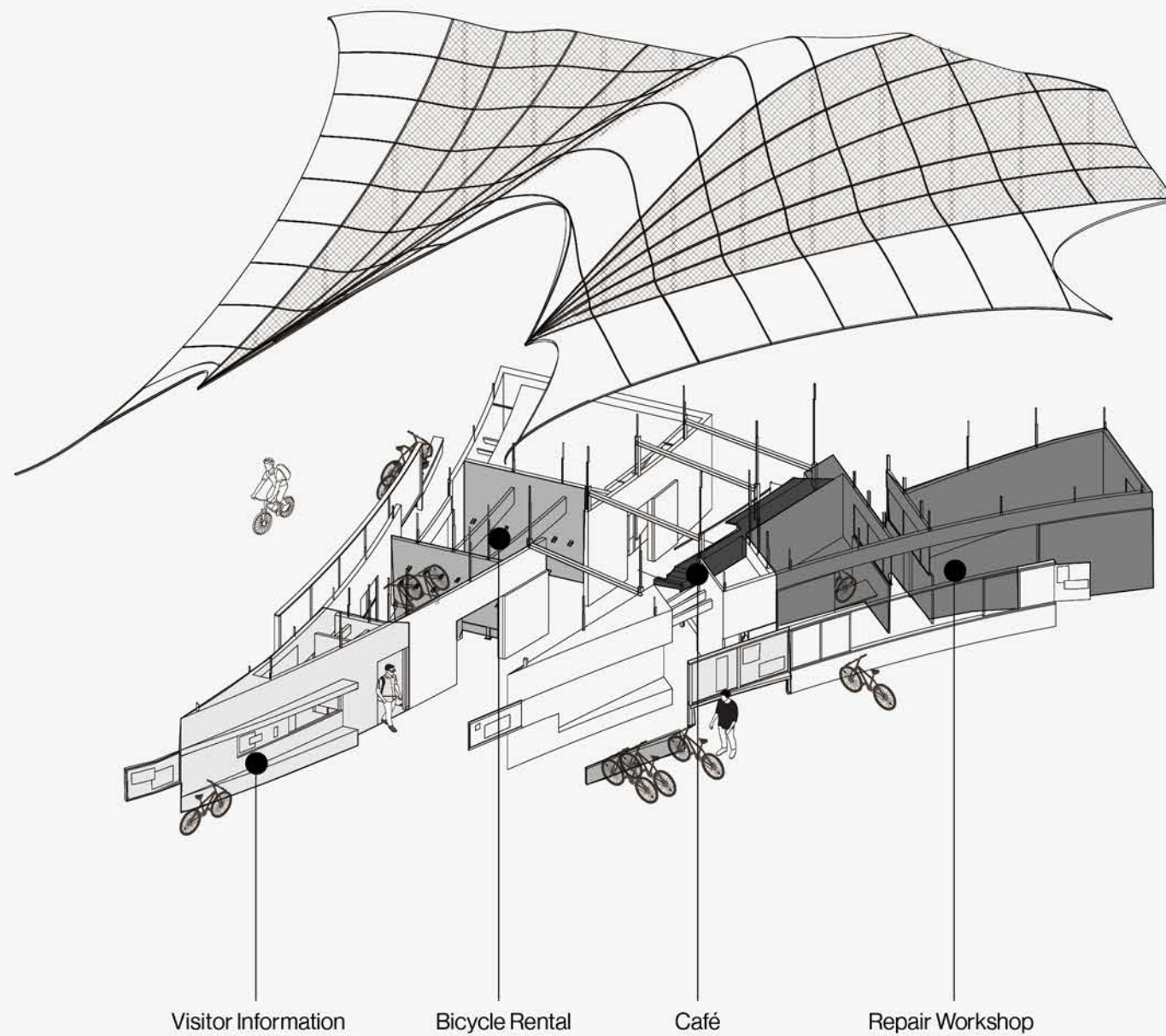
23



Shared bike stations

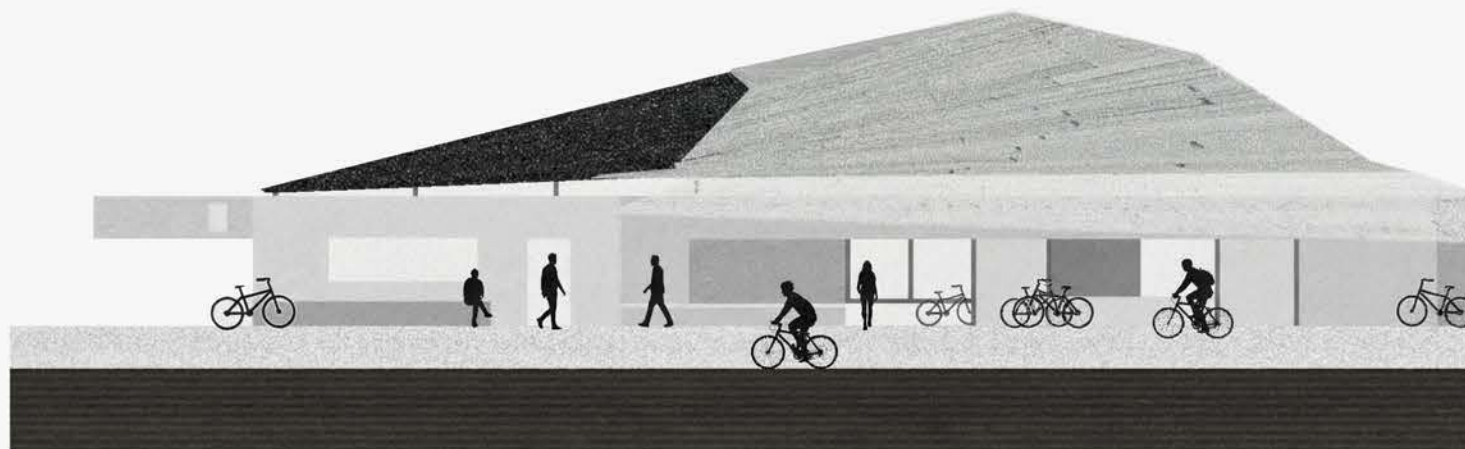


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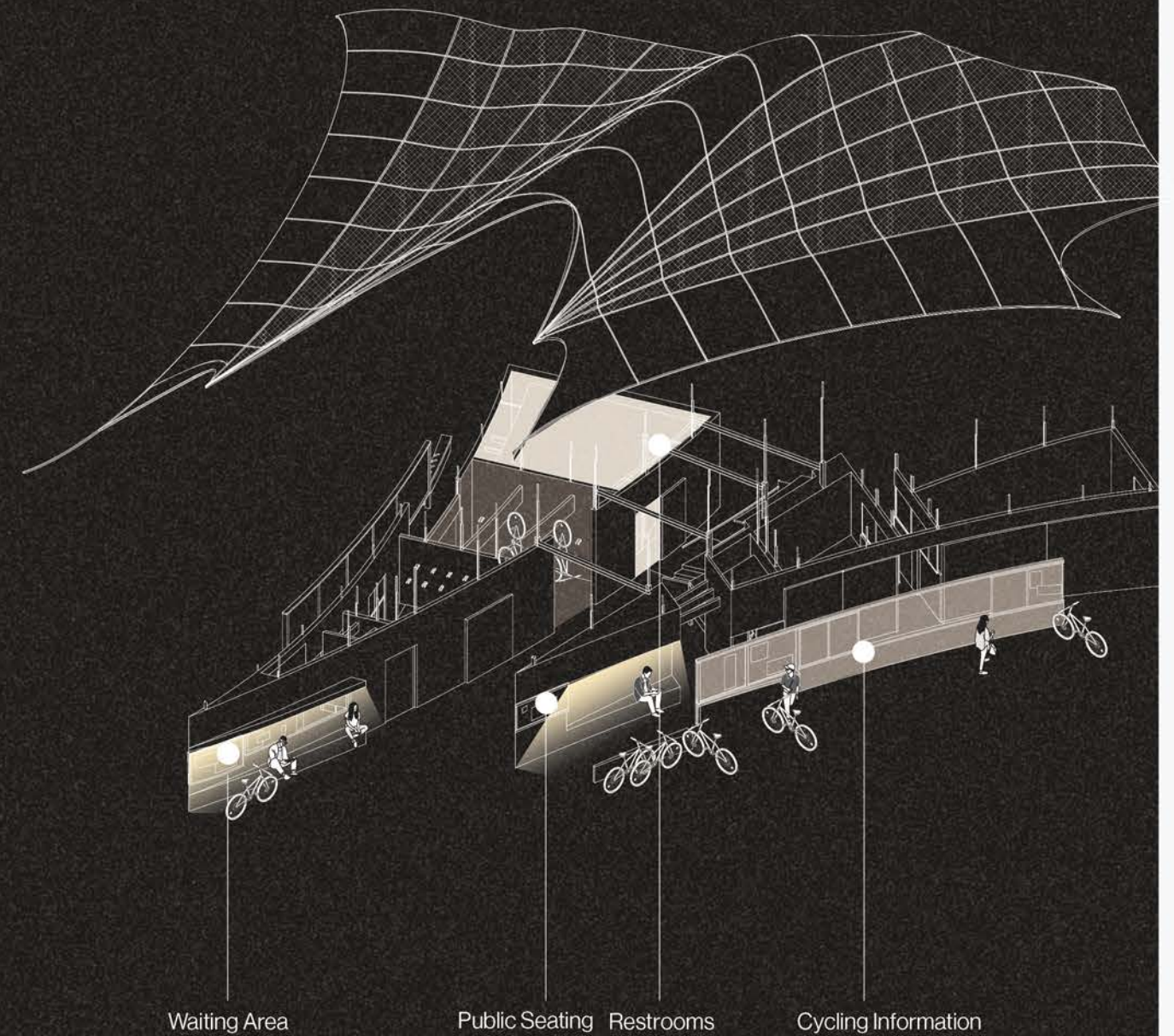


Rather than operating as a static transportation hub, the station continuously adapts to changing patterns of use throughout the day.

During the daytime, spaces open toward tourism-oriented activities, including bicycle rental, visitor information, café, repair workshop, and secure storage. These programs support the island's seasonal economy while creating employment opportunities for local workers.



25

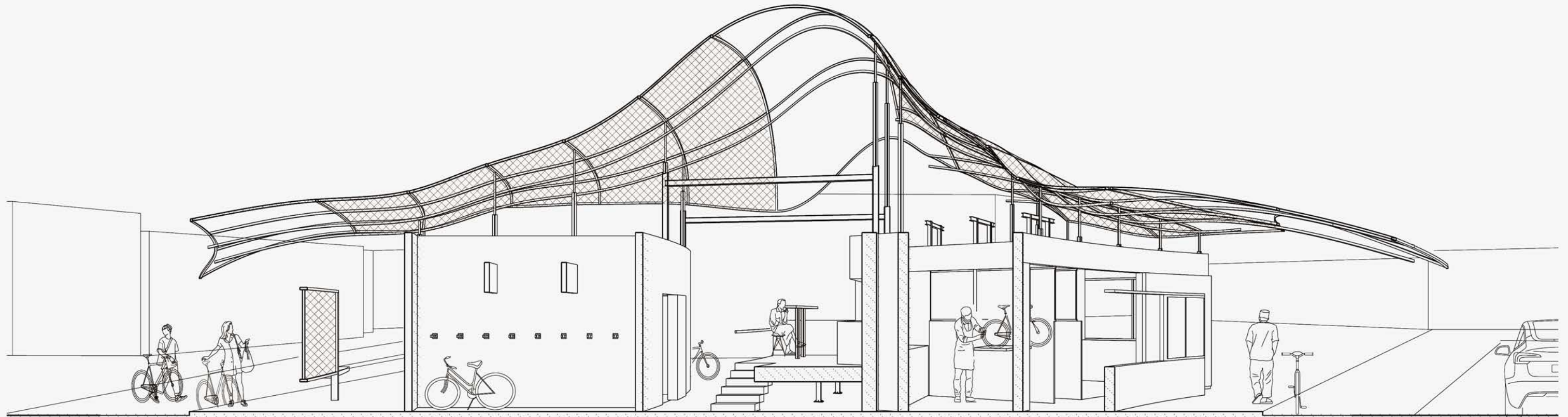


As evening arrives, the station shifts its focus from tourism to community use. Active programs gradually give way to illuminated waiting areas, public seating, restrooms, and cycling information, allowing the building to remain a safe and accessible public resource beyond business hours.

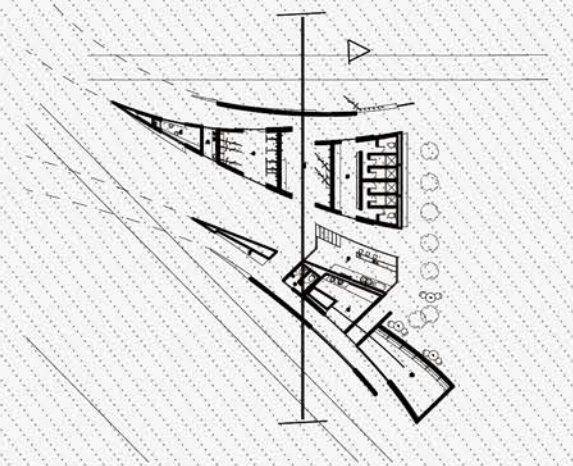


A lightweight roof unifies circulation, waiting areas, and public amenities beneath a continuous canopy. Open edges, natural ventilation, and filtered daylight create a comfortable space that supports movement, gathering, and short-term occupation.

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Productive Domesticity

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TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND URBAN FARMING

Type: Transitional Housing
Location: Detroit
Term: Spring 2025
Format: Studio Design Work
Collaboration: Individual Project
Advisor: Ritchie Yao

Domestic Productivity reimagines transitional housing for low-income residents in Mexican Town, Detroit, through the lens of urban farming.

In response, the project integrates a multi-scalar urban agriculture strategy aimed at restoring food accessibility and fostering community self-sufficiency. The design is organized into three key components: a ground level dedicated entirely to communal farmland; a sunken terrain of community programs nested beneath, shaped by the scale of activities it accommodates; and a thin vertical "housing wall" elevated along the northern edge to maximize southern exposure for agriculture below.

Each housing unit features a private courtyard with an integrated composting system, reinforcing sustainable food practices at the domestic scale. Existing shotgun houses on-site are preserved and repurposed into shared composting stations and recycling hubs, further embedding circular systems within the community.

By treating both the newly designed housing and the existing shotgun housing as modular "objects," this project introduces playful rhythm into the site. Ultimately, it proposes a new model for urban living, one where food production, sustainability, and social support converge to empower residents through daily practice and long-term opportunity.

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Green Space

Michigan Central

Highway Infrastructure

Residential

Vacant Land

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Detroit has a long-standing agricultural tradition that continues to shape everyday life across the city. This culture of local food production is exemplified by Eastern Market, one of Detroit's oldest and most established farmers markets, located within a nine-minute drive of the site. Originating as a 19th-century market district, Eastern Market remains a vital piece of the city's food infrastructure, supporting both local vendors and regional distribution networks.

Site analysis identified two existing markets within close proximity to the project area. However, both are situated within predominantly middle-class neighborhoods, resulting in higher price points that limit accessibility for lower-income residents nearby.

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Located within a transitional housing framework, the project responds to this gap by introducing urban farming as its central design strategy. Agriculture functions not only as a source of food production, but also as a spatial organizer and a transitional lifestyle for residents. Through farming, residents gain opportunities for skill development, community building, and potential income generation, supporting their transition toward long-term housing stability.

Response:

Urban farming becomes both a spatial strategy and a pathway toward housing stability.

The building footprint was developed through a series of massing studies that prioritize cultivable land over built area. Instead of occupying the site as a compact block, the housing volume is compressed into a continuous linear shelf, preserving the maximum amount of open ground for urban agriculture.

This linear organization also establishes a clear structural grid, allowing housing, circulation, and communal spaces to be inserted as repeatable modules while maintaining flexibility across the entire system.

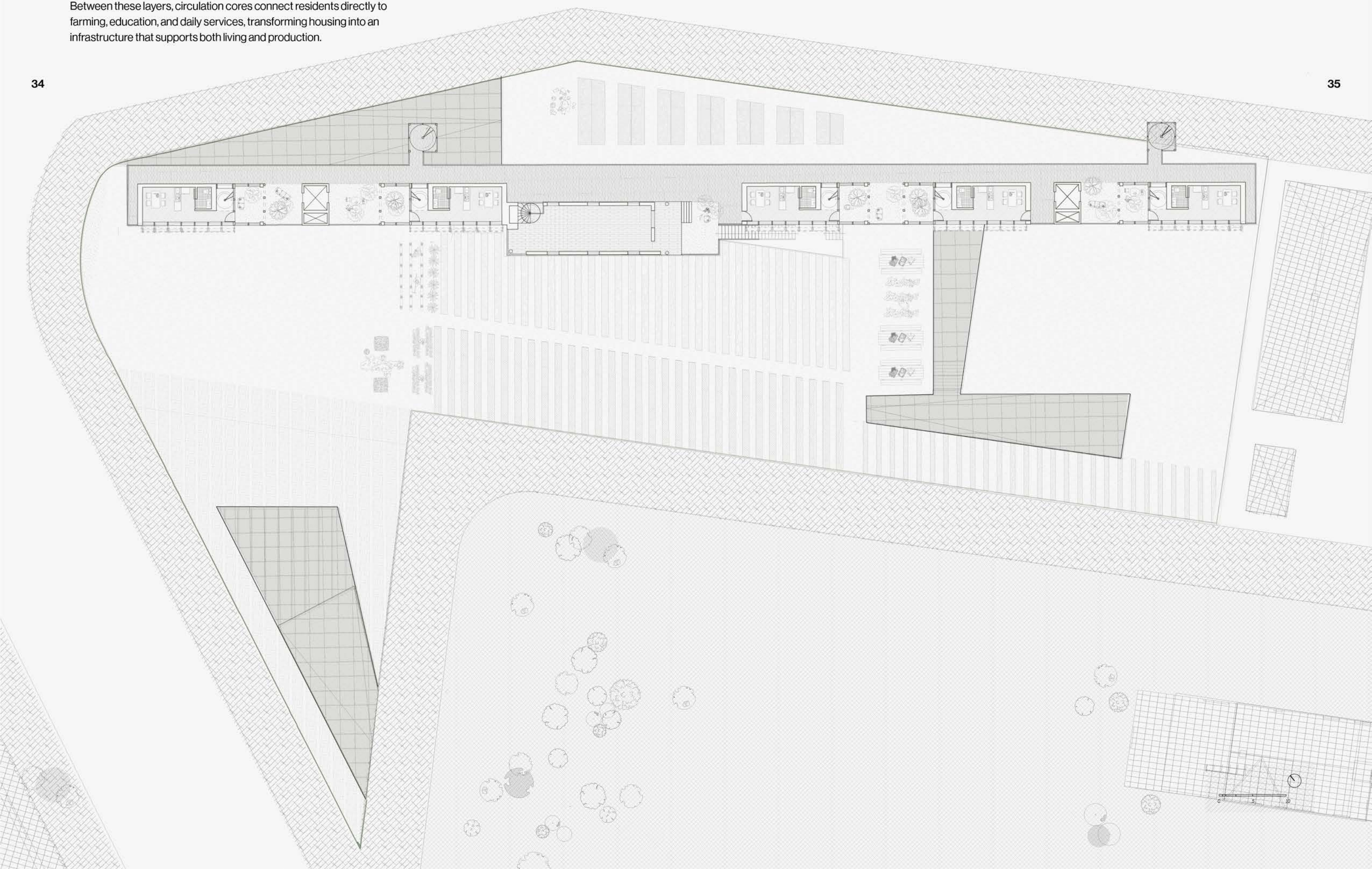


The project is organized into three interconnected layers. Housing is elevated above the site to preserve productive farmland below, while a shared underground level accommodates collective facilities including workshops, a library, and community gathering spaces.

Between these layers, circulation cores connect residents directly to farming, education, and daily services, transforming housing into an infrastructure that supports both living and production.

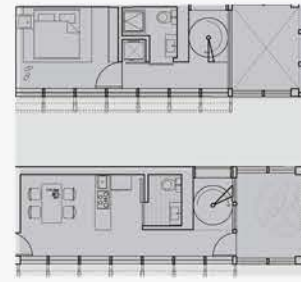
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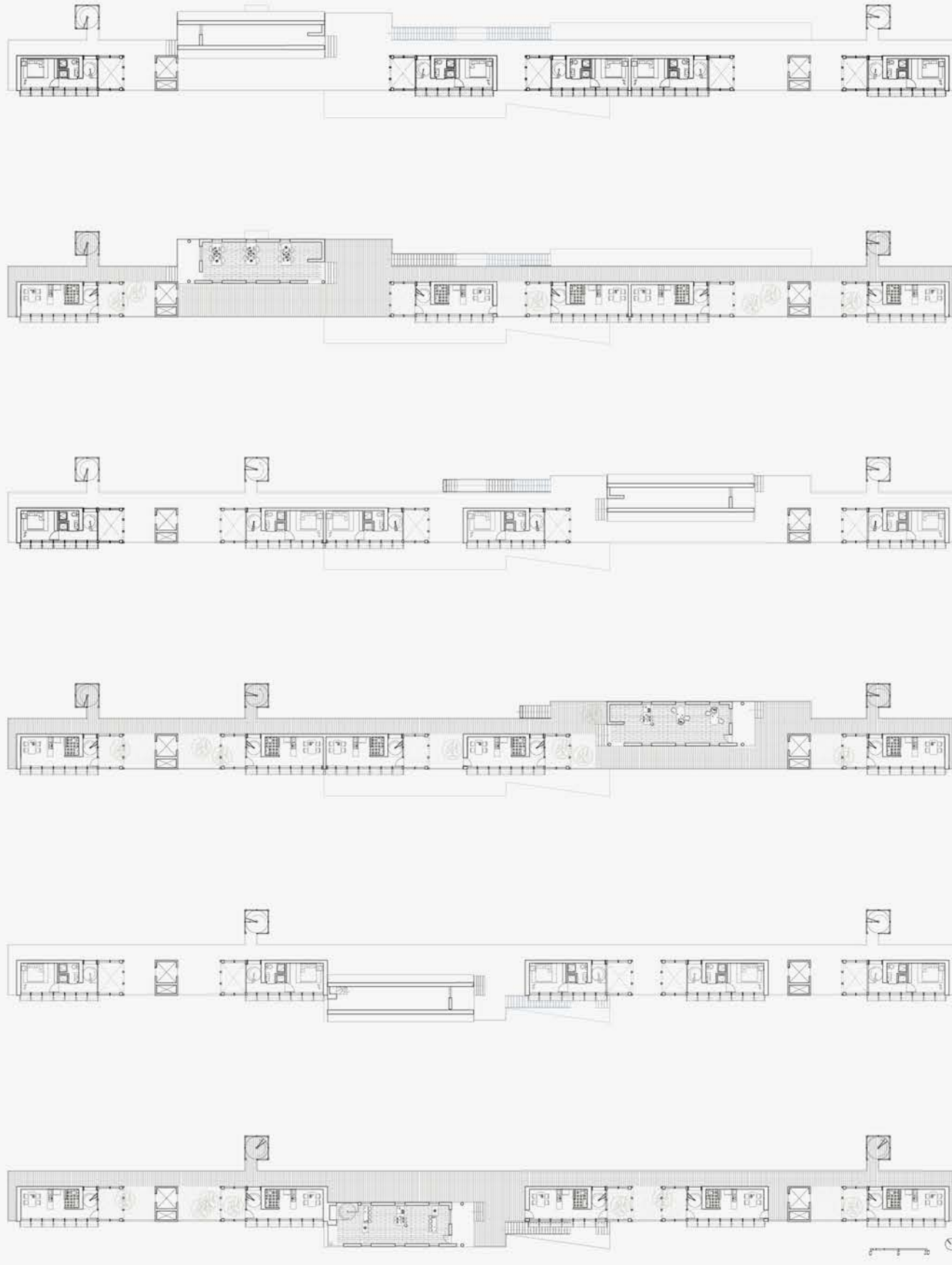


Housing Shelf

The housing shelf follows a continuous structural grid while allowing modular units to shift within it. This controlled variation creates a flexible composition rather than a repetitive one, leaving openings that become shared gardens, terraces, and communal outdoor spaces.



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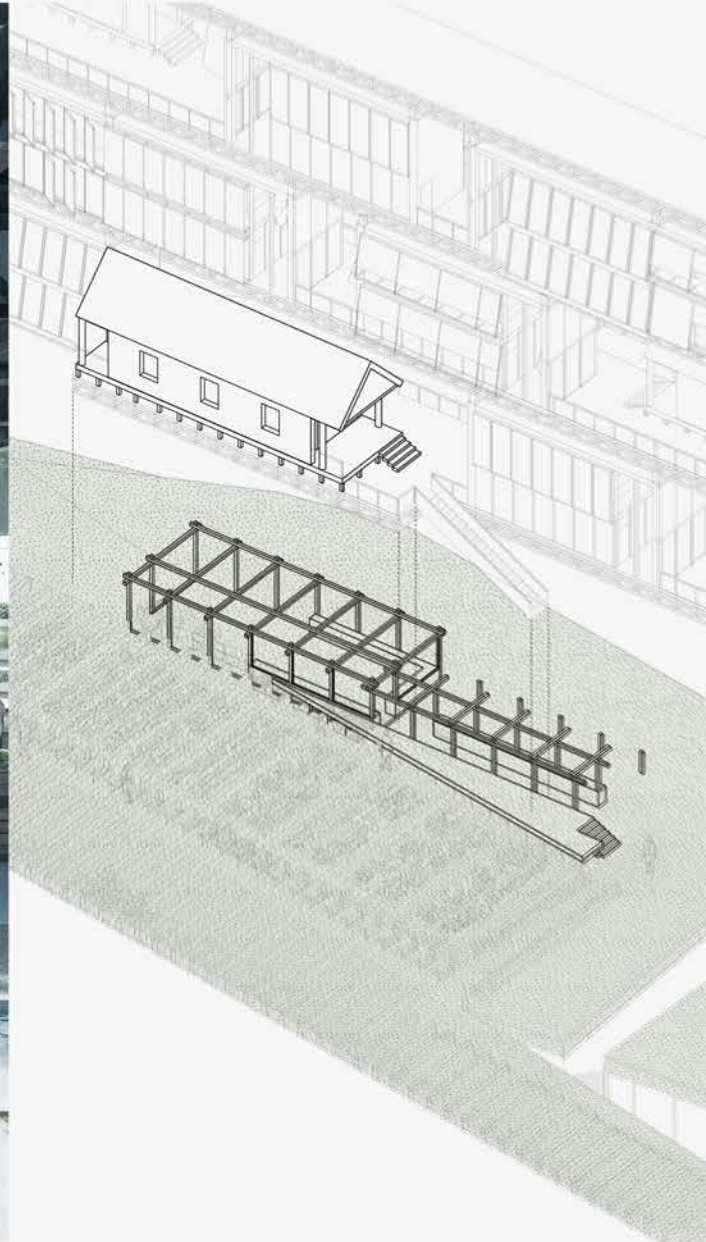


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Farm-to-Market System

The productive ground extends directly into a lightweight timber market built on the same structural grid. Its modular construction supports a localized cycle where food is cultivated, harvested, and sold within the community.



Shared Infrastructure

Beneath the site, shared facilities including a library, workshop, and meeting space provide everyday support for residents. Organized with the same modular timber system, these spaces strengthen learning, collaboration, and community life.





EazoAI

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DESIGNING THE HUMAN SIDE OF AI-GENERATED EXPERIENCES

Type:	AI-Native Experiences, Design Systems & Creative Strategy
Location:	Remote, US
Term:	Present
Format:	Full Time
Collaboration:	Group project with EazoAI

At EazoAI, I worked on making AI-generated apps more engaging, thoughtful, and human.

I started by designing and building the platform's first collection of featured apps, exploring what kinds of content could spark curiosity, encourage interaction, and help users understand what they could create with AI.

As the team grew, I developed design guidelines for our builders and led design critiques. I was especially interested in moving beyond the generic look of AI-generated apps, bringing more human intention, personality, and an understanding of user behavior into the design process.

I also helped push the platform toward 3D capabilities, experimenting with new tools, testing features, and building apps to explore what was possible.

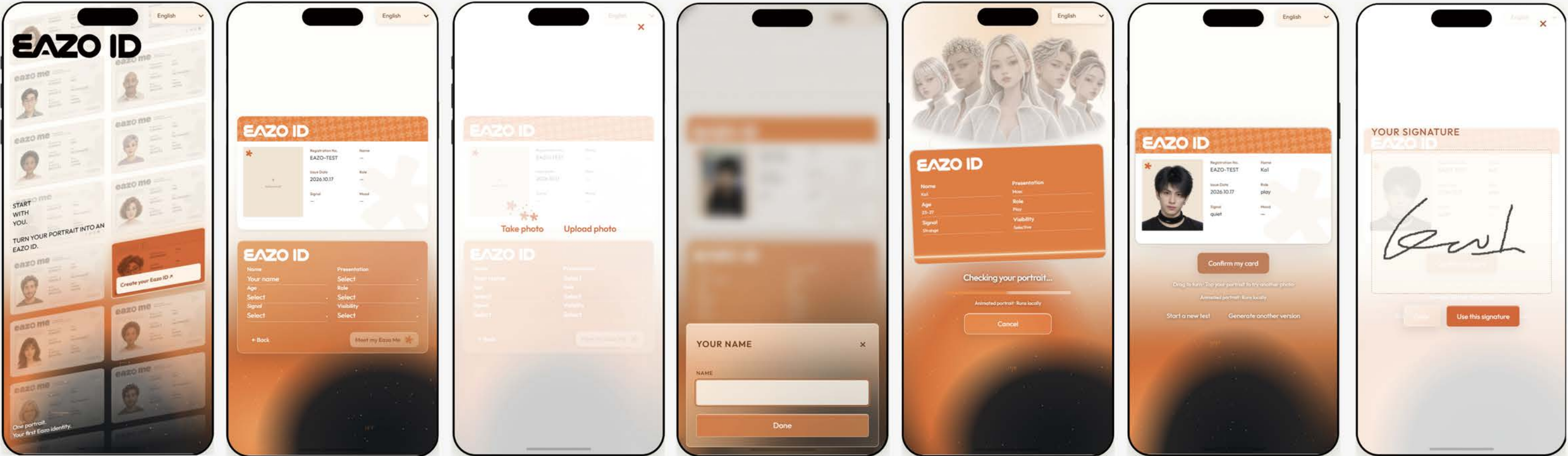
Alongside this, I used my own apps to create social media content and worked more closely with the design and marketing teams on how we communicate the product to a wider audience.

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I was tasked with creating a mini app that would help users feel more connected to Eazo. I came up with the idea of a personalized Eazo ID card, where users could upload a photo, turn themselves into a character, sign their name, and receive an officially stamped card.

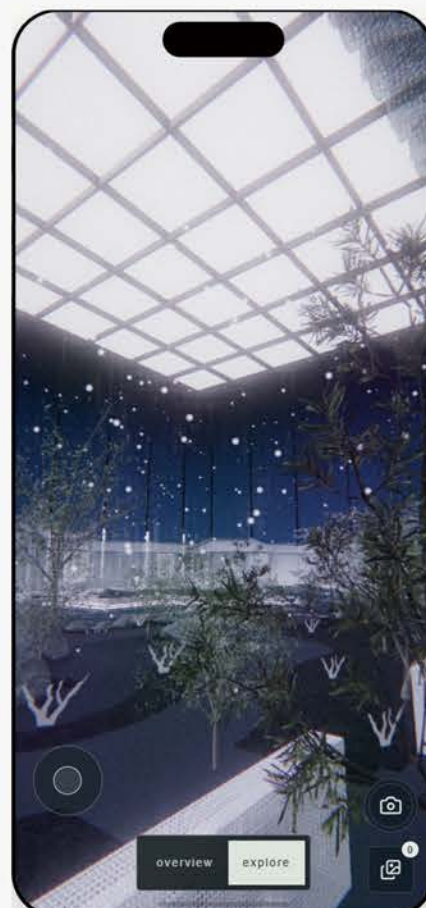
The design started with a cyberpunk-inspired aesthetic, but I later shifted toward a warmer, more approachable style to better fit Eazo's identity and reach a wider audience. I kept the original interaction flow, turning a simple photo upload into a small ritual of becoming part of Eazo. The final app received positive user feedback.



This project began as an experiment to test Eazo's new 3D capabilities. Starting with a rough garden model, I developed a workflow using Eazo, Blender, and Tripo to build and refine the environment, from architectural forms to AI-generated furniture.

I wanted to reimagine a traditional Suzhou garden as a dreamlike space inside a contemporary cyber museum. Inspired by the feeling of memory and dreams, I explored translucent materials, soft lighting, and subtle visual noise to make the garden feel less physical and more like an impression.

I also introduced changing weather, including snow, wind, and drifting fog, to bring a sense of time and atmosphere into the space. The result is an experiment in how AI tools can help create spatial experiences, not just 3D models.



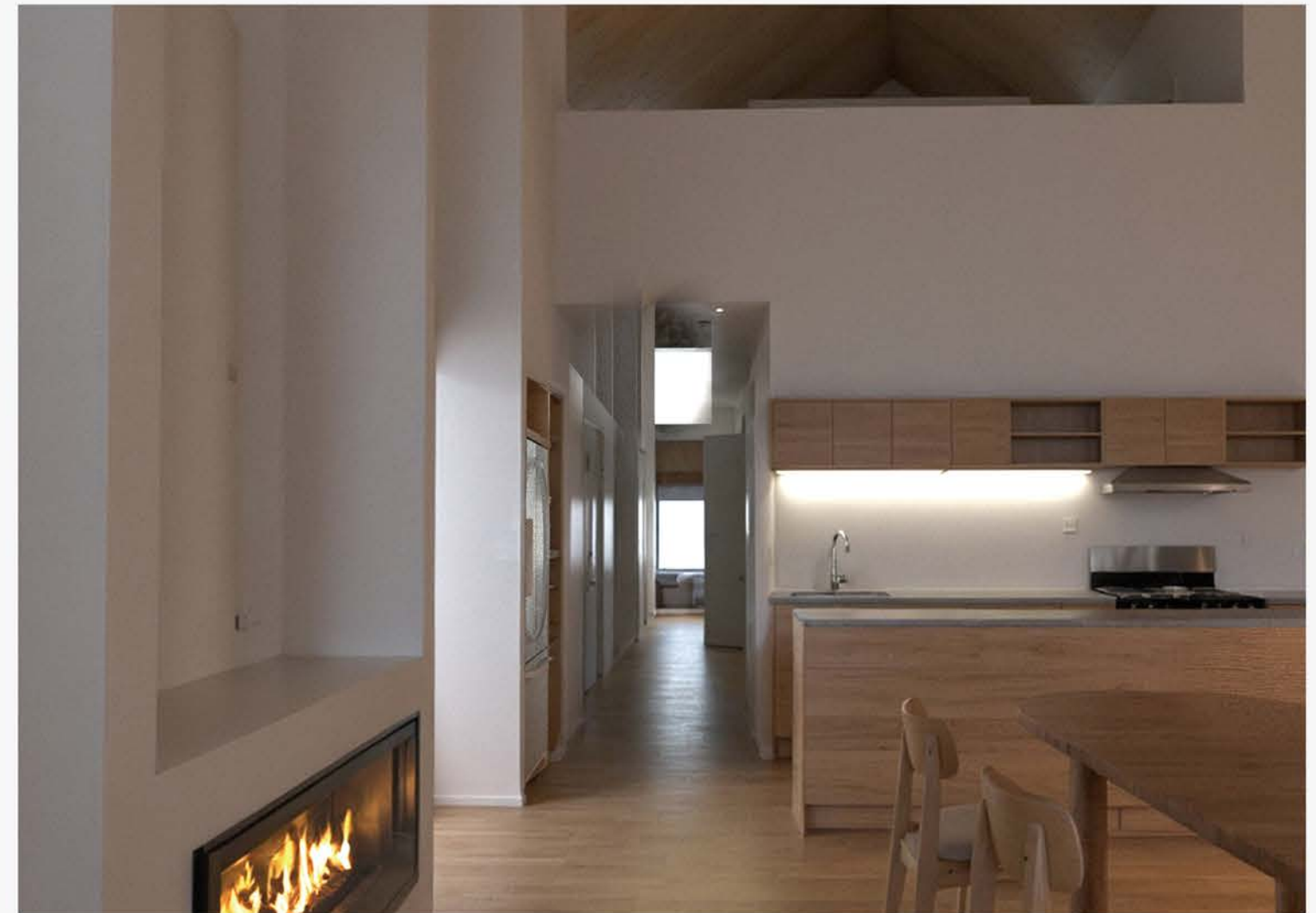
Ryan McCaffrey Architect

48

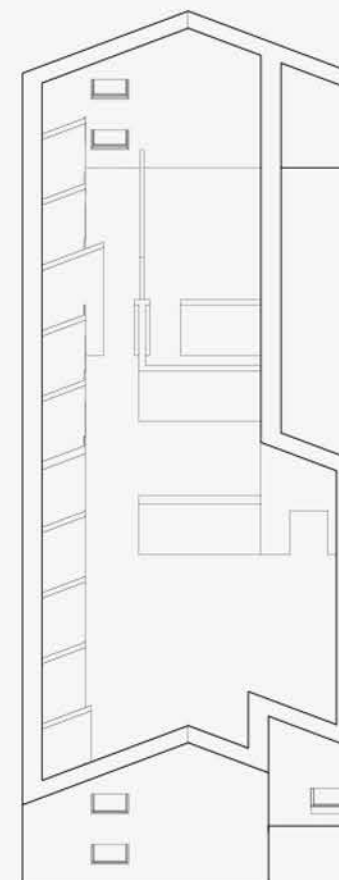
INCREMENTAL HOUSING

Type: Housing Prototype
Location: Boston
Term: 2026
Format: Internship
Collaboration: Group project with Ryan McCaffrey Architect

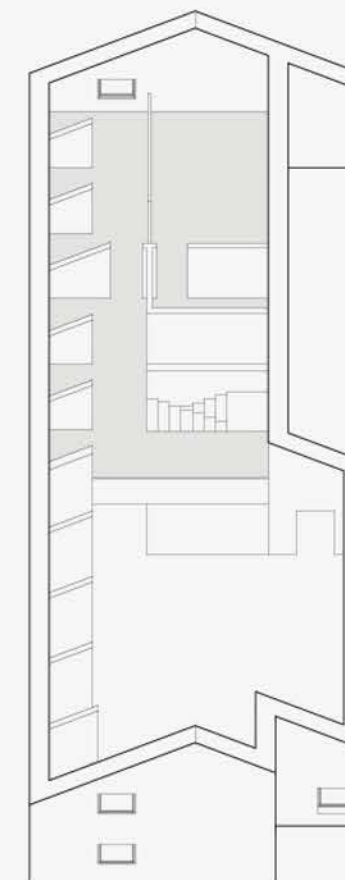
Developed with Ryan McCaffrey Architect, this adaptable housing prototype explores incremental growth for contemporary North American housing. The design allows homeowners to expand from a single-story house into a two-story residence over time, with structural systems, utility routes, and circulation planned from the initial construction phase. I contributed to the architectural design development, technical drawings, and visual documentation throughout the project.



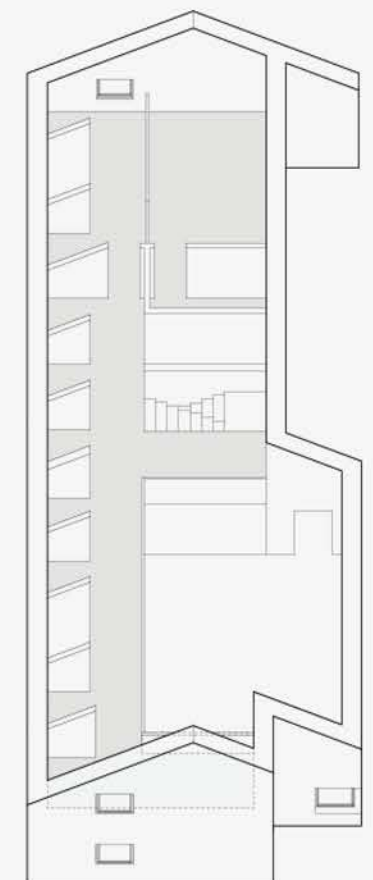
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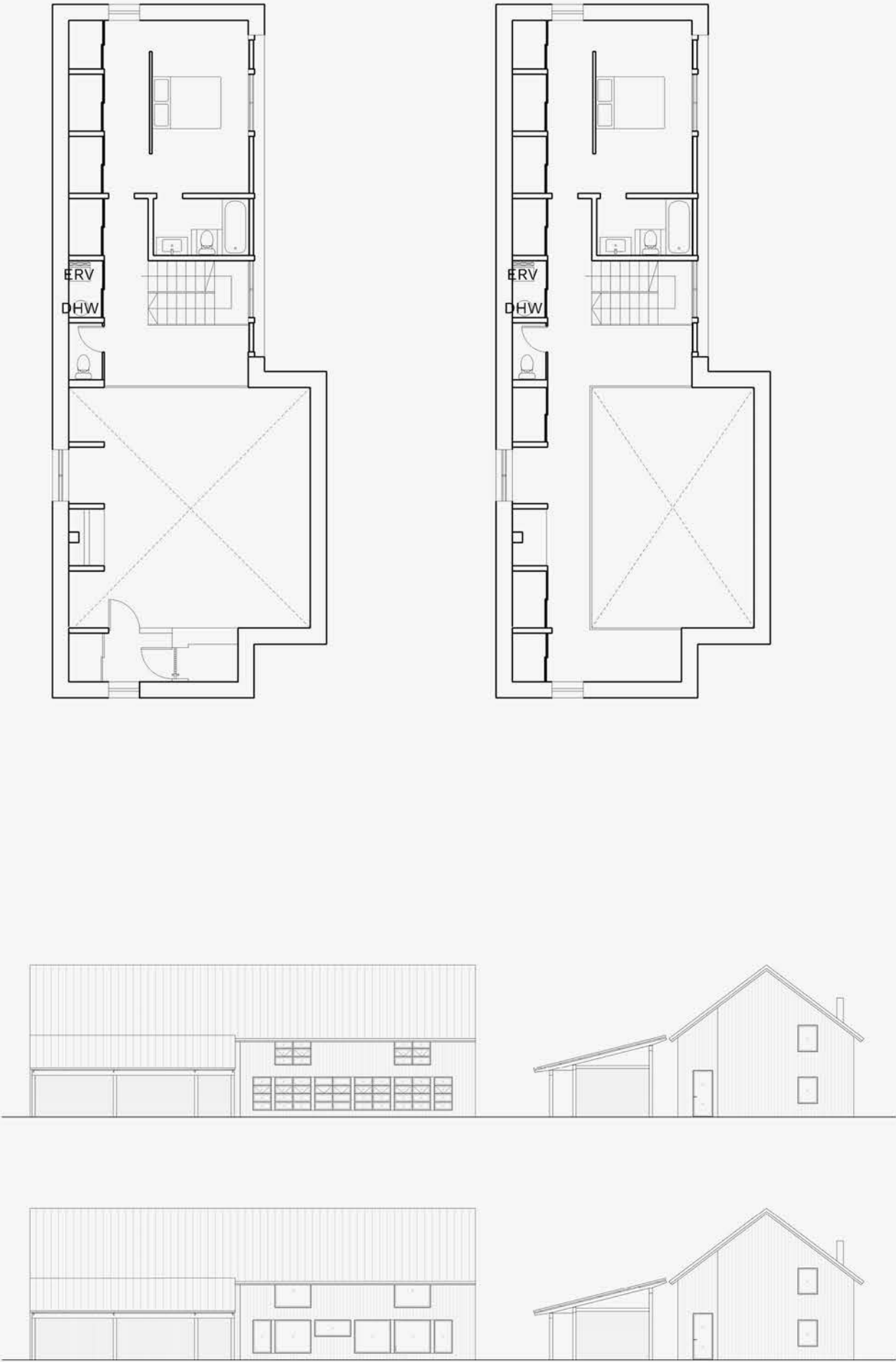
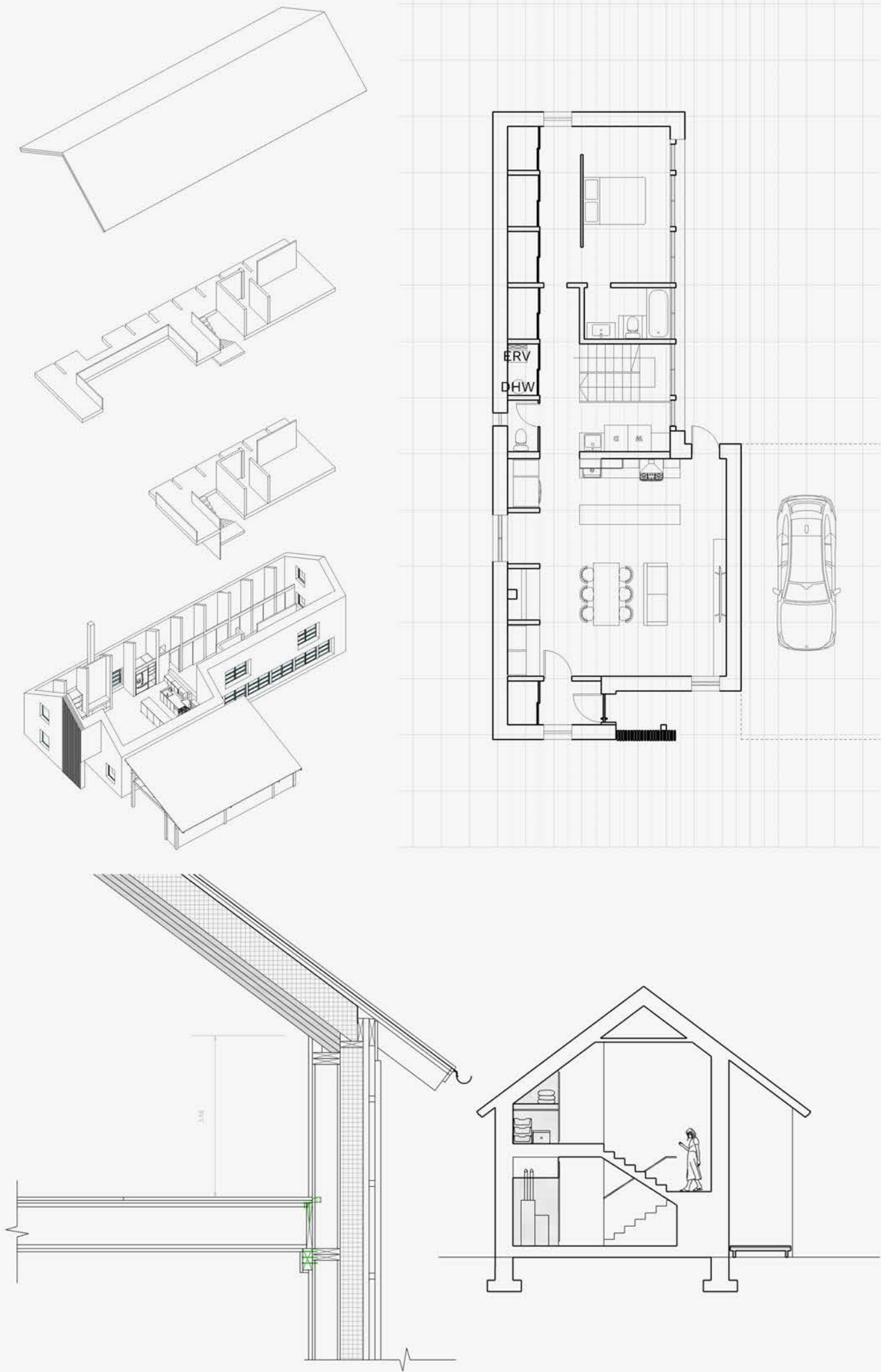
PHASE 1



PHASE 2



PHASE 3



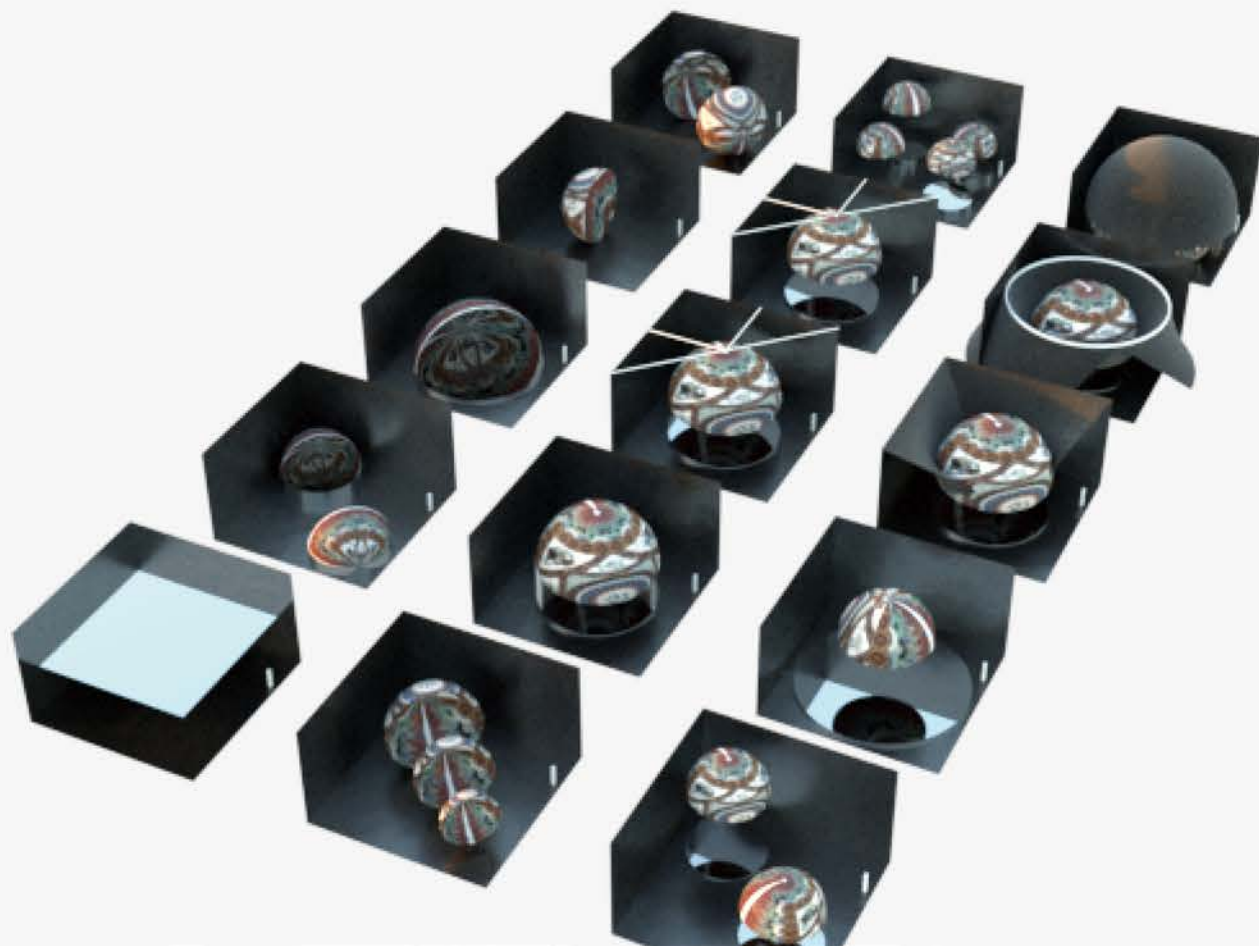
Harvard CAMLab

52

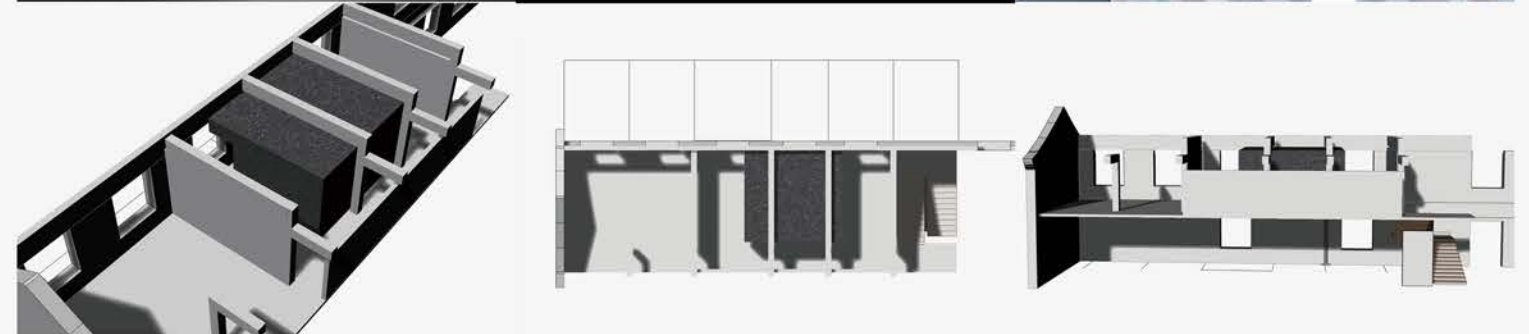
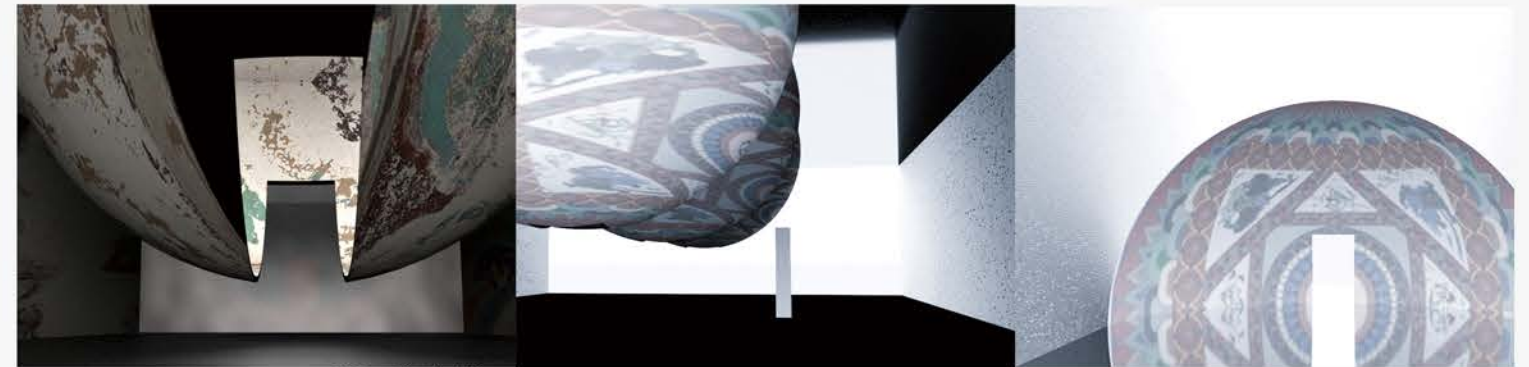
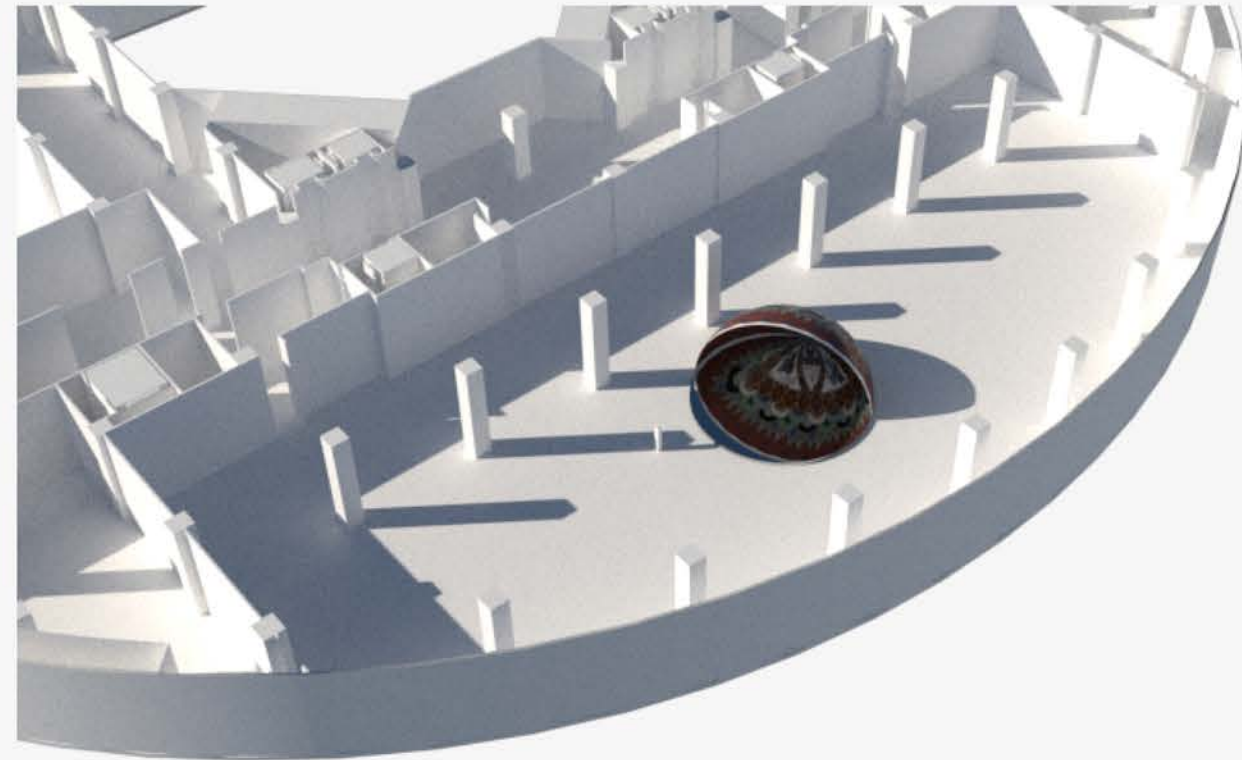
EXHIBITION DESIGN

Type: Exhibition
 Location: Boston
 Term: 2025
 Format: Internship
 Collaboration: Group project with Harvard CAMLab

During my internship at Harvard CAMLab, I worked on the design and visualization of XR cultural exhibitions. My responsibilities included exhibition design, exhibition modeling, architectural visualization, and detailed digital modeling of historic Chinese timber bracket systems (dougong). By translating architectural research into physical and digital representations, the project explored new ways of presenting architectural heritage within contemporary exhibition environments.



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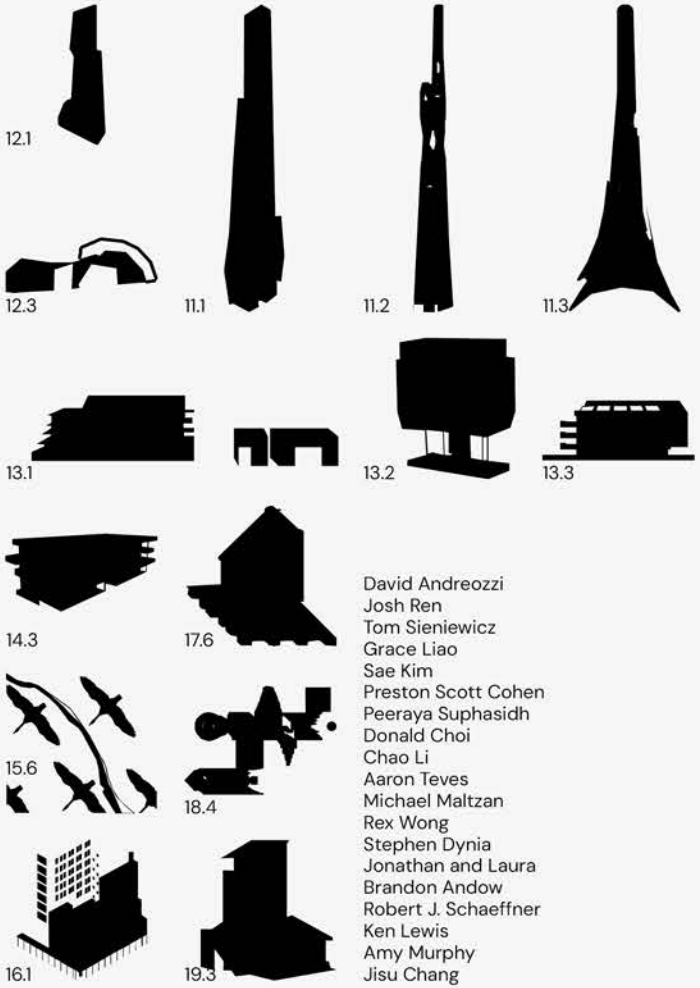
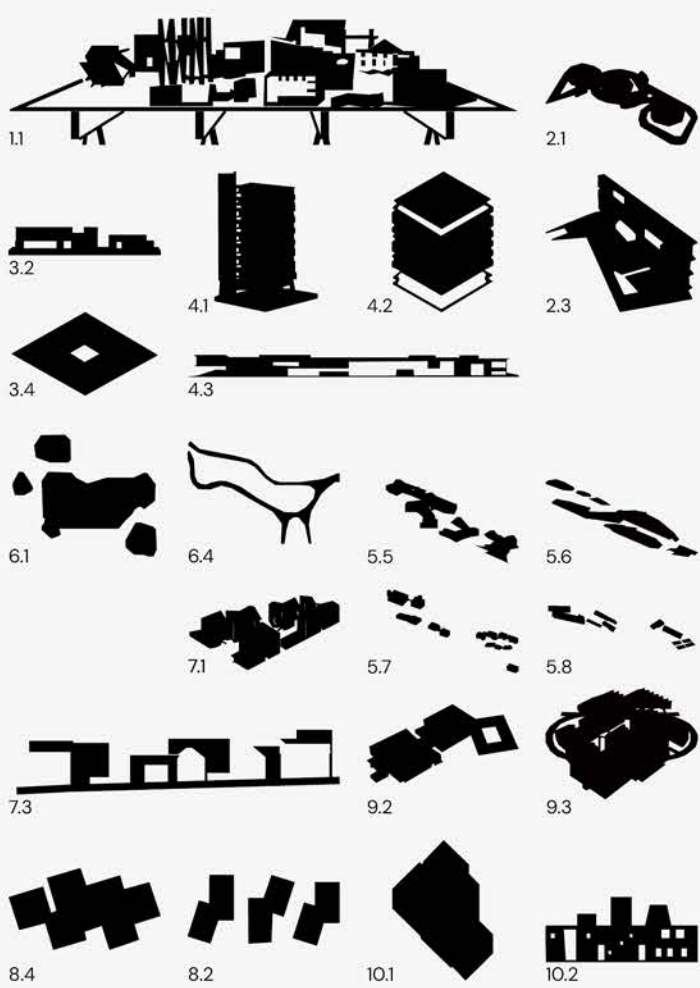
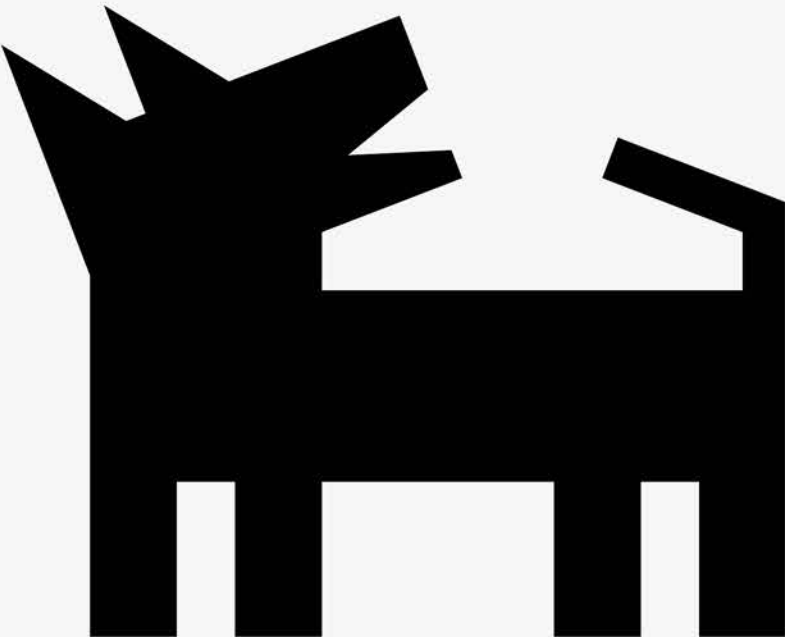
BEB Archive

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EDITORIAL & VISUAL IDENTITY

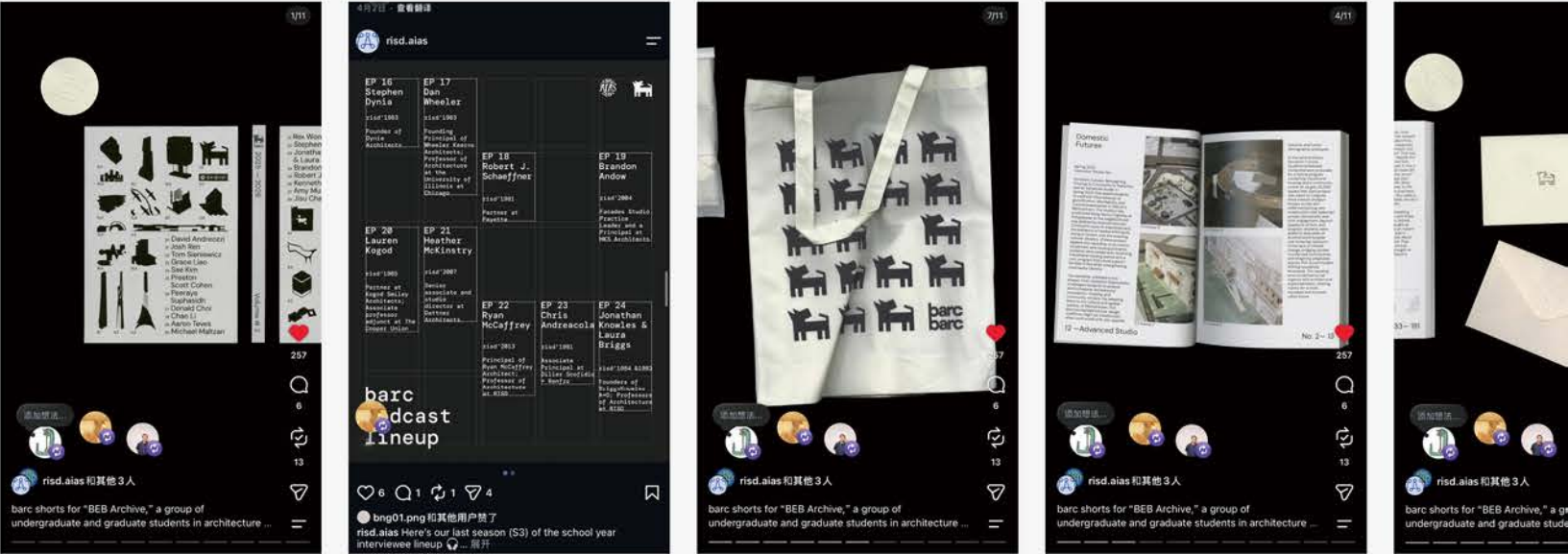
Type: Graphic/ Branding
Location: Providence
Term: 2025-2026
Format: AIAS BEB Archive Graphic Team
Collaboration: Group project with AIAS BEB Archive

As a core graphic designer for RISD AIAS BEB Archive, I contributed to the visual identity and editorial design of a student-led platform documenting the work and voices of RISD Architecture alumni and students through publications and podcasts. My work included logo development, publication design, editorial layouts, exhibition and promotional graphics, merchandise, and social media campaigns, collaborating closely with interviewees, contributors, and the editorial team to translate architectural content into a cohesive visual identity.



David Andreozzi
Josh Ren
Tom Sieniewicz
Grace Liao
Sae Kim
Preston Scott Cohen
Peeraya Suphasidh
Donald Choi
Chao Li
Aaron Teves
Michael Maltzan
Rex Wong
Stephen Dynia
Jonathan and Laura
Brandon Andow
Robert J. Schaeffner
Ken Lewis
Amy Murphy
Jisu Chang

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2024-2026 Kaimei Zhu

