

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

THESIS, DISSERTATION, PROJECT RELEASE FORM

Student Name: Daher Lara Kamel
Last First Middle

- Master's Thesis Master's Project Doctoral Dissertation
- Capstone Project

I authorize the American University of Beirut to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis, dissertation, or project; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes.

I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of it; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes after : **One ---- year from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.**
Two ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.
Three ---- years from the date of submission of my thesis, dissertation, or project.

Lara Daher

Signature

18/05/2017

Date

This form is signed when submitting the thesis, dissertation, or project to the University Libraries

Activating Der El Mokhales Hill

A New Vision Towards Monastic Landscapes

Lara Daher

18/05/2017



CONTENTS

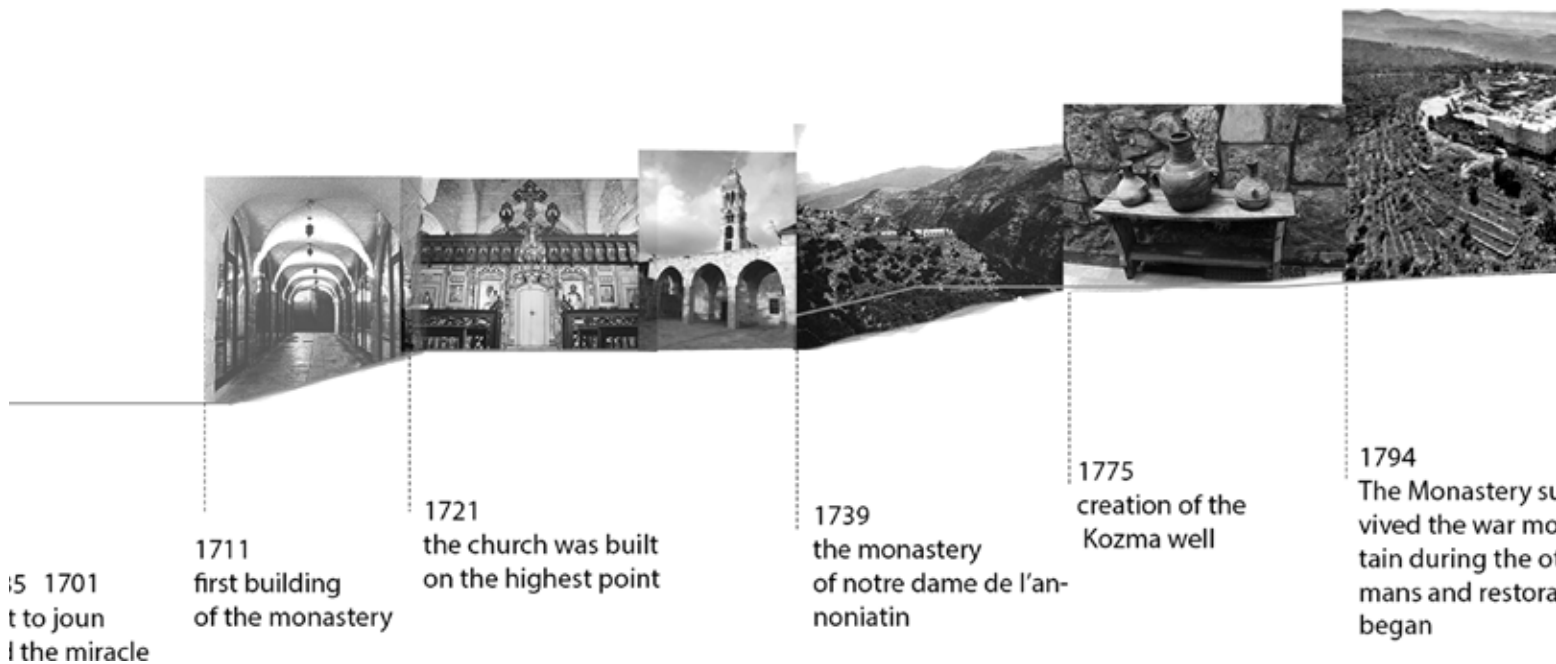
04	Introduction Background & Existing Problems Research & Design Questions
08	Methodology
12	Review Literature Case Studies
20	Context Site Selection/Background Site Inventory
30	Investigation Site Analysis (social, cultural, ecological, perceptual...)
32	Proposal Project Statement Process and Scenarios Program Final Design
50	Bibliography
52	Acknowledgement

History of the Monastery

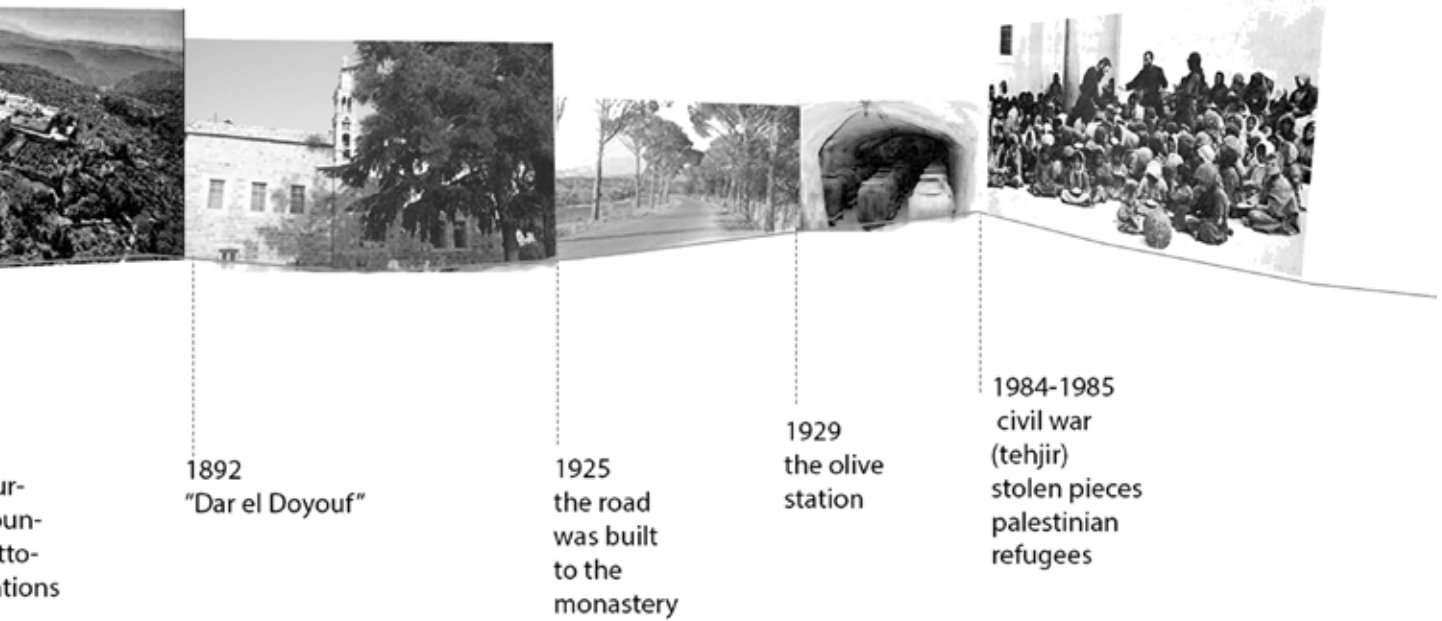
Miracle of the Saviour

The name of the founder was bishop Mokhail el Sayfi. In the spring of 1685, during a pastoral visit of his diocese of Sidon, Bishop Sayfi reached the village of Joun, where all the inhabitants of the surrounding districts came to greet him, carrying their guns on account of the many bandits plaguing the region at that time. One man had a gun of a new kind, having a steel firing hammer. A certain Deacon Athanasius Nasr accompanying the bishop took the weapon in his hands to examine it, but his finger slipped on the trigger, causing the gun to fire and the lead shot to lodge in the breast of the priest Father Ibrahim Toutou standing in front of him, who fell to the ground. As soon as the bishop heard the shot, he shouted the words: "O Saviour of the World" just as he was in the habit of doing and then rushed up with the others to see what had happened to the priest.

On reaching him, he heard the priest say, "Do not worry, Master!" On removing the priest's clothes, his companions found the lead shot sticking to his chest without having done any harm. His Lordship saw in this miracle a sign from Heaven that he should build the monastery nearby and name after the Saviour. He finally chose Mazra'at Mashmouchat el-Tahta on a hill east of Joun as the site of his religious foundation.



INTRODUCTION



The monastery was built on a hill in Joun, chouf upon the happening of a miracle during the visit of the monks that came from Sidon.

They wanted a place where they can settle and start expanding their religious message.

They built the monastery starting in 1711 followed by the church that was built on the higher point.

What makes the history of the monastery so important is the fact the it survived major events through time.

AN earthquake that happened in the 1950 and then the war of the mountains during the ottoman rule, the civil war in Lebanon and during all these events it was the shelter of those in needs, the refugees and the soldiers.

It is called "Al Der el Amer" for what it has offered and still offering to the people in need.



Religious Tourism



Educational Role



Agricultural landscape



Ecological Tourism



Store : Local market



The character of the monastery was fading however visitors and tourists still come there to enjoy the natural scenes, some of them even sleep in the hotel . The important questions ill be researching are How did the landscape shaped the monastery and the monastery shaped the landscape around it. what is still attracting the visitors to this place? is it the green space ? or the the factor of this sacred place that allows the person to contemplate and enjoy the scenery? What is threating the monastery and its history to be forgotten and how to bring back the relationship with the local communities.



METHODOLOGY



I am starting this project by looking at the history of the monastery and how it developed through the years.

Focusing on the fact that its a point of attraction and tourism tourism, the intervention will work to revive the traditons and cultural layers religion and cultural communal activities.

The process will focus on what distinguish this monastery and what constitutes its rich history.



REVIEW

Literature

In this part, I am discussing the articles and books that helped me with my project statement.

The reason I started looking for researches done on monasteries in the landscape is because I wanted to know the process followed in order to choose a location for the monastery, the way it developed and sustained itself through the years. But also to point out the issues with the monasteries and relate them to my site.

The first part will be dedicated to literature review (mainly books and PhD thesis papers).

The first book is by Mick Aston called "*Monasteries in the landscape*". Another PhD research paper by Eddie Procter "*The study of Monastic landscapes*"; "*A monastic landscape: The Cistercians in medieval Leinster*" a thesis for the degree of PhD from the NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF IRELAND, MAYNOOTH by Bridget M. Lynch

The research is divided between studying the history behind the monasteries and their relationship to the landscape; the second part is finding how old monasteries can be revived and reused by the community.

The research done on the monasteries showed that often the contextual information collected are classified into the architectural, agricultural and economic activity of monastic operations

In terms of location the foundation of monastic houses is often in reclusive areas of wilderness, more particularly on a mountainous area or a hill.

This goes back to the notion of "The Sacred Hill" in the Christian religion that the monks desire a place that is relatively high to be close to God but also to be visible to all the people visiting the monastery. Wilderness is often referred to by monks as place of spirituality and contemplation and that's why most of the medieval monasteries are first built on a land where no one has ever been.

But once the settlement is made, the monastery has certain requirements so it can sustain itself and that's why there is always a symbiotic relationship between the work of the monastic population and the agricultural landscape around them.

'The capacity of some monasteries not simply to sit on the land surface but to mould and change the landscape is as significant for the changing visual environment as it is for economic growth' (Davies 2014, 143)

Furthermore, 'the monastic estates could not survive in isolation. They thrived on commercialism and

The historic landscape and related sources can potentially hold evidence of a wealth of topographical features associated with monastic operations, ranging from communications routes, mills and farm complexes to fishponds and processing infrastructure, mineral extraction and even many of the more ephemeral features essential to day to day monastic activity and economy (e.g. wayside crosses, kilns, ovens, bird or animal traps, archery butts, animal pounds, dovecots, sheep washes etc.) (Moorhouse 1989, 59-6)

The other part of my research is finding projects where old and forgotten landscapes are revitalized.

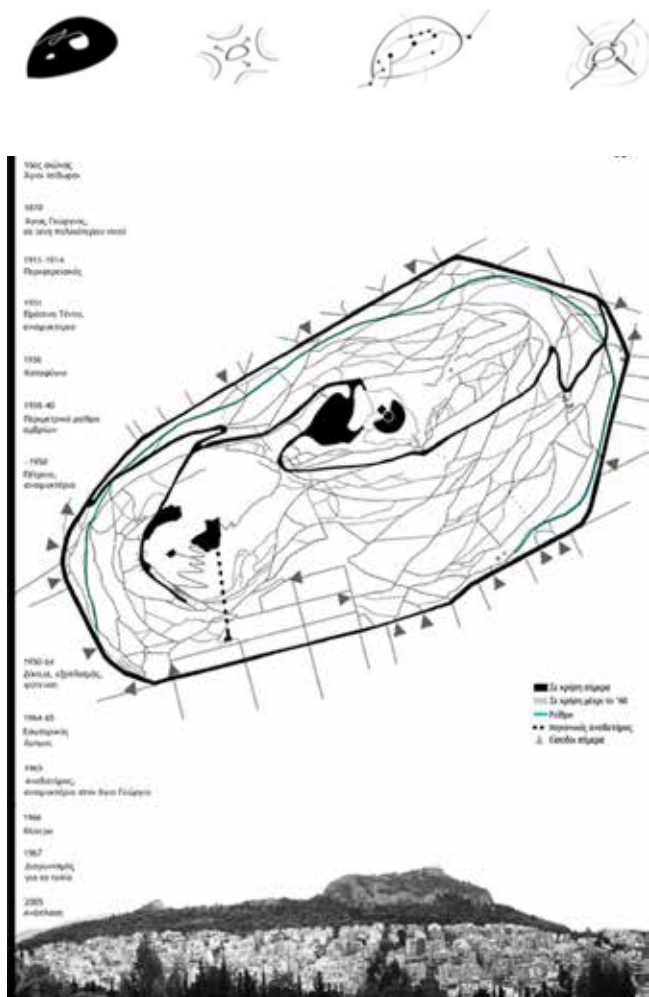
A paper by Stephen Lenz submitted for his master degree at University of Cincinnati entitled: "*Coverting sacred buildings*" *Revitalizing a way of life through building restoration*"

Another interesting paper is "*Abandoned monasteries: Problem and Opportunity for Chiang Mai ancient city*" where the author discussed the notion of Sacred Places as a living Heritage, and discusses the issues with management in case of the intangible heritage.

The final paper I am going to include in my review is entitled *New uses for old churches: An examination of Planning Regulation on the Adaptive Reuse of Churches buildings*.

What's important in this paper is the notion of the Adaptive Reuse which refers to the process of reusing an old site or building for a purpose other than which it was built or designed for.

It also opened for me a lot of doors to multiple case studies and projects done in this perspective.



Case Studies

The activation of Lycabettus hill

School of Architectural Engineering of the National Technical University of Athens

Consultants: Manios Manolis, Tripidakis Ioannis

The water, the view, the forest, the light and the process of ascent are the hill's elements that stay inactivated. The aim of the proposal is to highlight these elements in particular points of the hill. The identity is now visible, its significance is perceived and, in this way, the hill is activated as a center in the city of Athens

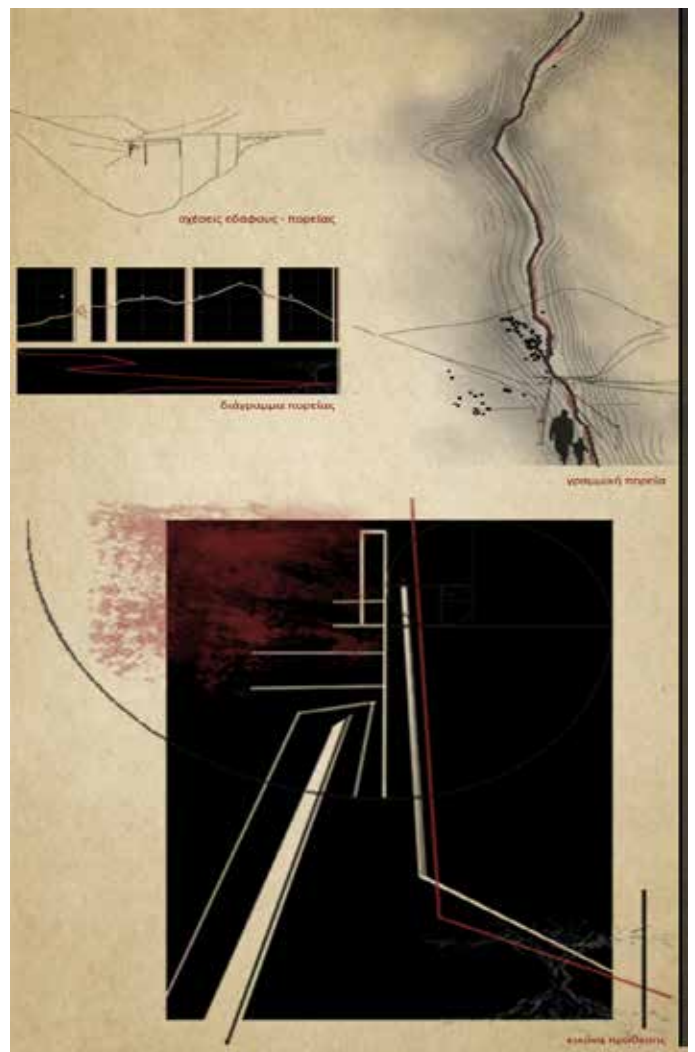
The subject of this thesis project is Lycabettus hill. The hill is located at the center of Athens. The visits there were almost exclusively restricted at two regions. People either visited the top, around the church of Saint George or the area near Zenetos theatre, used for parking or observing the city view. The rest of the hill remained unfamiliar. Like my site, people were walking towards the top, ignoring what existed at the space between. This was the initial trigger of my project.

The hill similar to my case is abandoned but, still has some elements that can give prominence to it. Given that they are not organized or designed, these elements just stay there inactivated. The proposal here locates key points of the existing network of pathways of Lycabettus that have or can receive elements of the identity of the hill.

The aim is that the points will constitute activation points of the hill and enhance its presence .

The elements that are considered to define hill's identity are:

the Water, the View, the Forest, the Light and **the process of Ascent**



Gorge_ous Trails

Department of Architecture, University of Patras

The human, the memory, the myth and the landscape in their synergy constitute the main theme of our project, which is manifested to the visitor along his movement on the site. The Aroania Mountains and their dramatic presence constitute the proper background for this experience. The proposed linear path brings together the topography and the legend, like the odontotos rack railway, revealing hidden aspects of the landscape, which are highlighted through a series of interventions

It has also been described as the most spectacular railway line of the Balkans, due to its characteristic relationship with the topography.



Curating the Common

Lviv Ukraine | ATLAS lab

The redevelopment of the Bernardine Monastery Complex is based on the need to cultivate the district's contemporary identity and needs while engaging with the site's unique heritage. The system of open spaces and streets that encompass the complex need to reveal the multiple layers of both historic and contemporary events while editing the numerous urban configurations that obstruct the flow/flux of urban life.

The complex is rich with history yet is slow to promote the continuum of urban life through art and civic events. The historic building fabric is both an asset and a crutch – the dispersed rigidity of existing buildings, infrastructure and artifacts constricting the continuum of the city of Lviv to curate its community.



Towards to monastery of Raidiotissa

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki _ Faculty of Engineering _
School of Architecture

Man, the monument, the place and its spirit, as well as the scale of man, are the basic concepts of this proposal. The route to the Monastery of Raidiotissa with its dramatic landscape constitutes the background for the study of these concepts. The aim of this project is the creation of a narrative, in order to bridge the gap between the beginning and the end of this destination, the past and the present, the secular and the monastic life, through the manipulation of the scenery.

CONTEXT

Site Selection & Background

“A landscape of memory and myth”

My project investigate the topic of monasteries in the landscape in particular the case of Der el Mokhales.

The monastery is situated at the top of a hill in Joun, Chouf.

its a point of extreme historic, cultural and ecological importance. However these layers are almost forgotten by the locals .

The History behind the monastery and its chronological evolution in the landscape is still unknown to almost any visitor.

thats why i going to mention the history of the monastery. After the miracle happened, the monkas returned to the site(Joun, elchouf) and started looking for a good spot for their settlement and they had specific criteria for what they wanted.

In the Christain religion, the sacred hill is an important concept it implies with it the seclusion and a landscape of spiritiatly and contemplation, but also the view wihich was crucial at that time so that the monastery can be visible from the villages surrounding the hill.

However, they also looked for water and a fertile land so that they can ensure their basic needs of life.

thats why they bought this land which was previously a farm and it was just on top of the bisri river.

The monks then came and settled down, they buit the church and then the monastery of Notre dame de l'annunciation followed.

The monastery survived a lot of disasters and restorations were made each time, especially after the war of mountains during the ottoman rule.

However in 1892, the monastery expanded and dar el doyouf was built to host as many refugees ,homless and lebanese soldiers in times of needs. Thats why the monastery was called “Der El Mokhalles el Amer” in honor of its generosity and hospitality.

after that, the monastery thrived offer more knowledge about the religion and made use of the olive trees that were htere.

a library was built where important manuscripts are still stored, a musical room and olive oil station and storage room.

Although the architectural history is there, the spatial connection to the surrounding is always undermined.

From the old times till now , the area is being described as a place of great natural beauty,

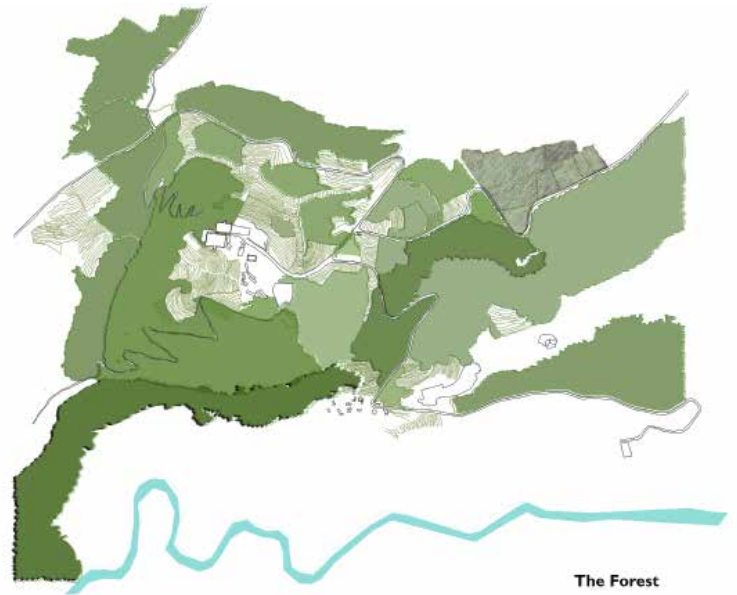
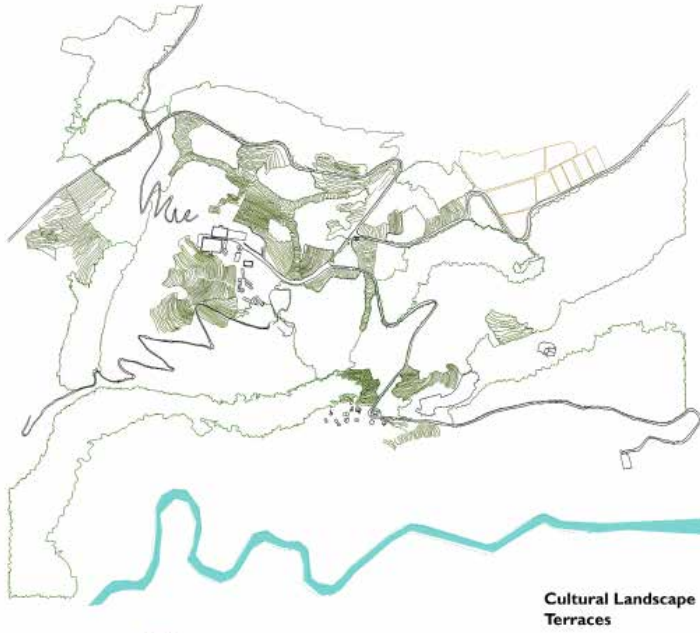
The project aims at reviving the historic significance of the monastery and its connection to the nature by connecting the user and engaging all his senses through his journey in the hill.

In this way, the user will be able to experience all the notions mentioned earlier through the process of ascent, he will be not be in contact with the just the outer layer which is the beauty of the nature but also the historical ,cultural and ecological layers.s

The important aspects to highlight in this process:

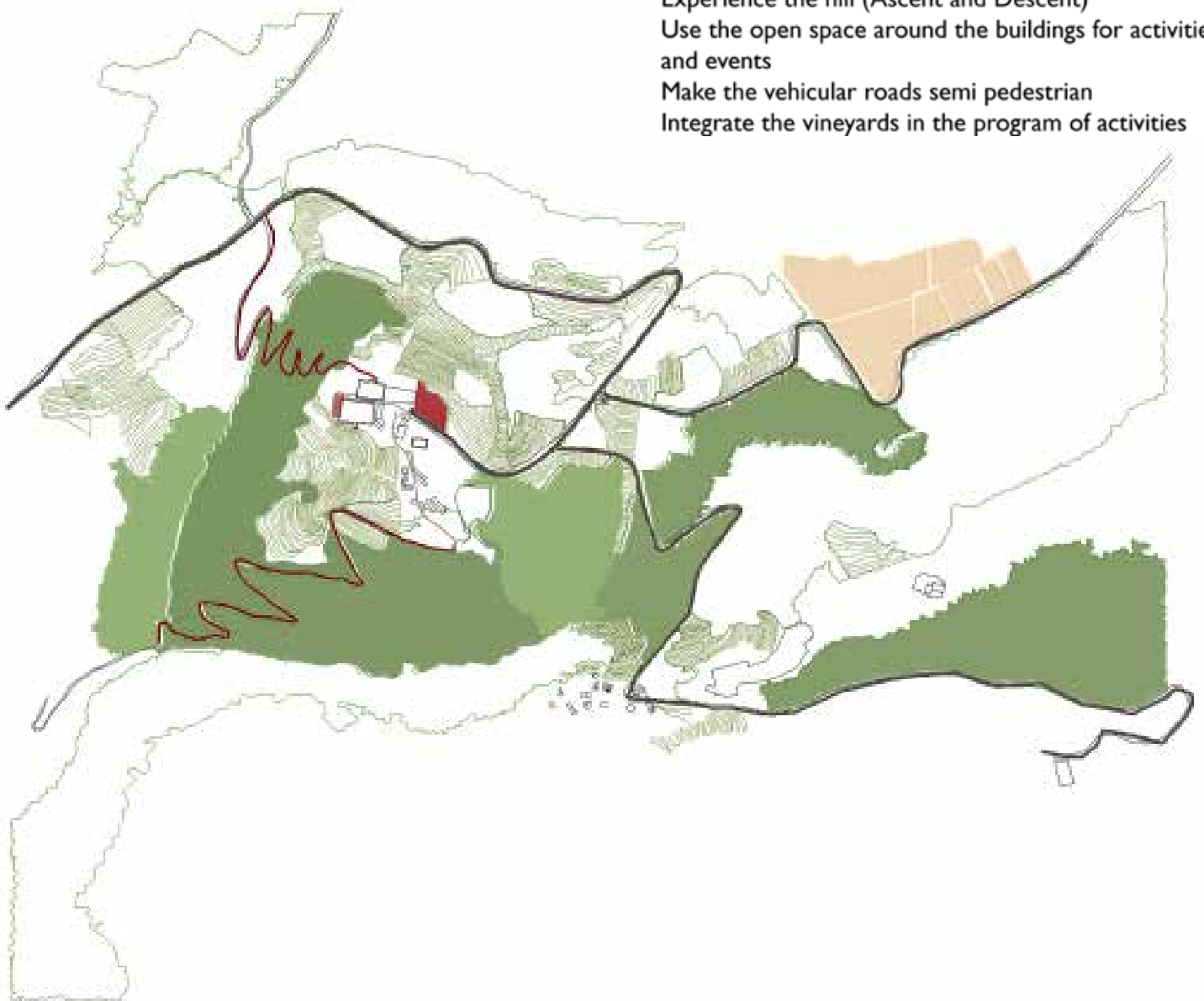
- The concept of the Sacred Hill
- Landscape of Seclusion and Spirituality
- The change towards an economical interest through agriculture.

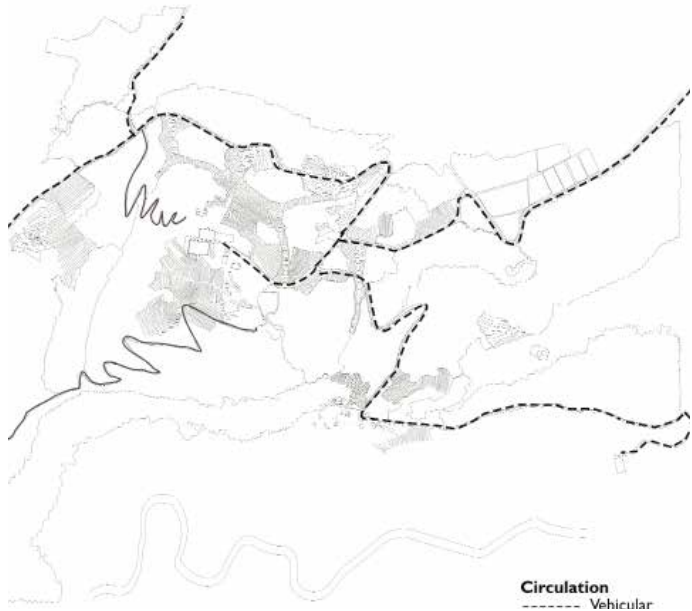
Site Analysis



Swot Analysis Opportunities

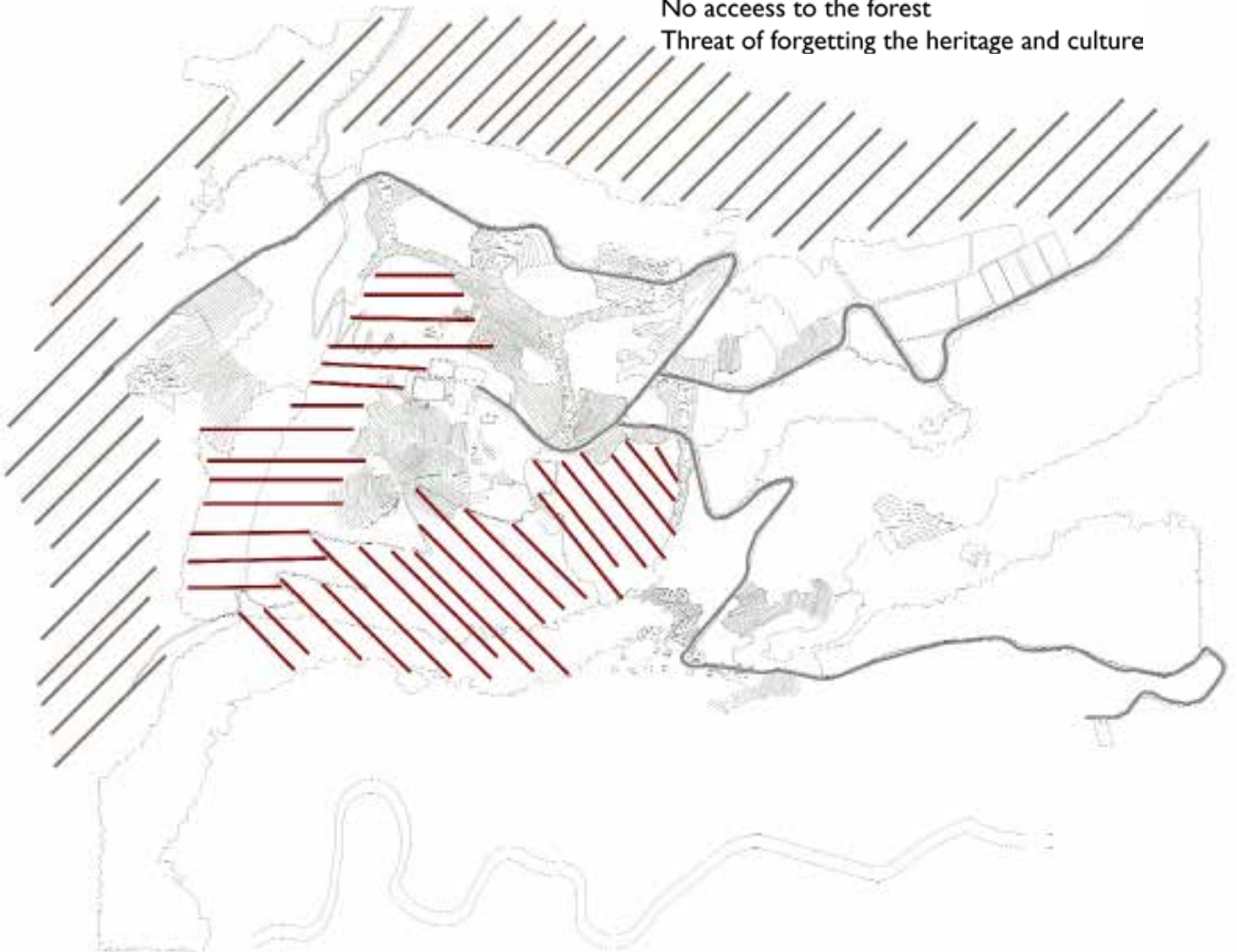
- Activation of old roads
- Experience the hill (Ascent and Descent)
- Use the open space around the buildings for activities and events
- Make the vehicular roads semi pedestrian
- Integrate the vineyards in the program of activities





Opportunities

- Disconnection with the outside
- Vehicular roads
- No access to the forest
- Threat of forgetting the heritage and culture

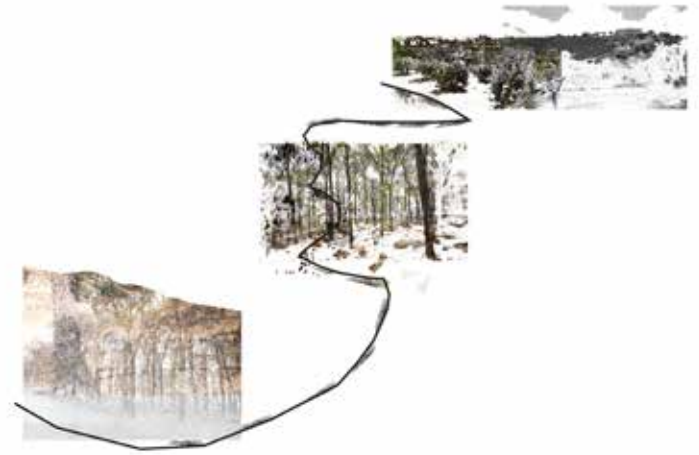


Site Inventory

The Sacred Hill



The Process of Ascent



The site's important features:

- The Sacred hill
- The fertile land
- The forest



Commercialism



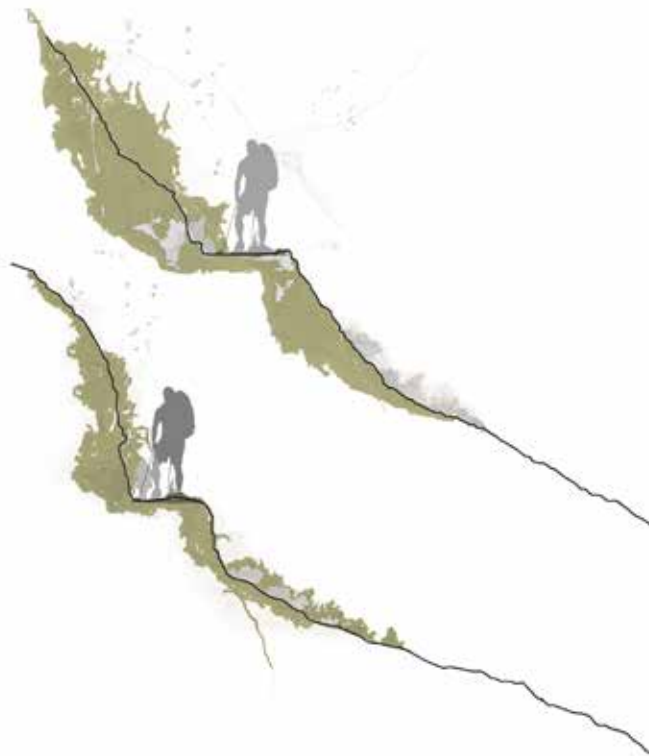
Landscape of seclusion and contemplation



Landscape of economy and production



Section 1/500
through the forest



Vegetation COver





PROPOSAL

Project Statement

My Project investigate the topic of monasteries in the landscape in particular the case of Der el Mokhalles. The monastery is situated at the top of a hill in Joun-El CHouf.

Its a point of extreme historic,cultural and ecological importance.

However, these layers are almost forgotten by the locals and tare threatened to disappear.

The history behind the monastery and its chronological evolution in the landscape is still unknown to almost any visitor.

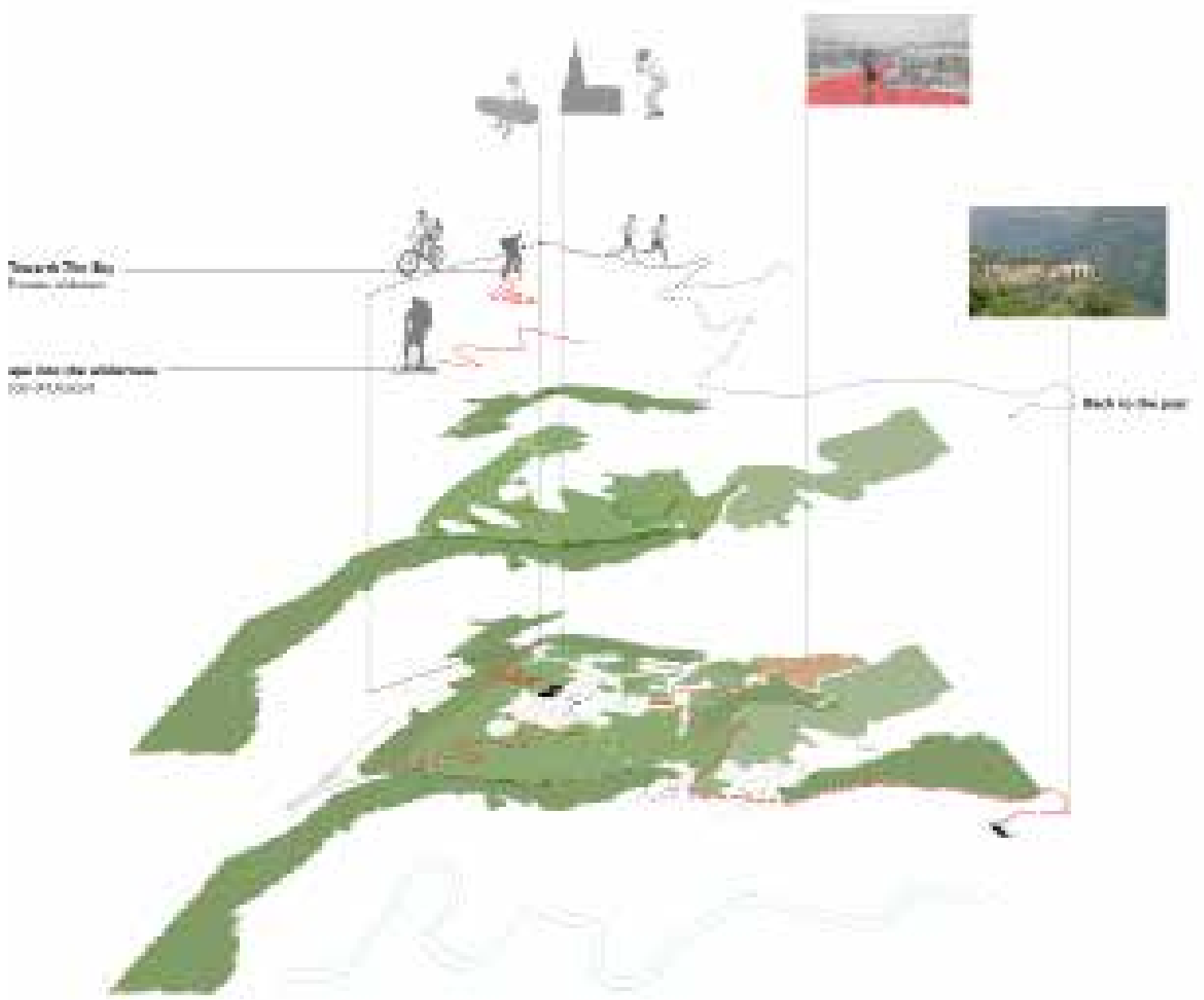
Although the architectural history is there, the spatial conenction to the surrounding is always undermined.

From the old times till now, the area is only being described as a place of great natural beauty.

My project aims at activating the hill and reviving the historic significance of the monastery and its connection to the nature by connecting the user and engaging his senses through his journey in the hill.

The important aspects to highlight in this process:

- The concept of the sacred hill
- Landscape of seclusion and spirituality
- The change towards commercialism
- The process of ascent and descent



Program

The program will consist of a series of trails

The first one will allow the user to experience the process of ascent and will be called “Towards the Sky”

The second trail is called “Into the Wilderness” where you’ll go through an experience of descent along the hill and have the opportunity to wilder into the forests and nature and reach the river of Bistri.

The third path “Back to the past” will take you all way to the other monastery where there is a lot of hstorical heritage and important religious ceremonies.



Escape Into the Wilderness










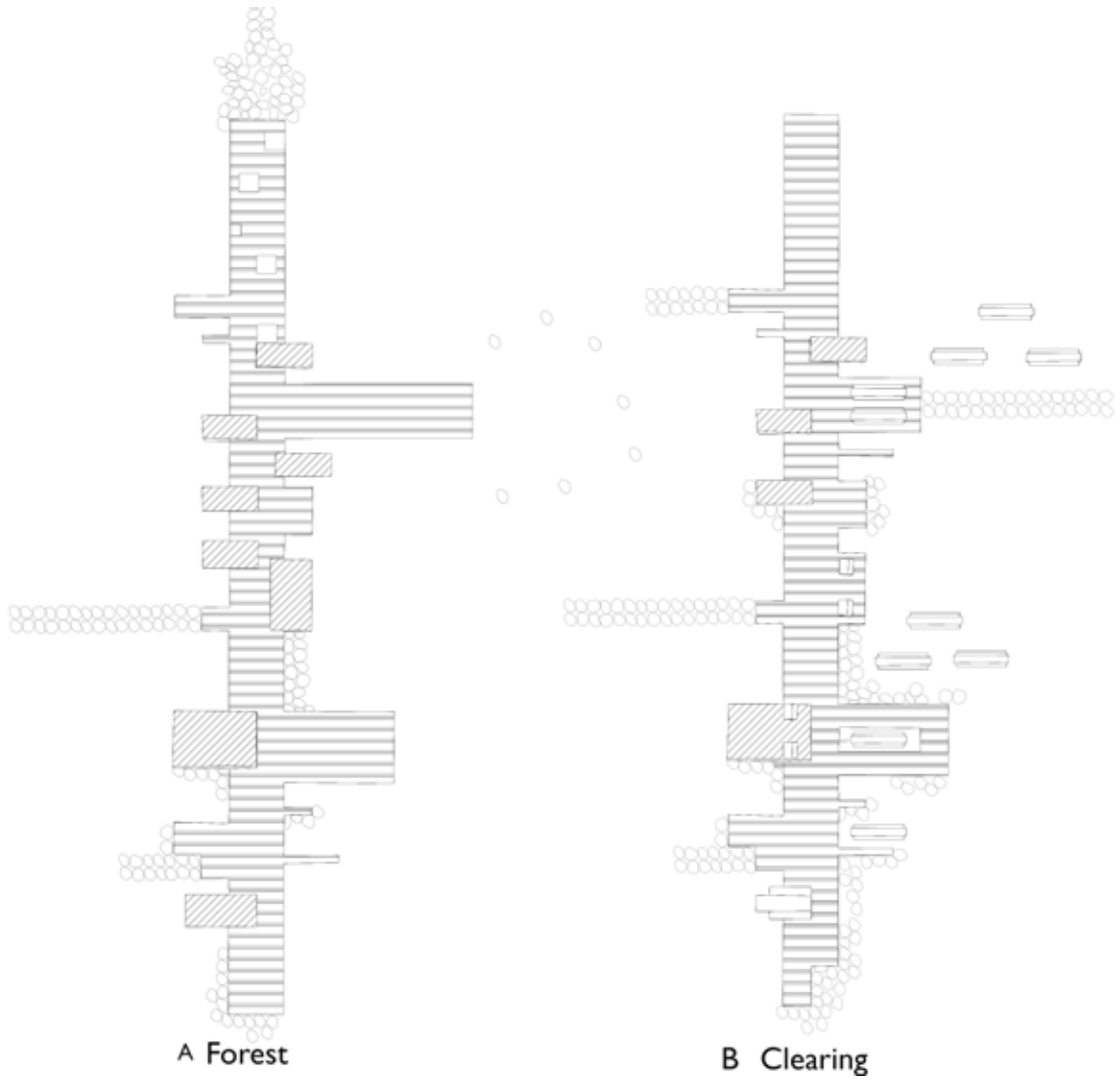
Master Plan

N
1/5000



-  Pilgrim Trail
-  Active Trail-Platforms Concept
-  Challenge Trail
-  Elevated Trail
-  Ecological Trail

Trails Typologies



Ora and Labora

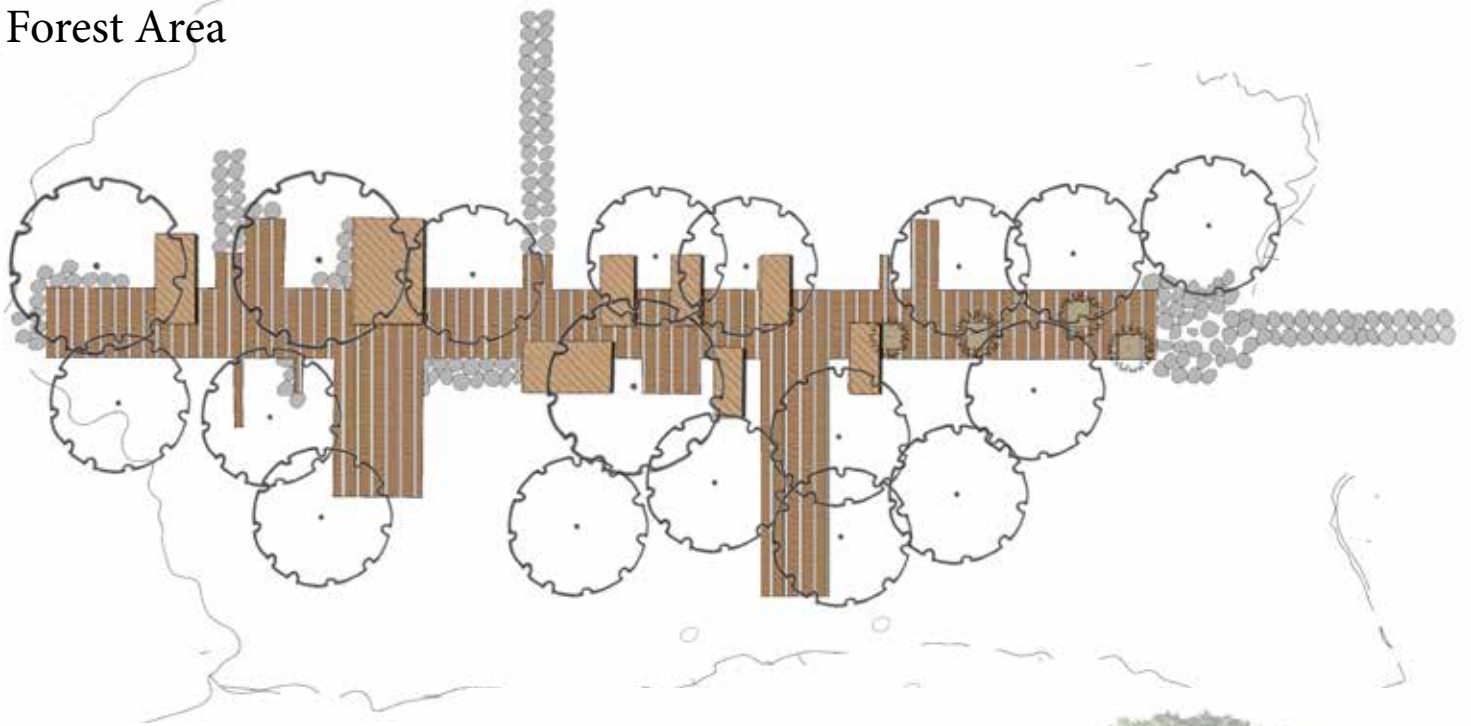
Reunite with God through the labor in the agricultural terraces

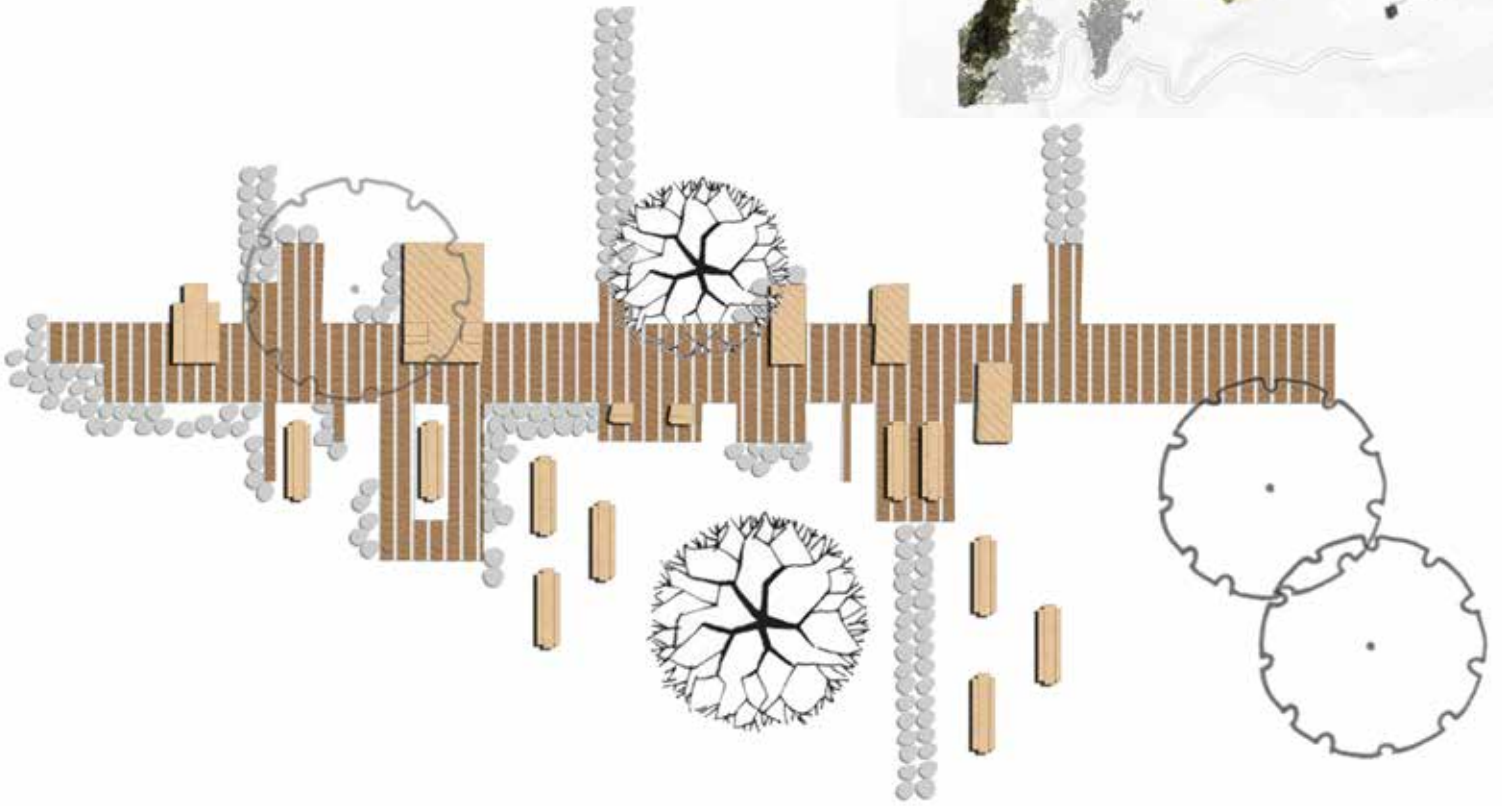




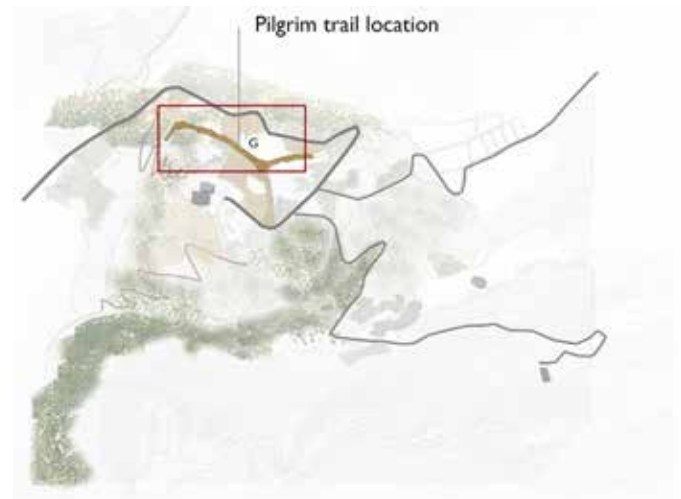
Engage the Visitors

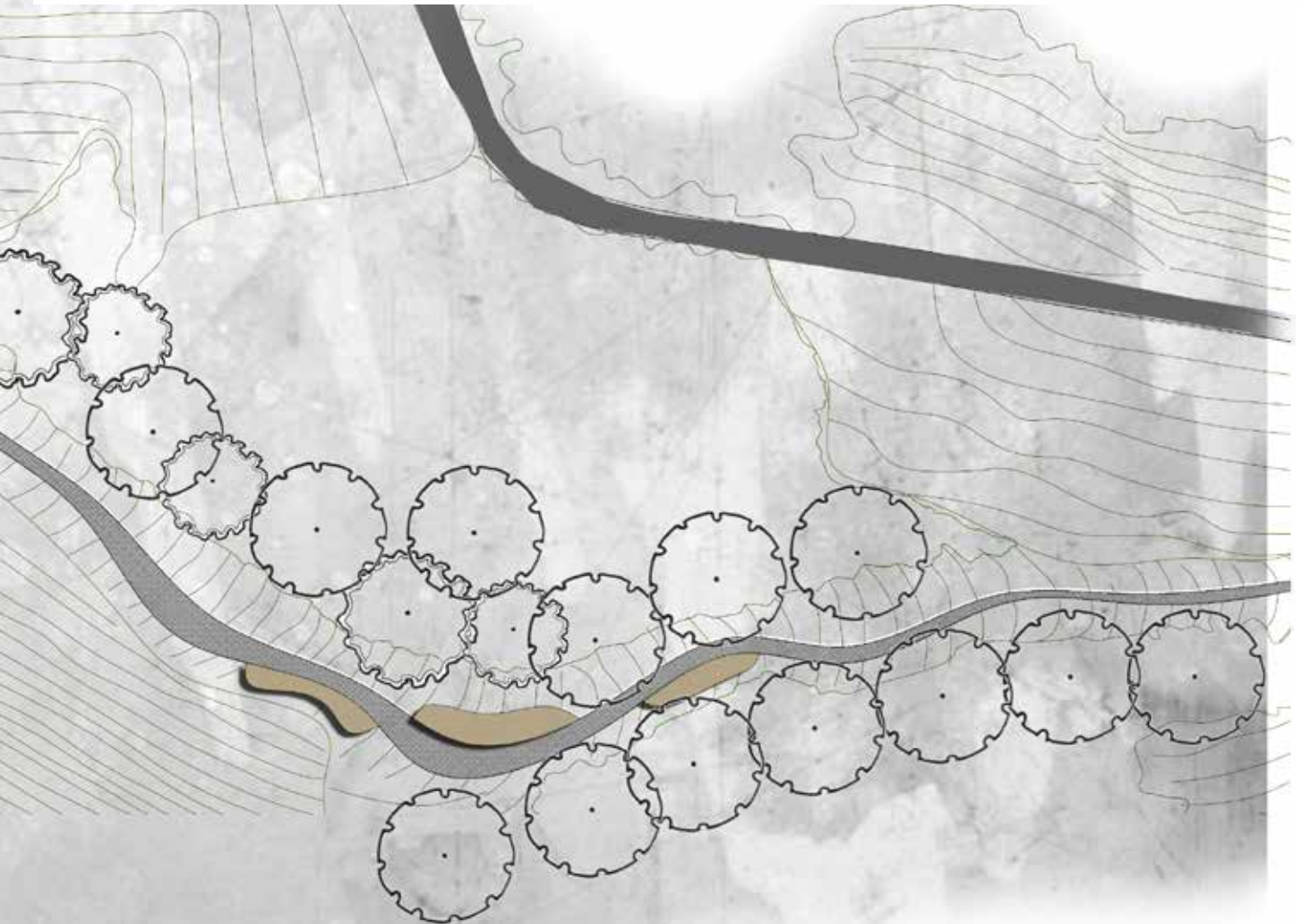
Forest Area



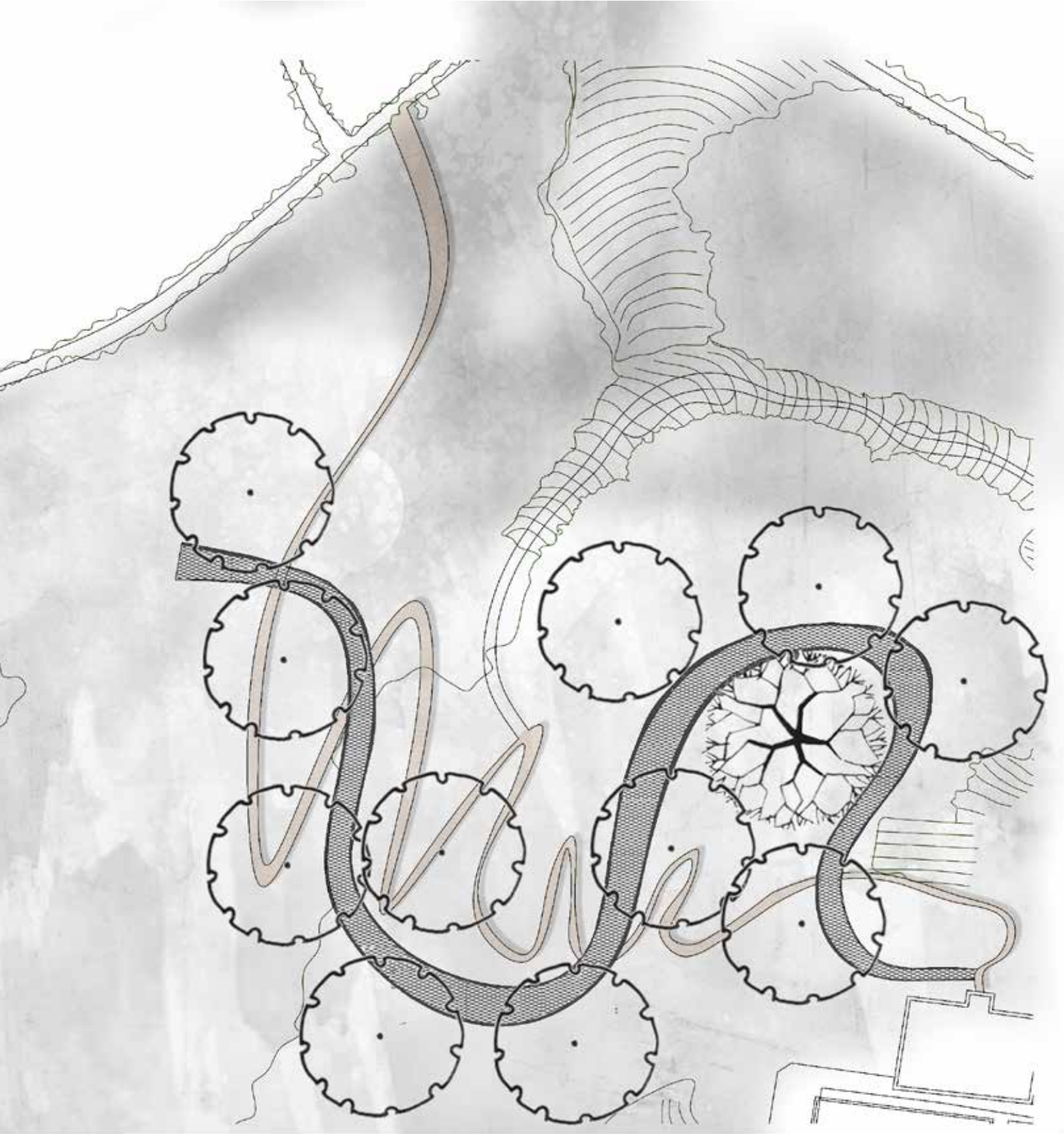


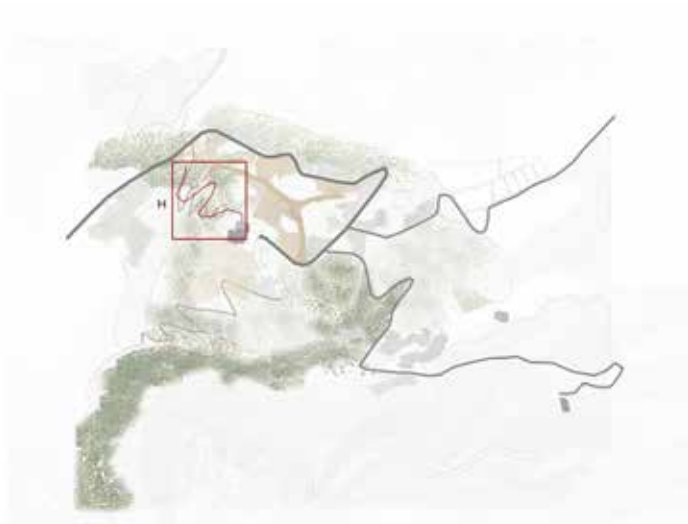
Pilgrims Trail



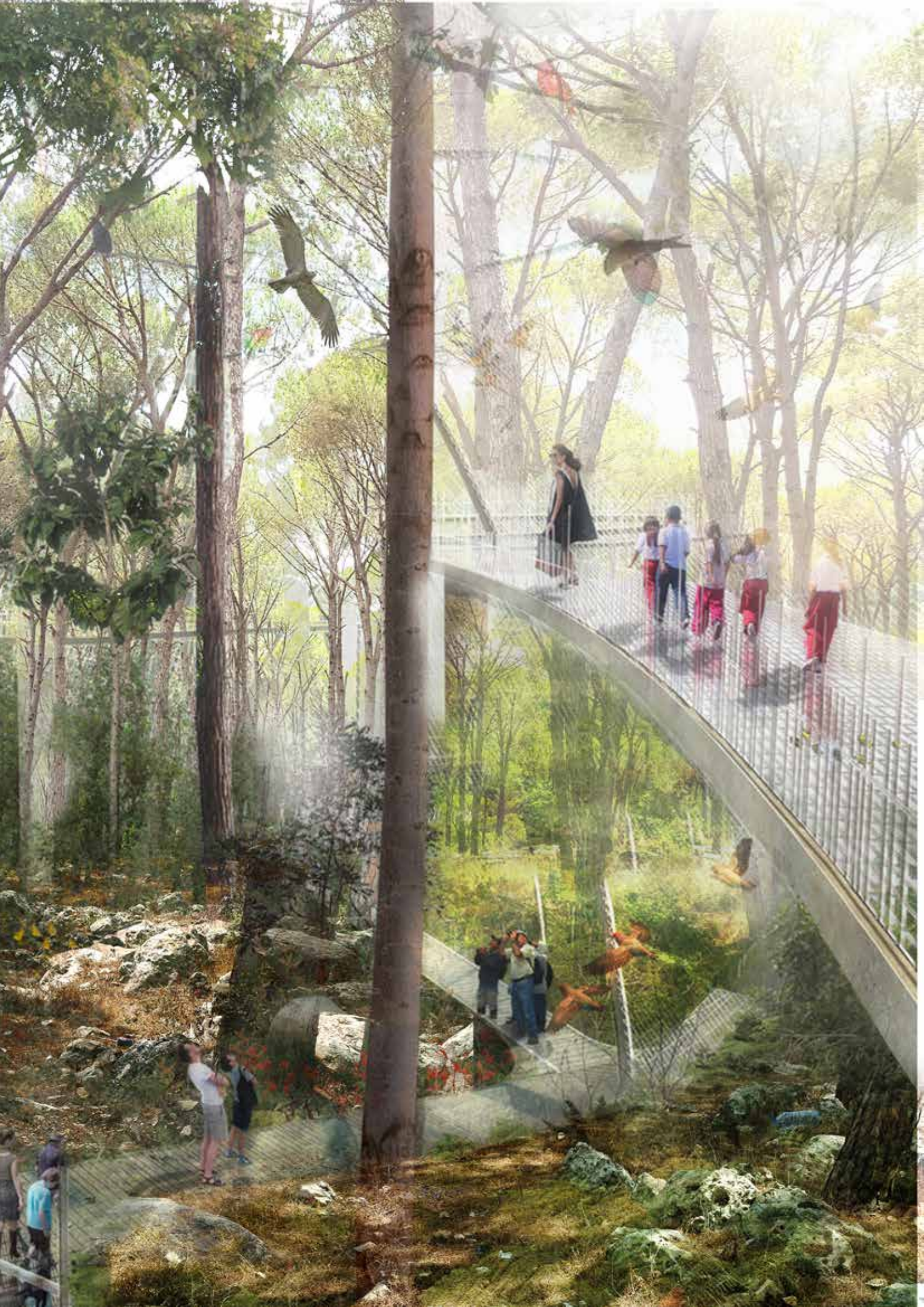


Elevated Trail for contemplation

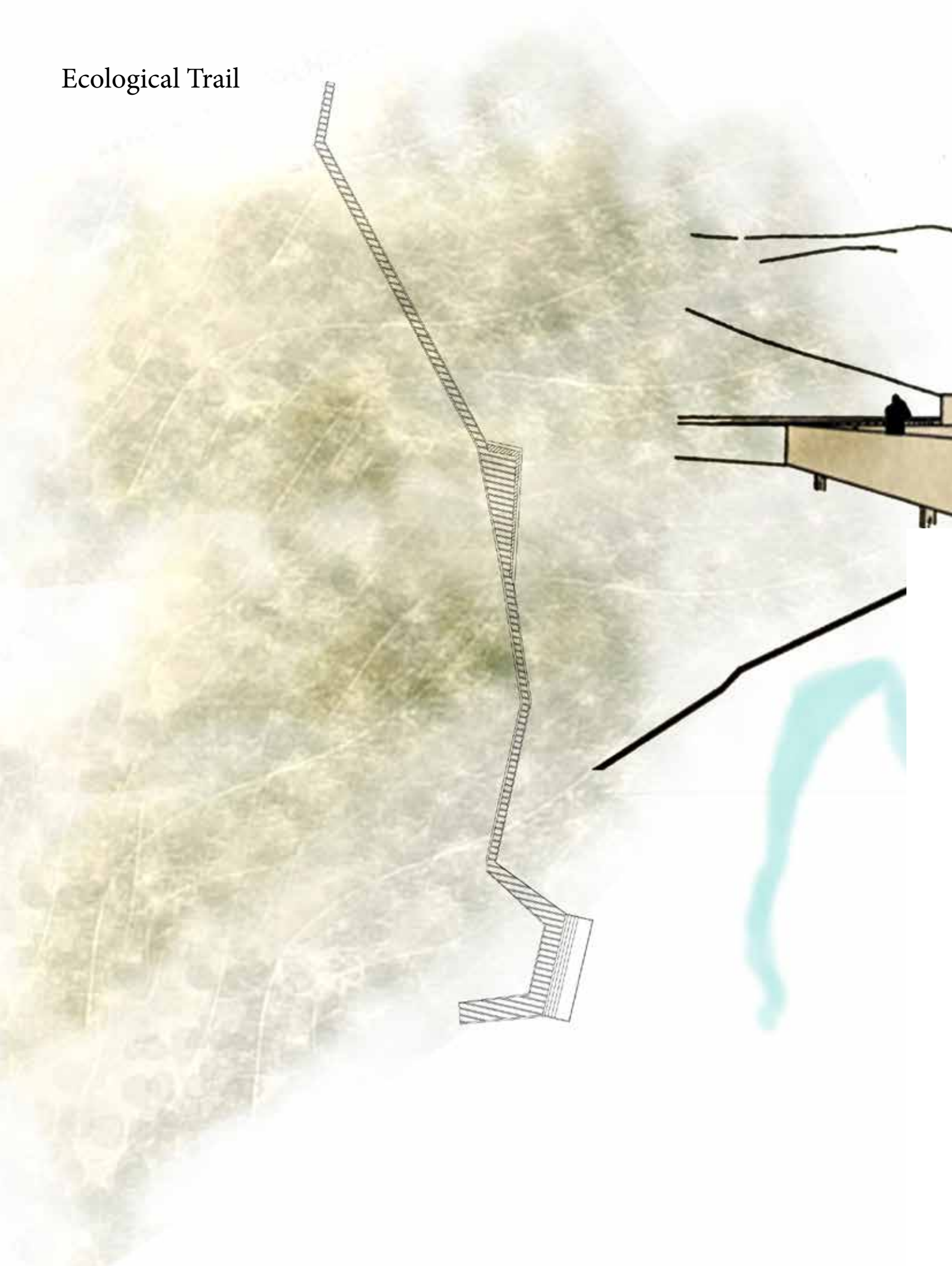


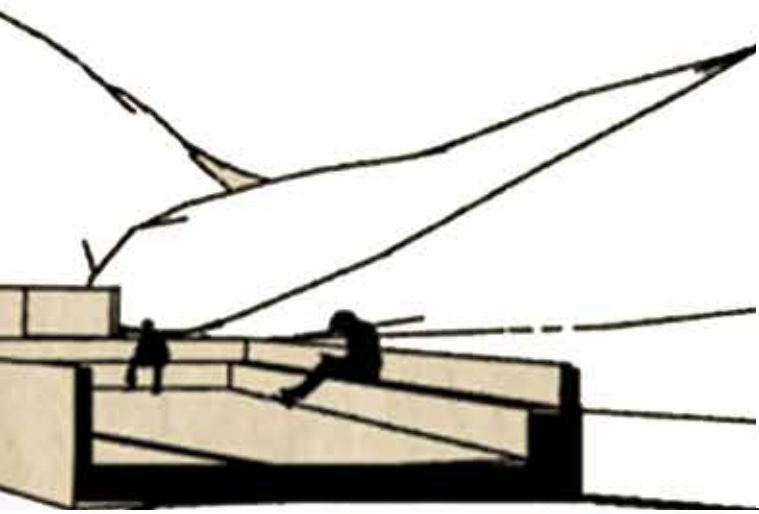


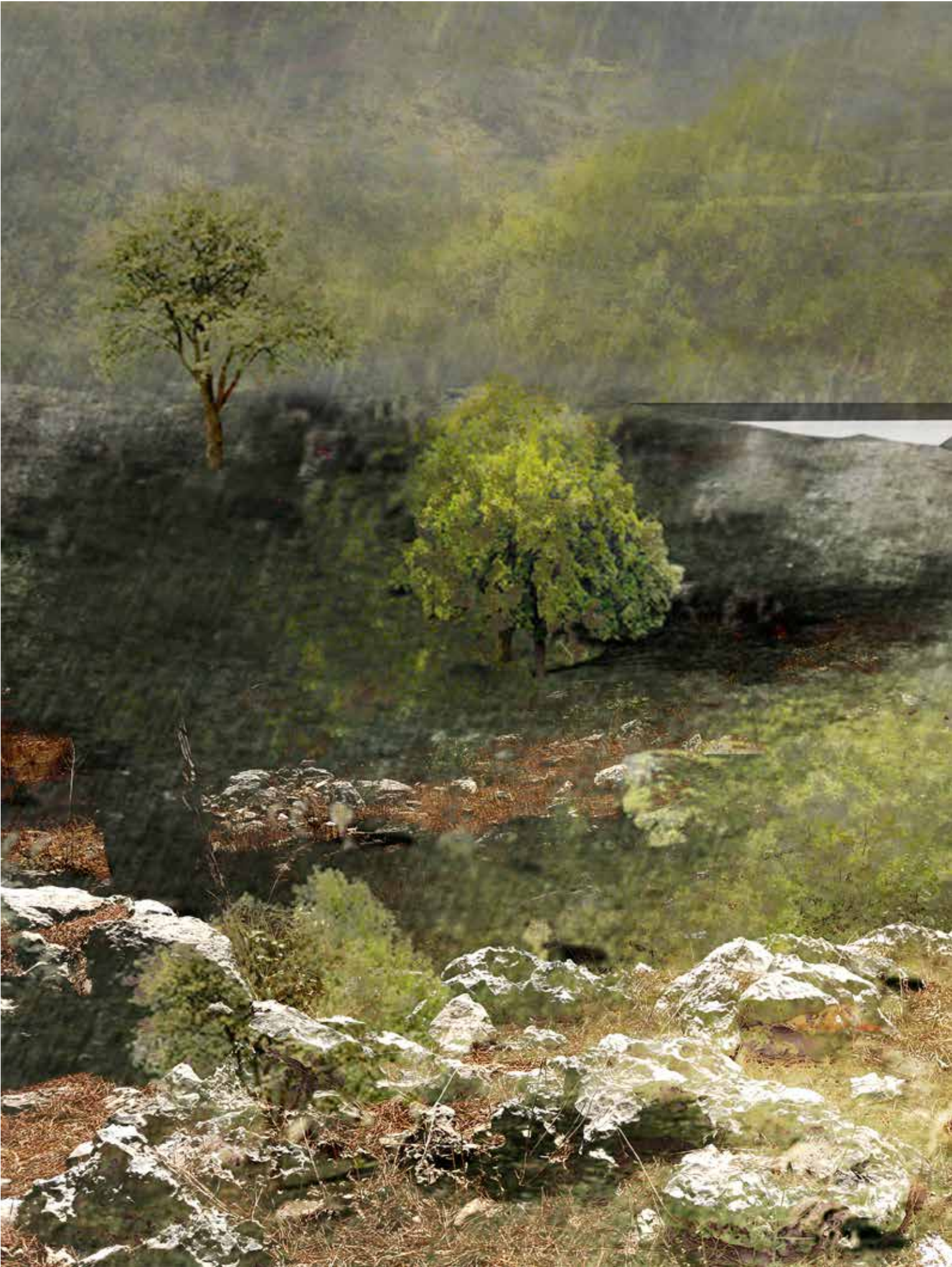


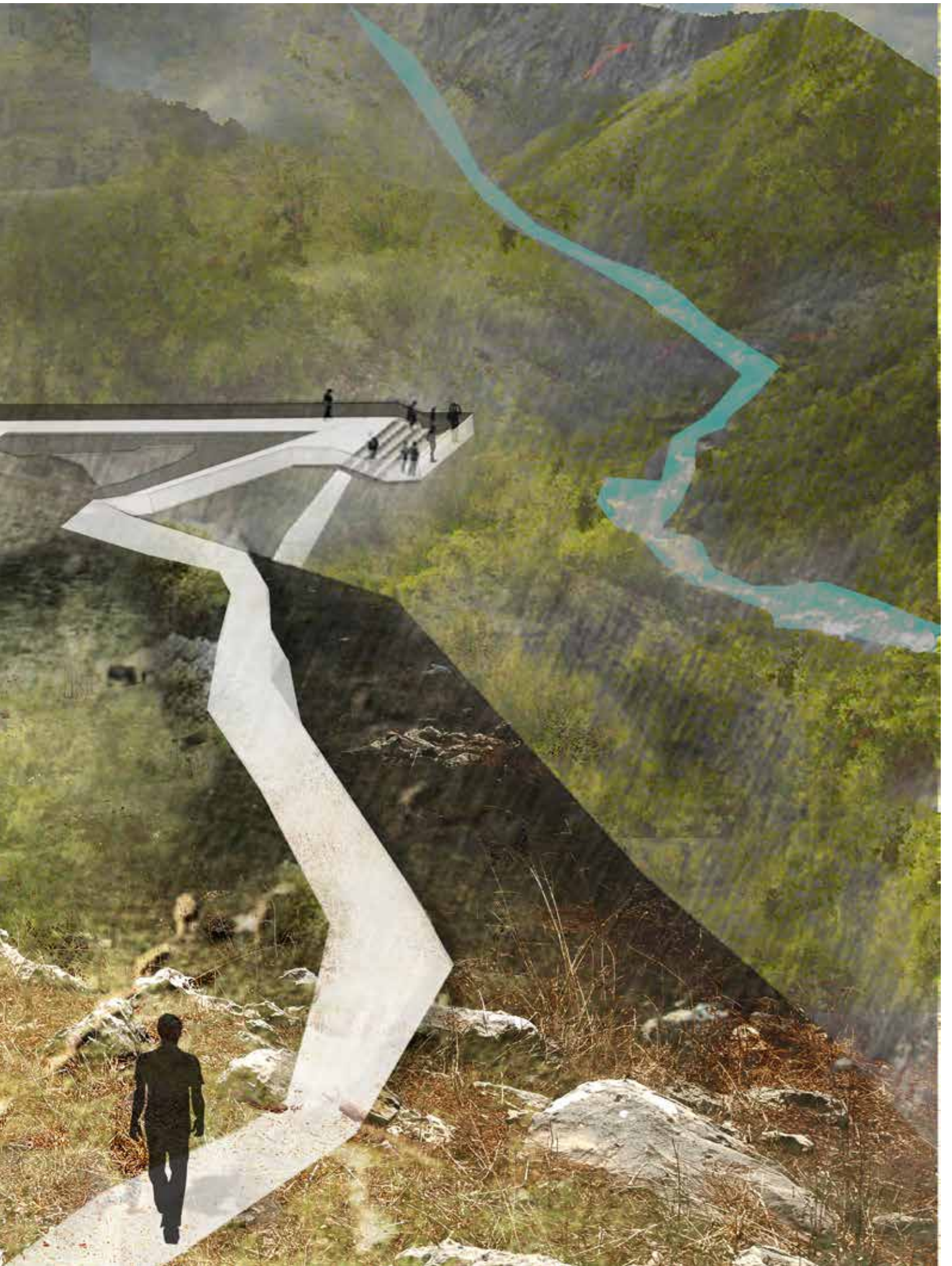


Ecological Trail











Trail Path



Stairs

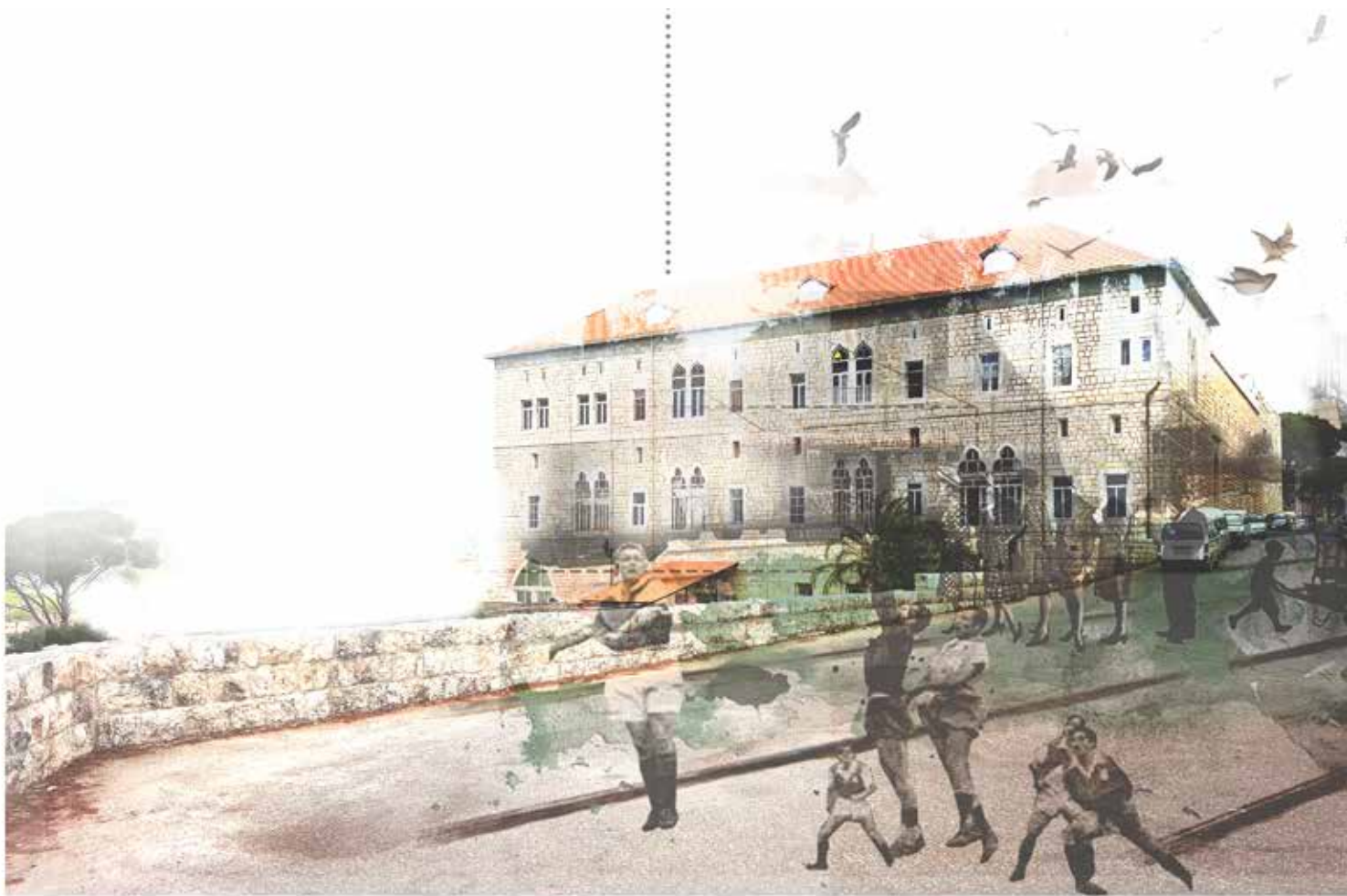


Stepping Platforms



Resting Platform

Redesigning the open space around the monastery : Adaptive Reuse





Amphitheatre





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this project could not have been possible without the participation and assistance of my advisor Dr. Nayla AL Akl, and the professors Sandra Frem And Beata Dreskler. Thank you for your support and understanding during these two semesters.

Your contributions are sincerely appreciated and gratefully acknowledged.

I would also like to express my deep appreciation and indebtedness to my family for their endless support morally and financially . I am forever grateful .