

**I STILL NEED A TITLE**  
**...UPDATE IN PROGRESS**

# **A Thesis by Dina Abou Saleh**

American University of Beirut Department of Architecture and Design

Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

Bachelor of Architecture BArch

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### **Special Thanks:**

I would like to thank my advisors Ghazal Abassy-Asbagh and Robert Saliba for guiding this research.

Thank you for believing in this project and for the continuous support, motivation and patience.

*Many thanks, A Cyborg*

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UNDERGRADUATE DESIGN THESIS  
IN  
ARCHITECTURE

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[I STILL NEED A TITLE...UPDATE IN PROGRESS]

by  
[DINA ABOU SALEH]

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ADVISOR: [Robert Saliba]

Approved by Thesis Advisor:



Robert Saliba, Professor

[Signature]

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Department of Architecture and Design

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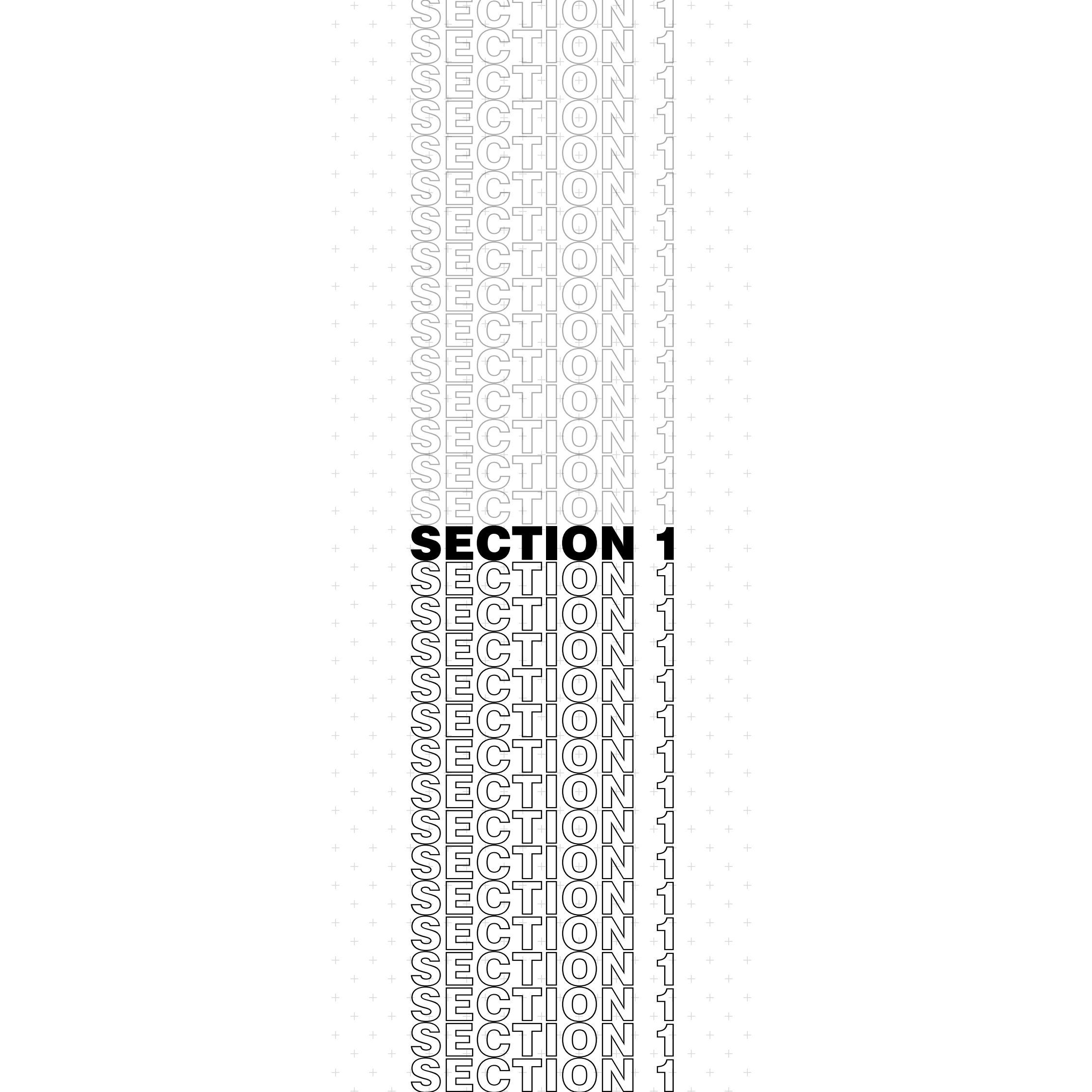
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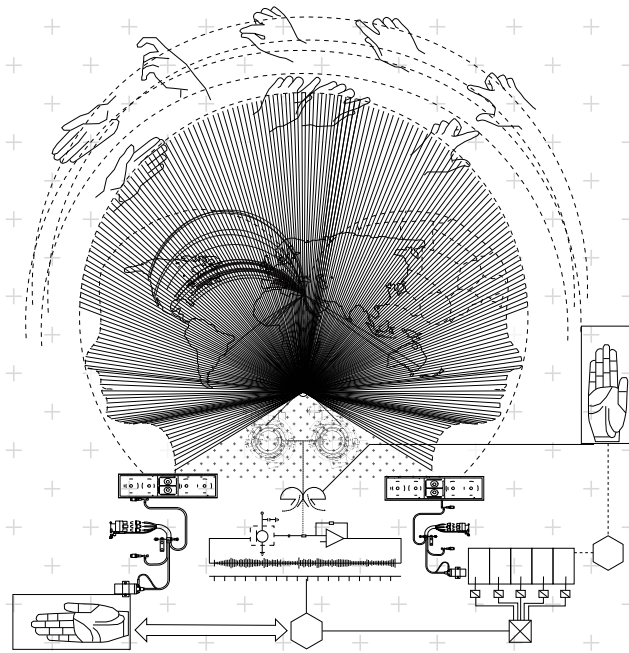
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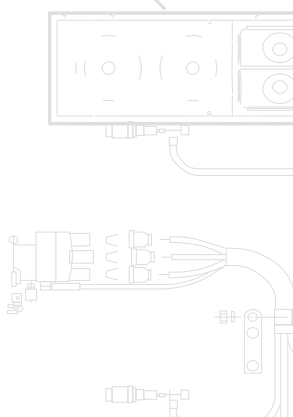
**S E C T I O N 1**

# I. Investigation



“ The cyborg is a condensed image of both imagination and material reality, the two joined centers structuring any possibility of historical transformation.”

– *Dona Harraway, A Cyborg Manifesto*





# The Cyborg

Social Media, Ads, Cookies, Geo-tags have defined a new domain of digital footprints that are characteristic of life in the contemporary city. Modern life is shaped by information and communication technologies. The thesis launches from an interest in investigating this new technology mediated society. It starts from an interest in opening up the conversation on the modern day issue of Data, the byproduct of this culture.

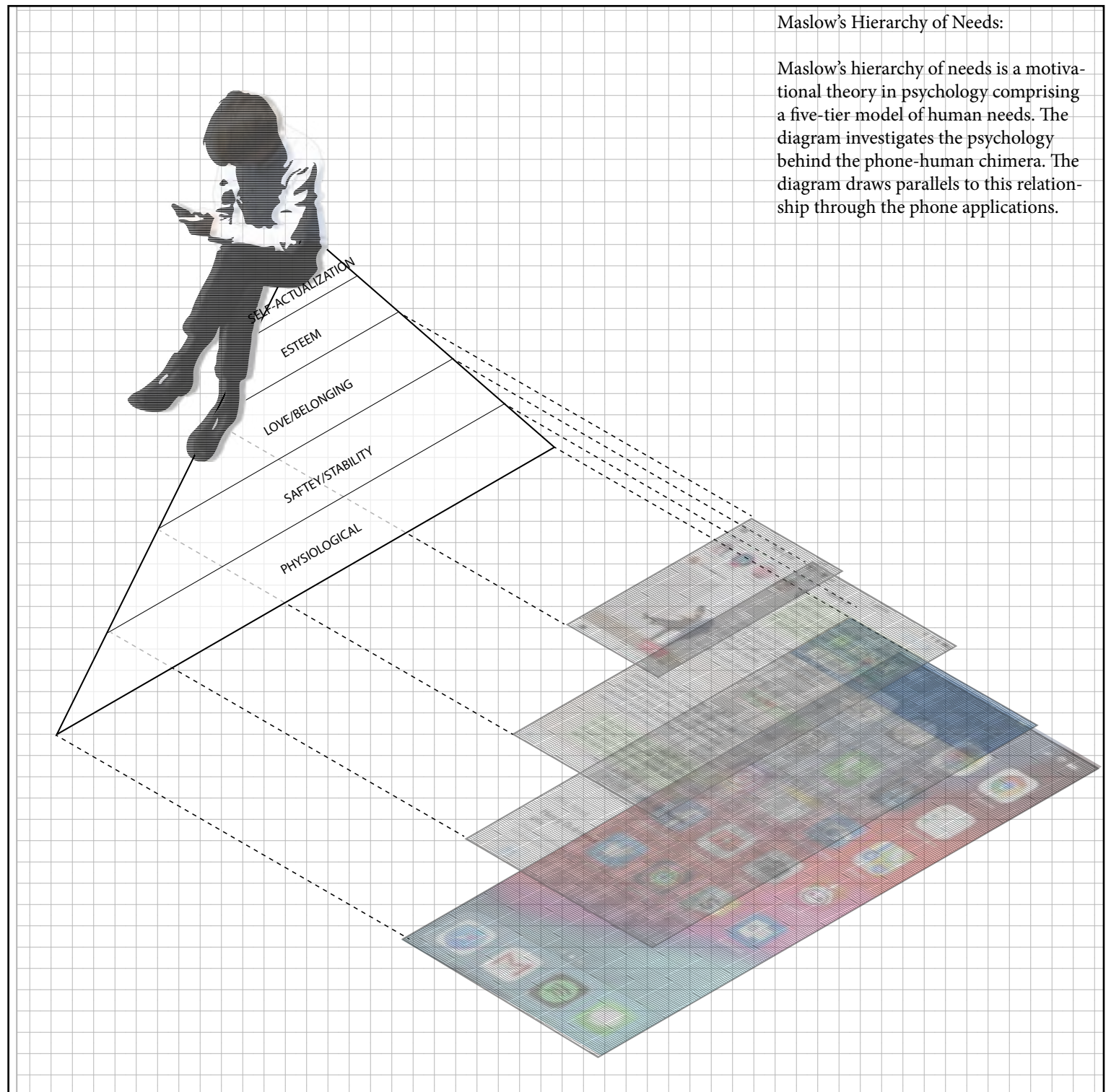
The thesis investigates Data from the perspective of the Globe, but then the body becomes the unit. *We have diluted into a phone, existing to constantly feed the phone to sustain this digital environment.* Between Fiction and reality, the research investigates the processes that construct this Body “The Cyborg”

What is the spatial manifestation of this data? What are the spatial needs of this new cyborg society?

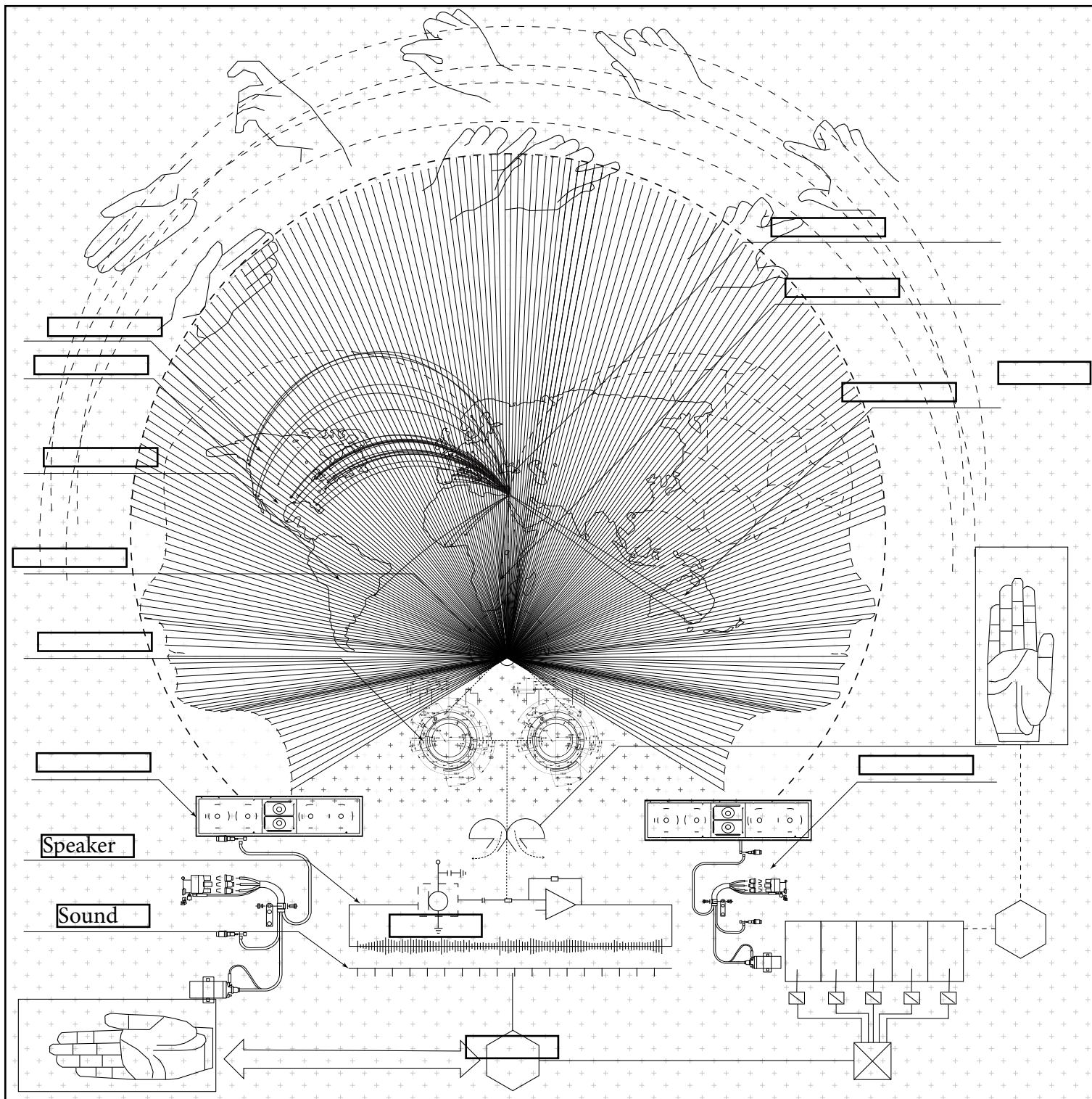
The spatial scenario has shifted. We thrive differently. I have diluted into a phone and this has become my anchor across different time and space.

## Cyborg Anthropology

Cyborg anthropology is a discipline that investigates the interaction between humans and technology from an anthropological perspective. According to Amber Chase Tool use For hundreds of years has been a physical modification of self. It has helped us go faster hit harder...Etc. But, now we are looking at an extension not of the physical self, but of the mental self. Phones have become a form of survival, a center of gravity, and a diary.



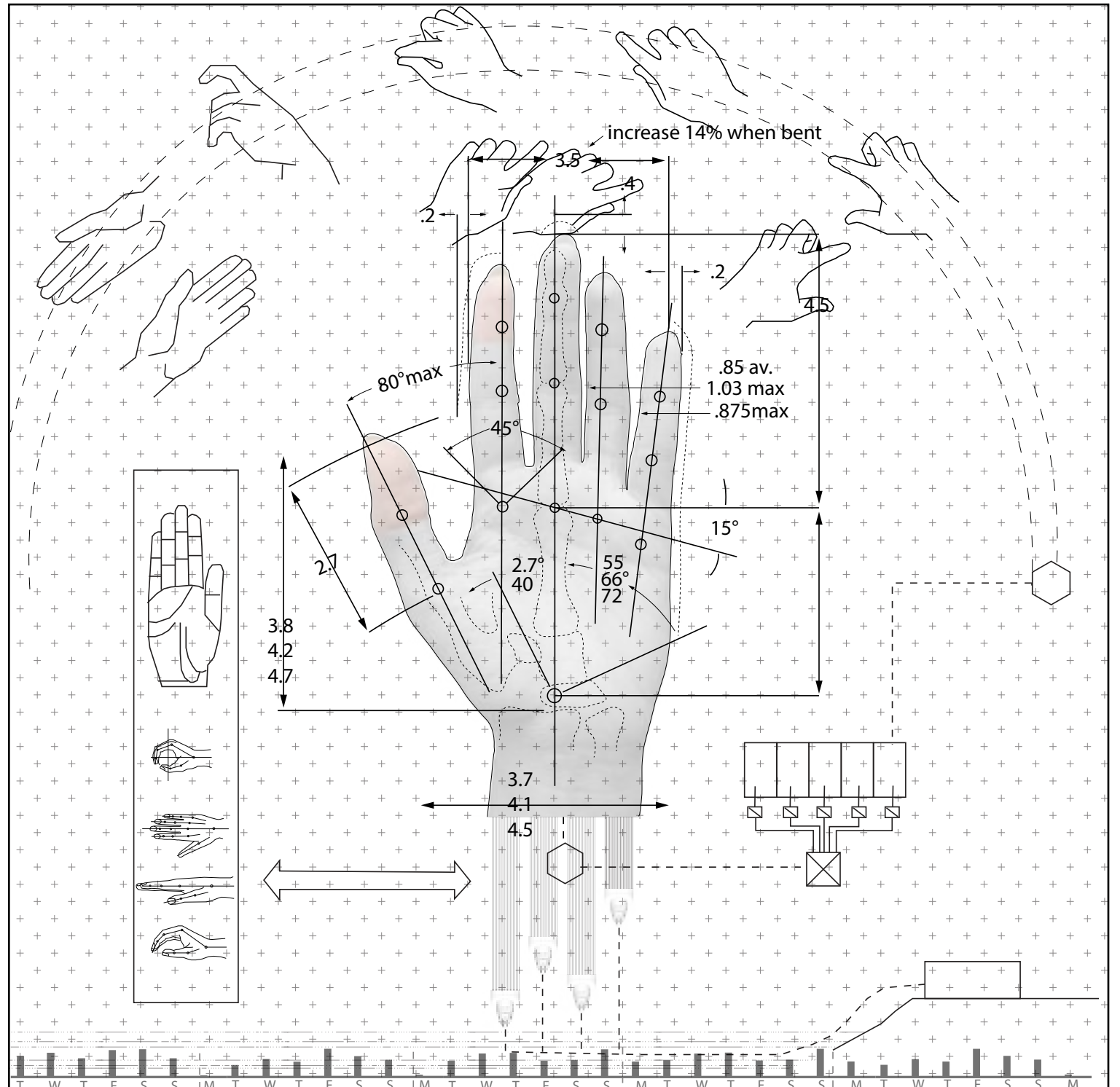
To begin with, it is important to define the Body of my research- The Cyborg. A creature of social reality as well as fiction, the Cyborg is composed of both Mechanical and Human parts. It is An organism to which exogenous components have been added in order to adapt to new environments. In addition to being a biological system, the body is a mechanical structure that functions in virtual systems and performs as an extended operation. The body is an augmented machine and the hybrid is the (human + phone) chimera that lives in an Online/off-line world. We are modern day monsters. It is not me anymore but me and my phone. In this diagram I investigate the components that make up this monster.



## Phase Portrait ii.

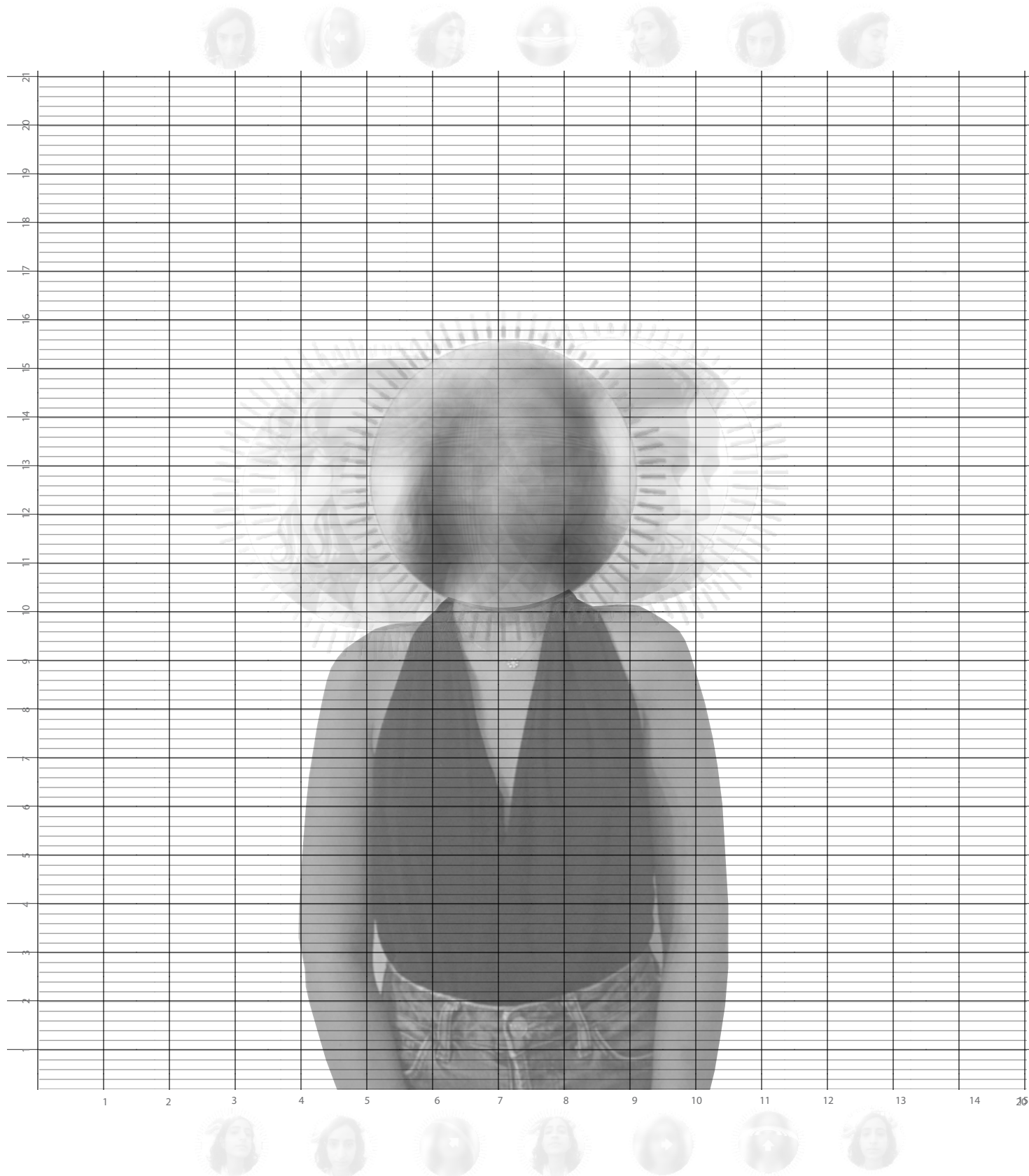
The fruitful coupling of fiction and reality fosters an imaginative process that maps the body in a new way. The Cyborg is used as a fiction mapping of social, technological, and bodily realities. In these portraits I take a close look at the systems that outlines this new hybrid. I represent the Cyborg as a sets of these Processes.

The diagram is an understanding of the output of the relationship between the mechanical phone and the biological body. In this diagram, a hand becomes a self portrait. We are defined by the gestures and movements we make on a screen. The diagram analyzes the hand and explores how our bodies have adapted to this new digital behavior.



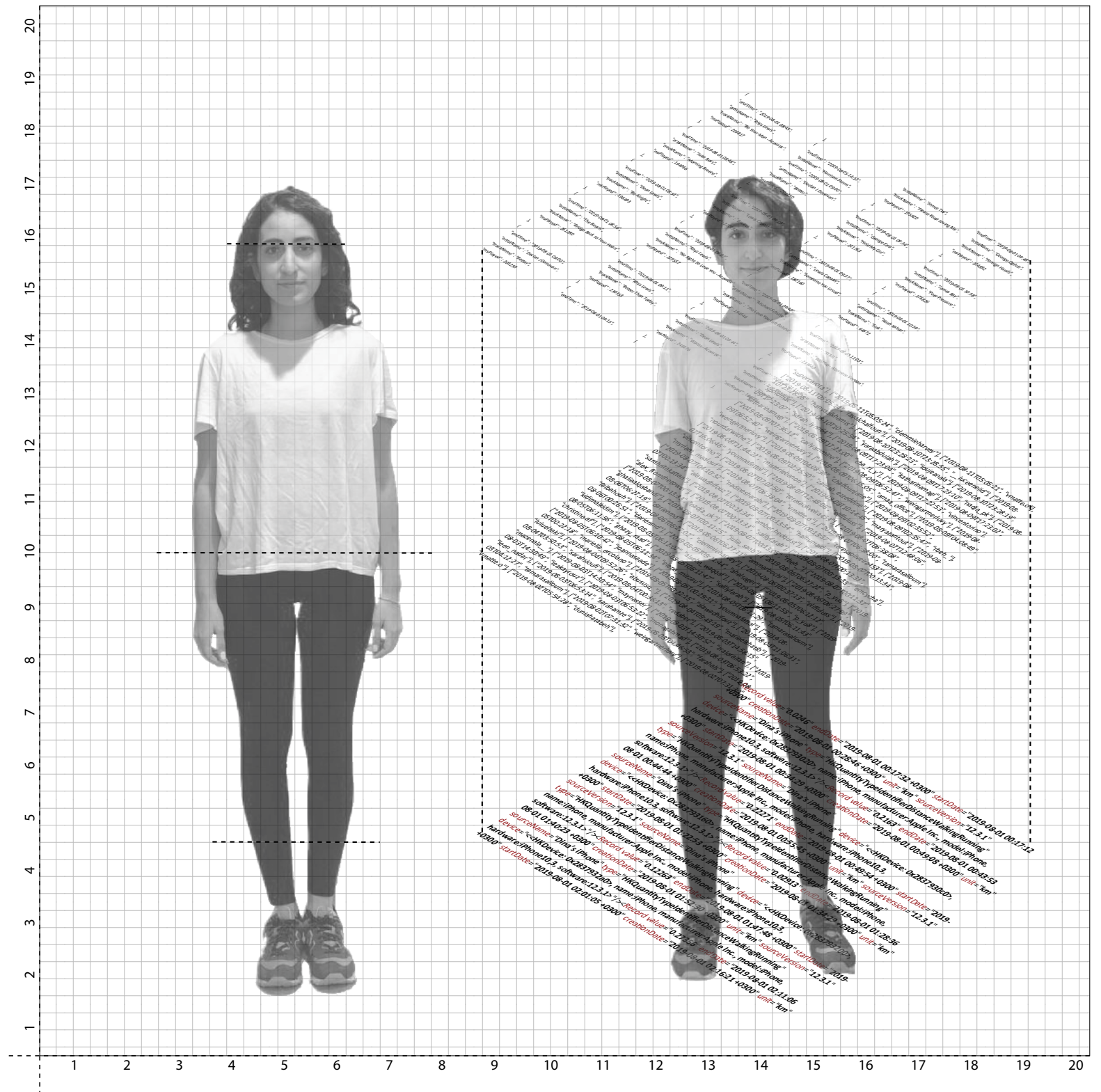
### Phase Portrait iii.

In this portrait I investigate the notion of the Cyborg as a series of patterns and Algorithms. I use screen-shots from the phone's Facial recognition software to reconstruct my Online blueprint. We are nothing but a series of motions and patterns. Our self/identity is defined by differential codes and gestures on a screen. According to Carpo, a series is not defined by its visual form but by the differentials and variances between the sequential items in a series. The essence of cyborg existence are these accumulated patterns which feed into a bigger system. We are an nothing but an Algorithm.

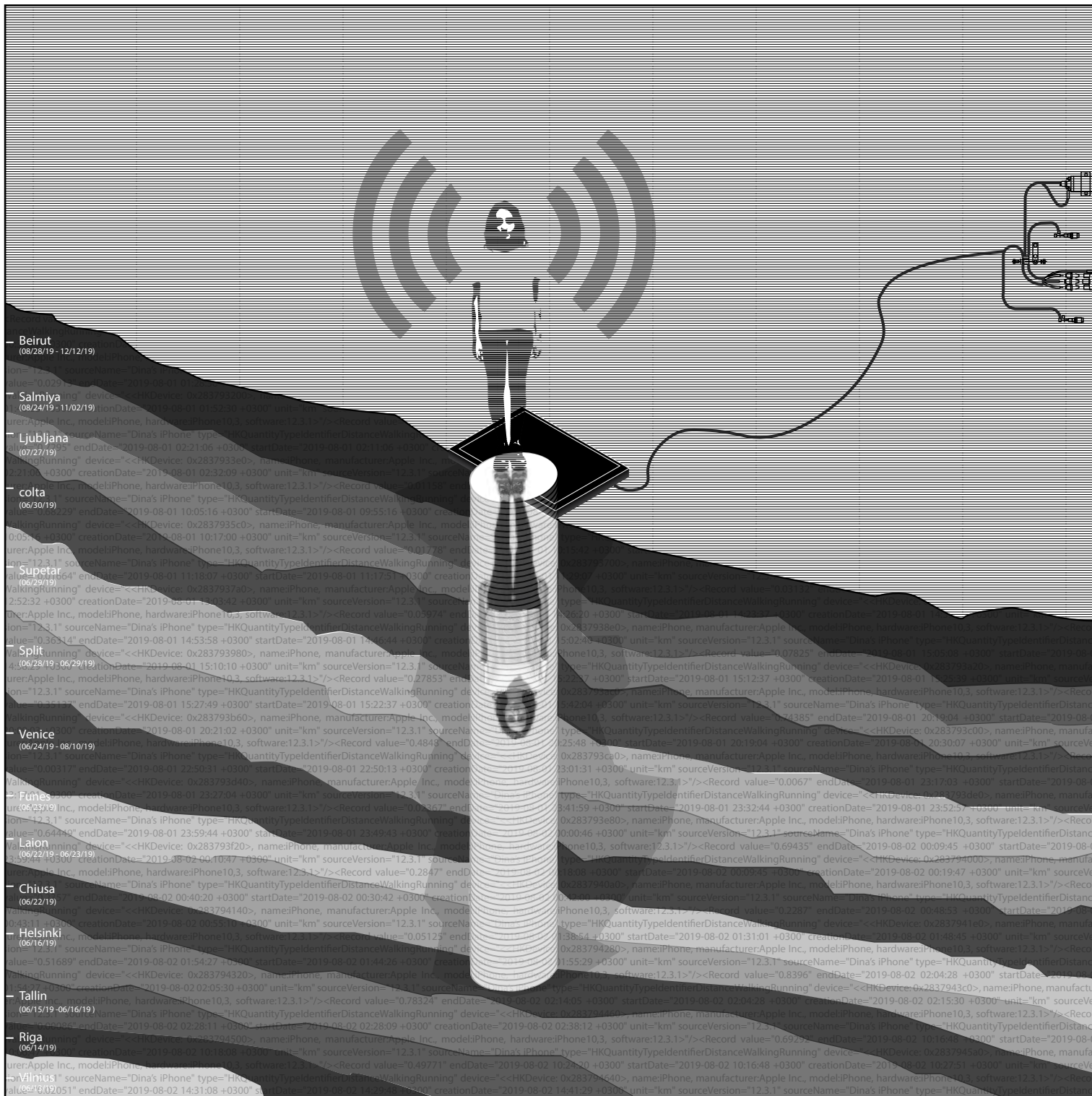


## Phase Portrait iv.

The diagram creates a friction between the data retrieved and the body part associated with it. The diagram is a digital diary where the textual data planes are taken from 3 different applications on the same day. The data is taken from Spotify, Instagram, and Health application. The body becomes the unit that is defined by these apps. The diagram is a diary and an anatomy of parts.



The diagram explores the idea of the body as a data mining site. Data collected on location history becomes an archaeological dig creating a time line of data. In this diagram I employ the *Significant location* feature on my iPhone and reconstruct my time line of events. This technology works by tracking and saving all your places without you consciously knowing. In this diagram the stream of data is a fictive archaeology created by sediments of residual data.



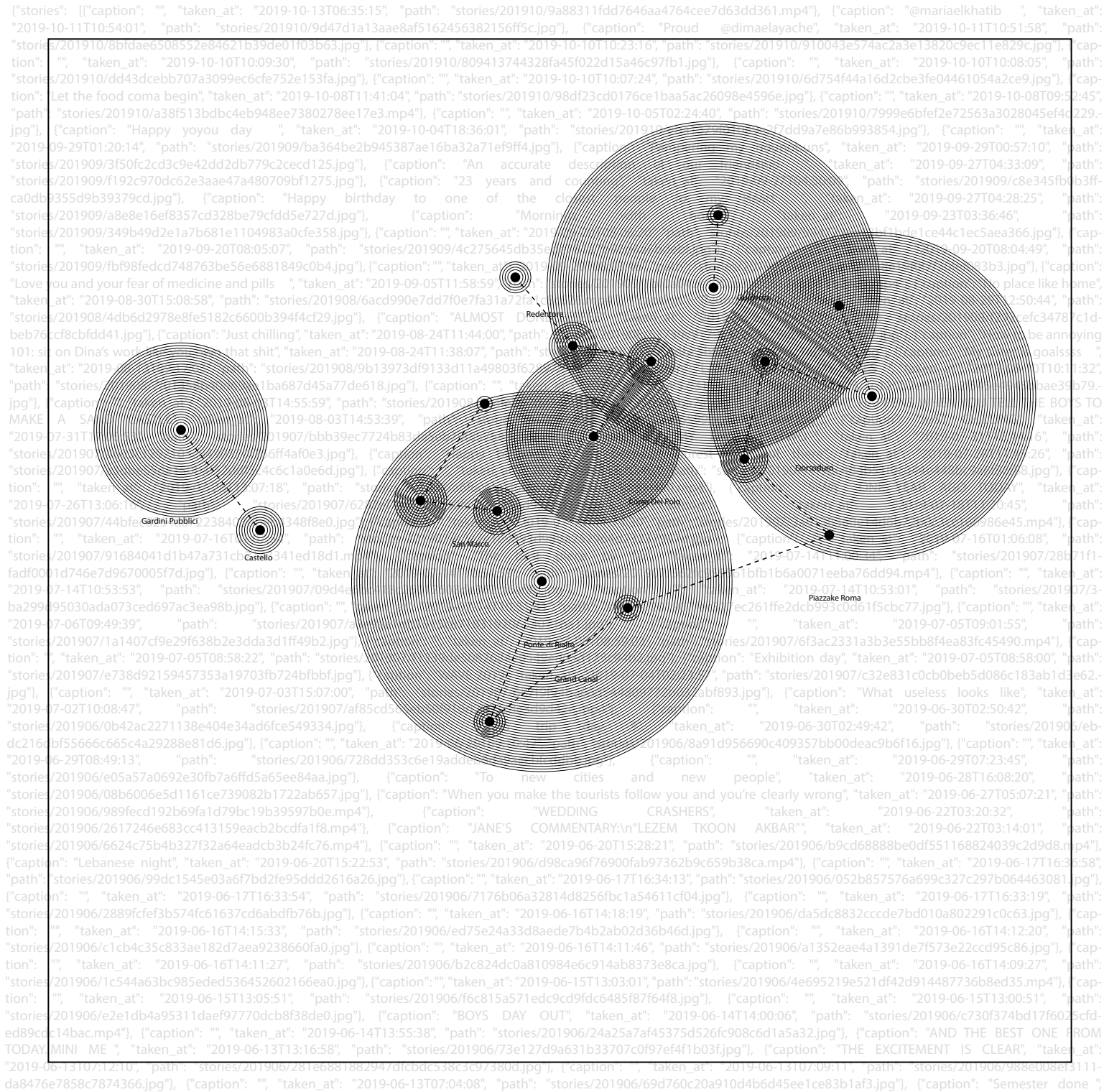
## Dear Diary ii.

In this diagram I use my phone to map my spaces around Beirut. The diagram creates a digital diary of all the places i visited the last 5 months. This digital diary becomes a way of defining the cyborg. Geo tags have defined a new domain of footprints that are characteristic of life in the contemporary city.



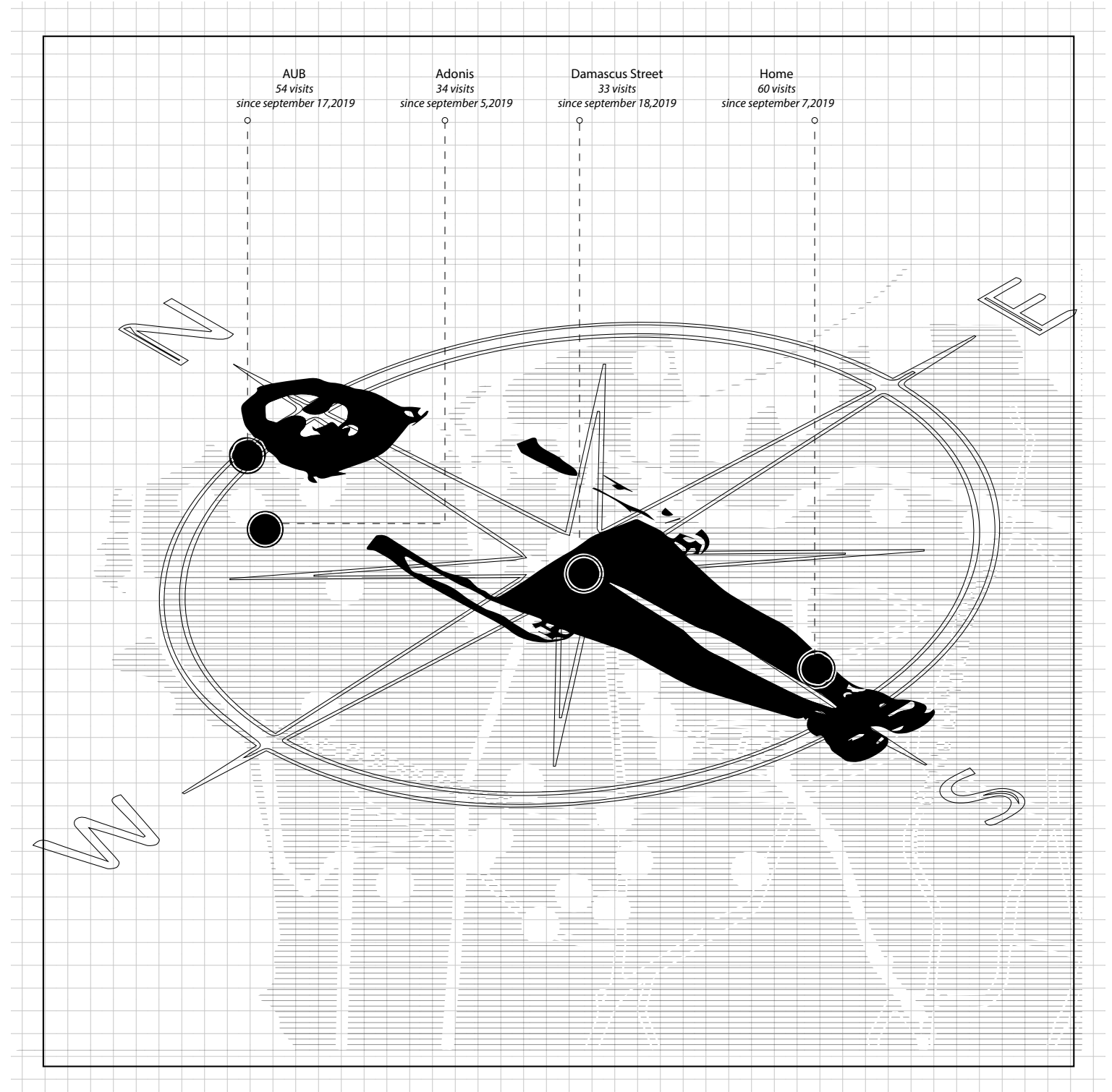


The diagram is a mapping of the mind through space. The pictures and their locations are taken from my Iphone during my 7 month stay in Venice. The rings correspond to the number of pictures taken in each specific location. Placed together the diagram creates a memory of events.

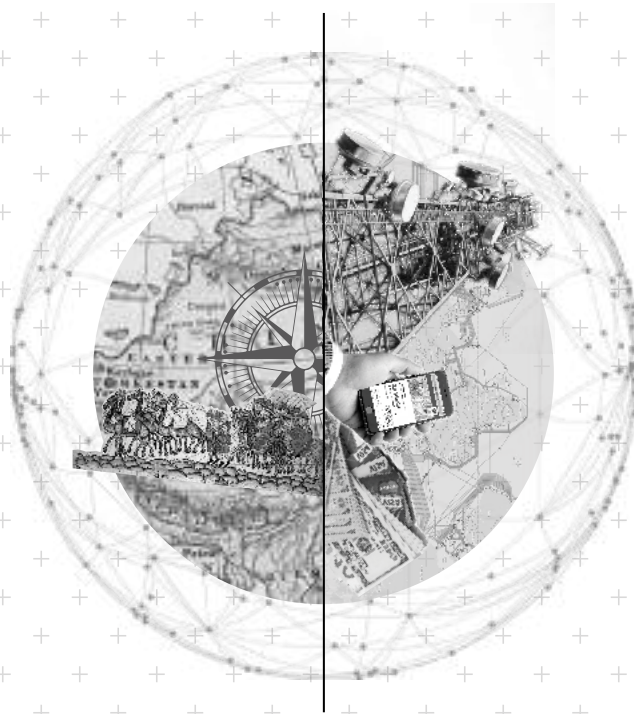


## Dear Diary iv.

It is me, my phone, my data. I have diluted into a phone and this has become my anchor across different time and space. In this diagram i trace my most visited locations. I plot this on a coordinate graph and create a coordinate system that traces my body through space. The graph becomes a representation of my life and the nodes of activities i engage in each day.



## II. A Unit: Data



“Capitalists are interested in the life of the worker, in the body of the worker ; only for an indirect reason: this life, this body, are what contain the faculty, the potential, the dynamics. The living body becomes an object to be governed not for its intrinsic value, but because it is the substratum of what really matters: labor-power as the aggregate of the most diverse human faculty”- *Paolo Virno*



Guy Debord :“ *The social needs of age are developed in which the administration of society/ contact is totally dependent on instantaneous communication. All activity is nullified to the construction of the spectacle*”

Jean Baudillard : “*Pornography of information/ communication. Body, landscape, time dissolve as scenes/ events.*”

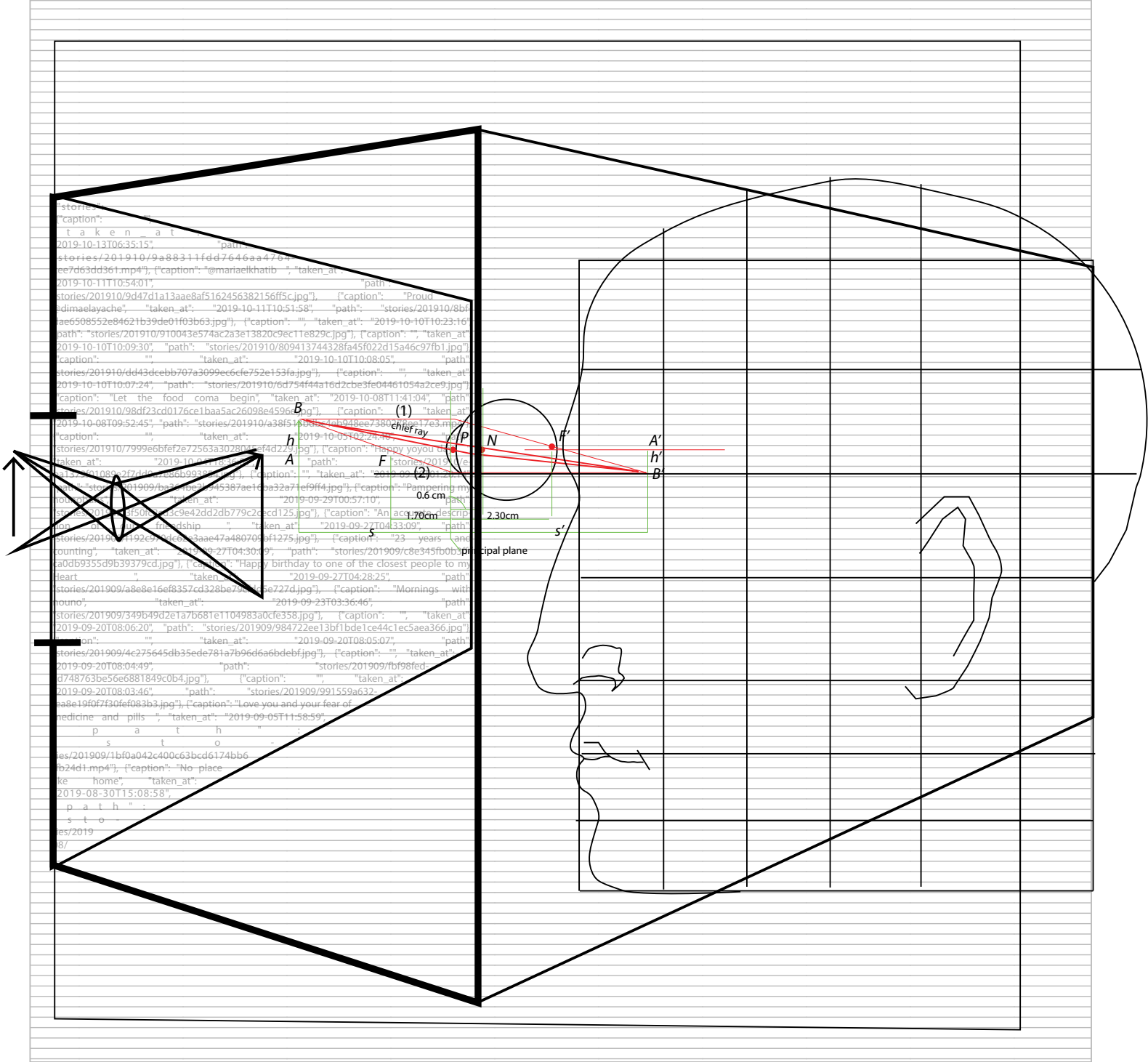
In their essays both Baudillard and Debord offer an accurate portrait of our image-saturated society living within an ecstasy of communication in Online and off line presence. Representational projection has created a real moment where “everything that was directly lived has moved away into a representation”. The evolved cyborg thrives in this Society of the Spectacle. Commodity Culture becomes the essence of life. The spectacle consumes capitalism and thrives in it. We are at a third stage of Capital where Modern day Labor is the task for a Constant stream of Data Production. Labor has become synonymous with modern life. The phone has become the medium that produces this labor.

Current real moment= Accumulation of Spectacles + Excess of Communication

# Data Production

We are at a third stage of Capital. Commodity= TIME.

Time factors in as more screen time, more clicks, more views, etc. *Modern Serfdom is not a conflict over our physical labor, but over our attention.* This is where the importance of data factors in: Acquired Data generates algorithms which generates content customization. Content Customization, the epidemic of modern consumer culture, generates more profit. The Competition is one over our attention. Quote by the Netflix CEO-Reed Hastings:“ Our biggest competitor is sleep, maximizing clicks, views, amount of time with Products”



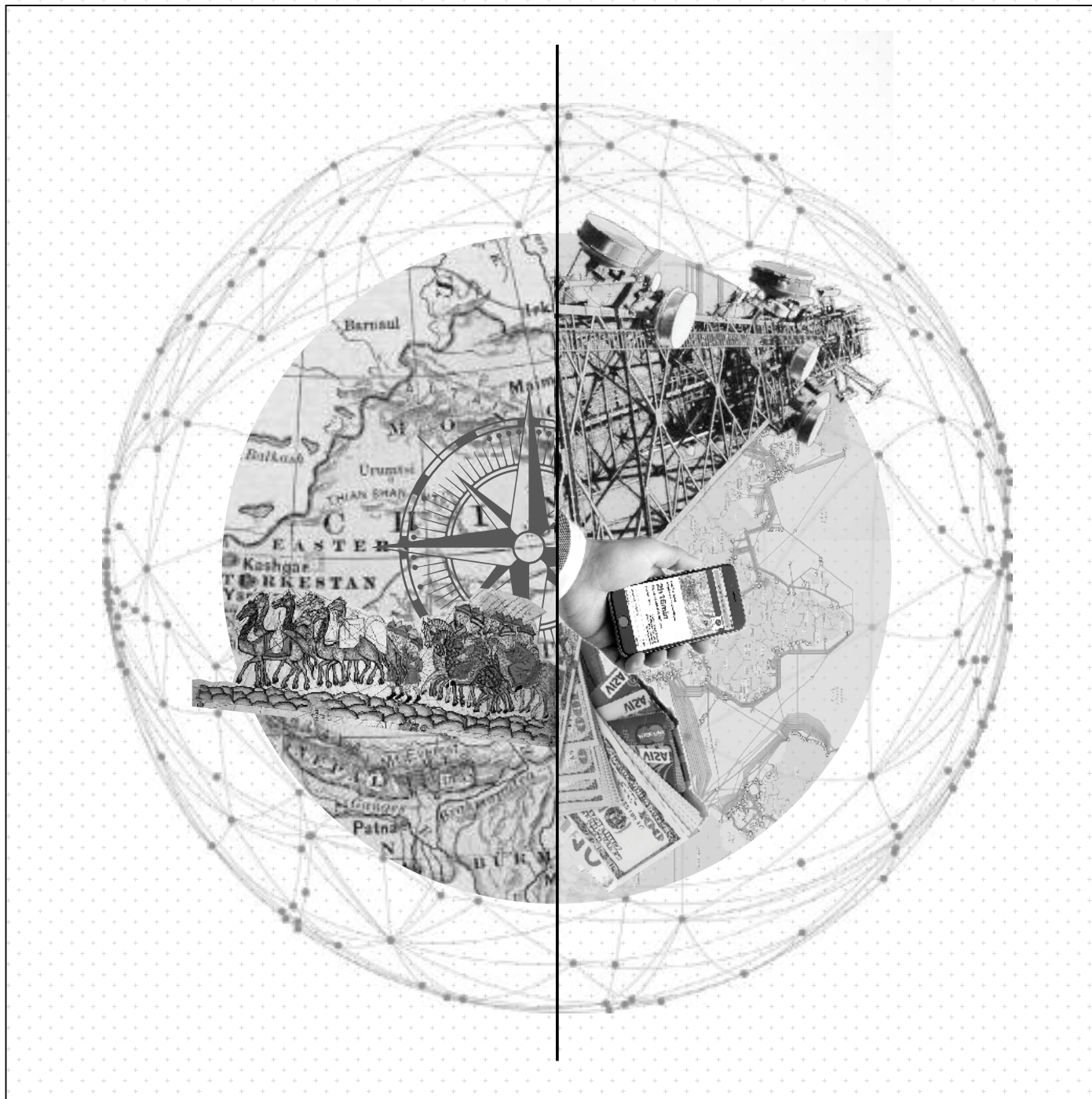
## A Modern Panopticon

The Cyborg is part of a process. He is a unit in a set that is constantly being designed. These applications take, manipulate, and redistribute. The body is a Factory that is constantly producing labor for these apps. These applications in return take, manipulate, and redistribute. *Applications are constantly changing themselves by changing you.* They do not change you directly, but they work by generating certain norms that create changes in the ways that you interact with the interface. GUI (Graphical user Interface) is the medium by which we design the logic of human interaction on screen.

In a quote by Carpo on modern digital technology and design: "But insofar as the object is technically, an open ended algorithm, a generative, incomplete notation, then the object's designer will "authorize" some general norms to determine aspects common to a range of variable and individual events"-*The Alphabet and the Algorithm*. The Cyborg is the open ended algorithm who is being studied and "authorized". He is a formula that is designed and updated.

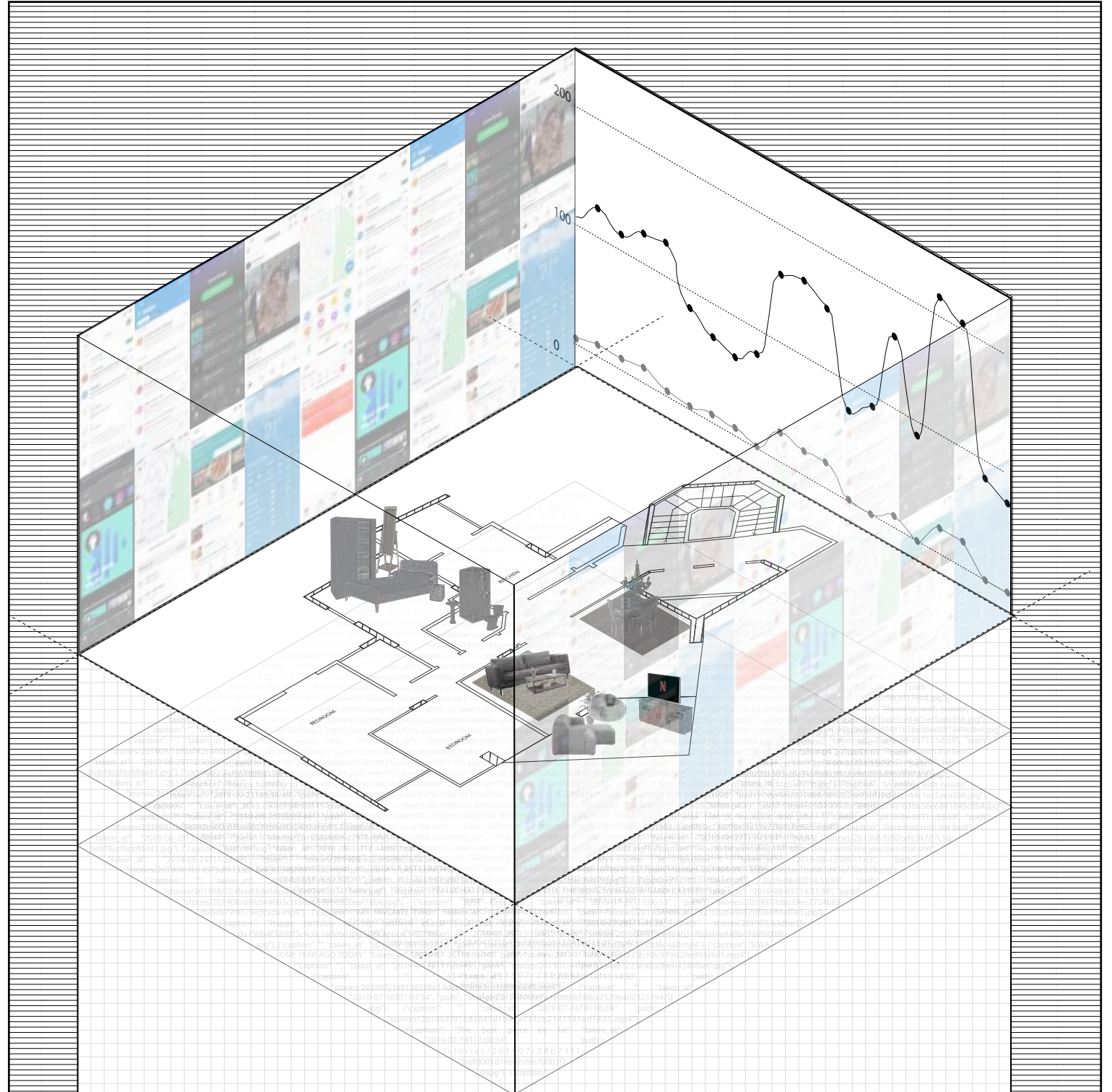


We don't just have capitalism, we have Globalism. The cyborg exists between this non-space and non-time. The conceptual erosion of time corresponds to the spatial erosion of what Marc Auge terms: "non place". The Idea of a non-place such as airports, retail, parks, chain store, etc is a visible sign of Capitalist globalization. These non-places resemble one another more than they resemble the context they are located in. Similar to non-space we are currently living in non-time. A historical reference to the Ancient silk road, the collage posits the Internet as new Global Network. The diagram is a Portrait that gives due to its old predecessor.



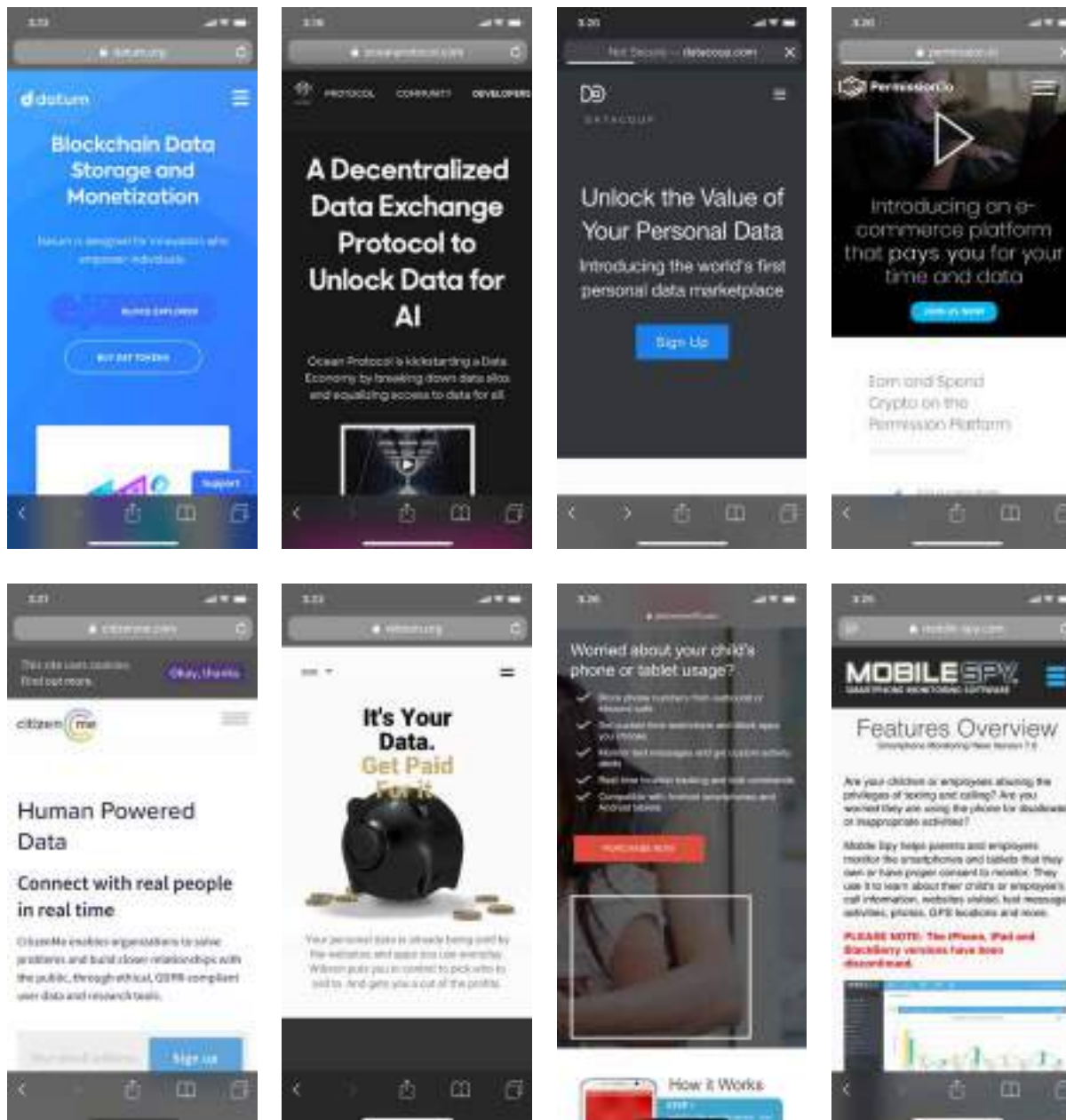
## Leisure and Labor

The drawing is a reconstruction of the housing unit as a set of laboring spaces for data production. Spaces such as beds, couches, dining tables become productive nodes. The social organization of the society is dependent on this excessive communication and phone-use. Our entire universe comes to unfold Arbitrary on our domestic screen. As iterated by Jameson, the life of the worker has evolved from the industrial factory setting into a social one. The addition to this, is the dualism of leisure and productivity. Leisure time has become more productive than the regular work time. We Labor more into these applications in our leisure.



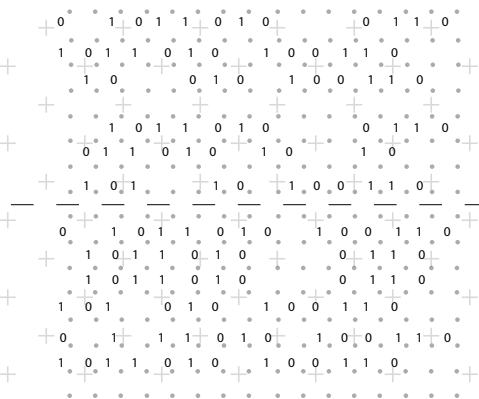


Data Rights allows people to get immediate compensation for their data to be used as opposed to the Data being mediated by companies. This system eliminates the middle man and gives ownership to the original producer of data. The entire system of global labor is changing. Some Applications existing now: (exp. Datum, Ocean Protocol, Data-coup, Permissio.io , Citizenme, Wibson...Etc. ). In addition to Data rights we have illegal spy-ware applications. Spy -ware applications are marketed as a way to monitor “employees and children”. Some examples of existing applications are : mobile-spy, teenshield, phonesheriff ..etc.



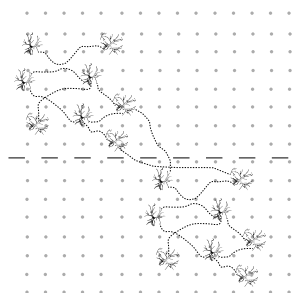
A selection of Apps that engage in Spyware technologies

### III. An Ecosystem

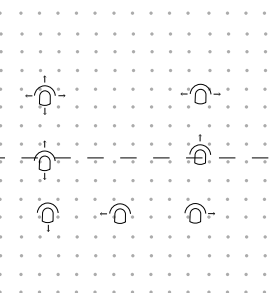


“Acts of worlding require attention to agents of organic and inorganic and to both the material and narrative composition that make life-worlds”-Rania Ghosn and Hadi Jazairy (*Geo-stories*)

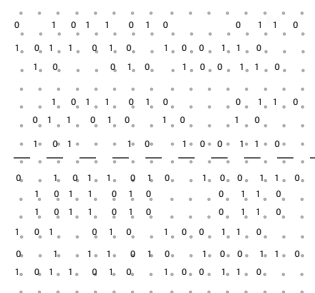




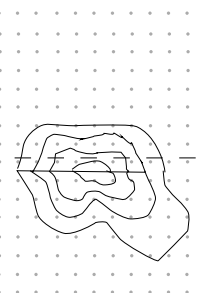
Neurons



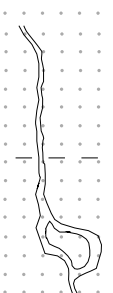
Body/Interface



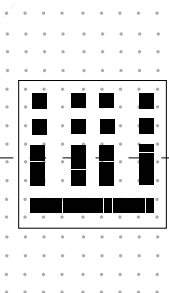
Binary Code



Network On land



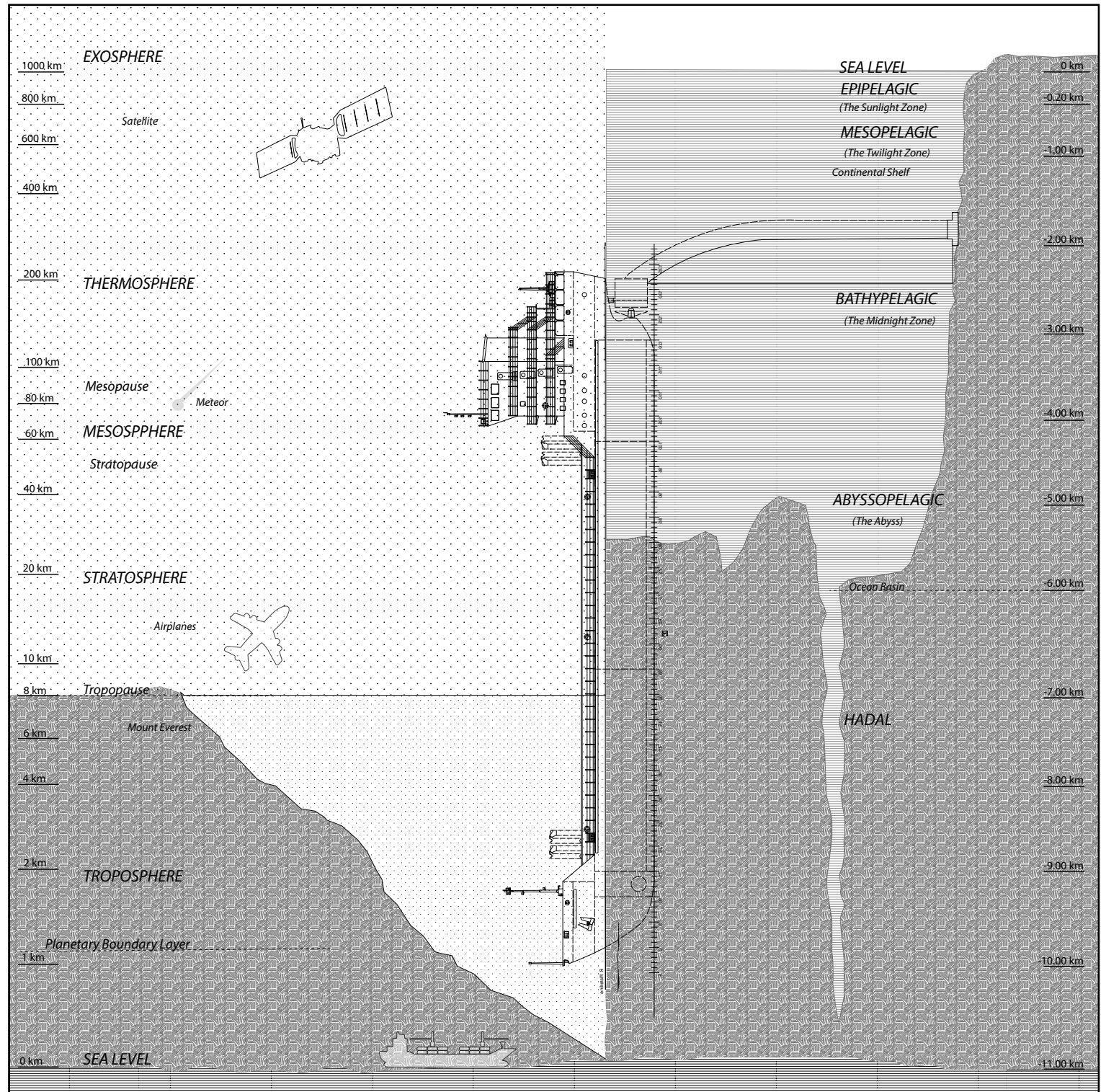
Waterway



Data Center

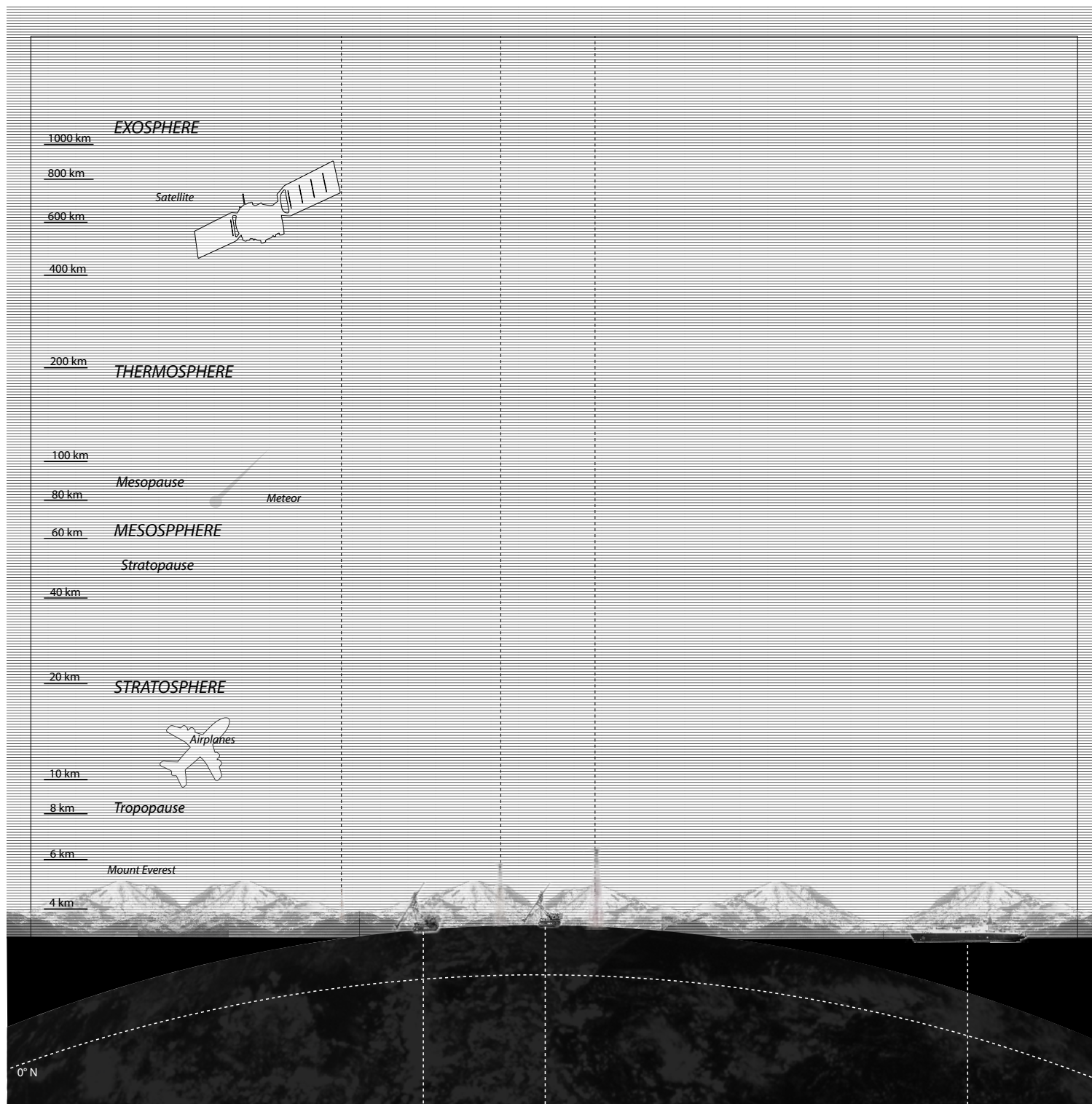
# A Geography of Data

Data is seen as an abstract entity that we coexist with but we do not interact in. This section imagines a world that understands the flow of interiorities from one state to the other, and creates a narrative of production. It explores this complex Representational dialectic of data and investigates the main externalities that connect this Internet network together. These are the Data Centers, Optical Fibers, Ships, Satellites, and the main driving force behind all of it -The Human. The Diagram aims to Highlight the architectural infrastructure behind this vast global Internet capital. Data has Framed a certain Abstract geography of the planet that I counteract in this geographic portrait of the planet.



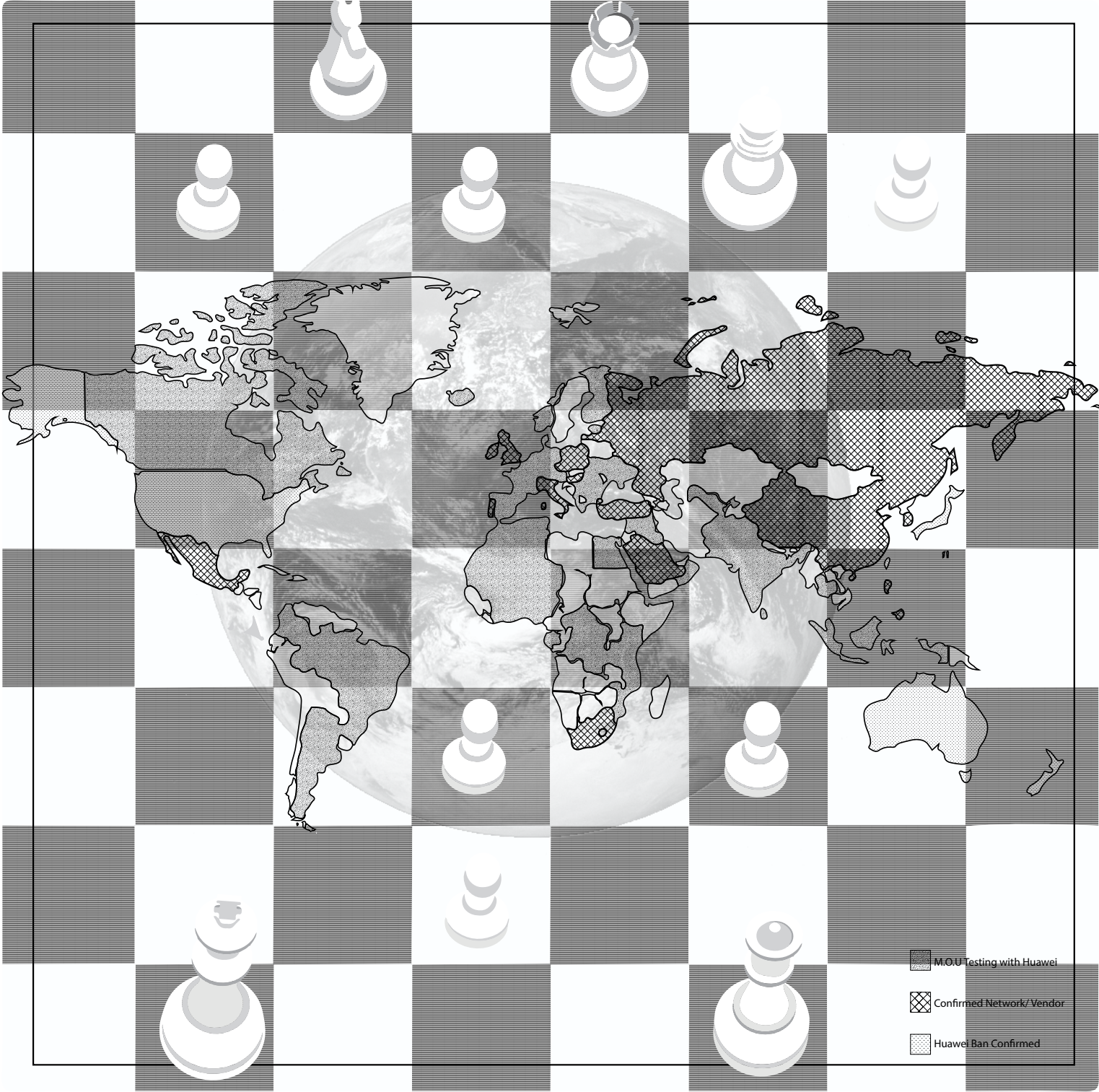
## Terra-forming Earth

Terra-forming: Work on transforming other Planets into earth-like environments. It is a common trope in science fiction. But perhaps the most substantial Terra-forming project undertaken by humanity is earth. Satellites, Submarine cables, schemes to provide for this infrastructure. The Age of the Anthropocene has defined a new typology for a landscape. We are turning the planet into a giant computer that we can sit and control. There is a friction between the material physical and nonphysical.

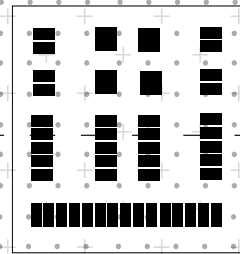


# Mother Earth, Mother Board

A form of political and social control, we are building new societal structures that support these technological shifts. This diagram highlights the geopolitics of the Internet. The diagram shows the growing Chinese Technological dominance of Cyber and Telecoms economies. The map categorizes the countries adopting Huawei and 5g services.



## IV. States



Data: A process of Transformation

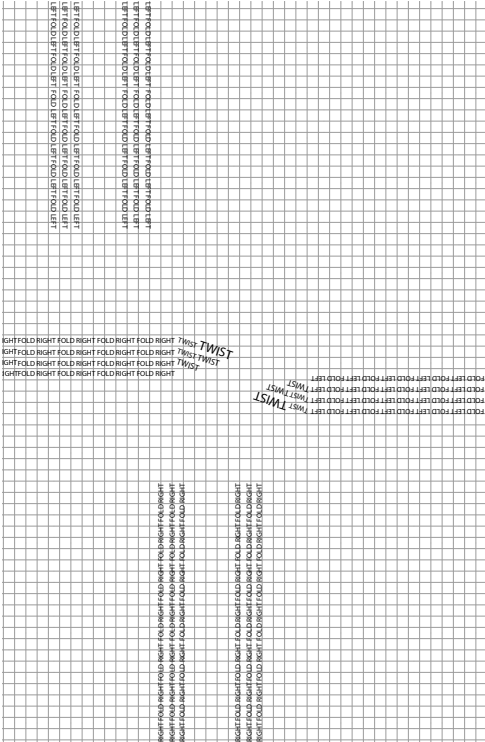
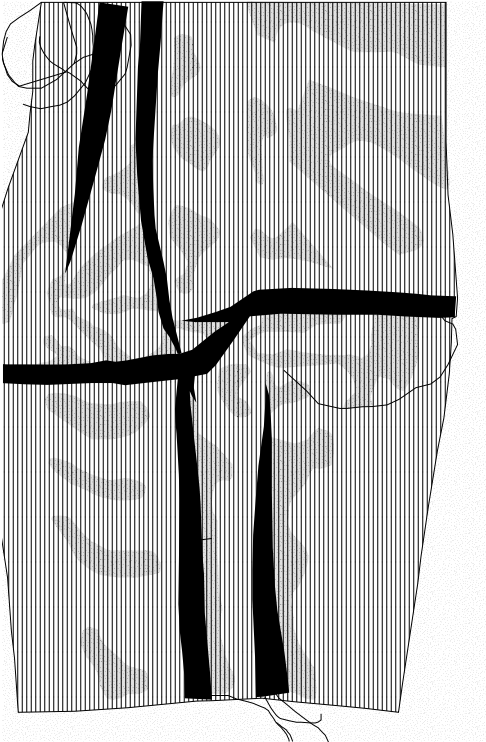
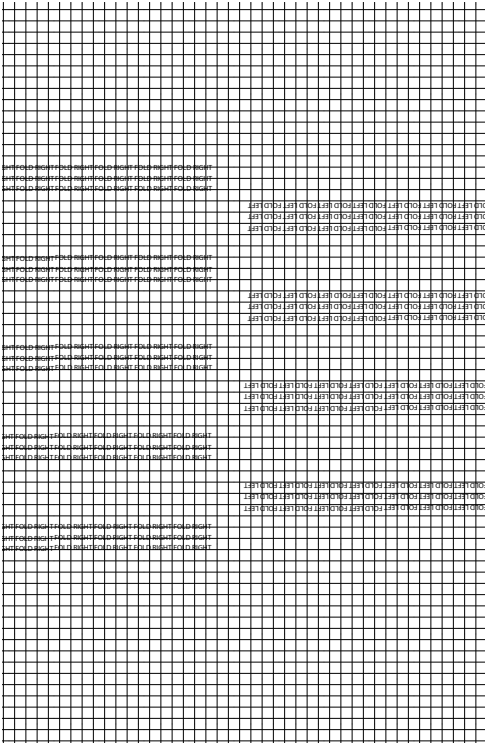
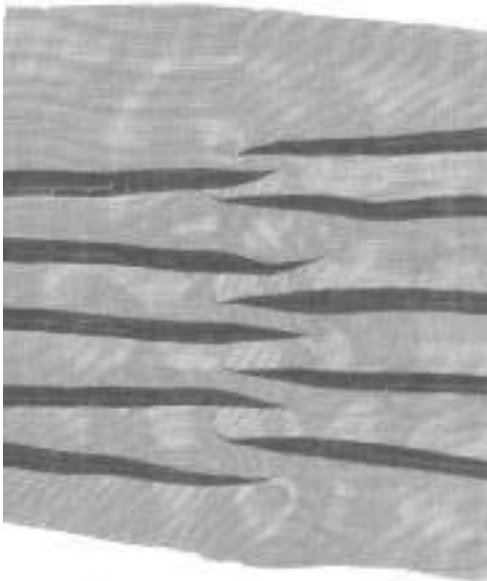
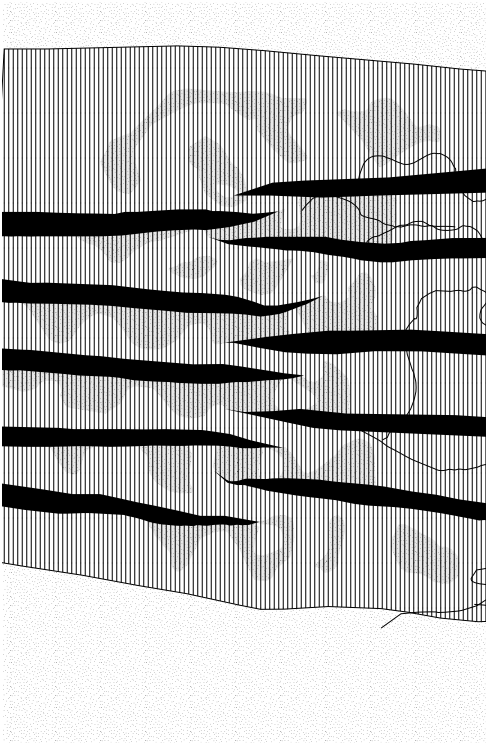
*Decay: A gradual change over time*

*Death: A threshold, a transformation from a state to the other*



# Fabric Experimentation

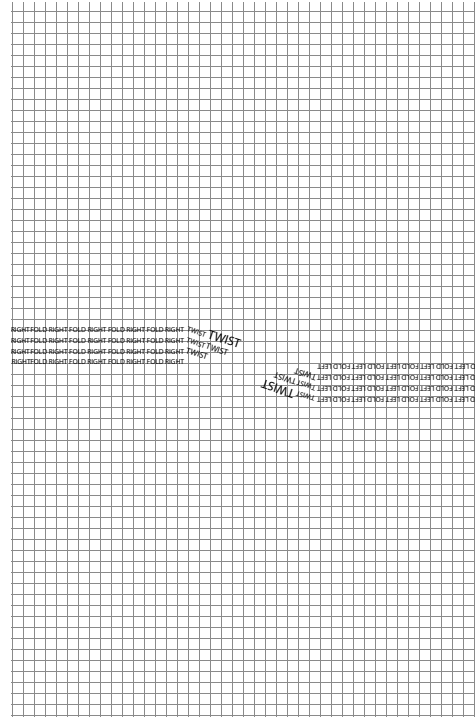
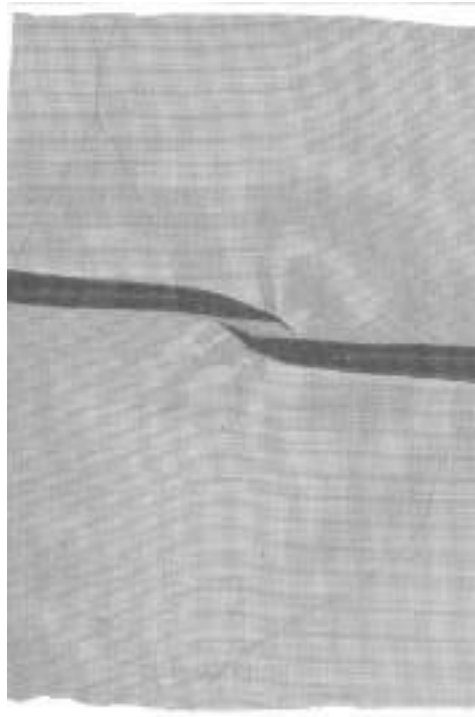
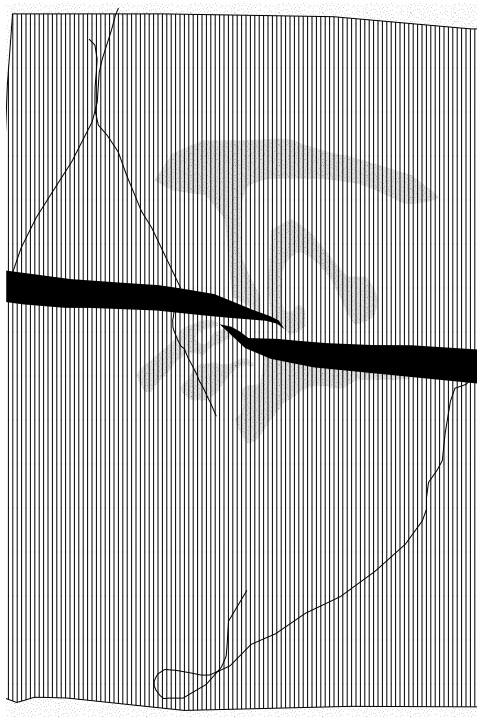
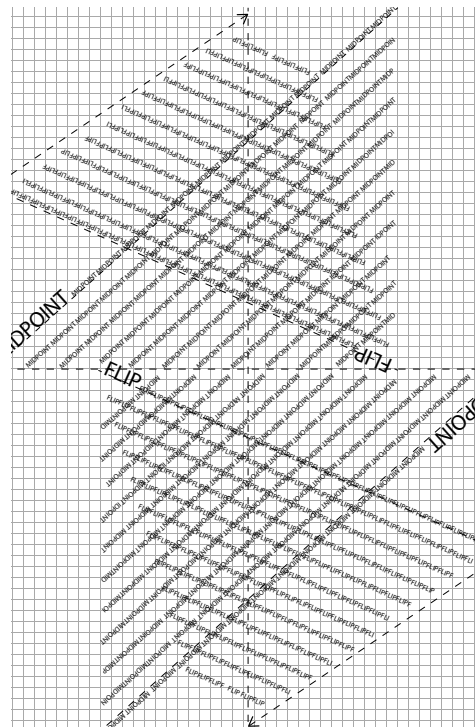
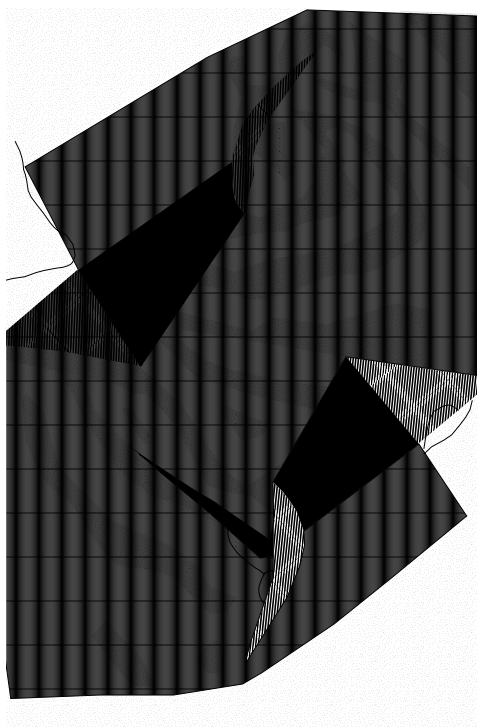
Inspired by Eisenman's writing *Diagram: An Original Scene of Writing* I employ his ideas of what constitutes a diagram. The diagram becomes a condition of a repetition of its being and a representation of this repetition. This repetition of difference is crucial to understanding the transformation of Data from a state to the other. In these Fabric Experiments I translate folds into a set of codes . A fold up or down becomes the parallel to a binary code of 0s and 1s. I create different fabric algorithms, then i go back and decode the steps.

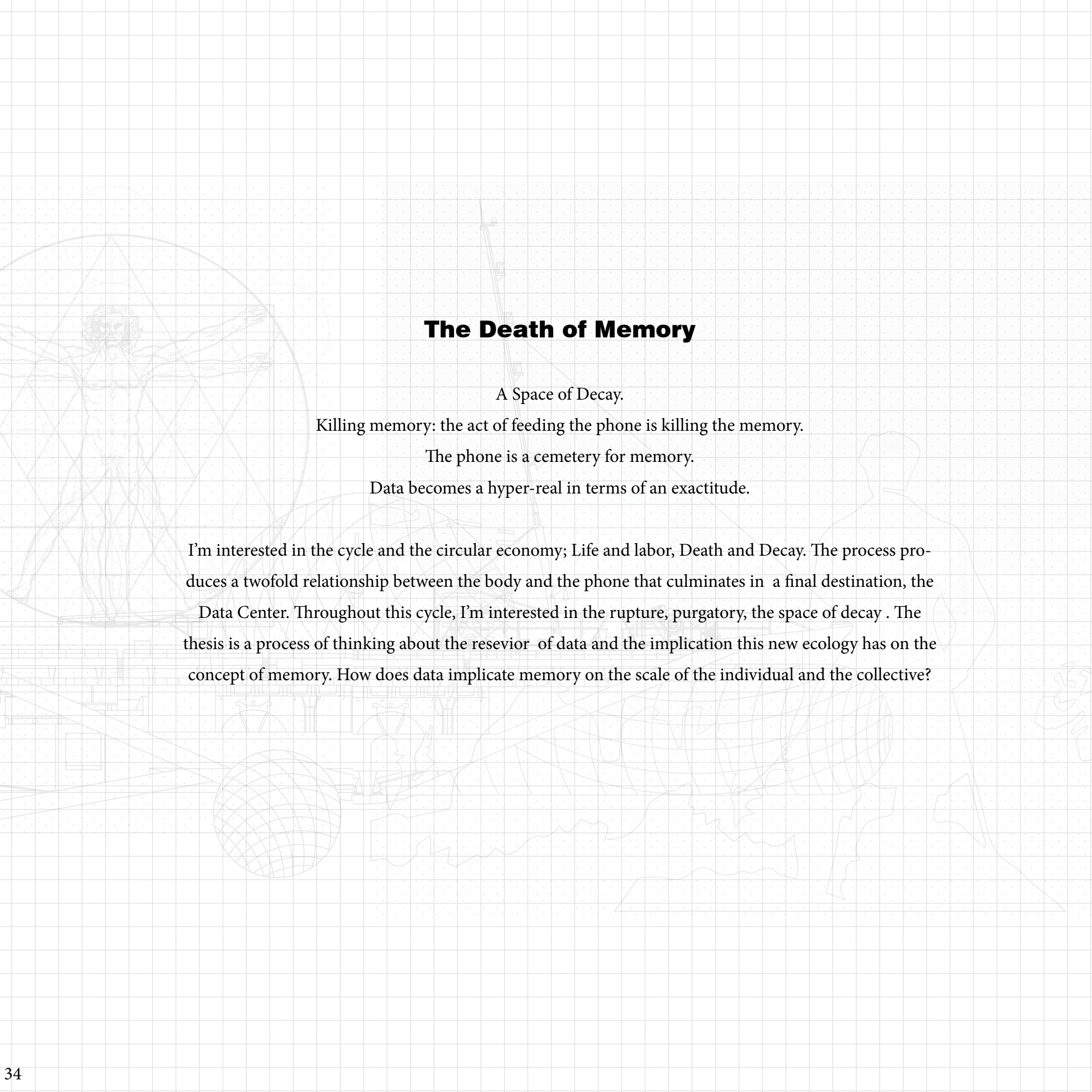




## Fabric Experimentation

In this experiment, I investigate methods of data transfer. Starting with the instructions from the brain to body, body to fabric, and finally body to digital scan. The experimentation creates a circular economy that investigates the process of data and decay as a design process. Each step produces a residual, creating a state that is different than the other.





## The Death of Memory

A Space of Decay.

Killing memory: the act of feeding the phone is killing the memory.

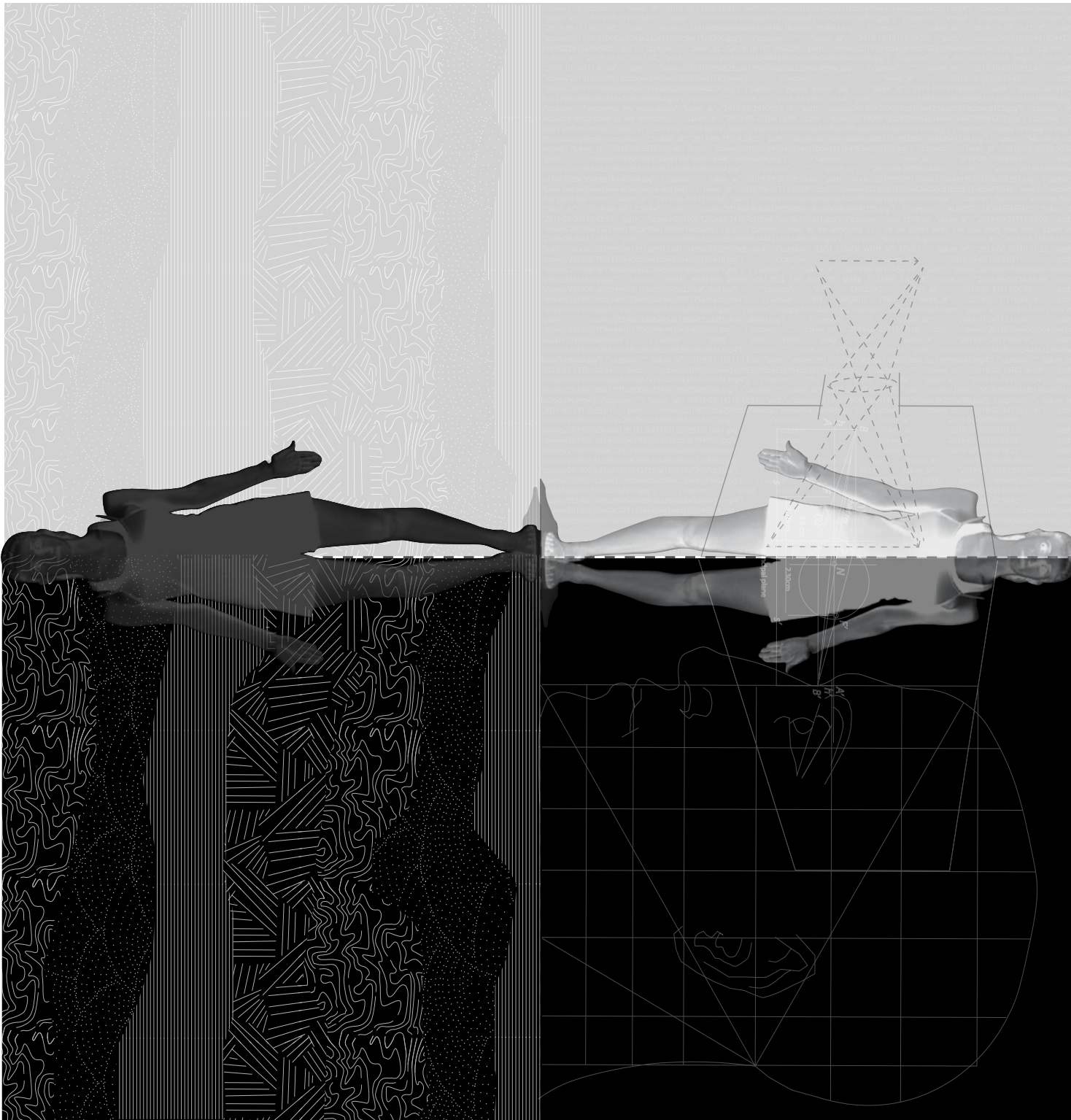
The phone is a cemetery for memory.

Data becomes a hyper-real in terms of an exactitude.

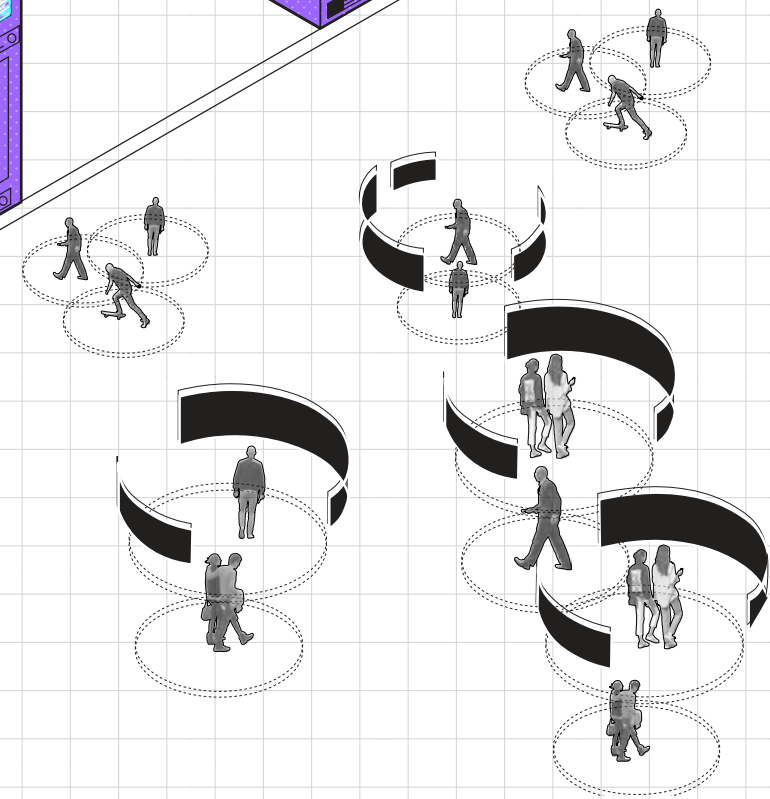
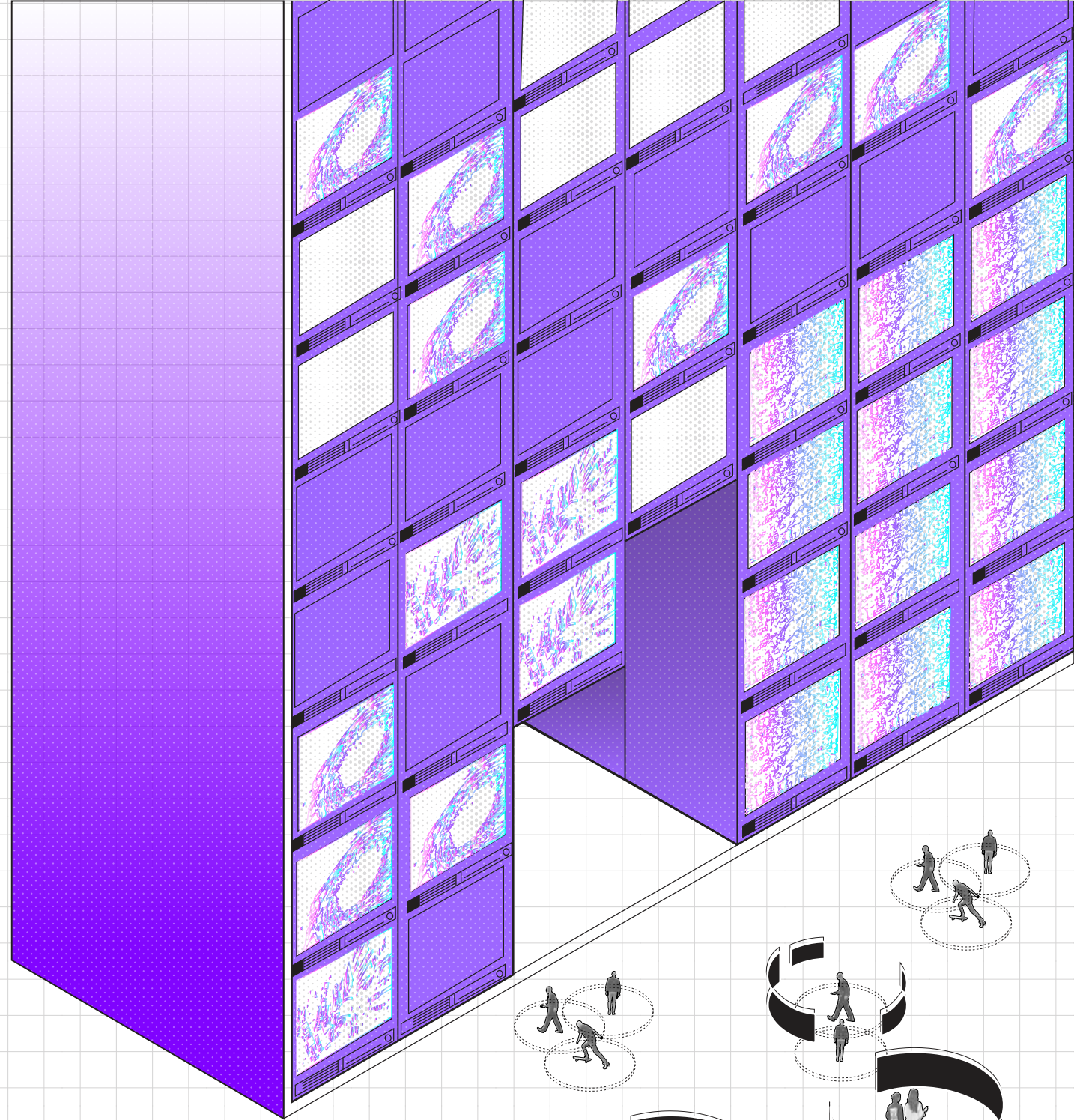
I'm interested in the cycle and the circular economy; Life and labor, Death and Decay. The process produces a twofold relationship between the body and the phone that culminates in a final destination, the Data Center. Throughout this cycle, I'm interested in the rupture, purgatory, the space of decay. The thesis is a process of thinking about the resequencing of data and the implication this new ecology has on the concept of memory. How does data implicate memory on the scale of the individual and the collective?

*If Writing is a Repression of Memory (Derrida), then Data is the death of memory.*

On Hauntology: We are living in a moment while being haunted by the moment before it. Mark fisher proposes his theory and talk about a postmodernist moment that keeps on going in a cycle. Haunting is resistant to the creation of a homogeneous time and place. Haunting is an anachronism that supposes a disjunction between a space and its time. Our generation is stuck in this moment that keeps reproducing itself through media and our phones. Our Digital Data lives in a state of transience.



**SPECTION**

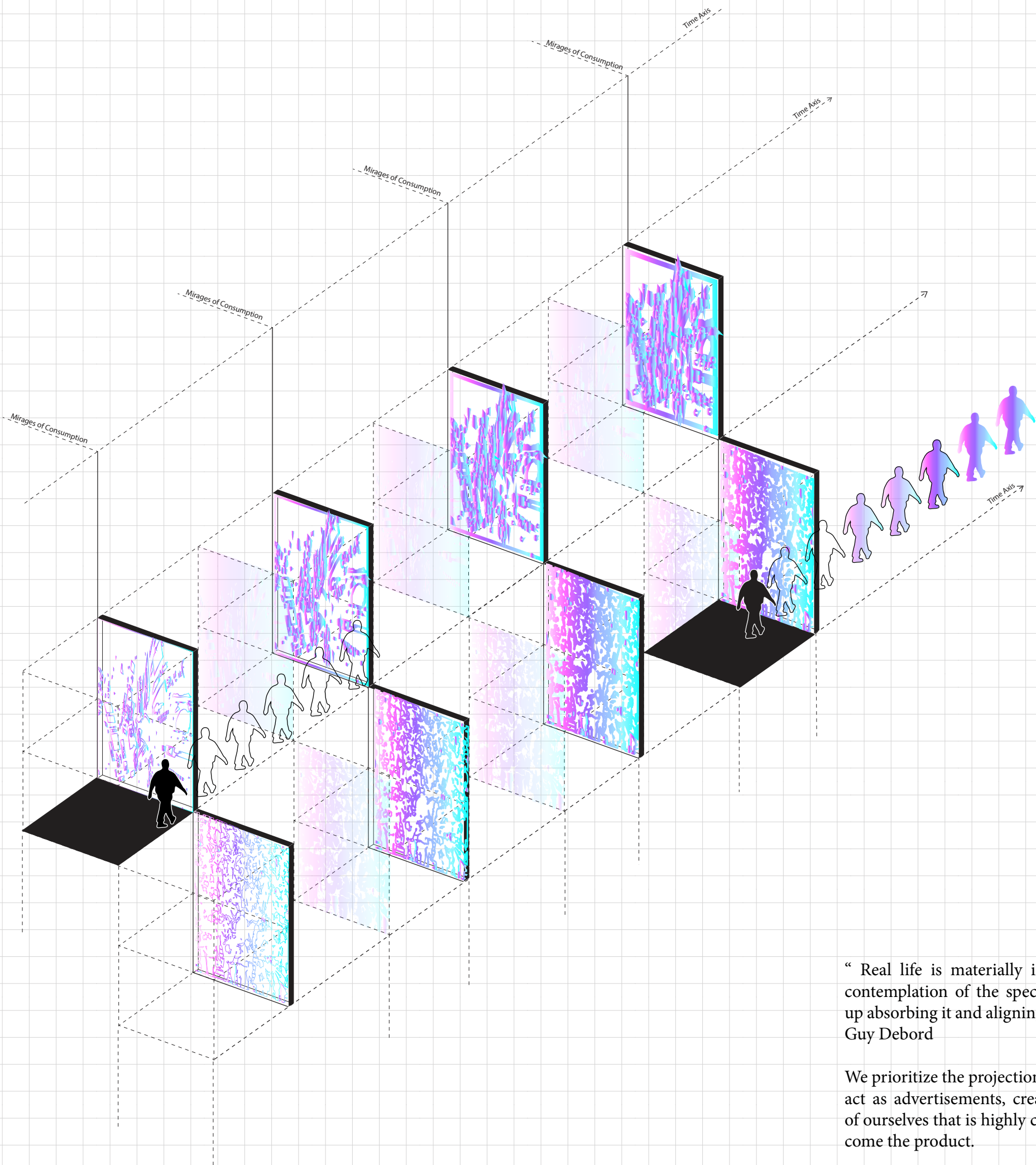


**...UPDATE IN PROGRESS**

## II. Design Problematic

Today, our society exists with a constant stream of information where our perception of reality is *embedded within the screen*. This virtual wall has changed our spatial understanding of the social, adding a new layer of Interaction. The current condition is characterized by the replacement of time and space by a screen that could be everywhere and nowhere, leading to an absence of time and space and its replacement by programmable interface.

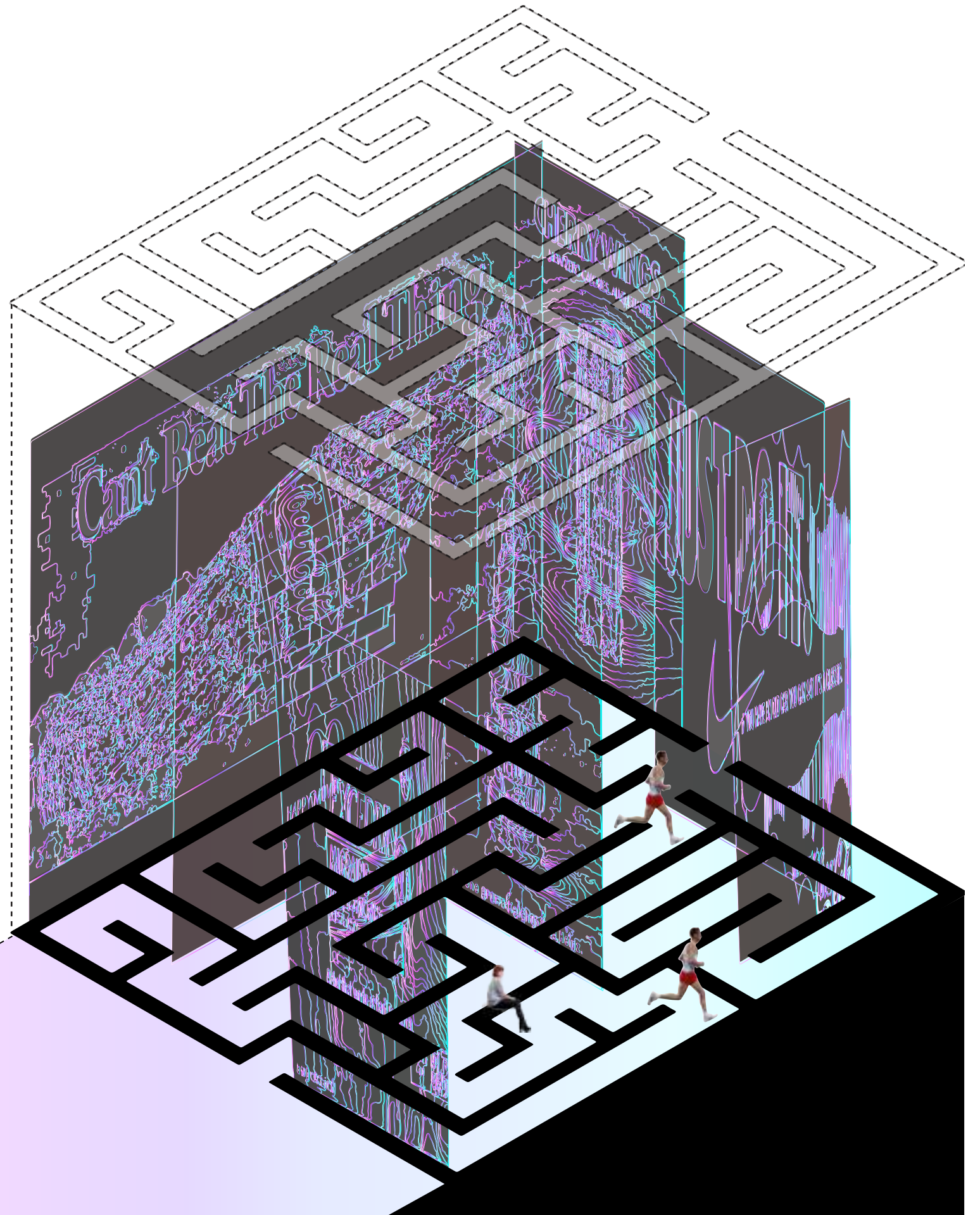
The project explores how design responds to spatial interaction in a community consumed by the digital interface. The project is *a monument, a place of consumption, an image, and a spectacle* that responds to the present condition of globalization, non-places, and its users called “society of spectacle”.



“ Real life is materially invaded by the contemplation of the spectacle and ends up absorbing it and aligning itself with it”- Guy Debord

We prioritize the projection of images. We act as advertisements, creating a version of ourselves that is highly curated. We Become the product.

“ The spectacle cannot be understood as a mere visual deception produced by mass-media technologies. It is a world-view that has actually been materialized.” - Guy Debord





The city has become a space of augmented survival. We do not just want consumer goods but we consider it necessary for our augmented survival. What is sold is not the product but the Image/Lifestyle/Appearance of the product. Our experience with consumerism is slow programming.

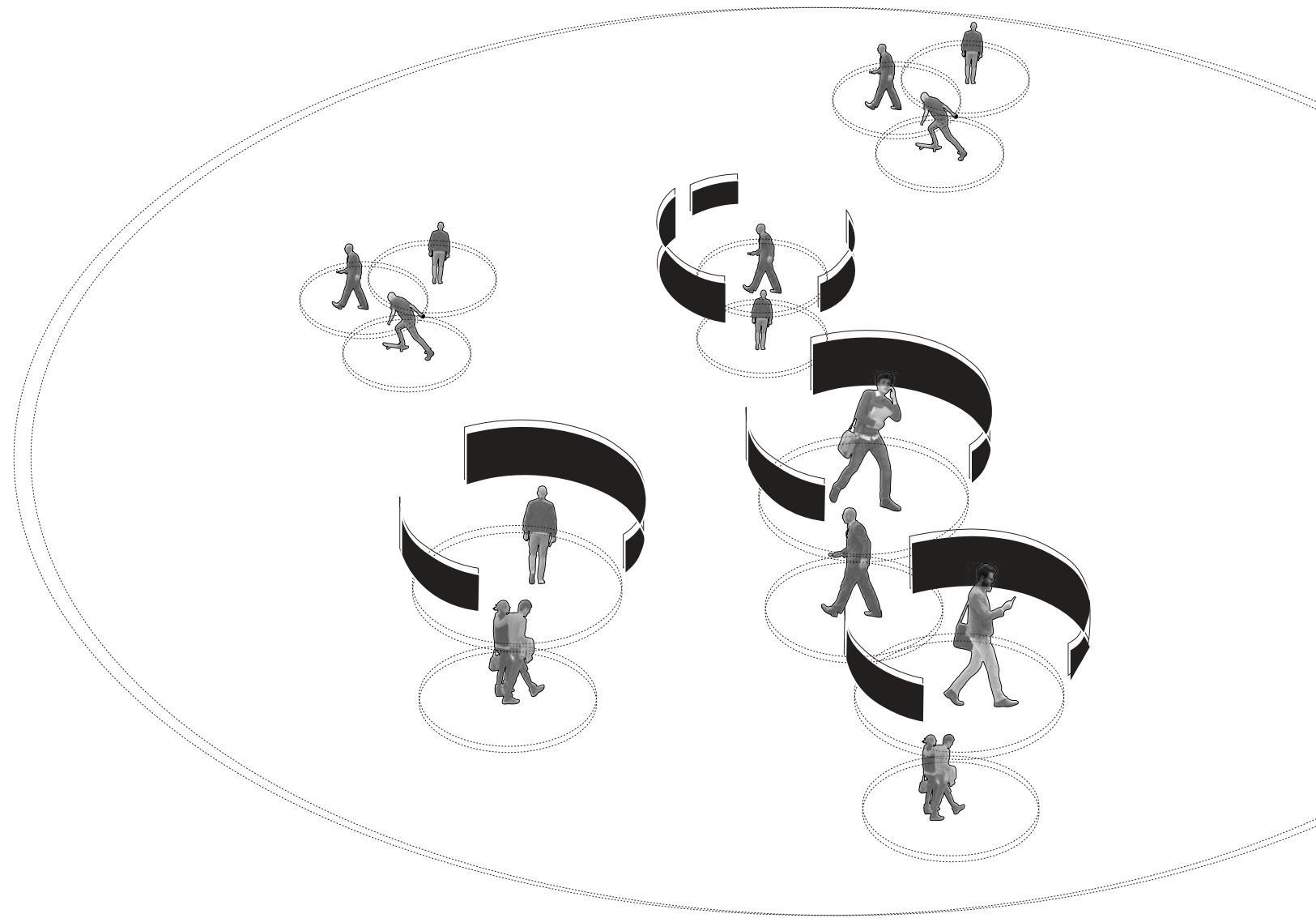
The image is Prioritized over the actual content.



# Design Proposal

The project investigates a new model of urban centrality. Exploring paradoxical conditions of physical and digital domains, the project proposes scenarios of hyper-condensed realities. Set within the context of Down Town Beirut - a site of religious importance, of cultural capital and a space with complex divided political history - this hybrid space serves as a new gated centrality that connects Beirut back to a global system.

As a rejection to traditional notion of culture, the hybrid space embraces the new realm of digital exposure, producing a series of cultural encounters and events as disruption, provoking and influencing the sub-consciousness of people. The intervention stimulates cultural reactions and materializes the spectacle. The project communicates the surreal city of information, data, and assumed transparency. The surreal city of the future consists of a network of data where interaction almost neutralizes place-boundedness. The present is a compilation of moments that transcend time and space.



**“Surrounded by these *imaginary stations* that feed reality,** the energy of the real to a city whose mystery is precisely that of no longer being anything but **a network of incessant unreal circulation-** a city of incredible proportions- but without space without dimension. As much as electrical and atomic power stations, as much as cinema studios, this city, which is **no longer anything but an immense scenario** and a perpetual pan shot, needs this old imaginary like a sympathetic nervous system made up of childhood **signals and faked fantasies.**”

- *Simulacrum and Simulation, Jean Baudrillard*

### **III. Site: Beirut Central District**

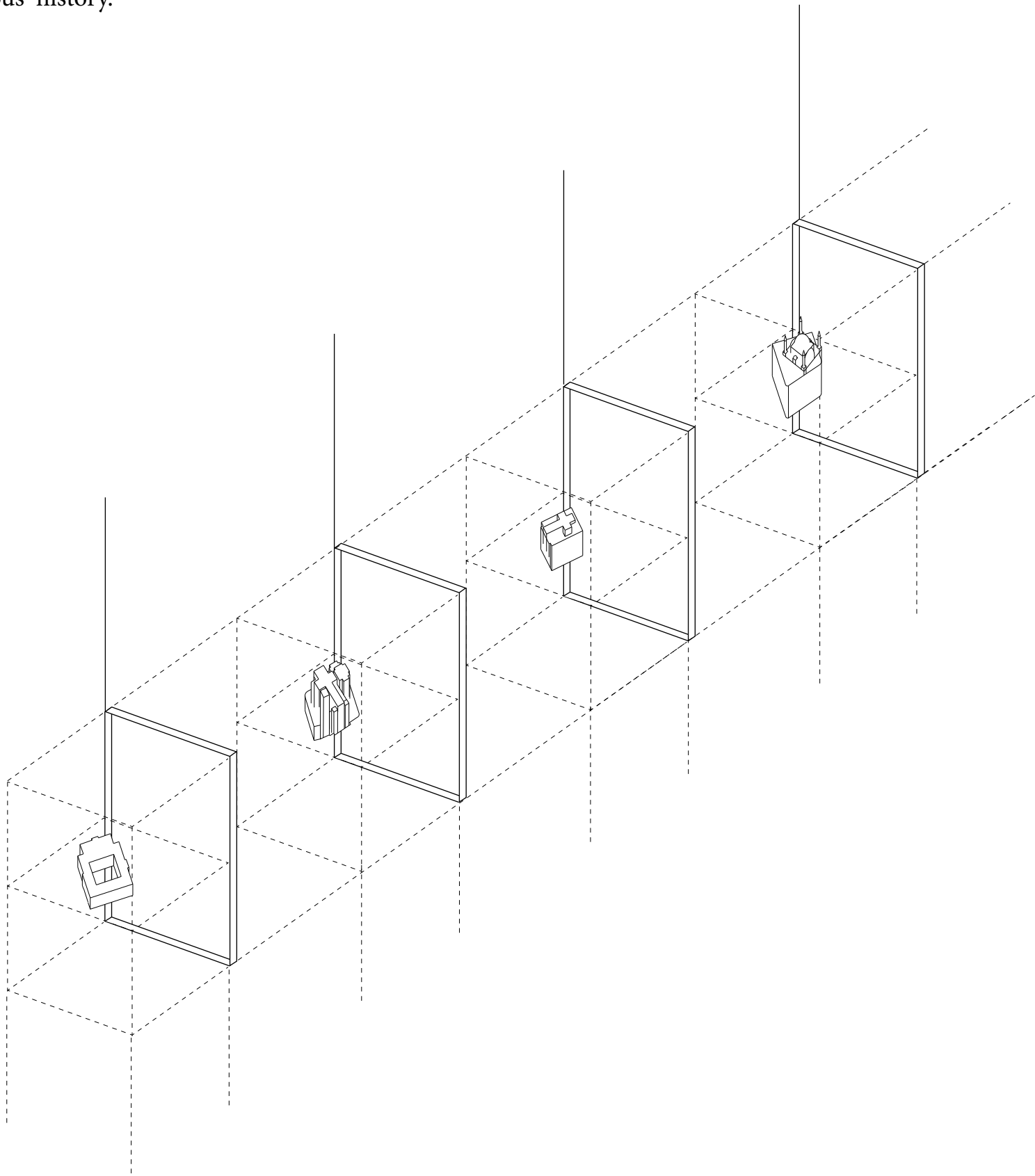
Operating across physical and virtual realms, the project is a new urban monument that starts to shape the morphology of the city. A series of folly structures extended into interactive virtual environments through digital projections. Twisting their traditional role as markers in the landscape, these follies become junctions between virtual and physical spaces that grow and change in response to movement of visitors in the city.





- Aerial shot showing the evolution of Place d' Etoile.

-Diagram showing the different typologies on site. Site is a center of political, social, and religious history.

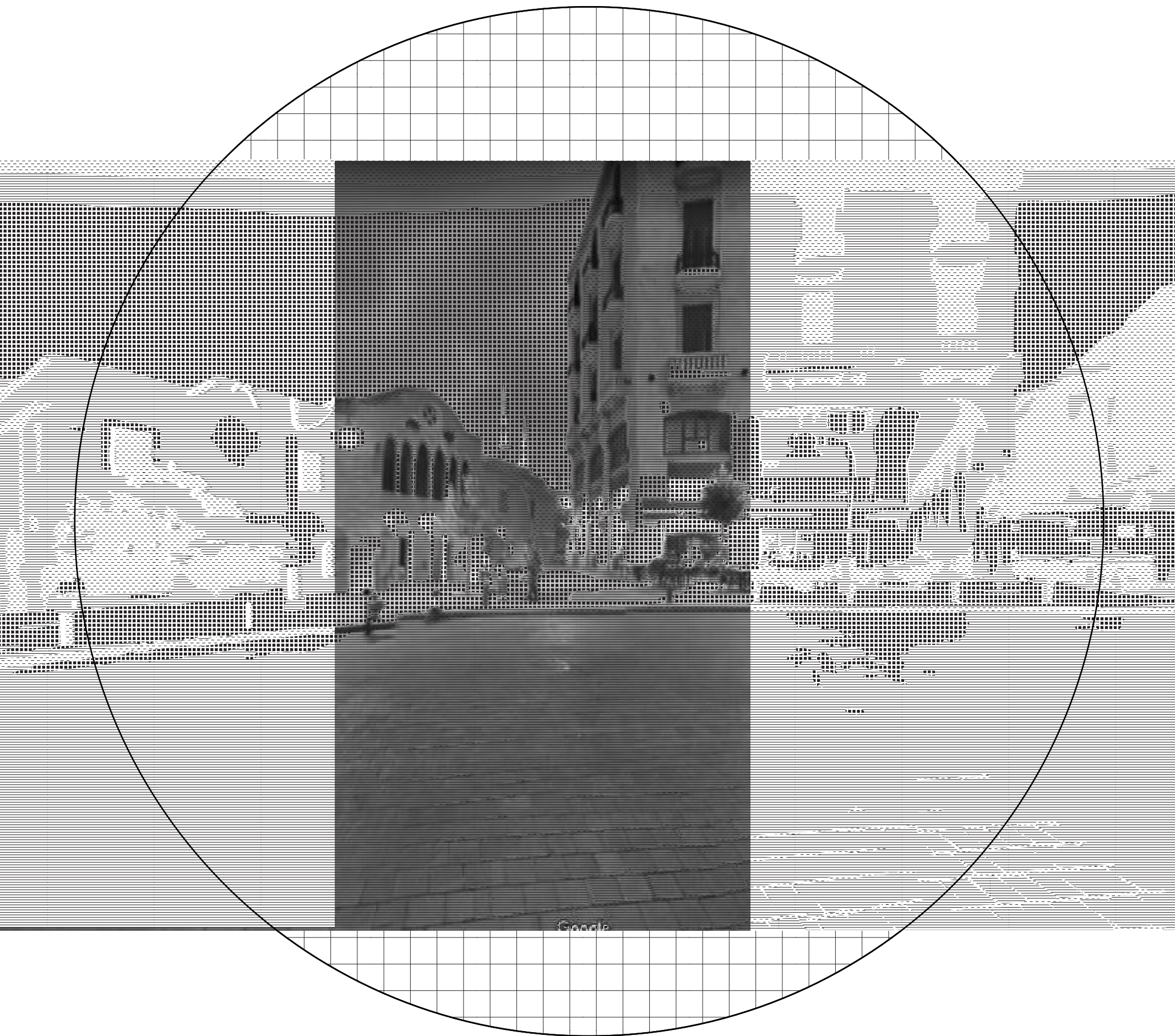


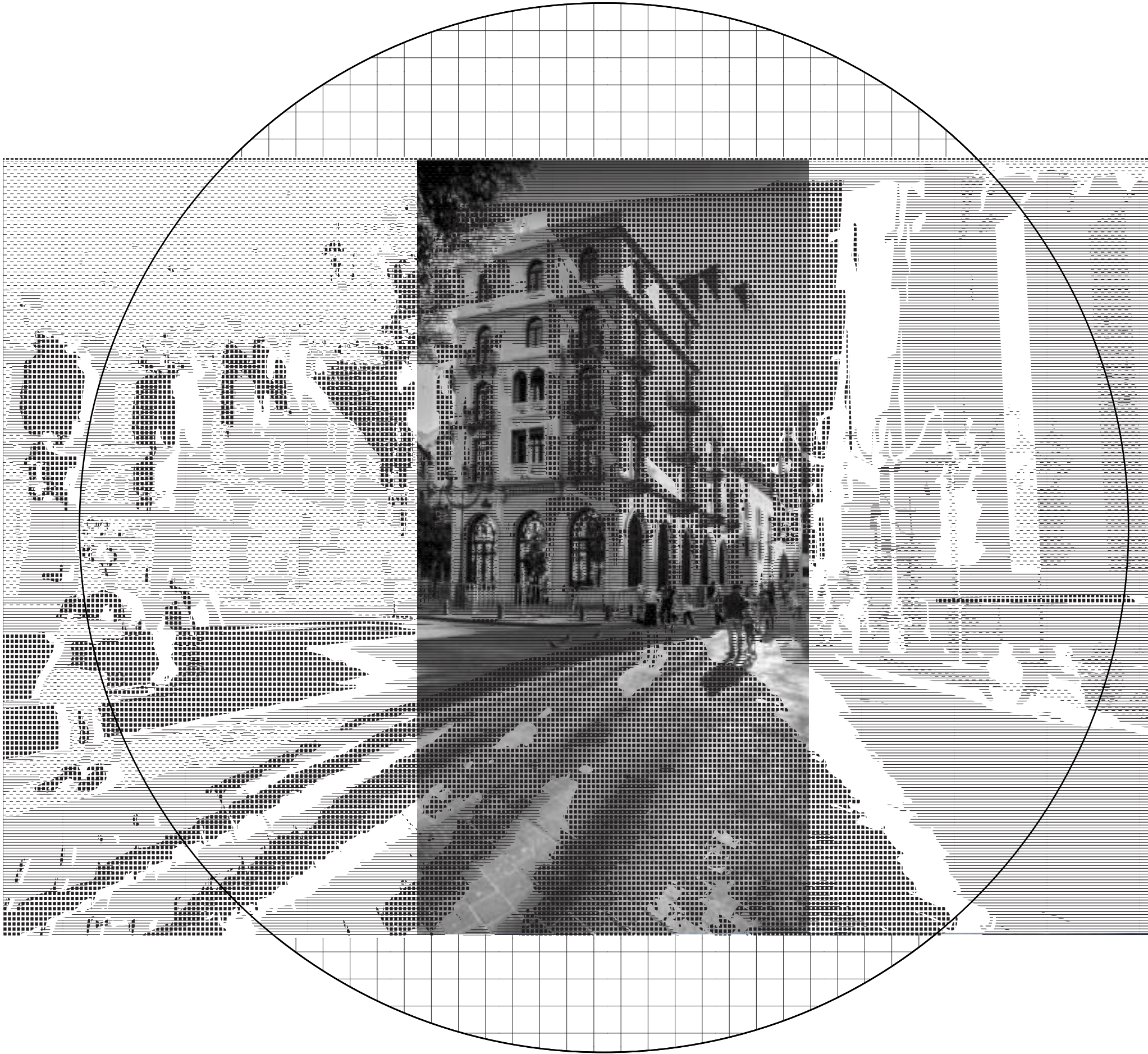










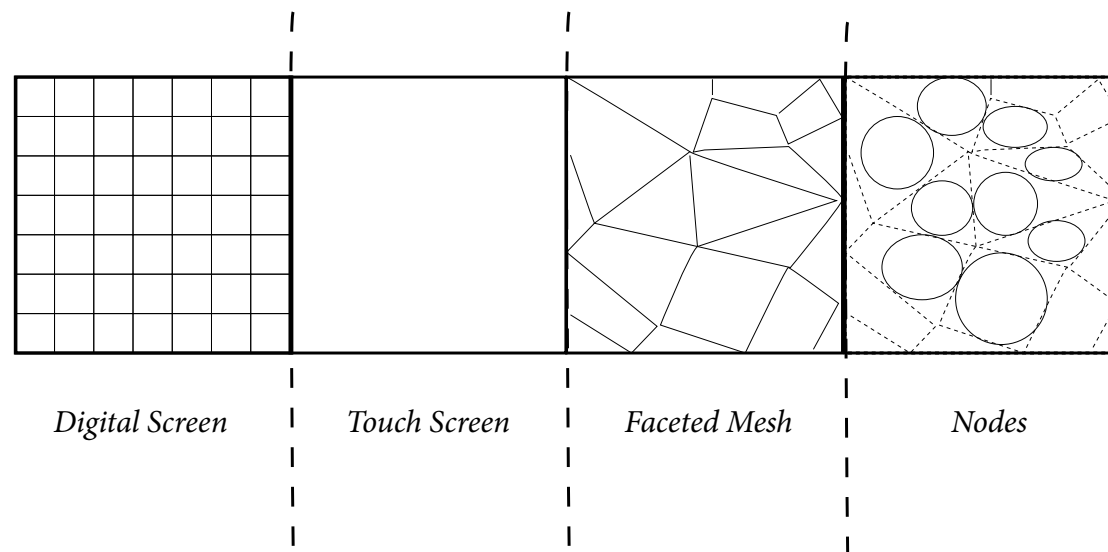


## **IV. Design Approach**

The Design is a process of Exploring edge and boundary conditions and understanding the morphology of urban space. It is a process of juxtaposing the virtual with the physical space. Extending the reading of the site as a cyborg, the image performs modernity. The image is a commodity and an object to be consumed. The architectural interventions investigate the layer of performativity in connection to the image. Data and space has created a new logic of order.

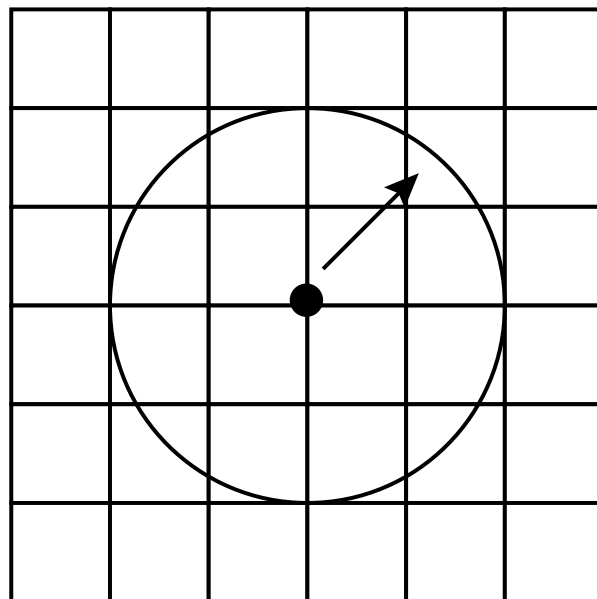
Key words: Urban optics, phantasmagoria, repository, city and memory.

## DECONSTRUCTING THE SURFACE: LAYERS OF IMMERSION

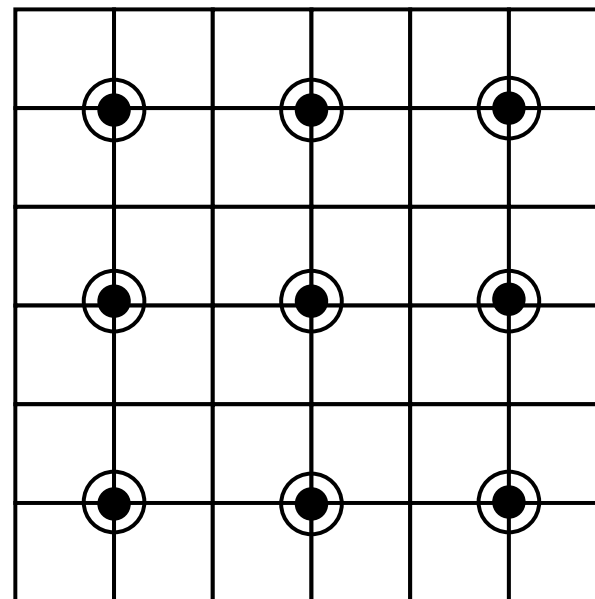


## CENTRAL VERSUS DECENTRALIZED URBAN ORGANIZATION

### STRATEGY 1: CENTRAL/BOUNDARY



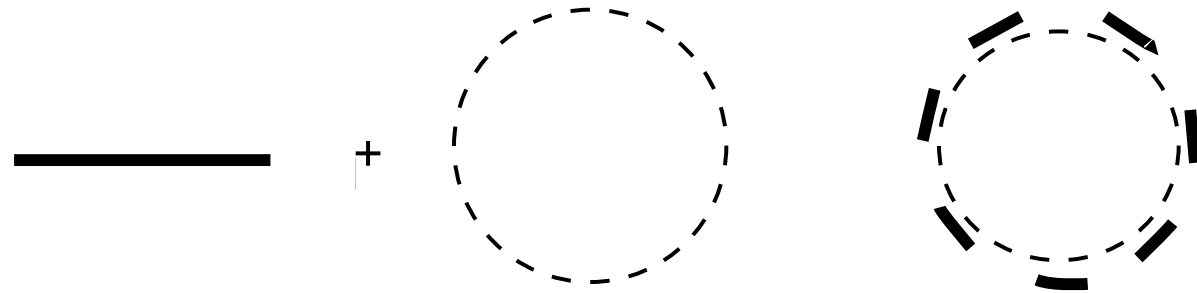
### STRATEGY 2: FRAGMENTATION



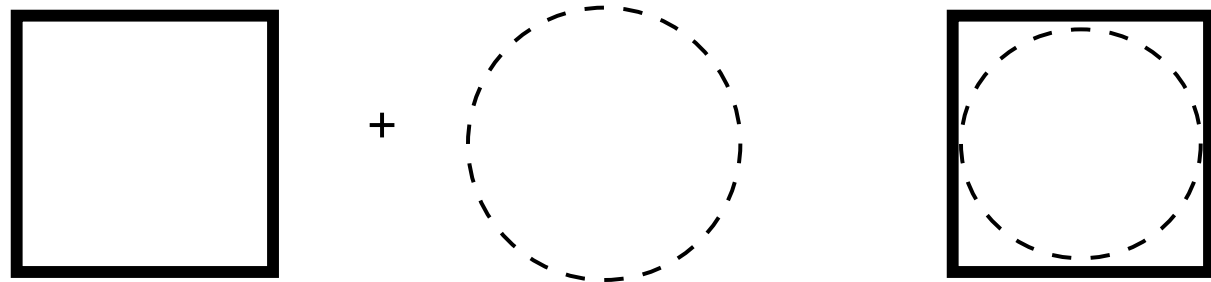
**ARCHITECTURE AND THE IMMERSIVE CITY:**  
*SPACE MAKING IN THE VIRTUAL REALM*

*CONCEPTUAL STRATEGY:*

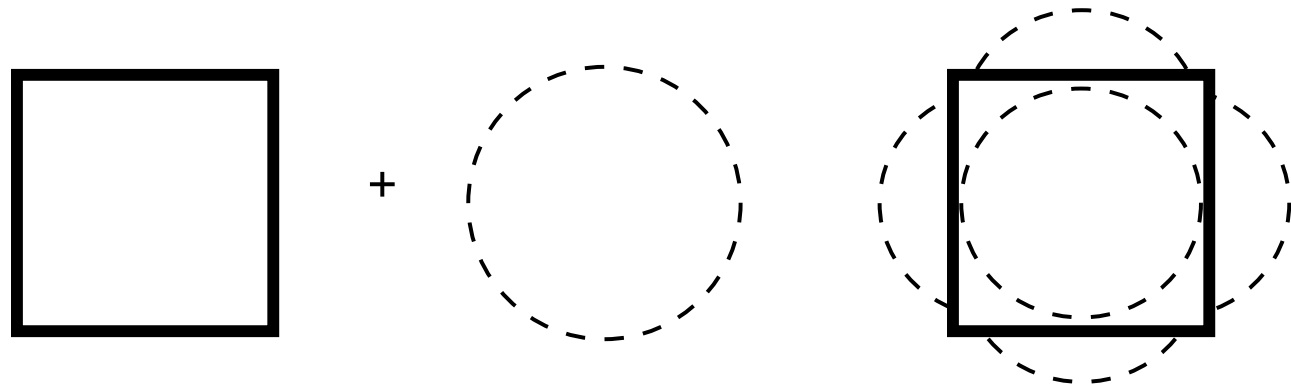
*Billboard*



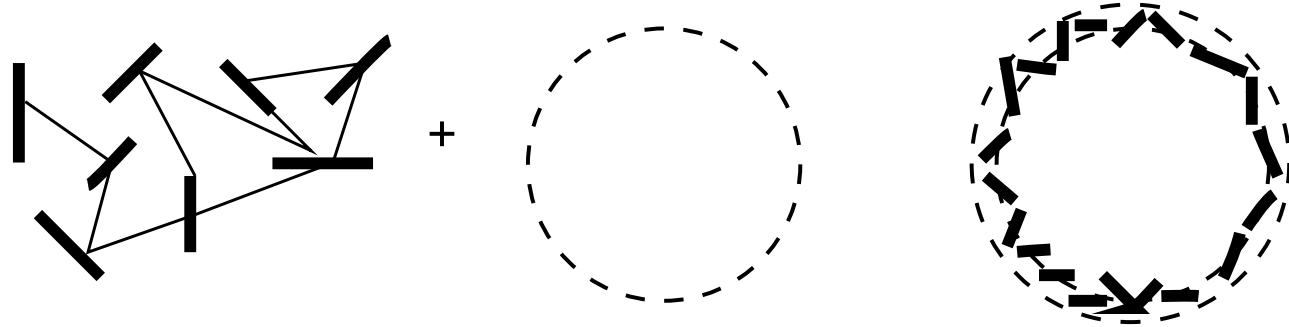
*Pod*



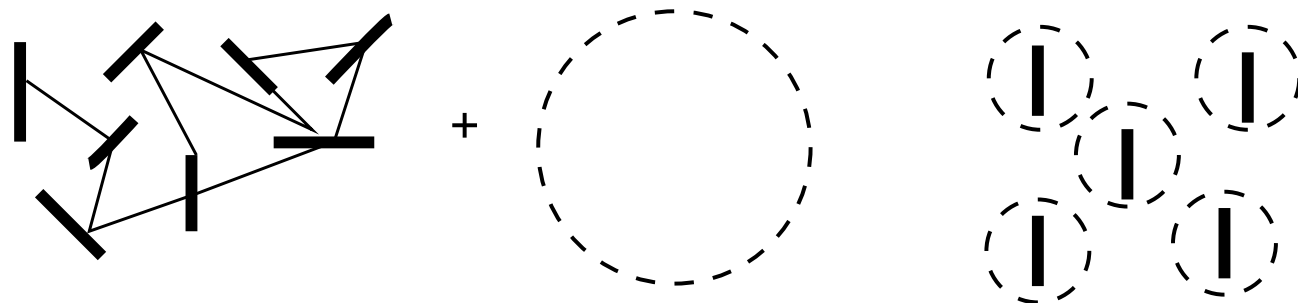
*Memory Palace*



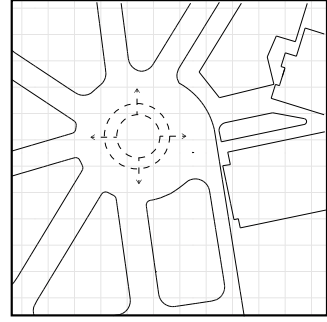
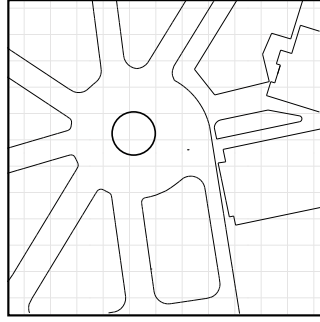
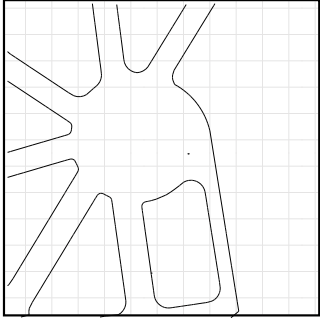
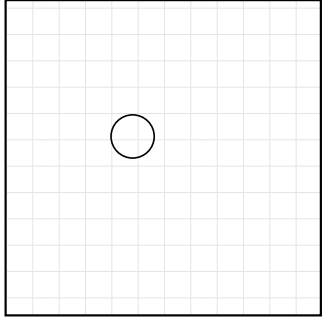
*Bloom*



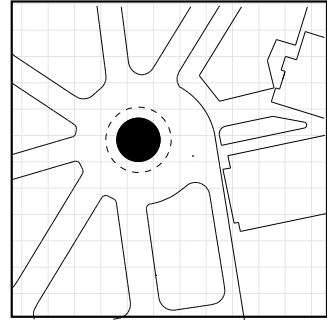
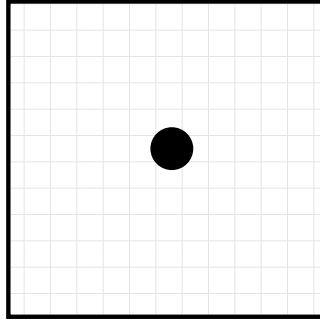
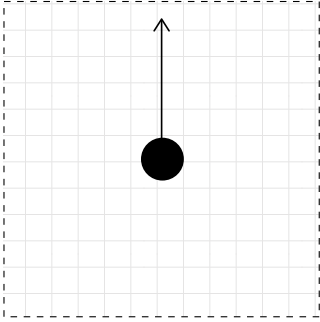
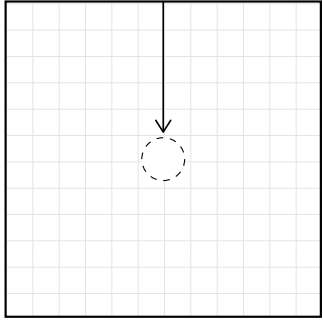
*Cloud*



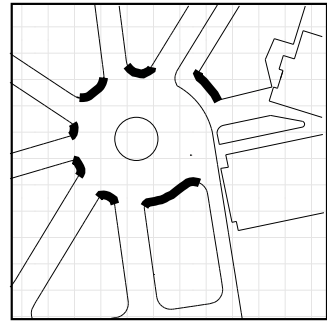
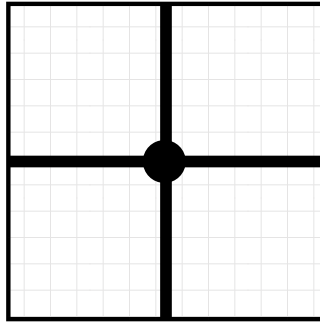
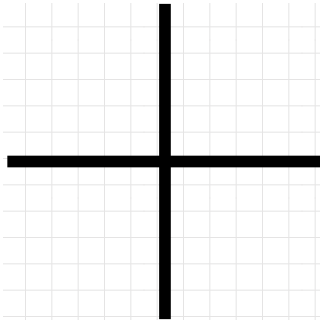
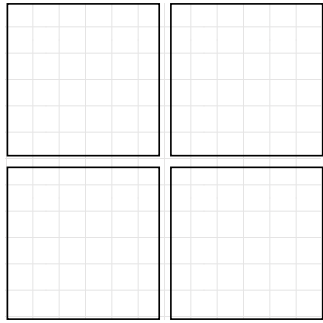
*Site Organization*



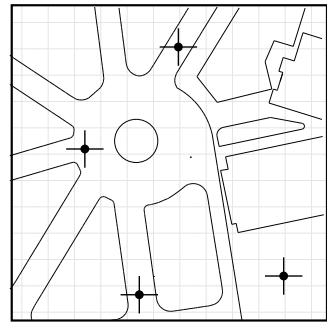
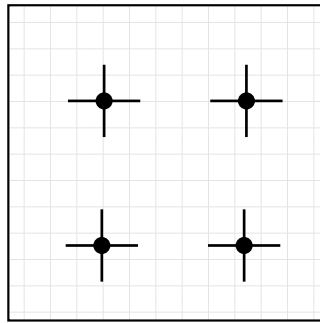
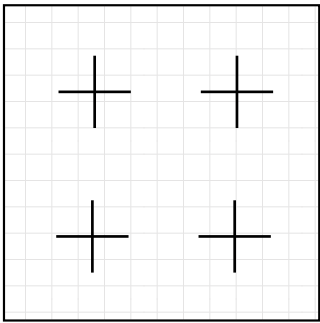
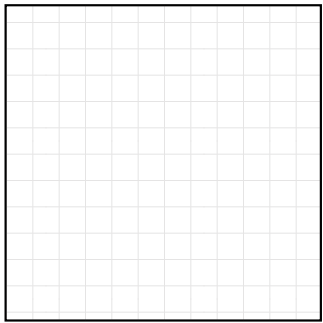
*Strategy 1: Center*



*Strategy 2: Peri-center*

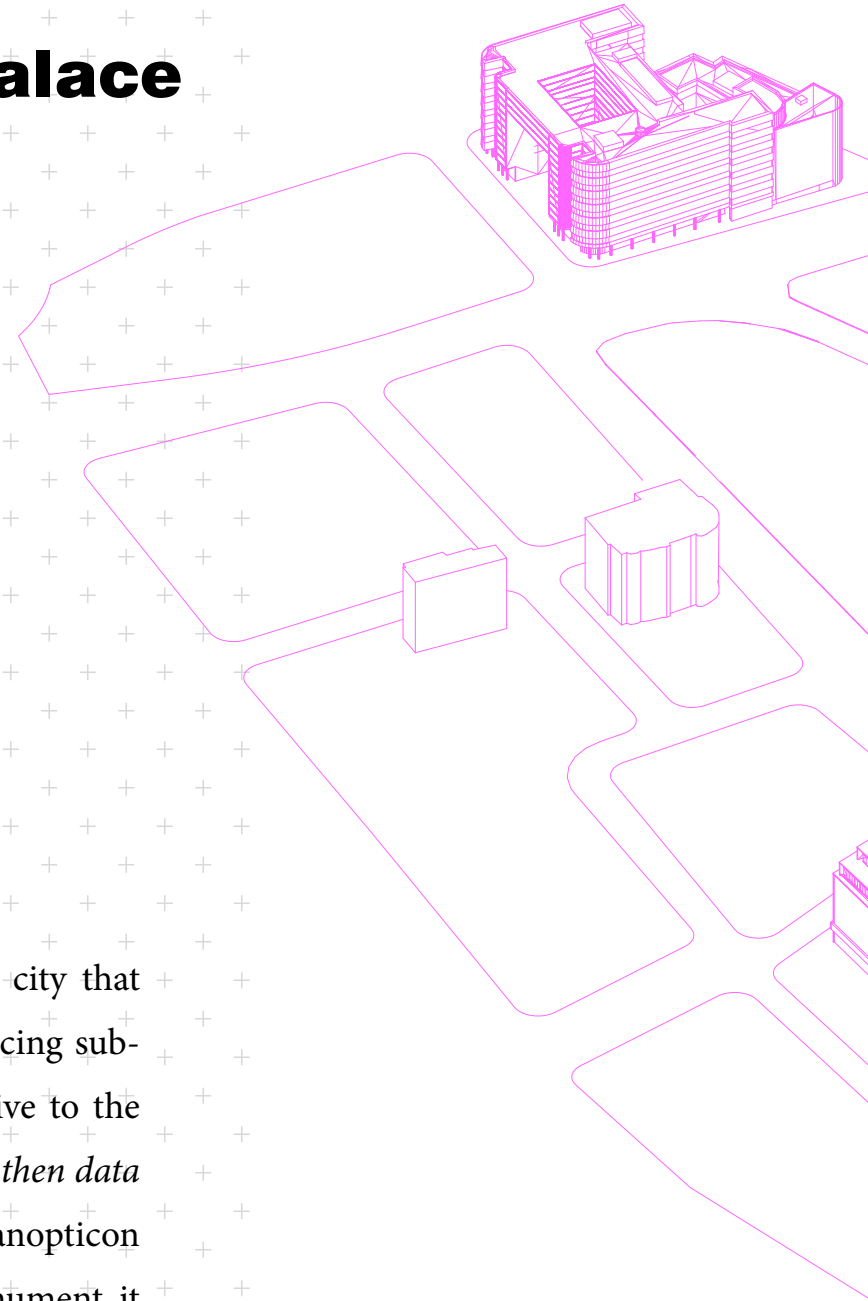


*Strategy 3: Epicenter*

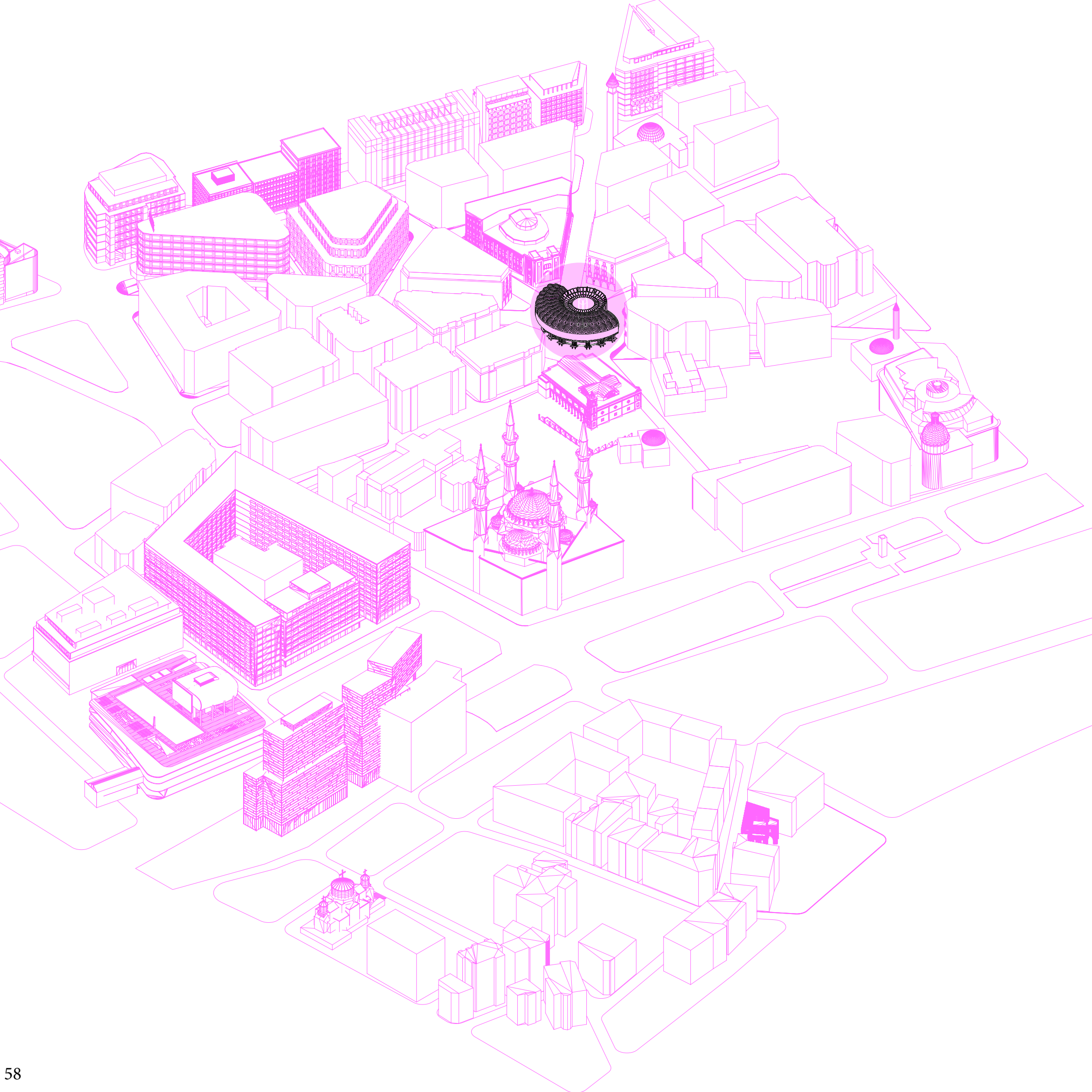


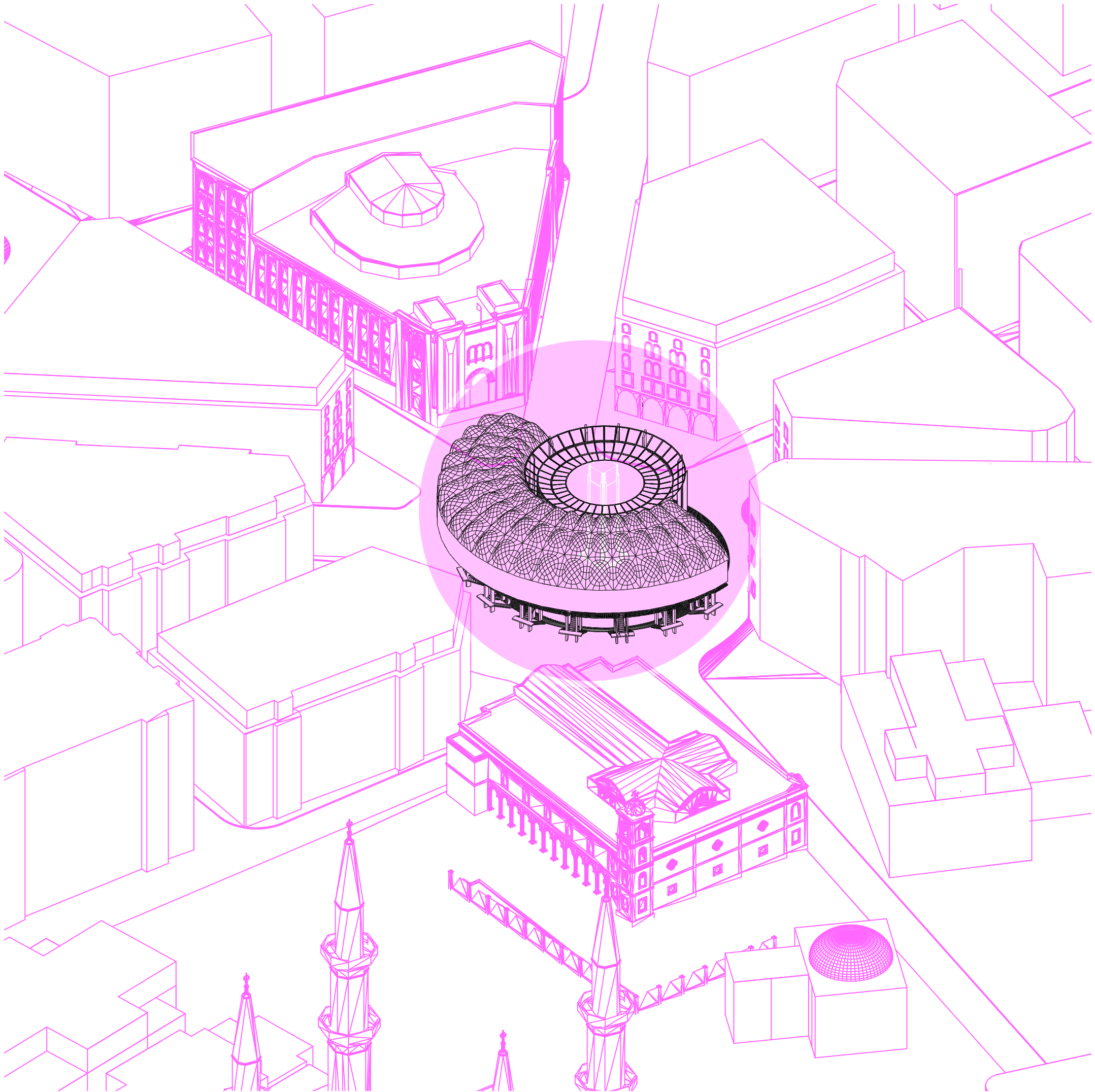


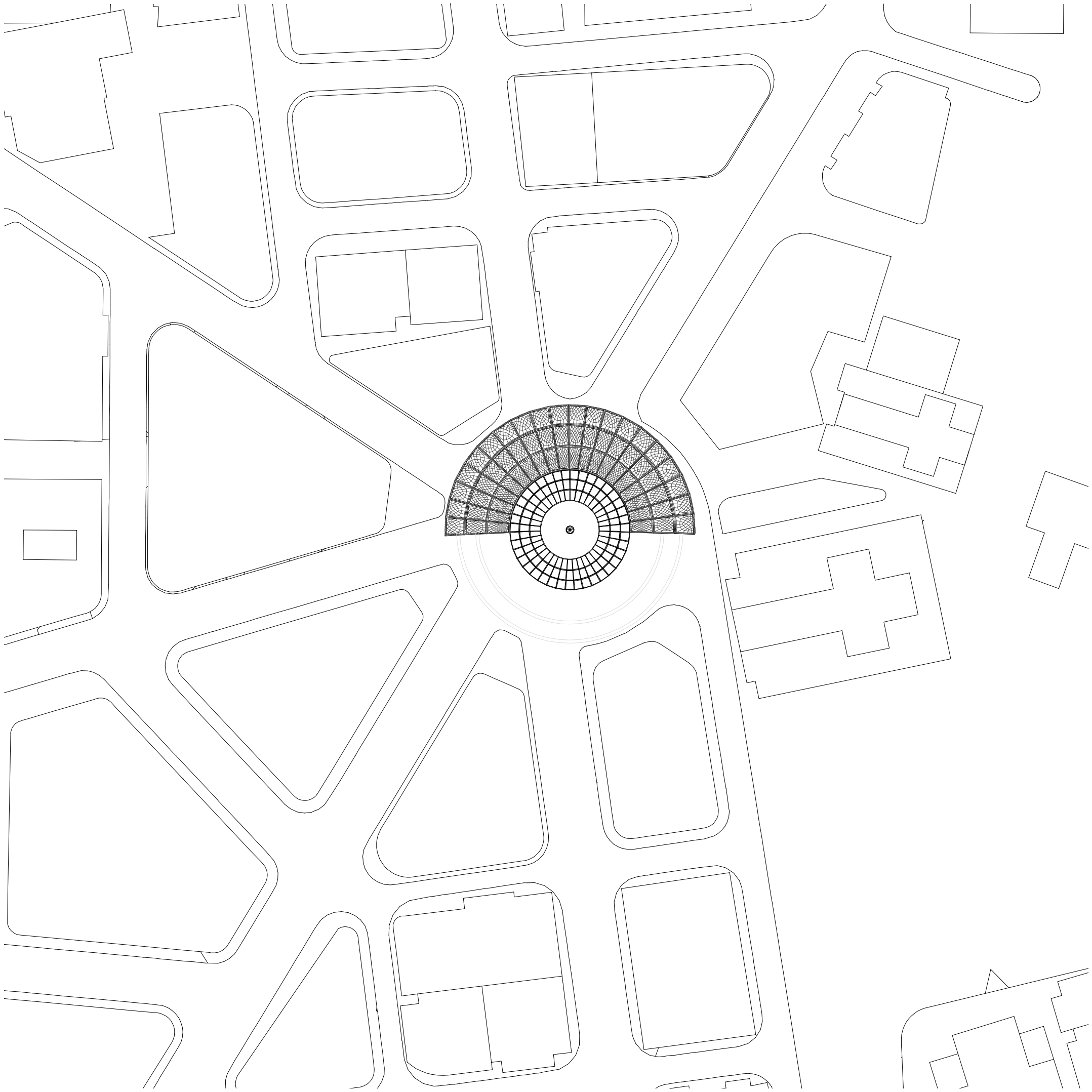
## Object 1: Memory Palace

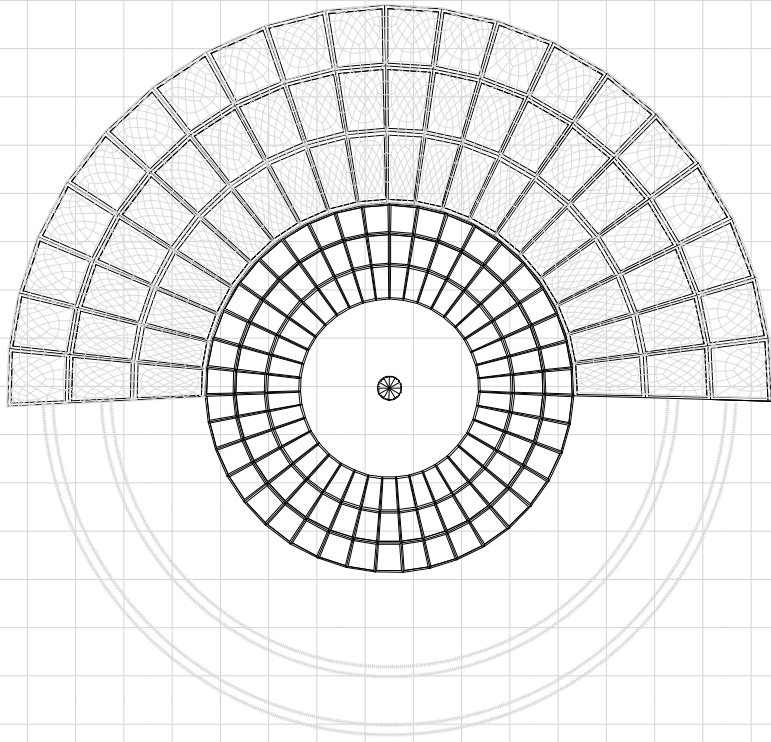


Memory Palace is a new monument in the city that crystallizes memory in public space by replacing subject by programmable objects that are reactive to the present. *If writing is the repression of memory then data is the death of memory.* Memory Palace is a Panopticon that places data at the center. An inverted monument, it is a space of absent memory.

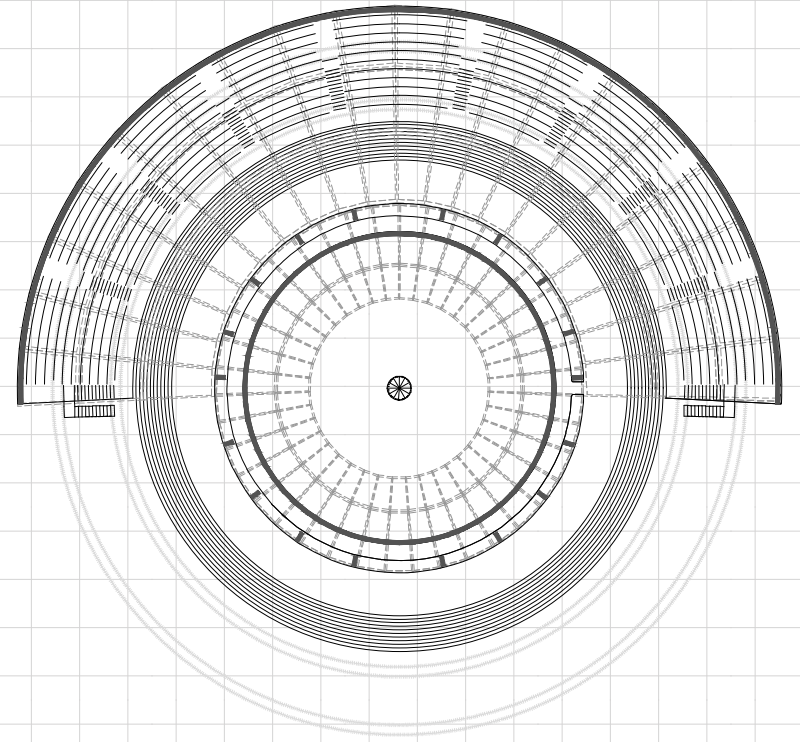




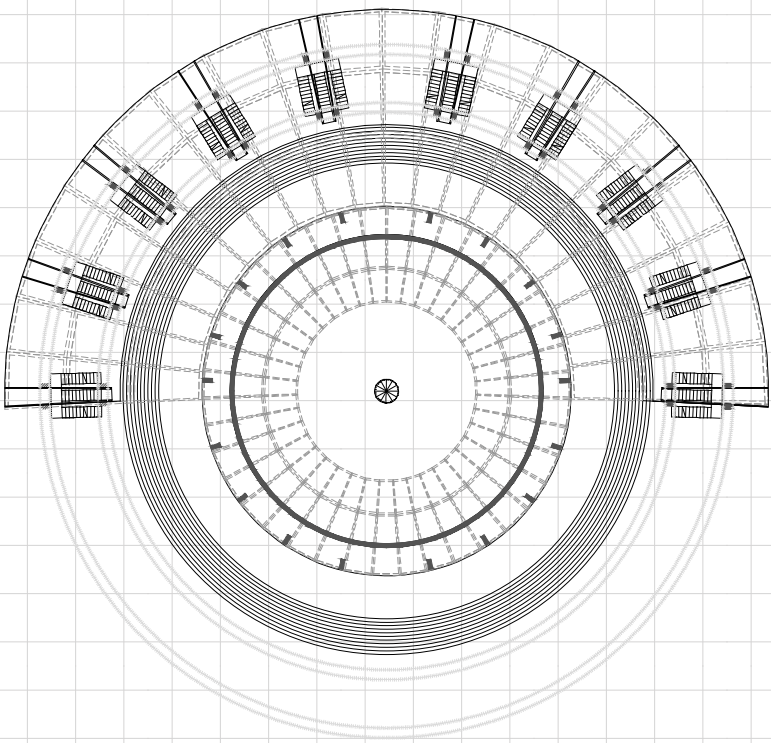




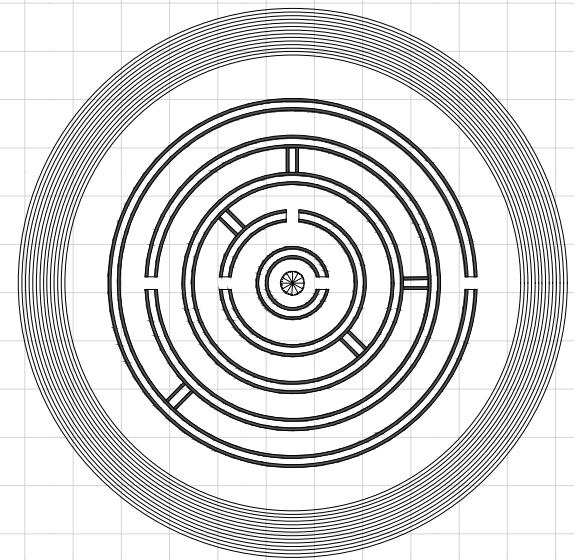
Top View



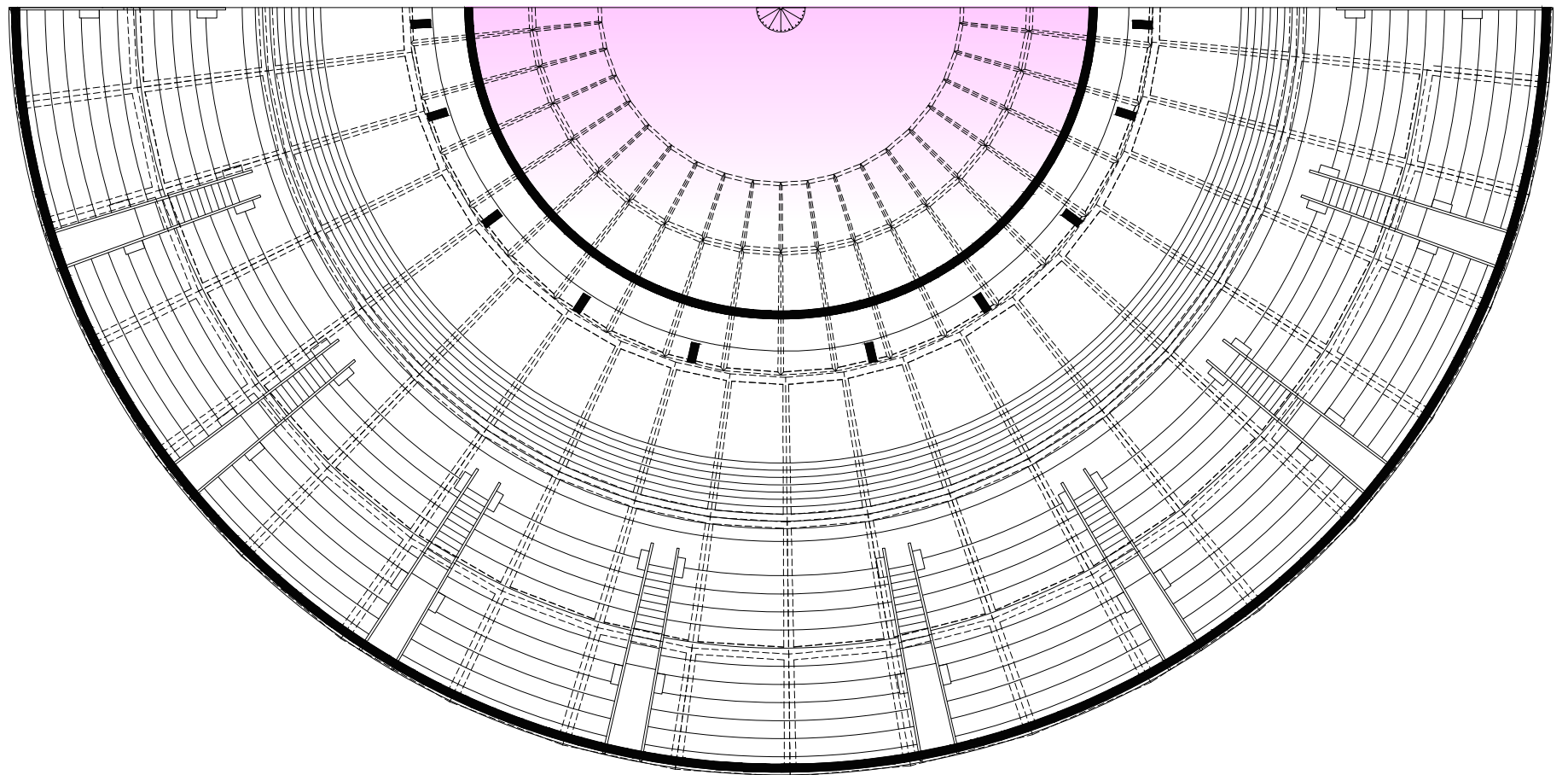
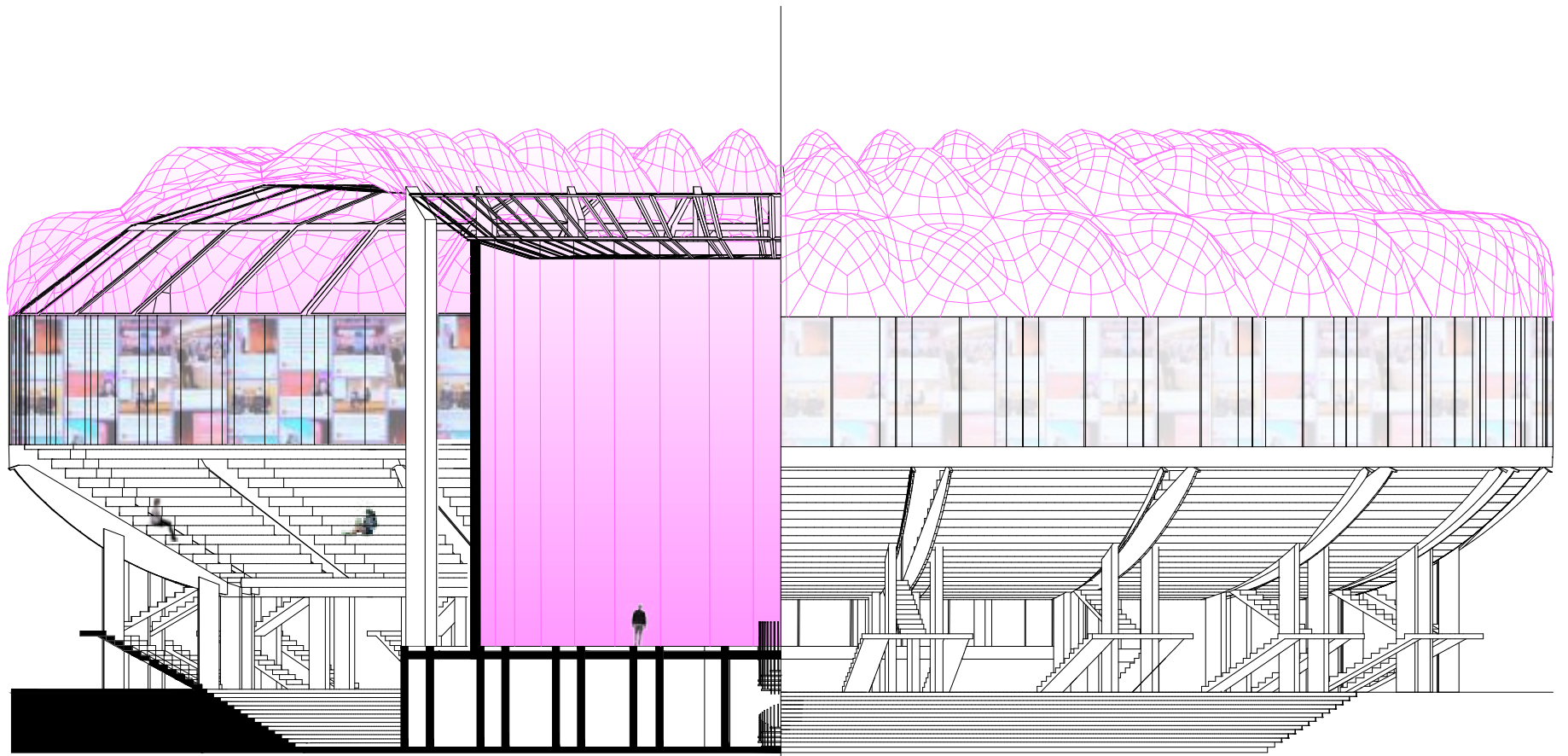
Level 3

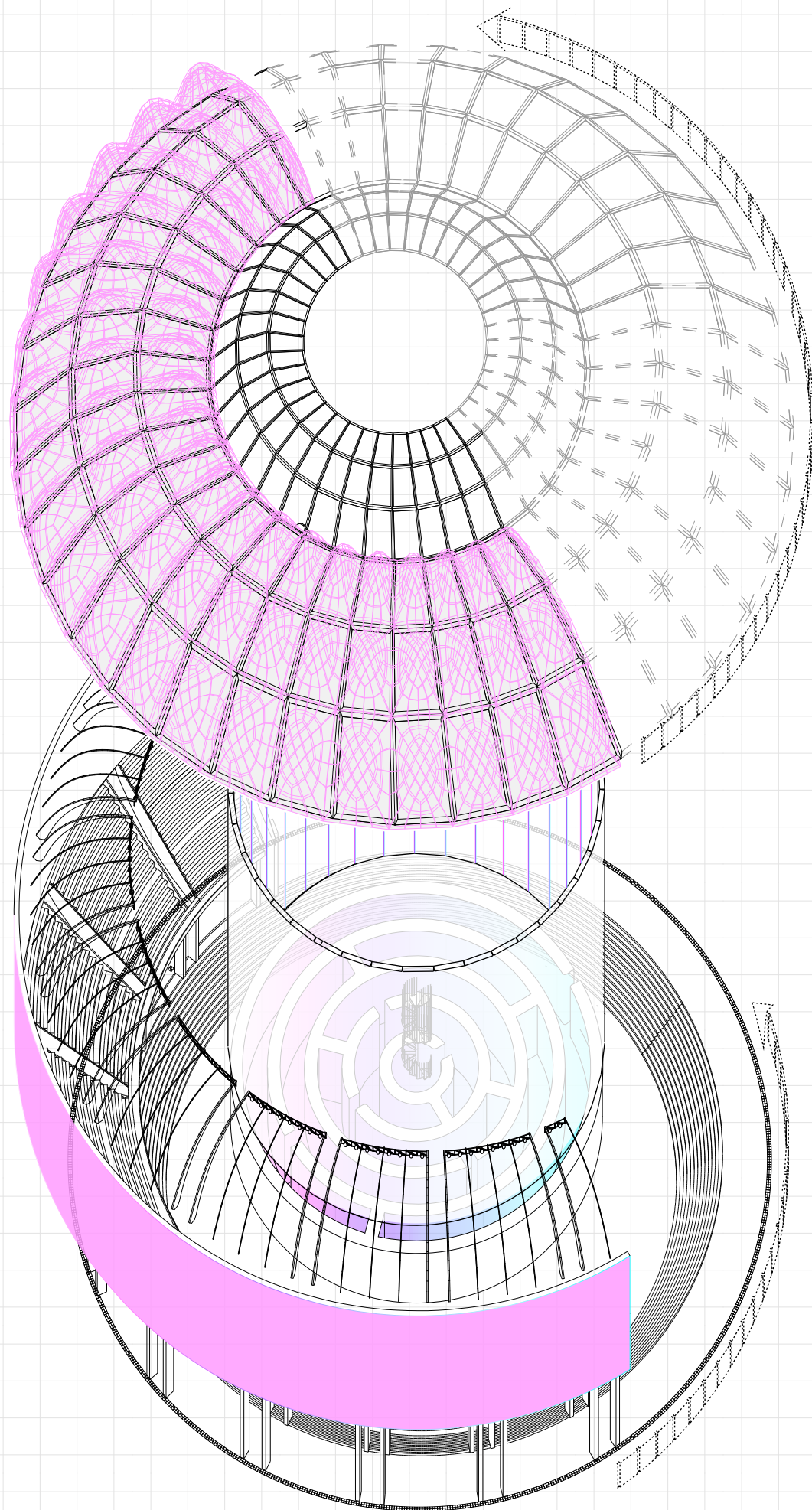


Level 2



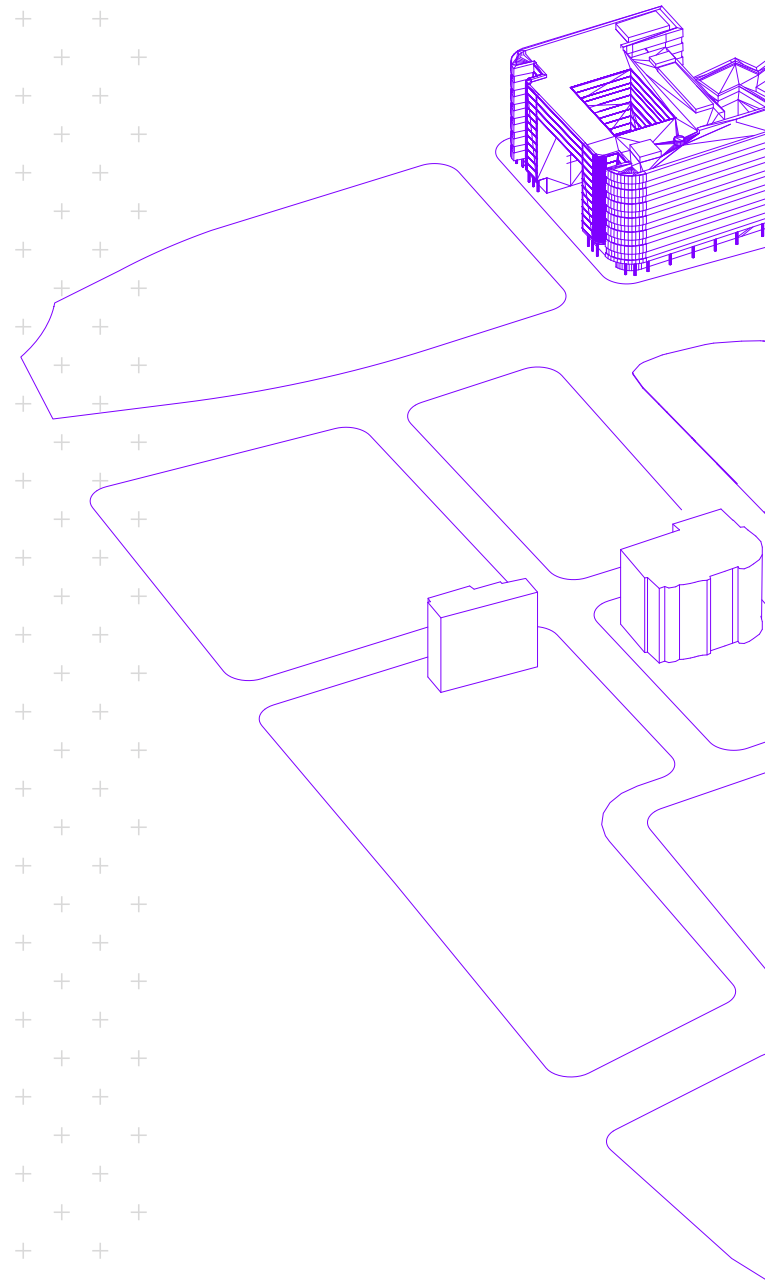
Level 1



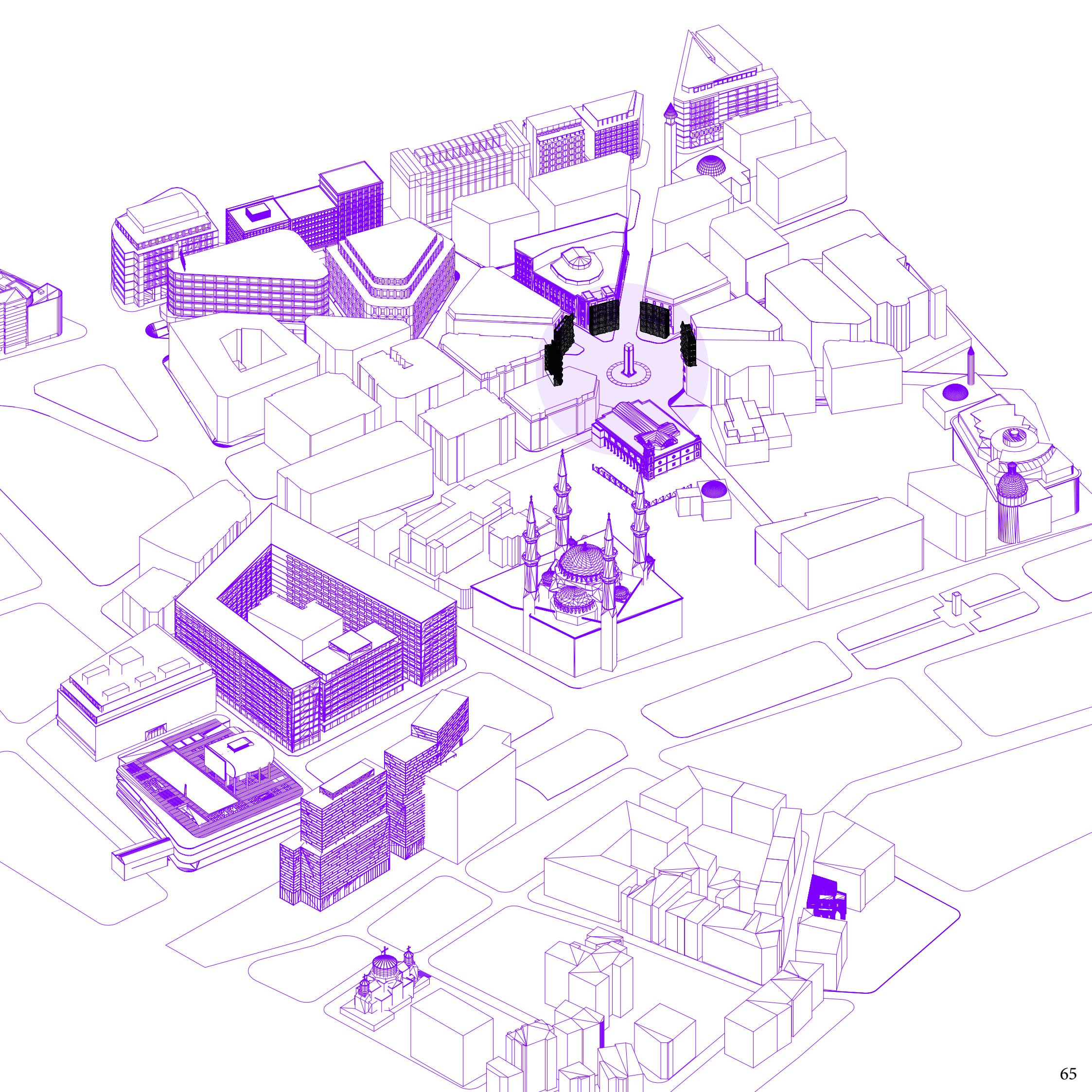


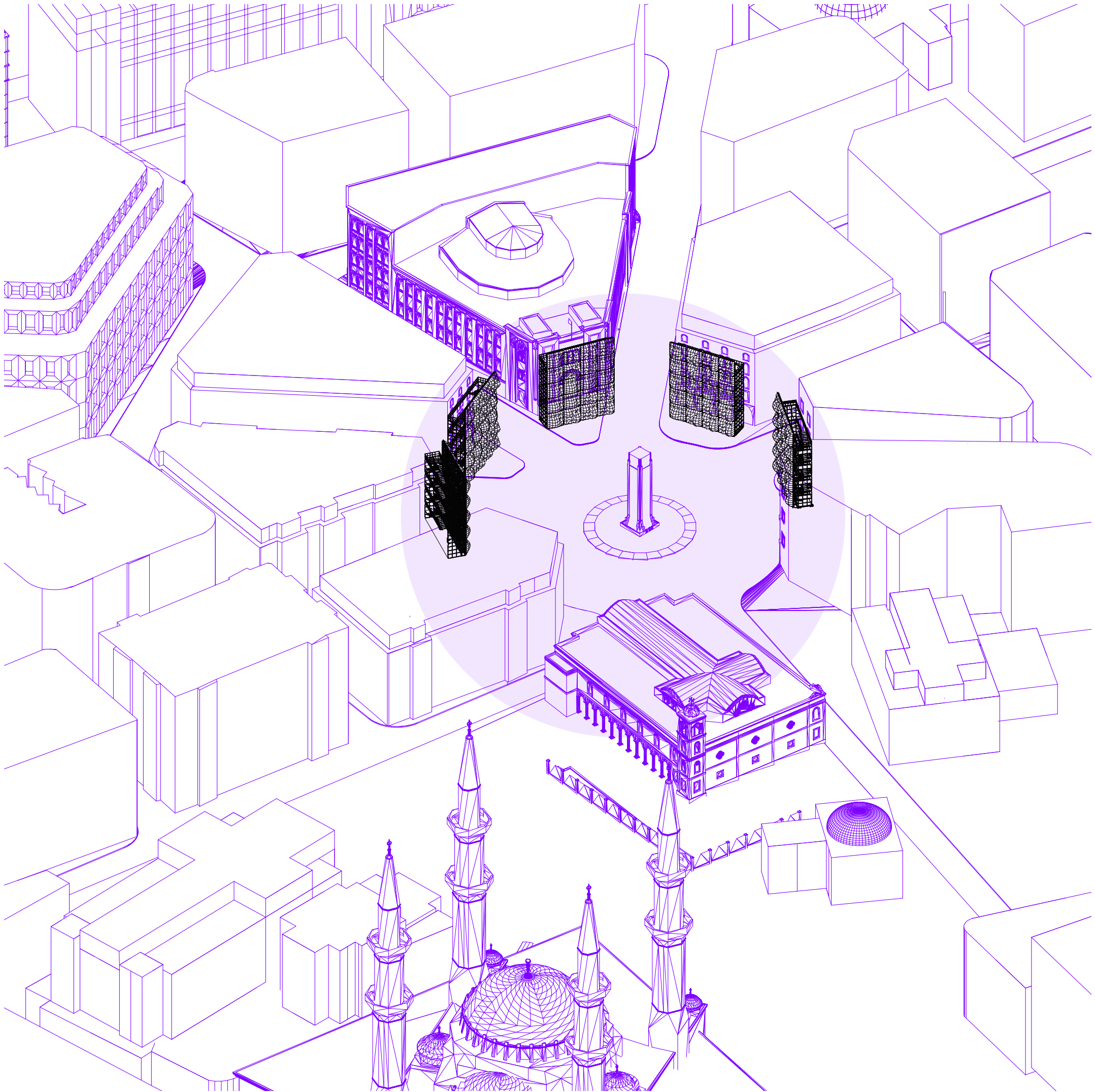
## Object 2: Billboard

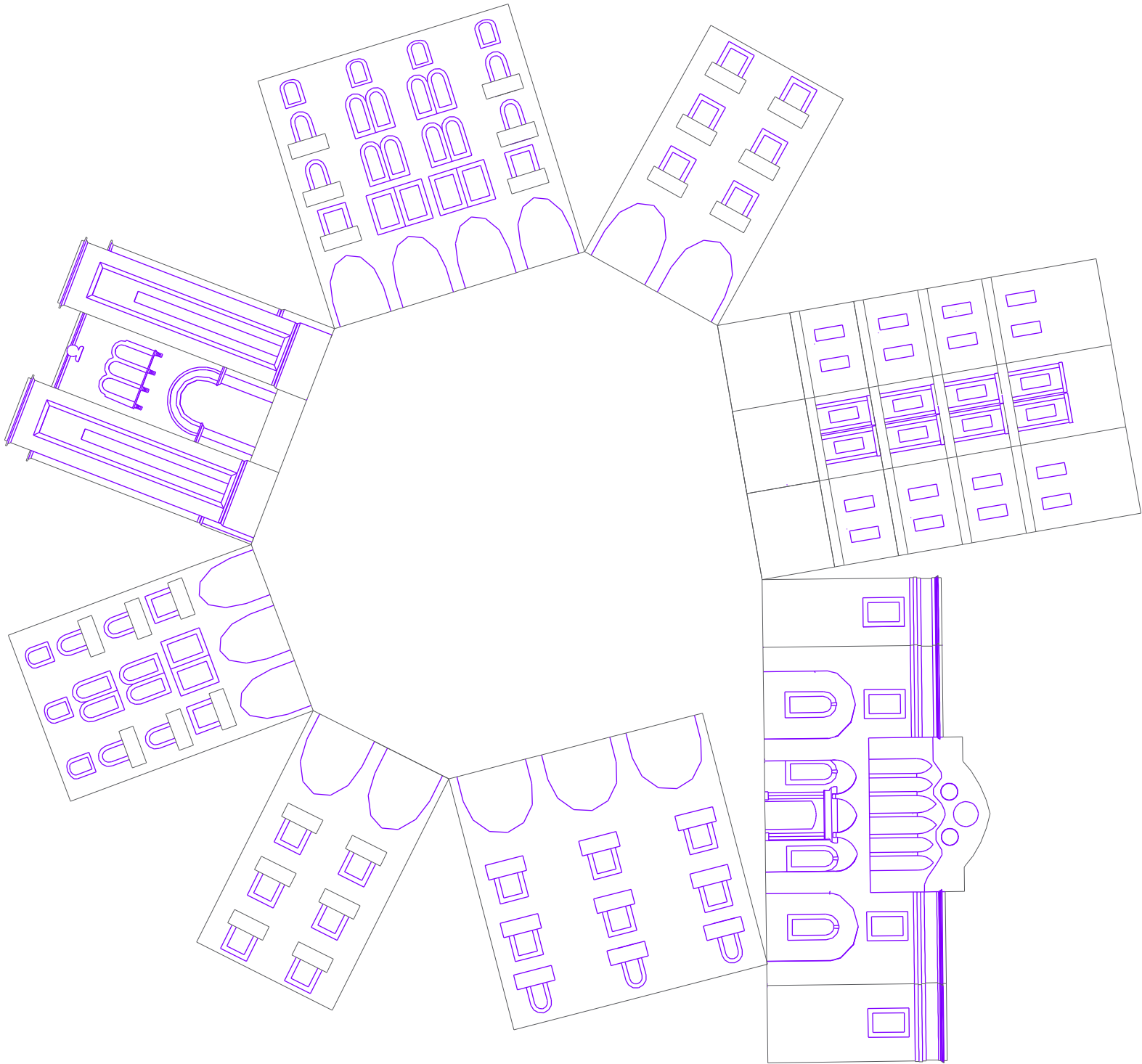
Billboard arena is a new center in the city tackles the idea of *Facadism*, creating a new skin for the building that works like a derogatype photo with a negative and a positive face that alternates. The facade of the building is programmed to stimulate cultural reactions and become *a canvas of expression*.

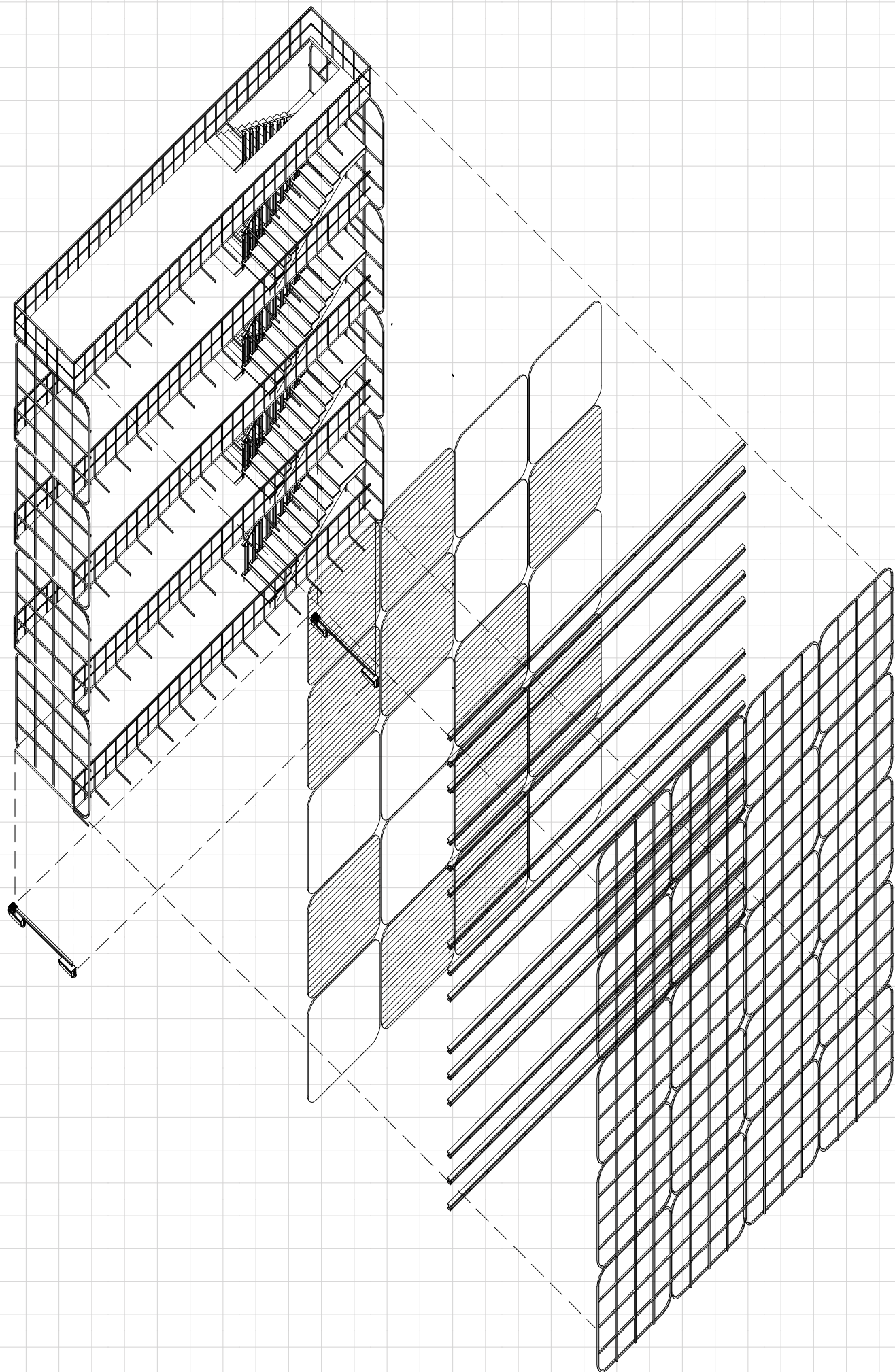


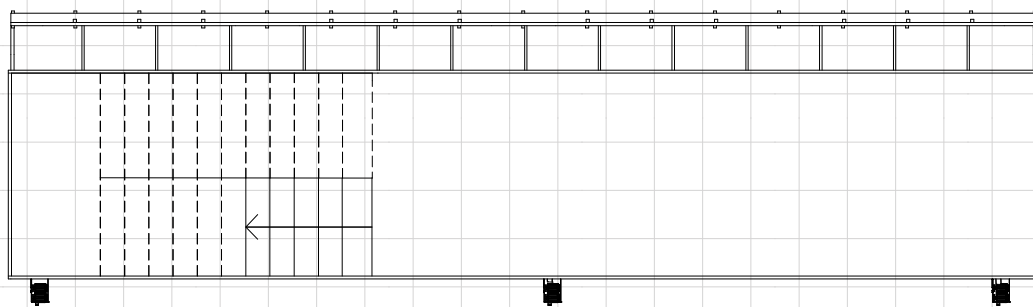
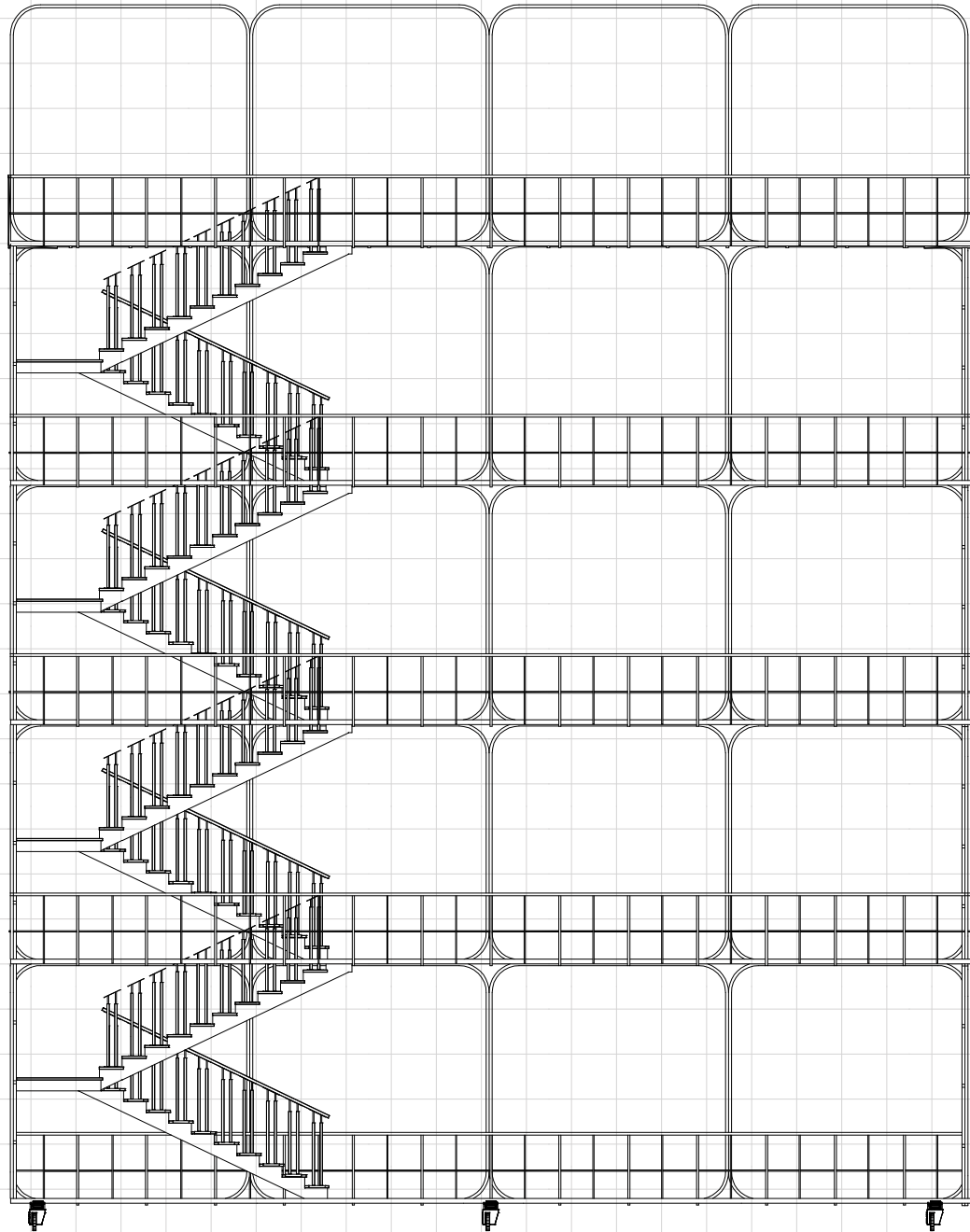


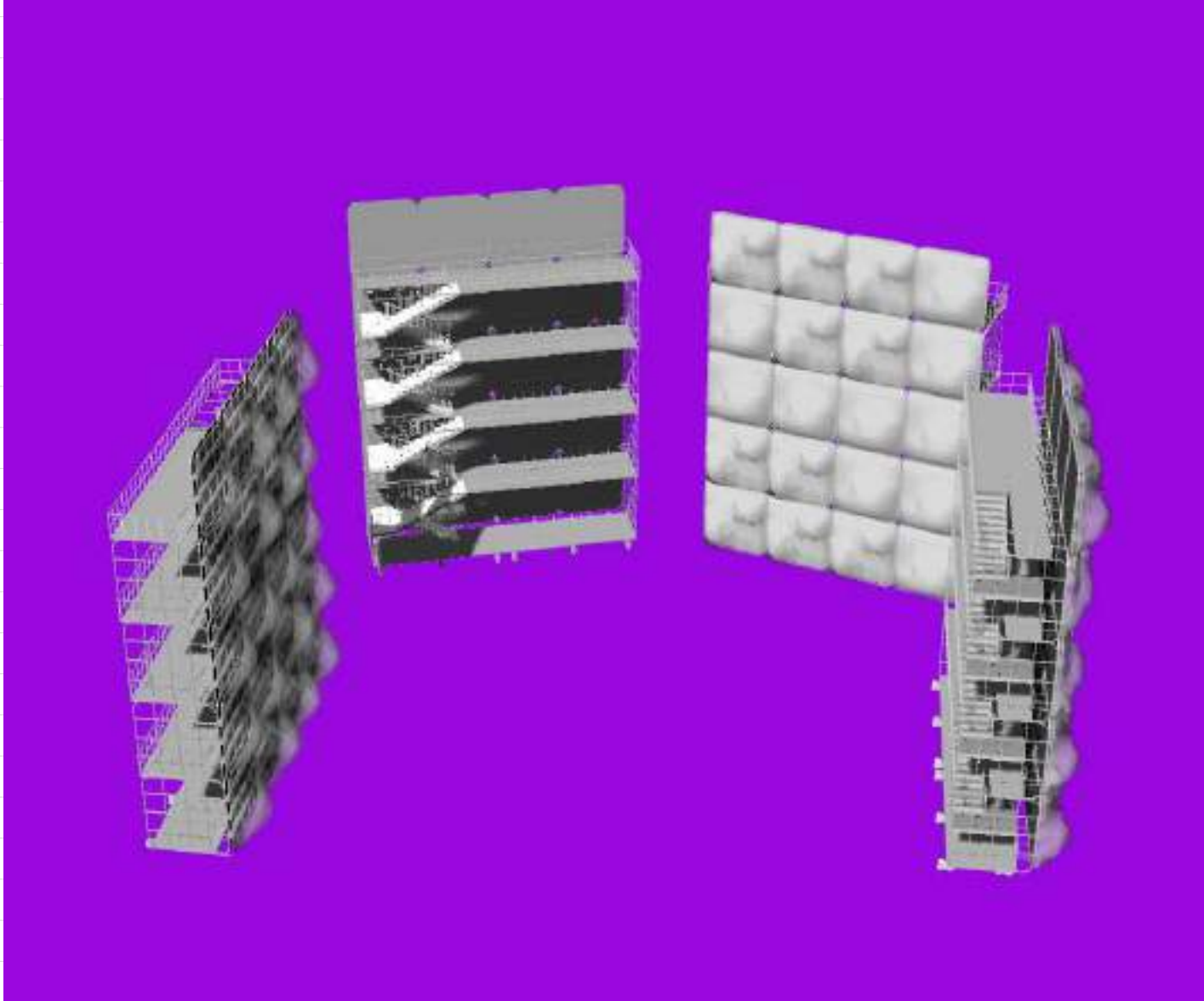




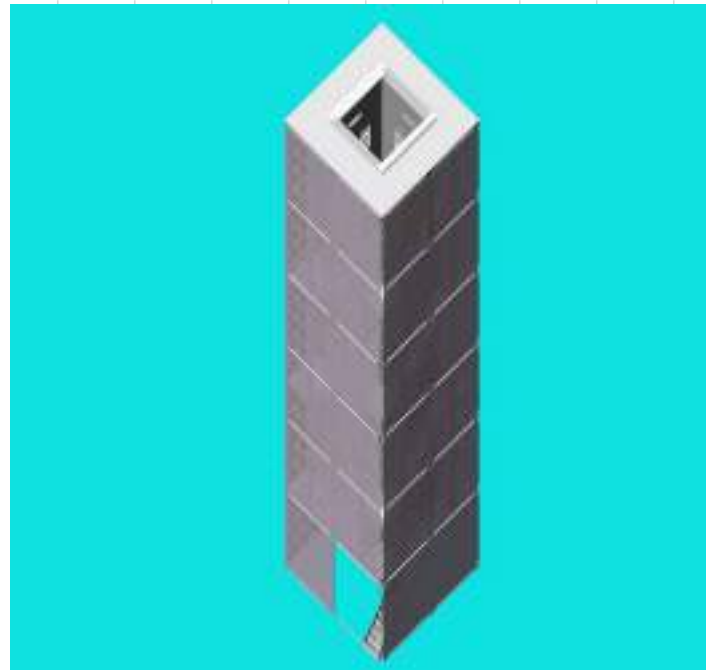






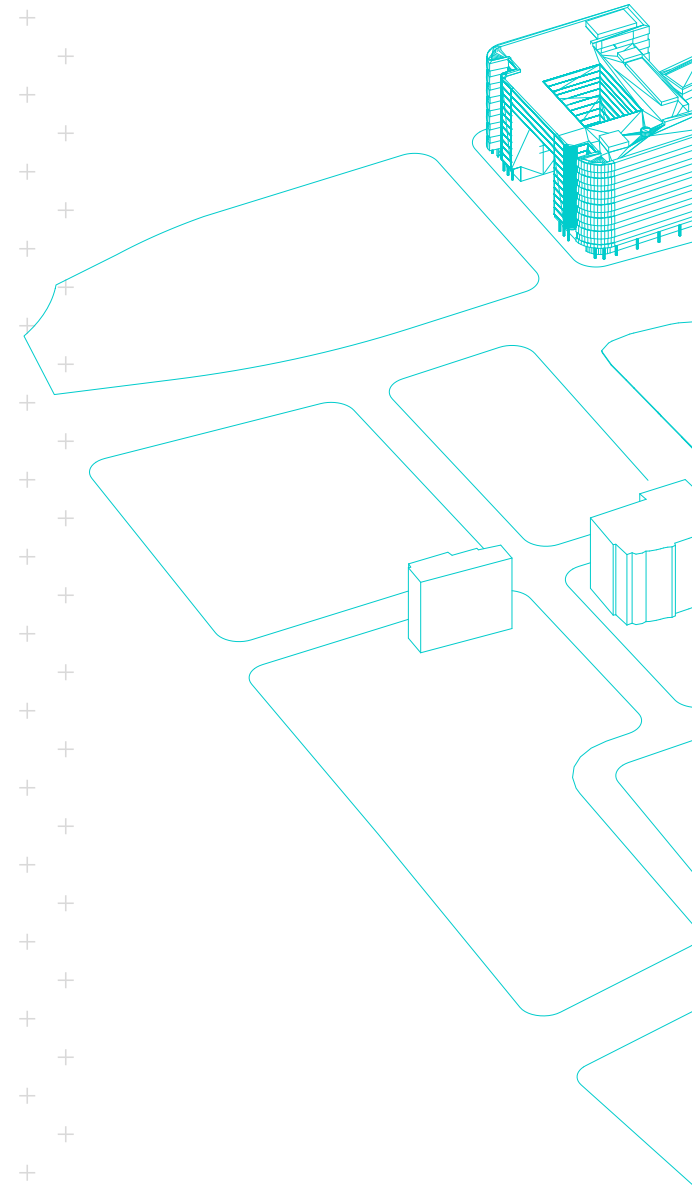


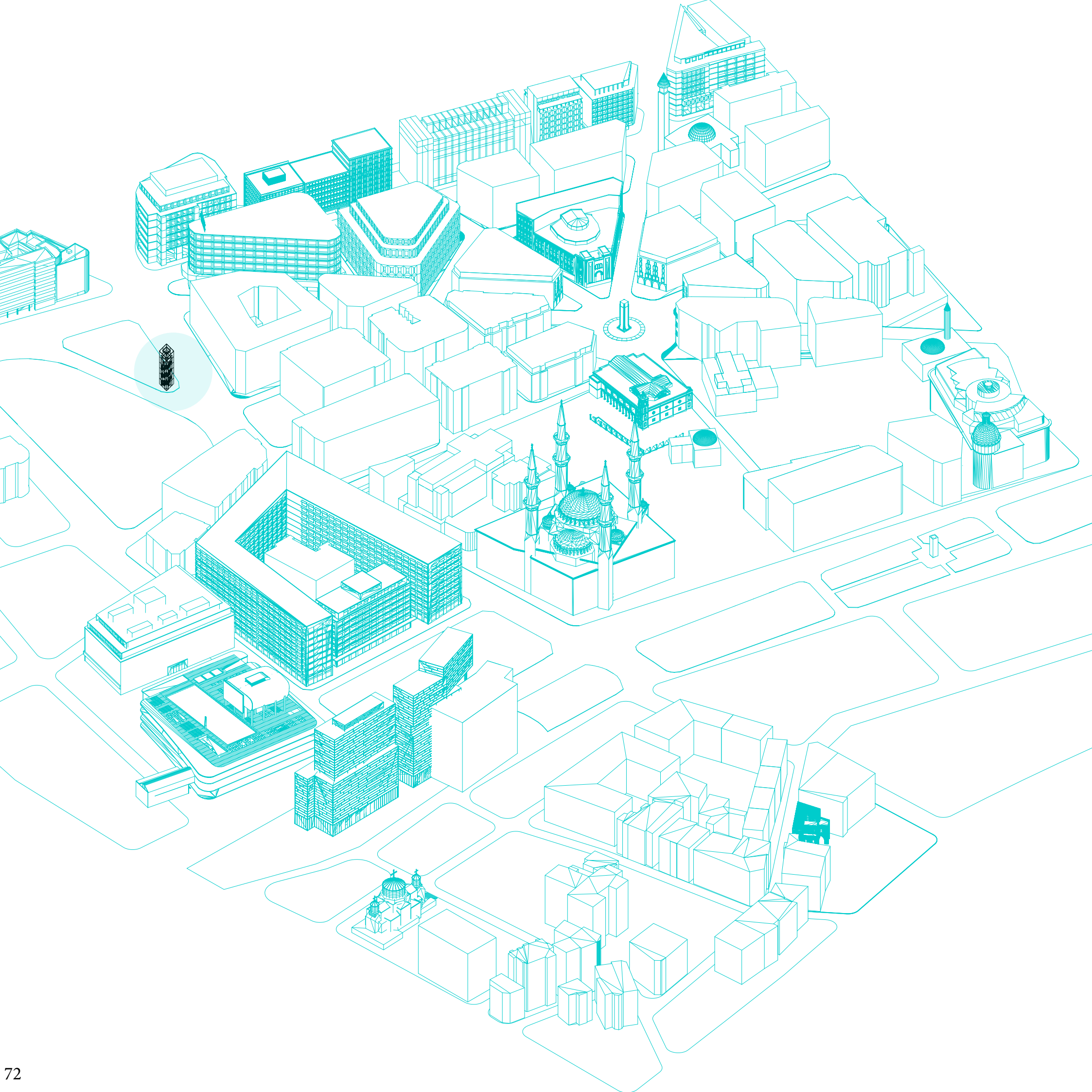
## Object 3: Time Capsule



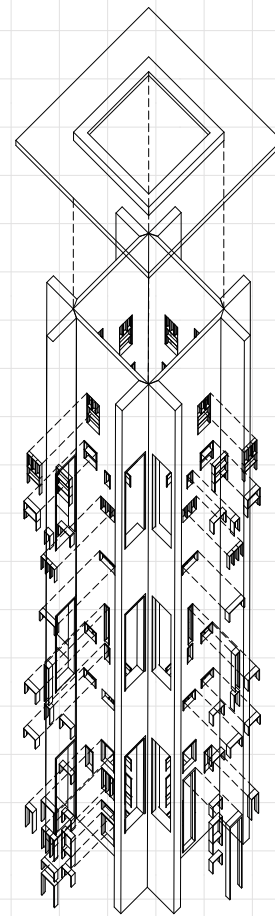
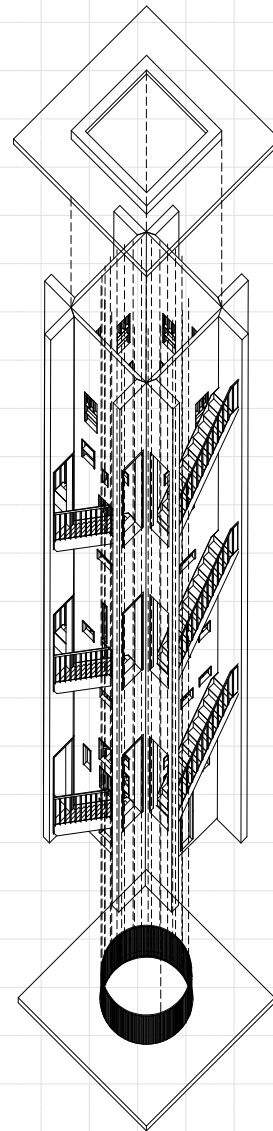
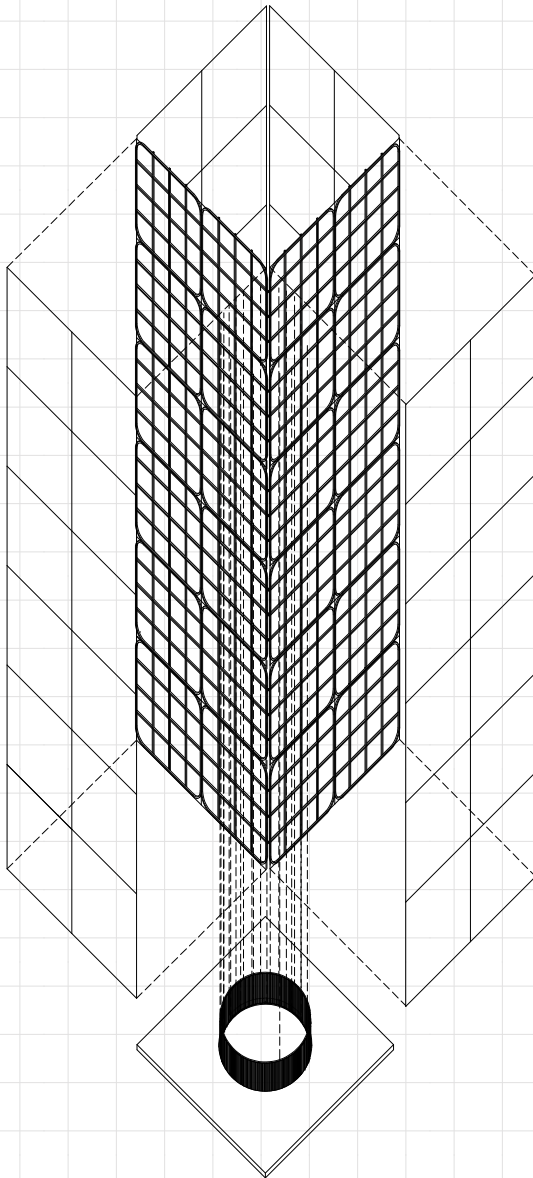
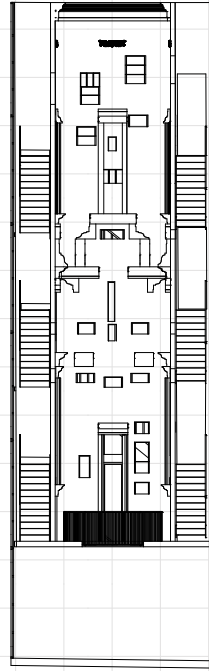
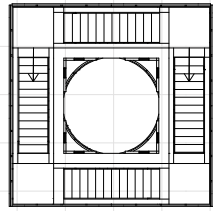
Time Capsule is a new monument in the city that replaces time by absent time. The clock tower has its roots in modernity where time is seen as a means of control and productivity. The monument is an anti-clock that signifies virtual continuousness and absence time.

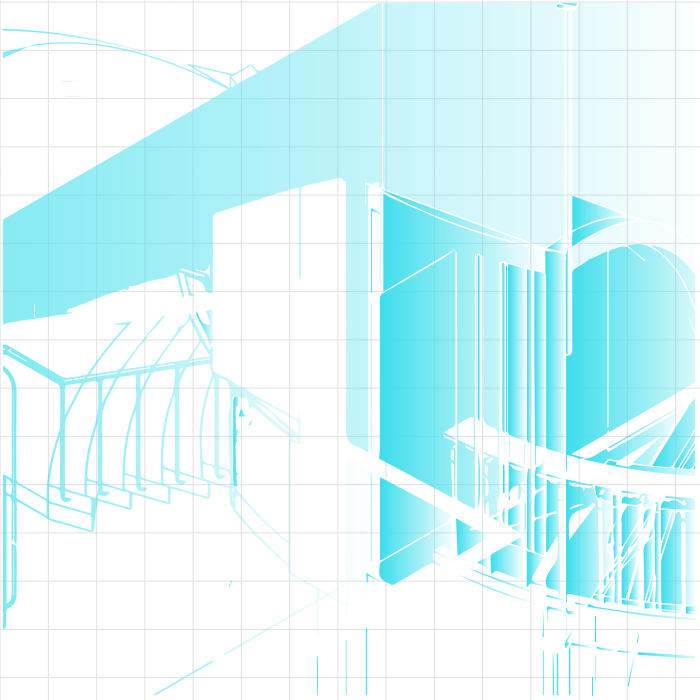
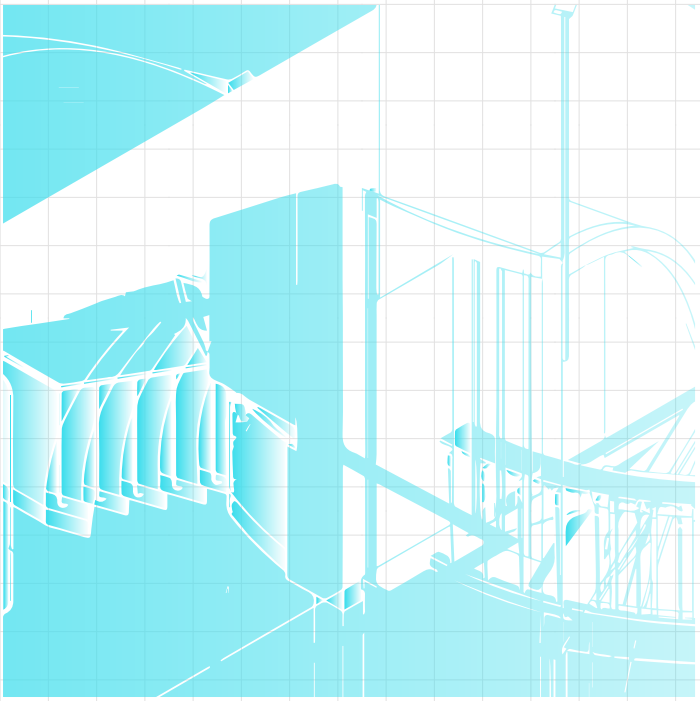
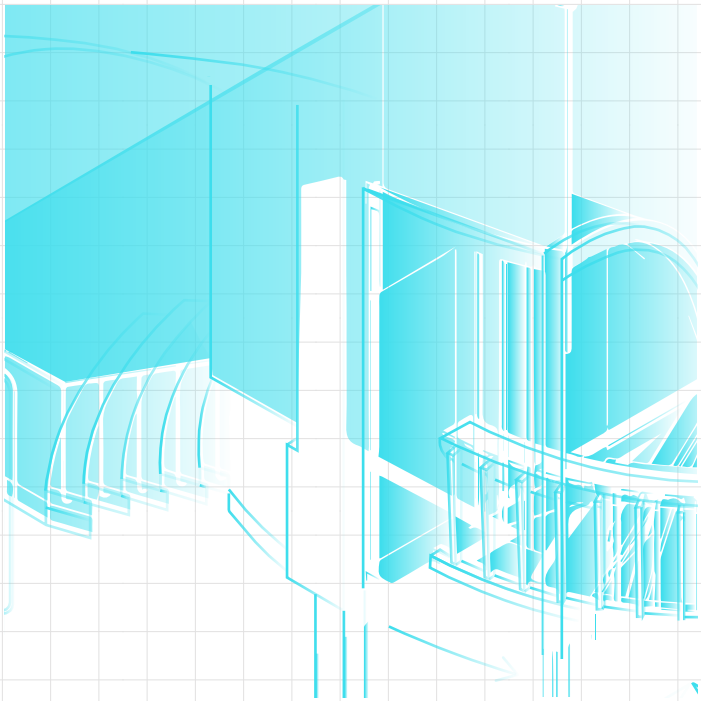
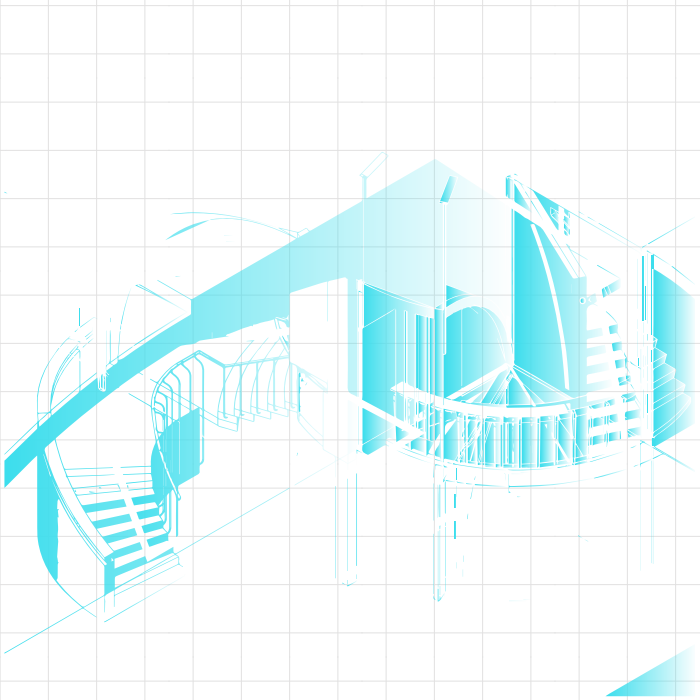
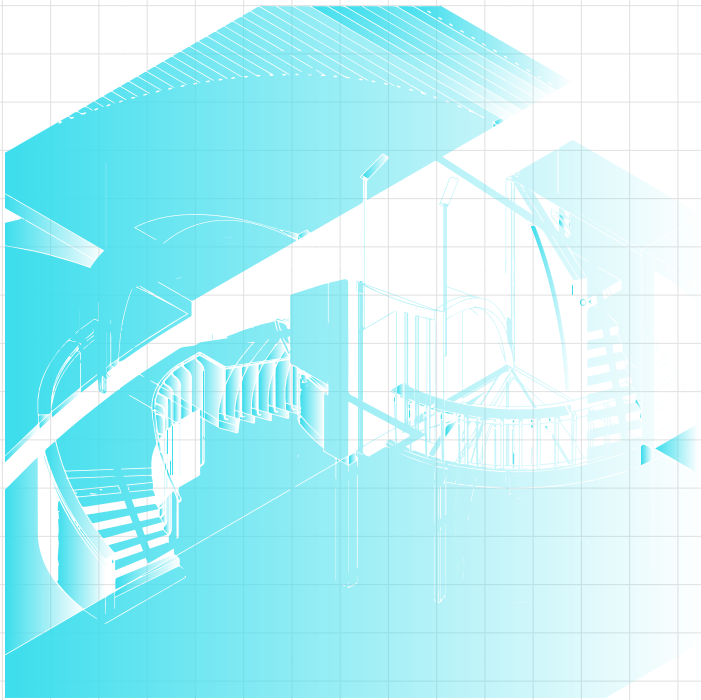
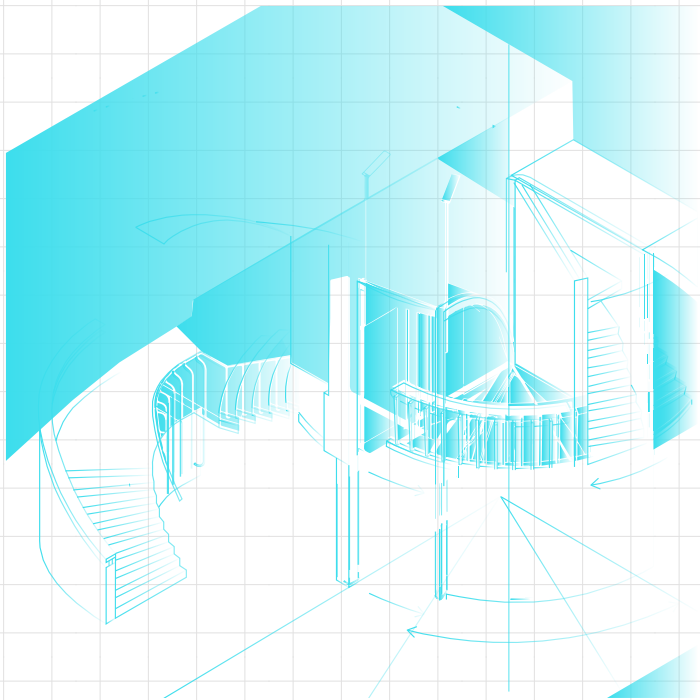
It becomes *a space of framed moments*.

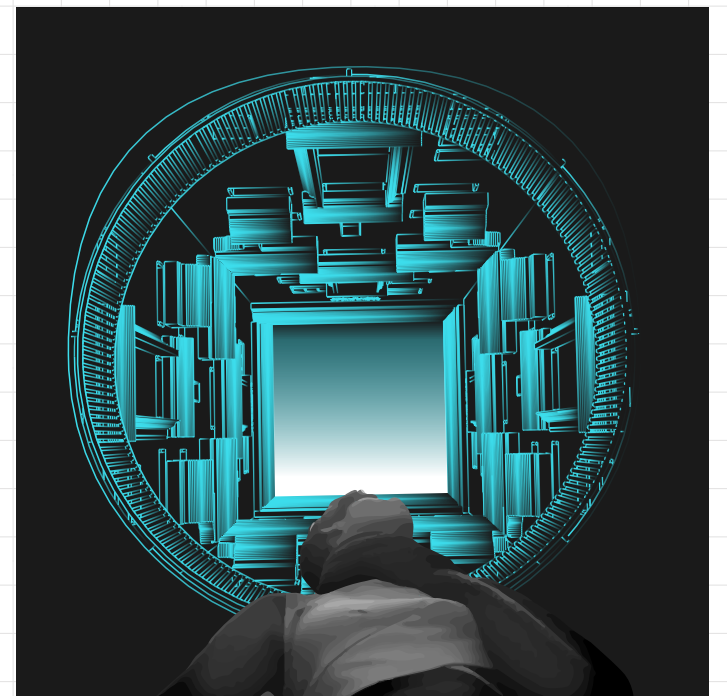
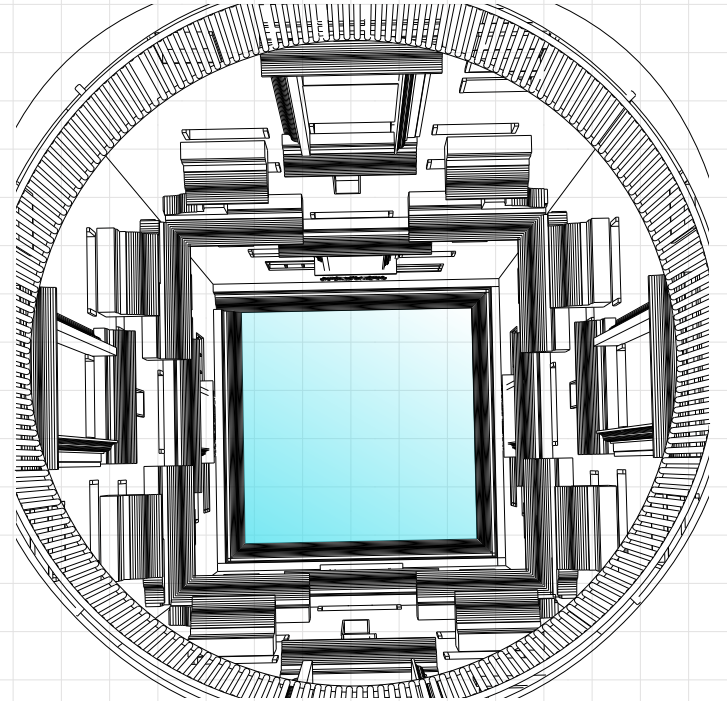
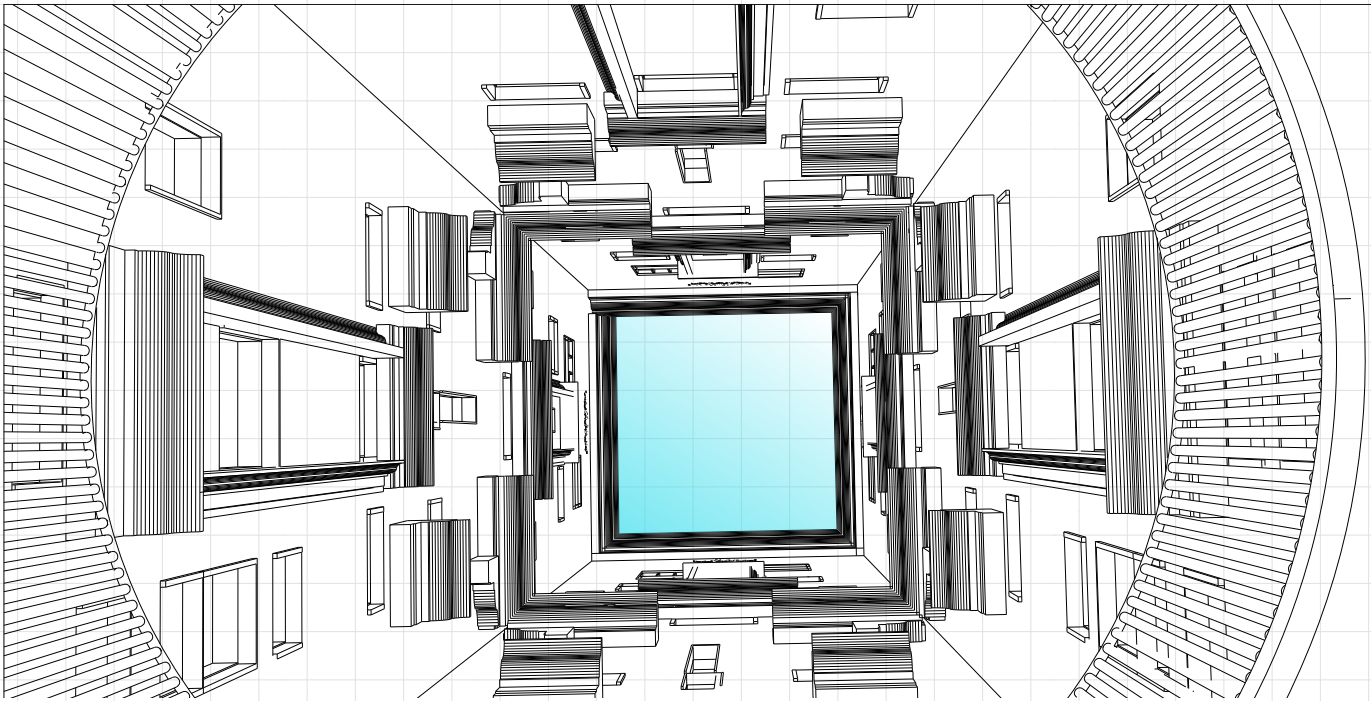
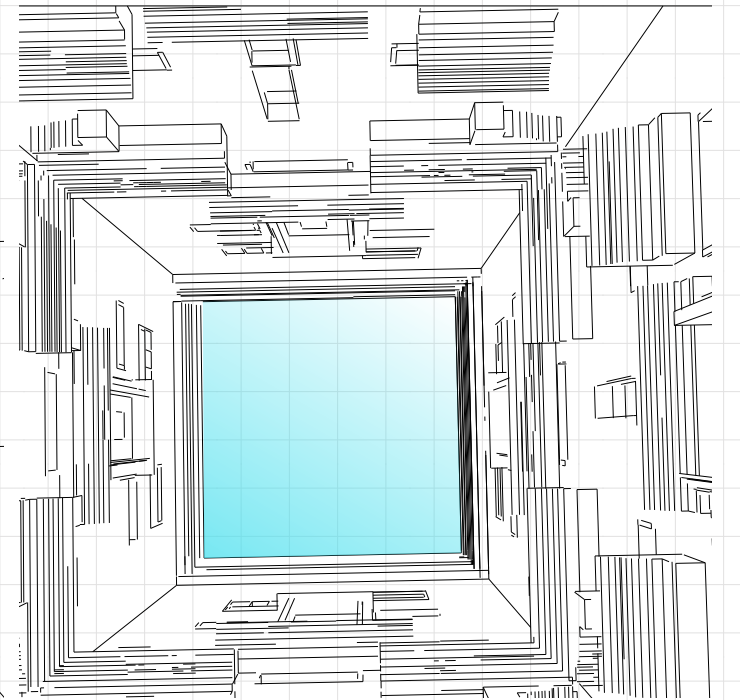
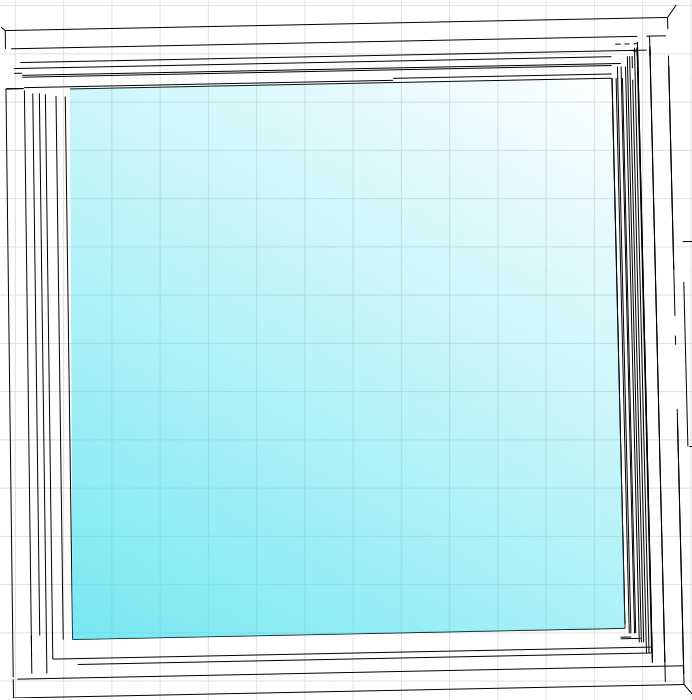
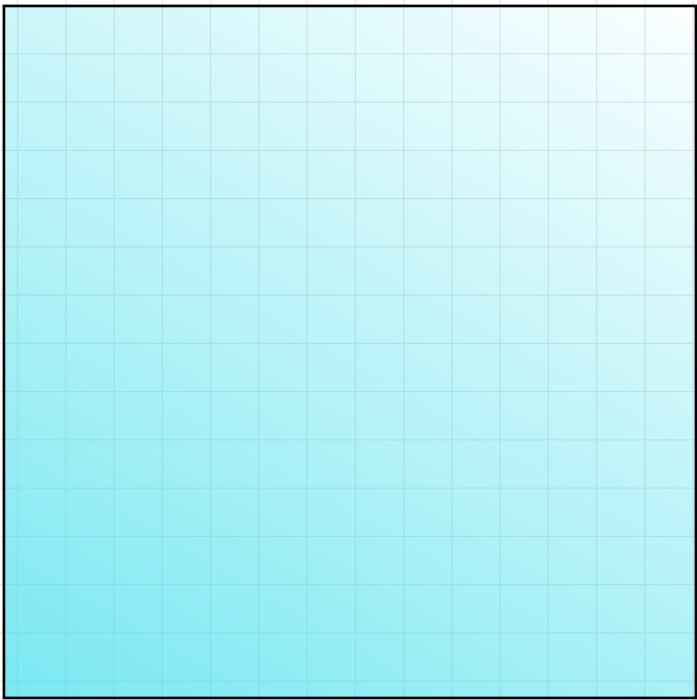






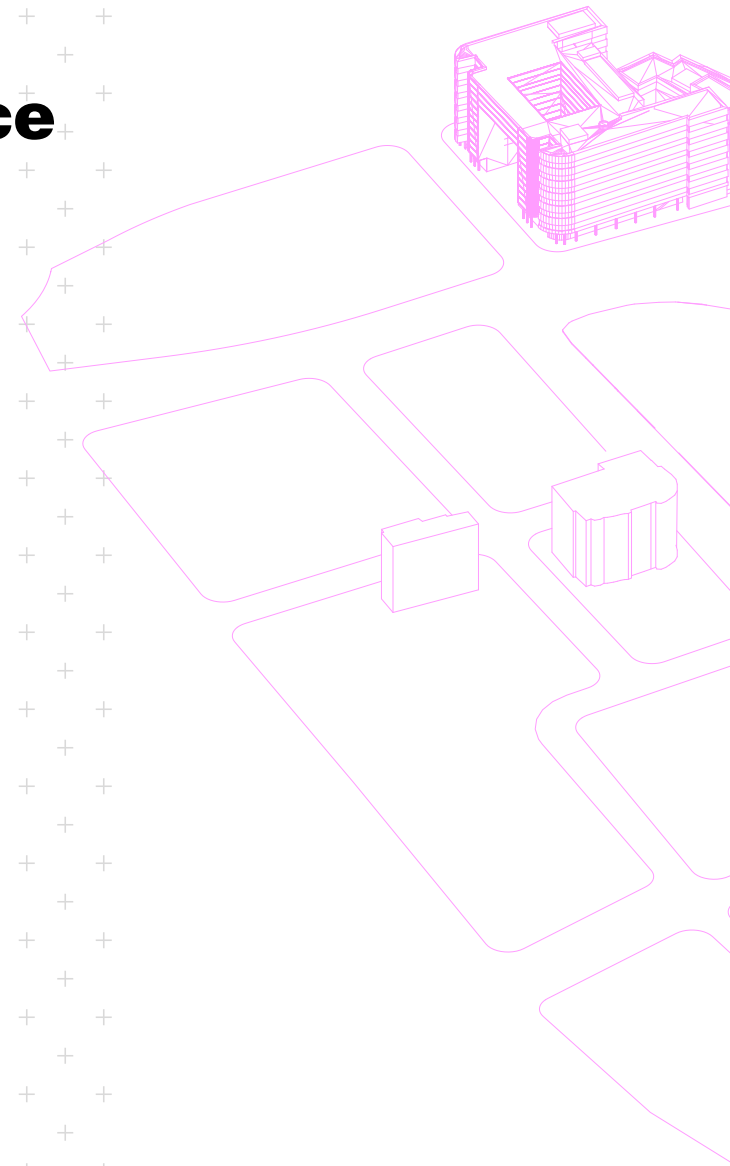


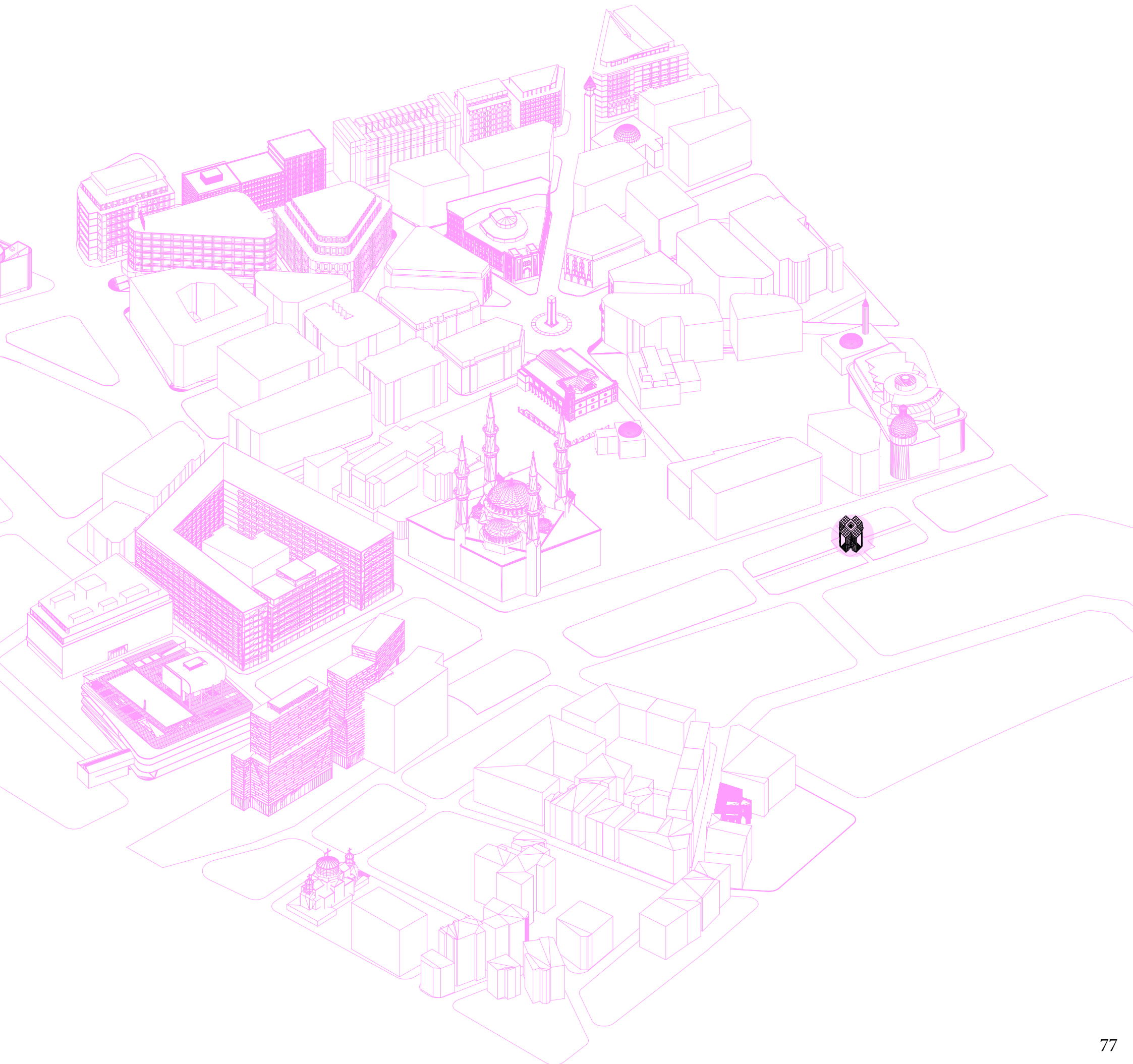


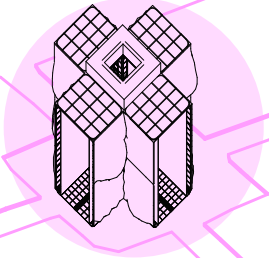
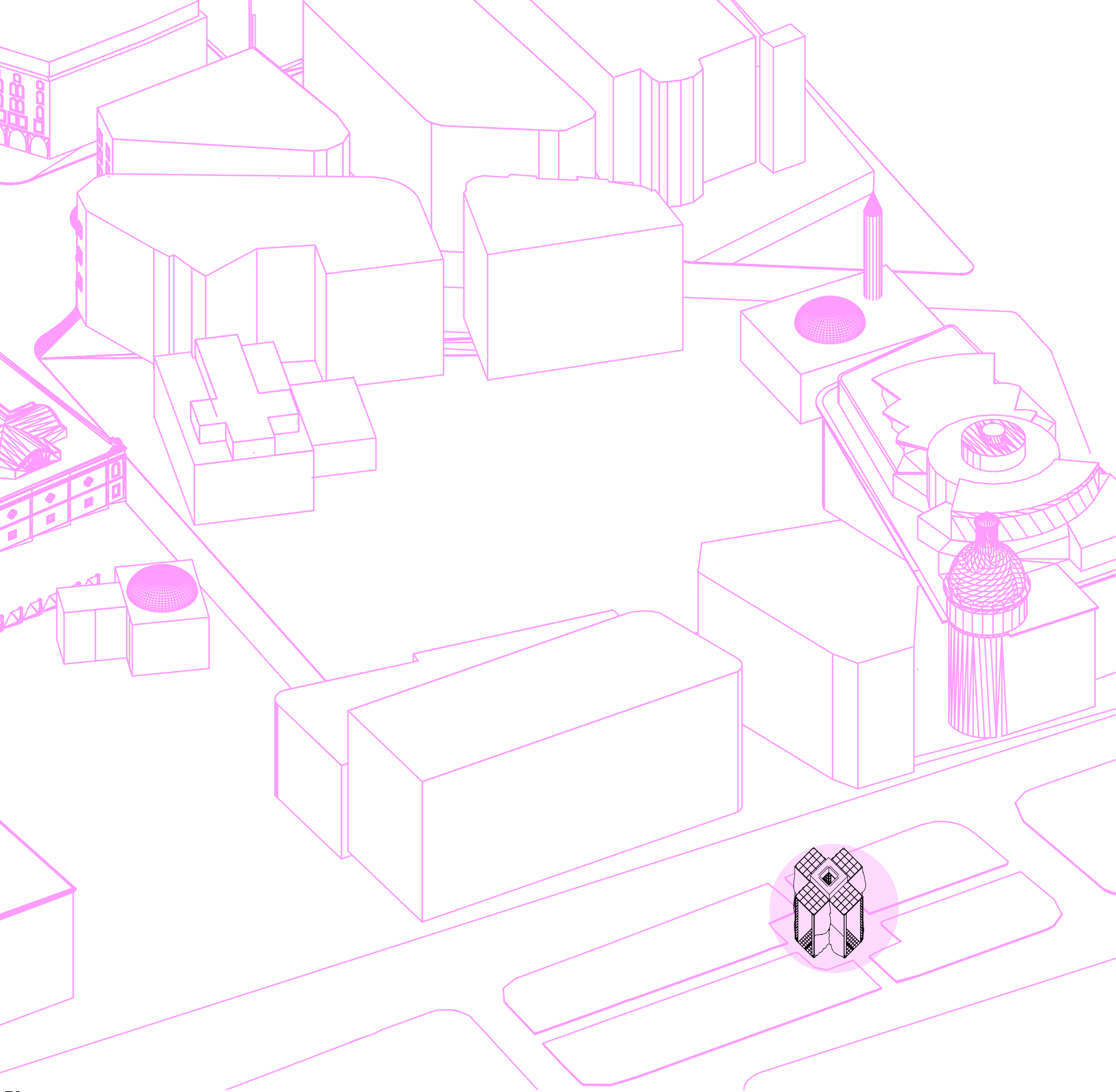


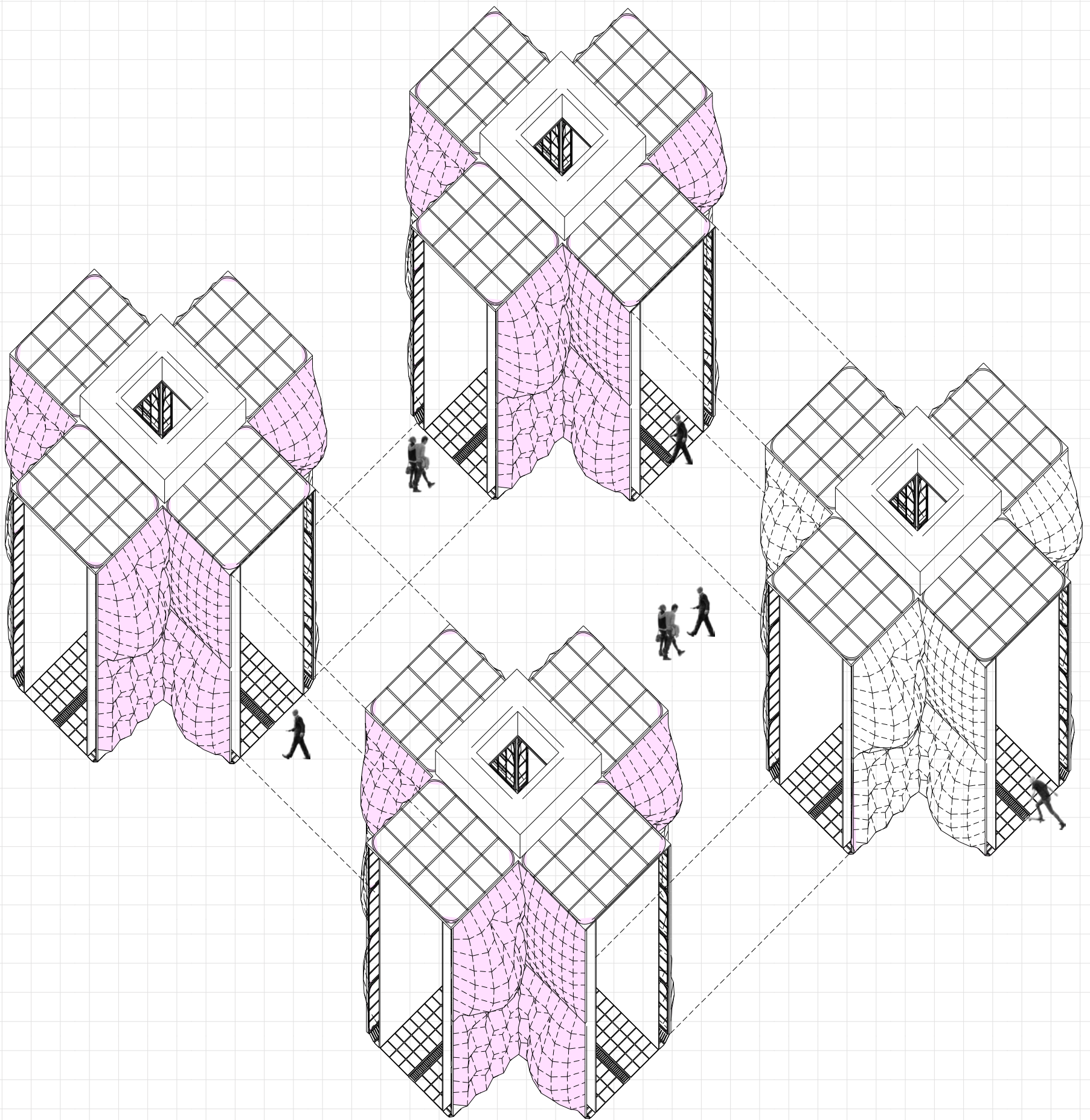
## Object 4: Memory Palace

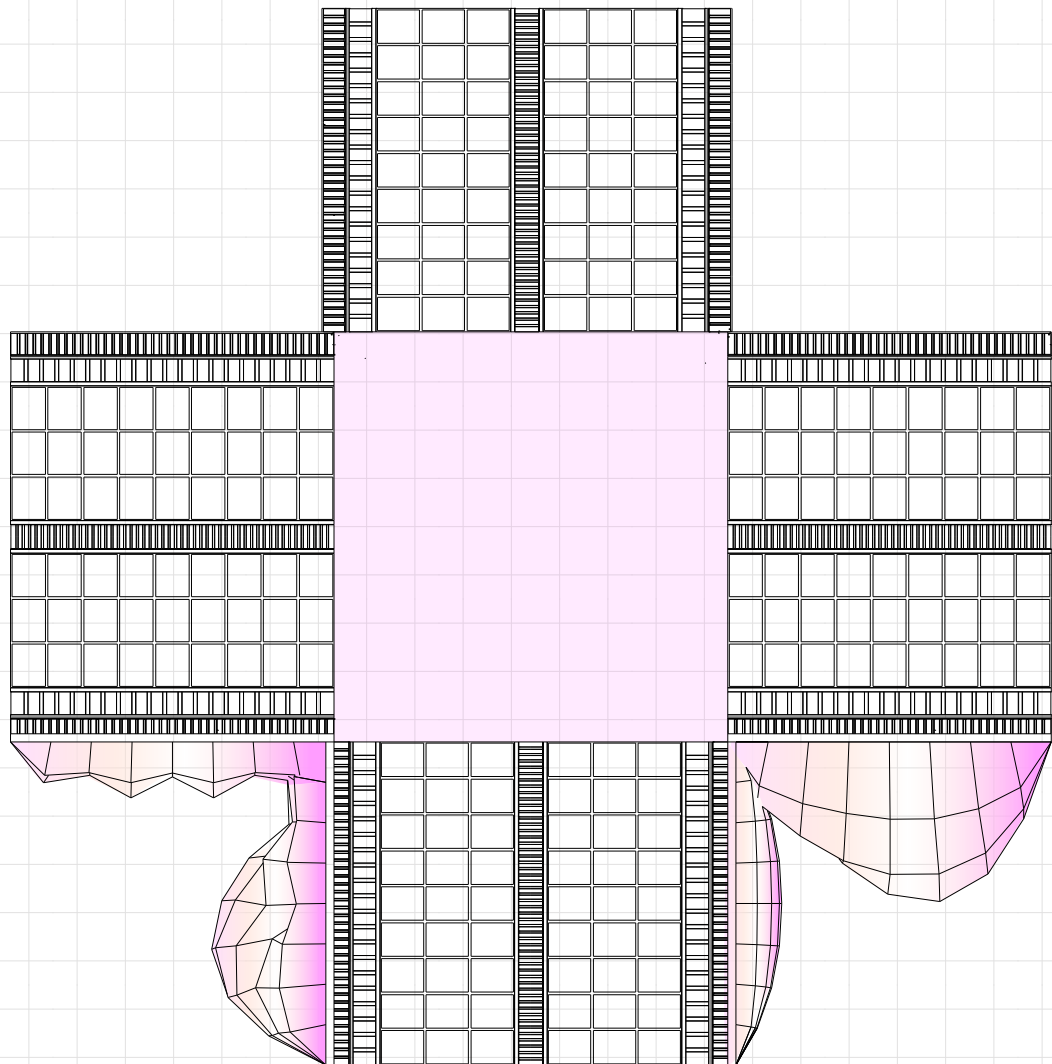
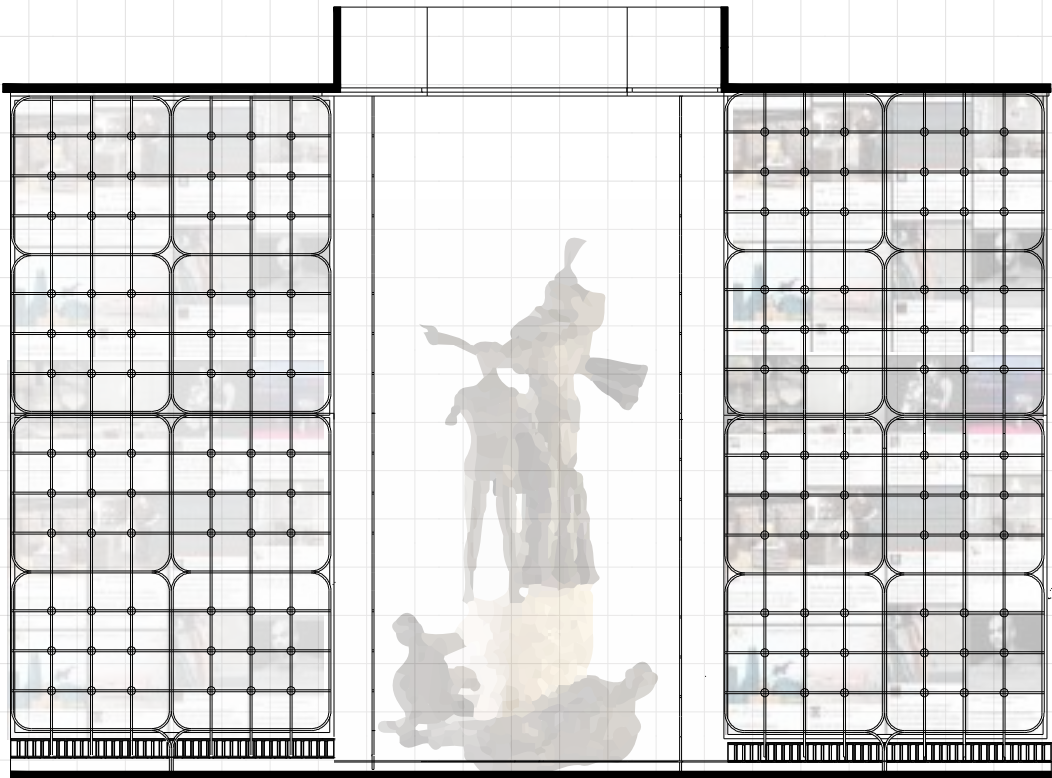
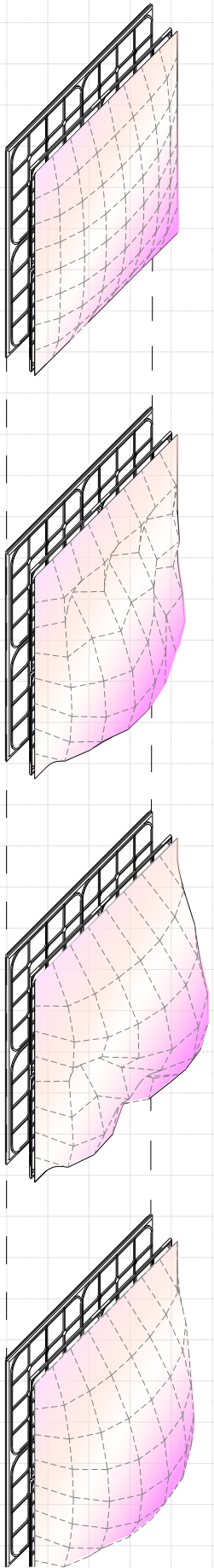
Memory Palace is a new monument in the city that fetishizes the monument. An interactive space, Memory Palace is a space to be consumed. It is an object of Pleasure and a pilgrimage to the commodity fetish- *Walter Benjamin*. The new monument creates moments of stimulation and interaction. An architecture of hedonistic controls, the monument combines virtuality with the analog to produce events as disruptions and to create new narratives in the city.



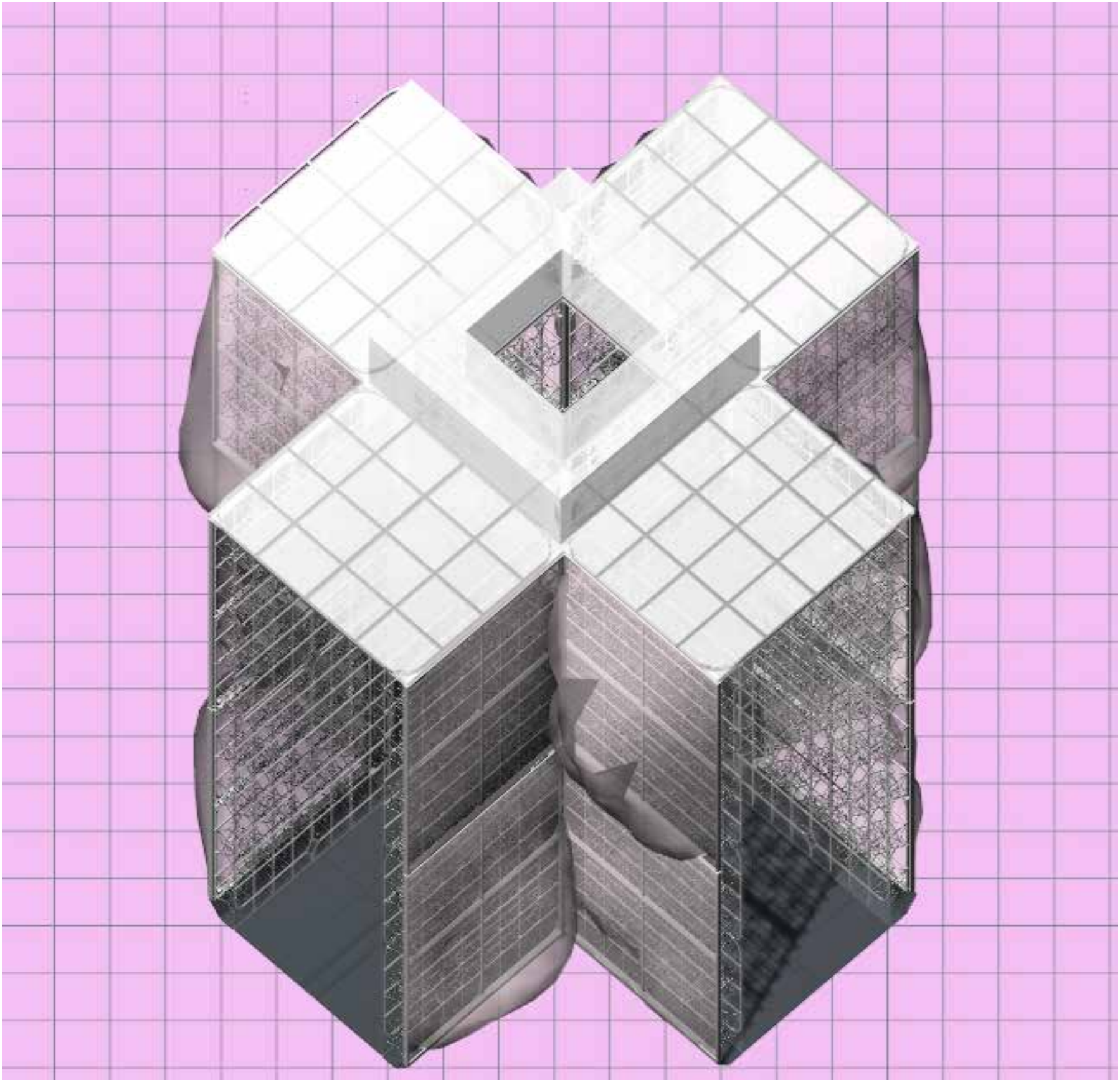








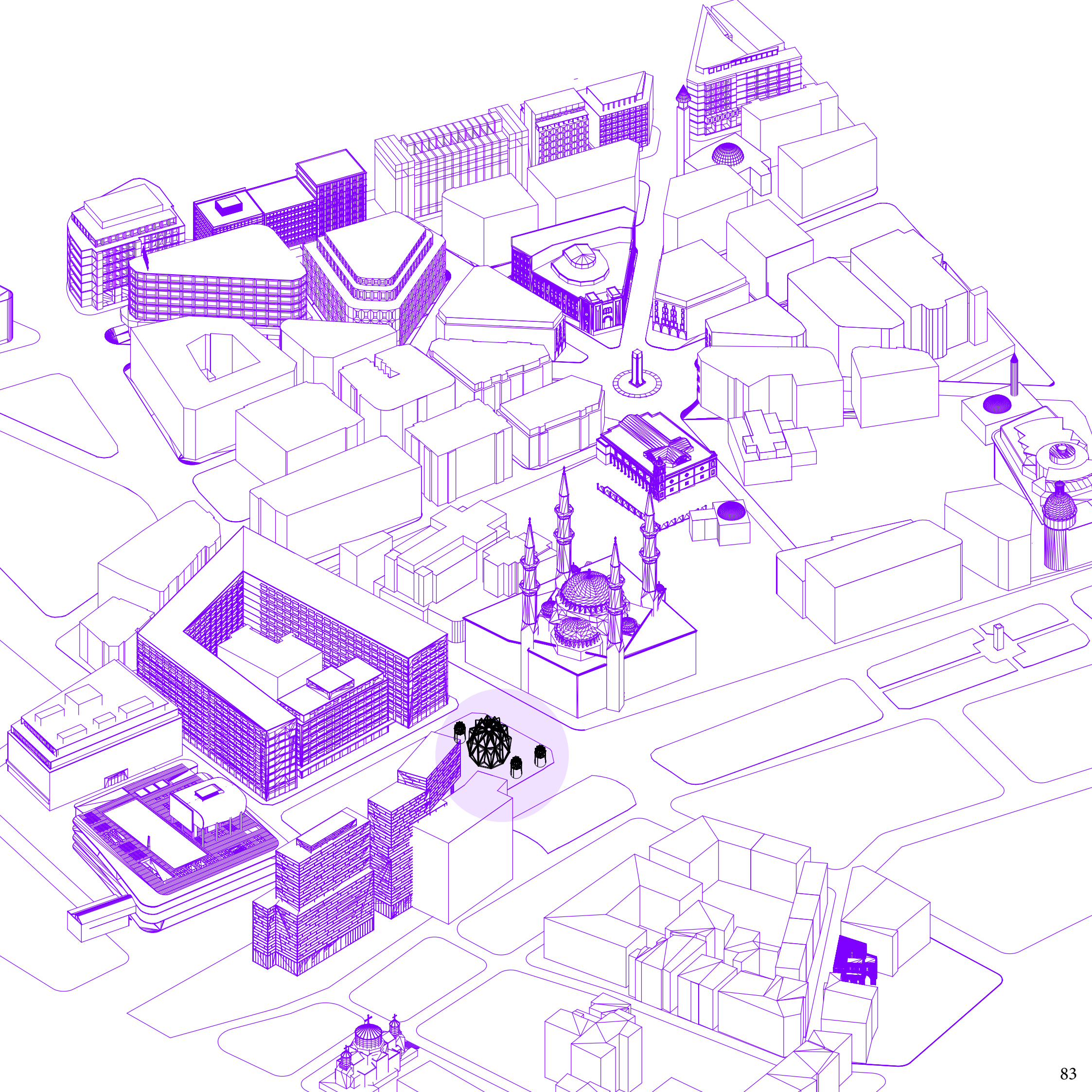


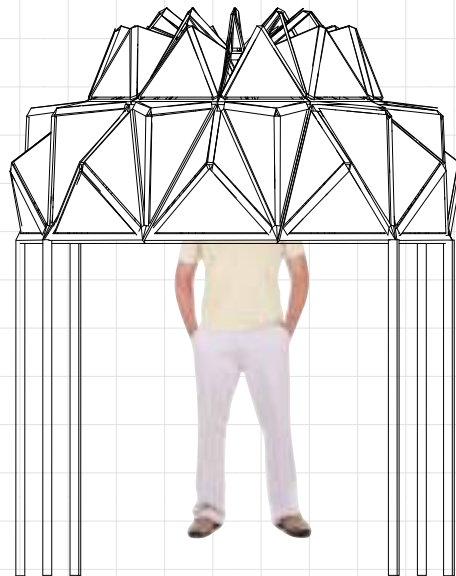
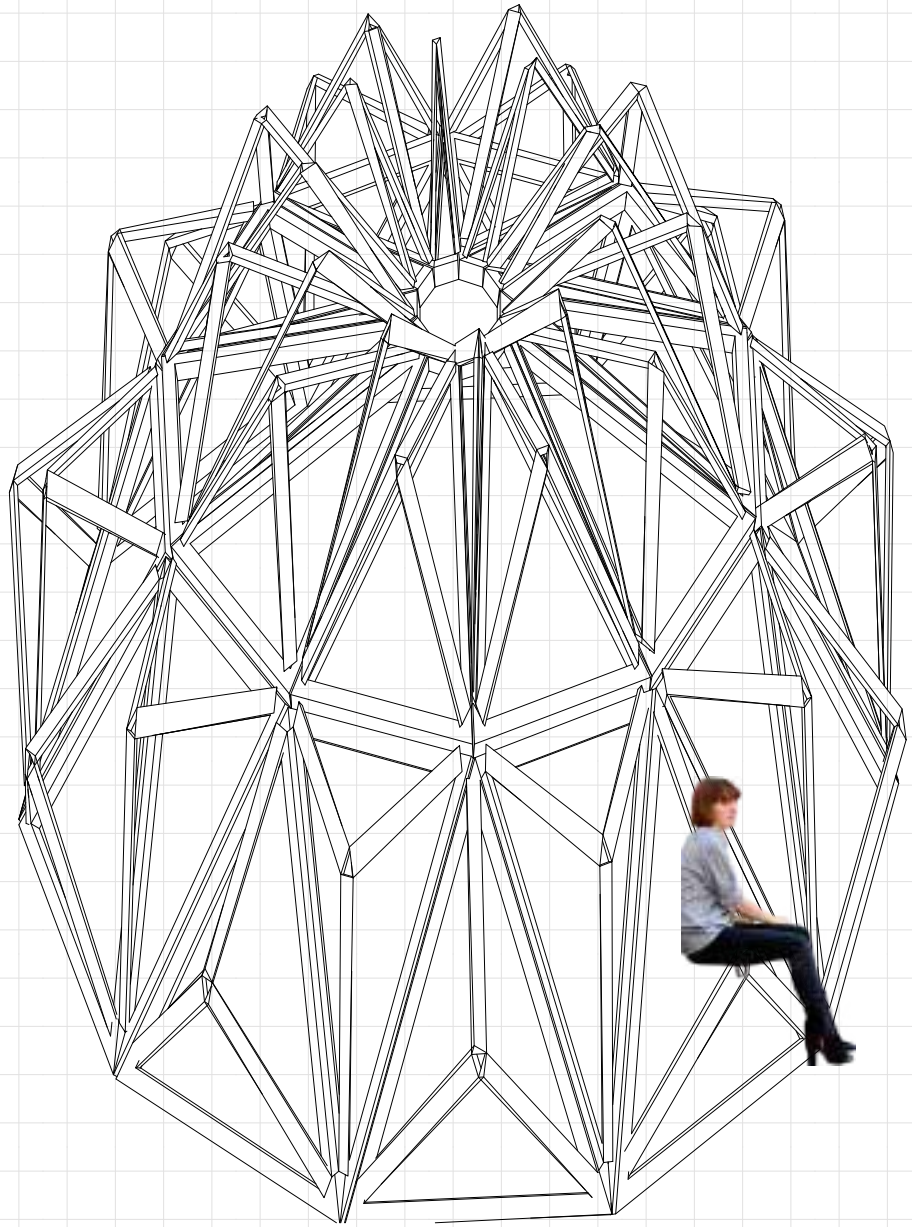
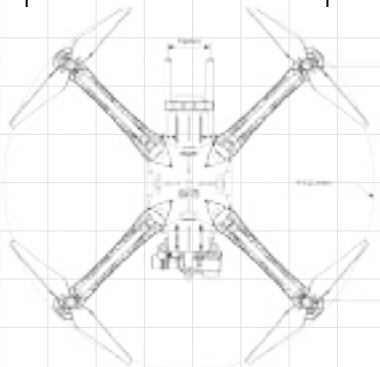
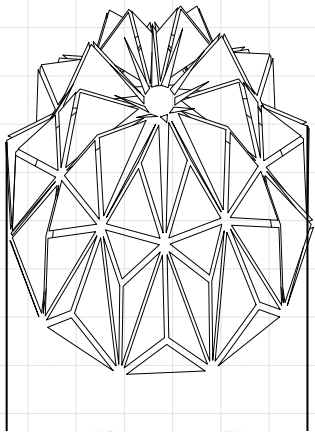
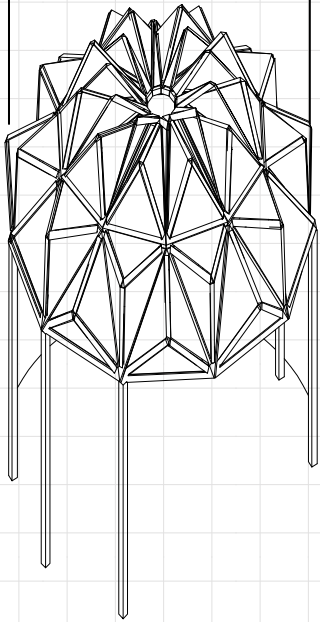
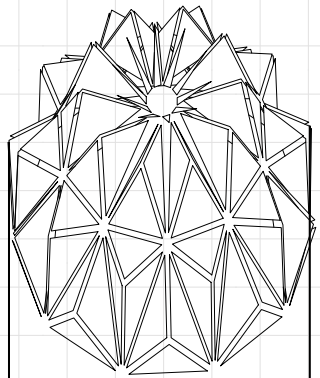


## Object 5: Blooms

Blooms is a new landscape in the city that creates a network of plugged isolation. Blooms is a new monument that deconstructs the image of the city. It is a space of disorientation that culminates in transcendence. An inverted monument, it is a *space of illusionary memory* that fragments the image of the city.



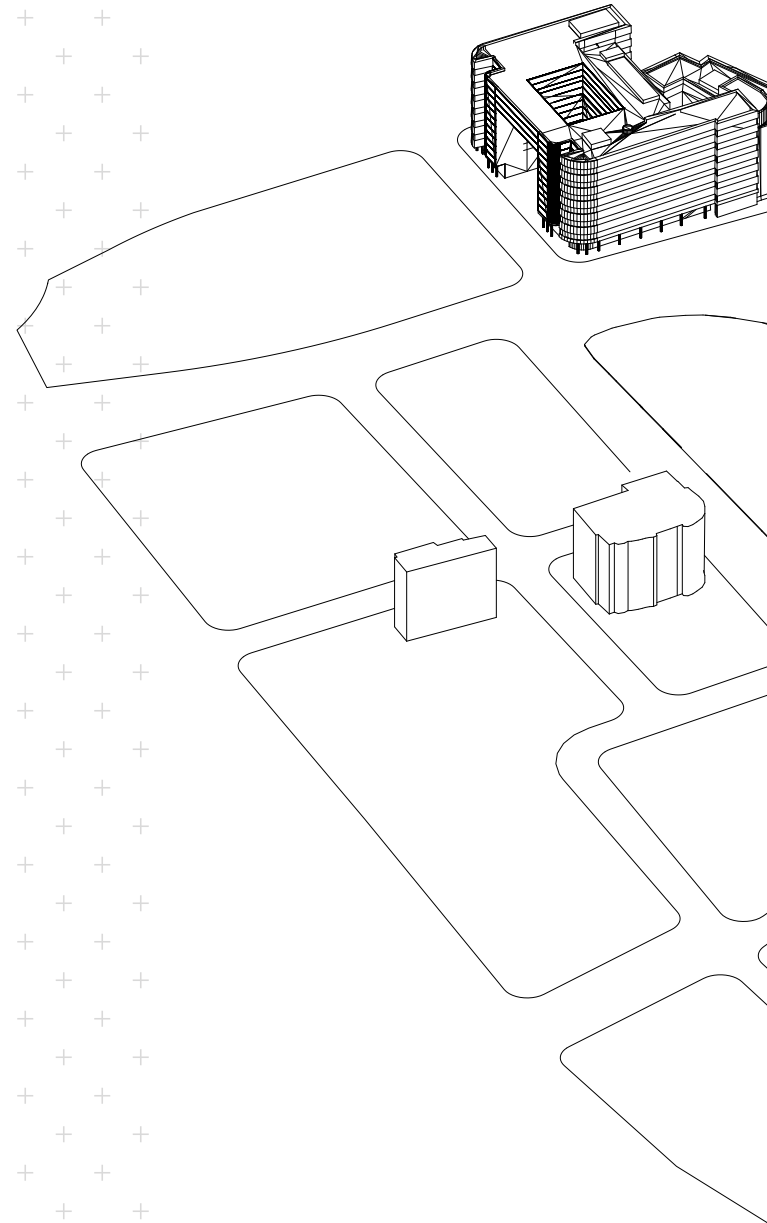


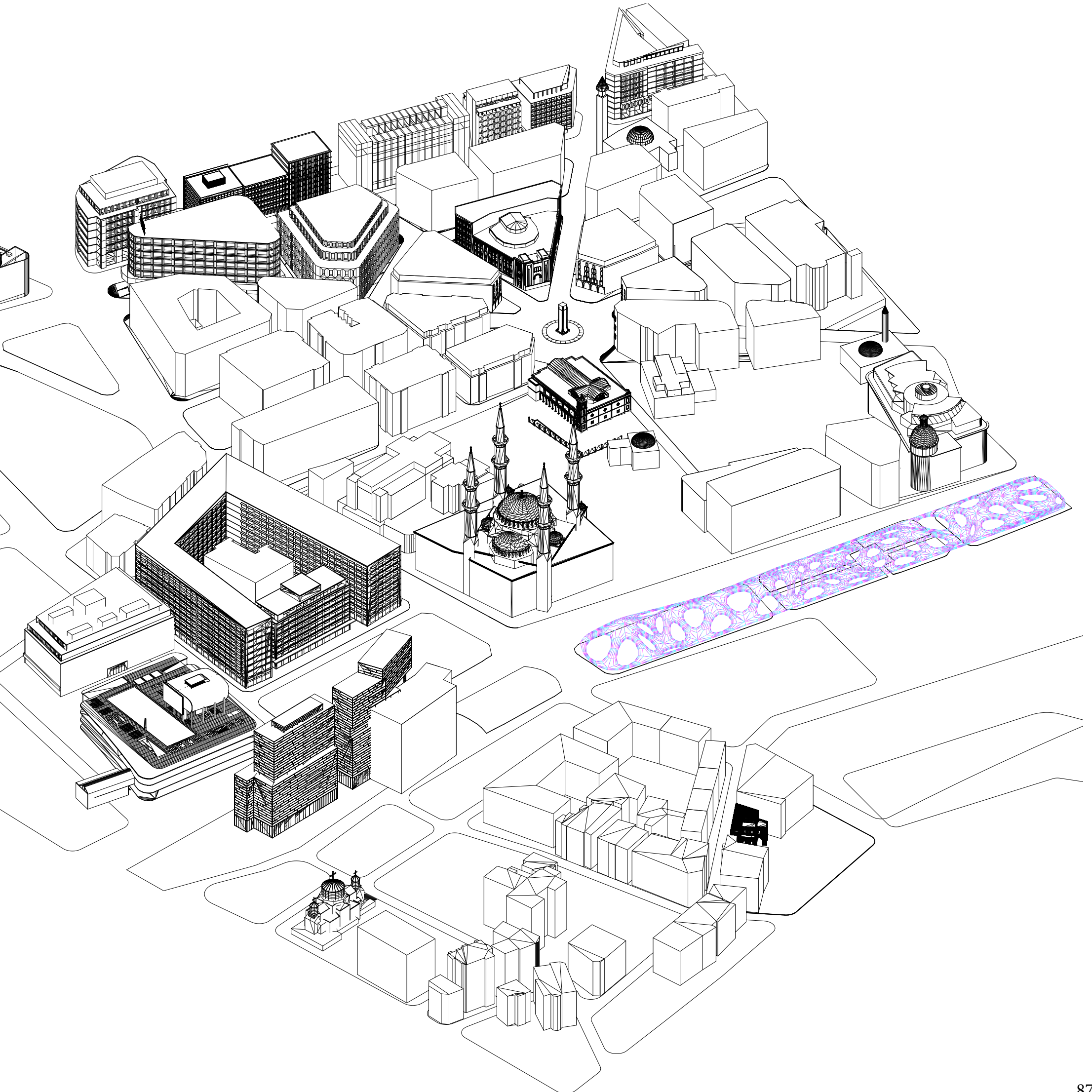


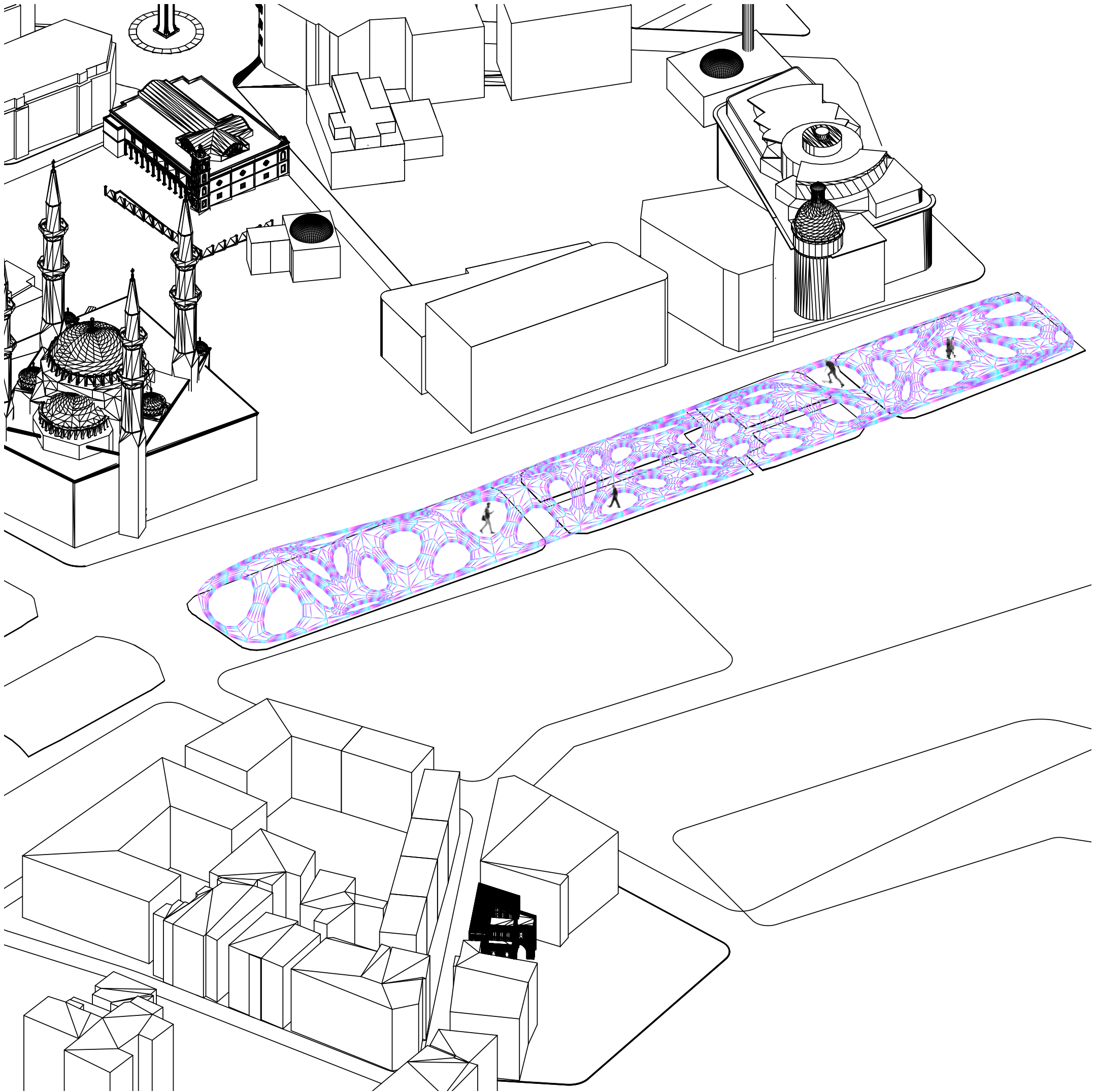


## Object 6: Cloud

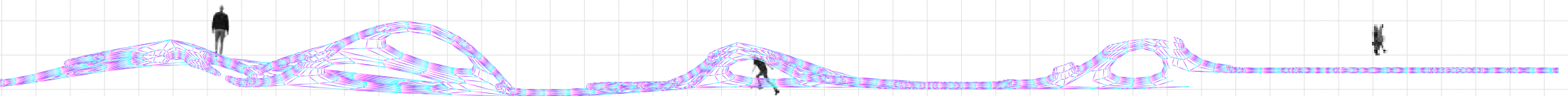
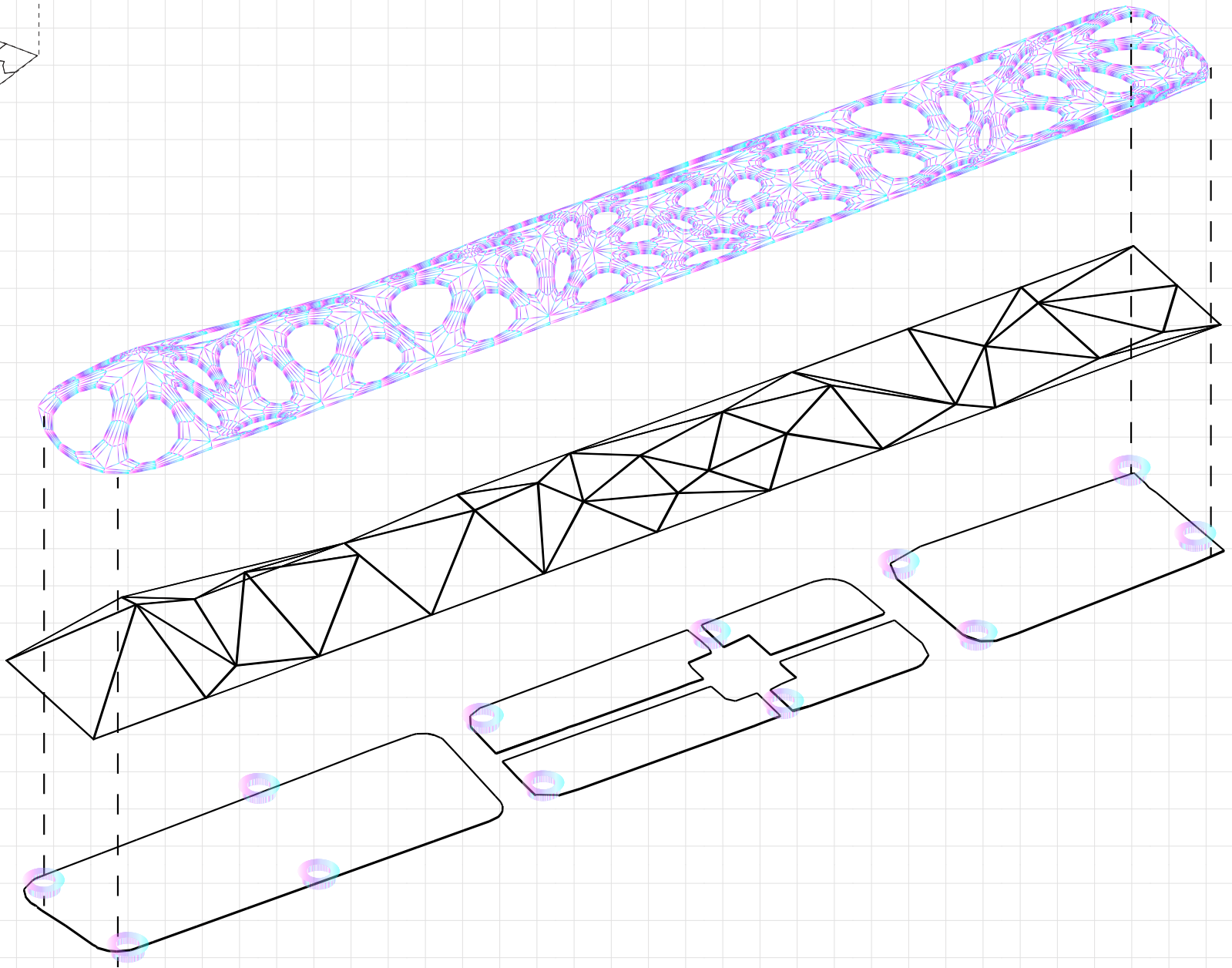
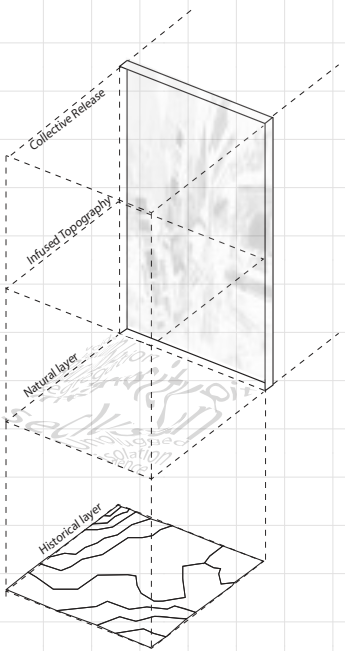
Cloud is a new Public space, a collective orgy. Cloud follows the methodology of the crowd. Reconceptualizing the shared interaction within a boundary the Folly become a new public space in the city that adds a layer of virtuality to the center. Clouds are *virtual Pavilions that transform, multiply, and respond to Human Online/off line interaction.*





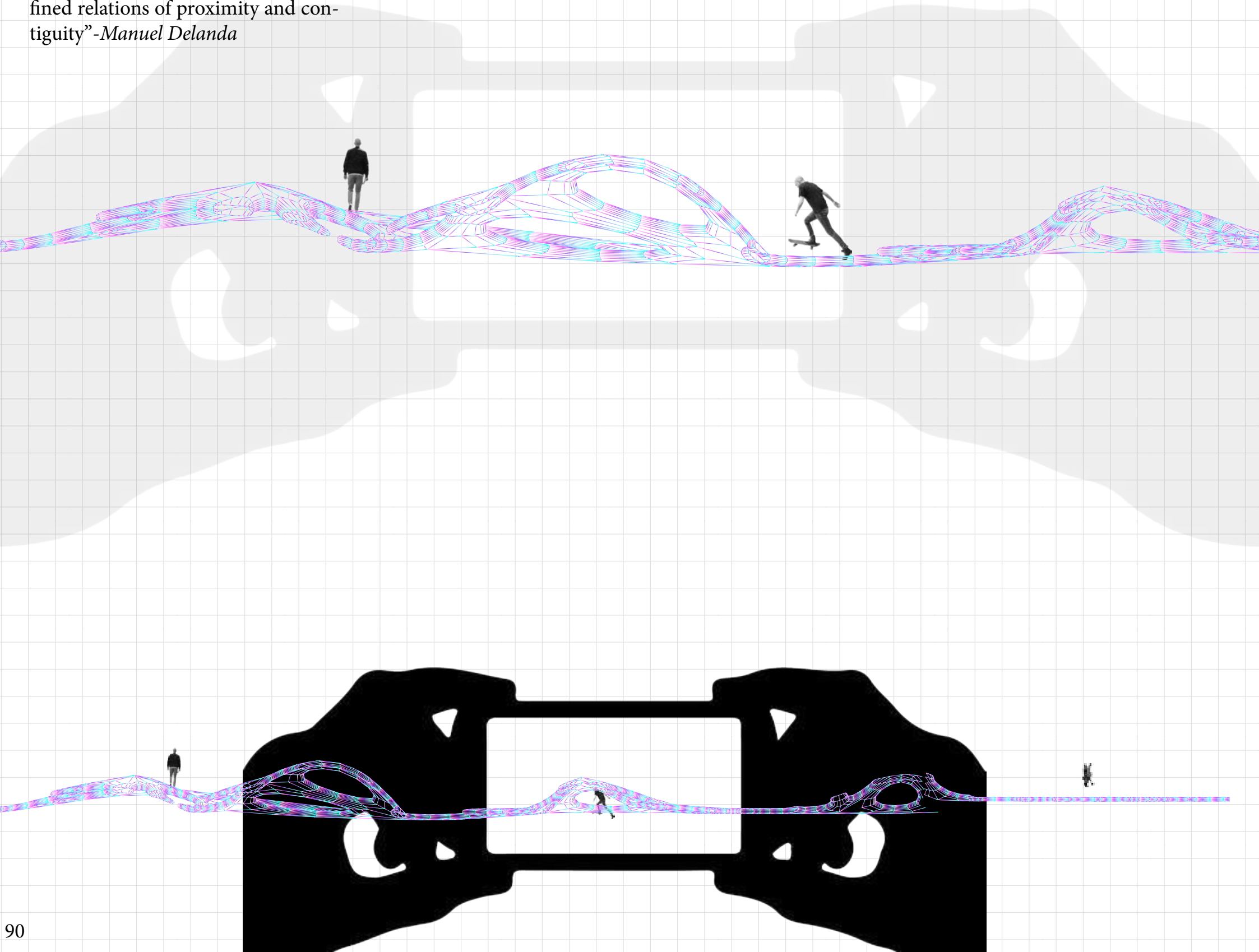






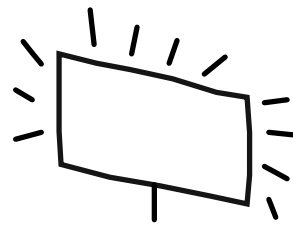
## A Virtual Network

Quoting Manuel Delanda on his theory of multiplicities: “They are concrete universals meshes together into a continuum forming continuous immanent space. A space is not just a set of points, but a set together with a way of binding these points together into neighborhoods through well-defined relations of proximity and contiguity” -*Manuel Delanda*



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**Thank you**