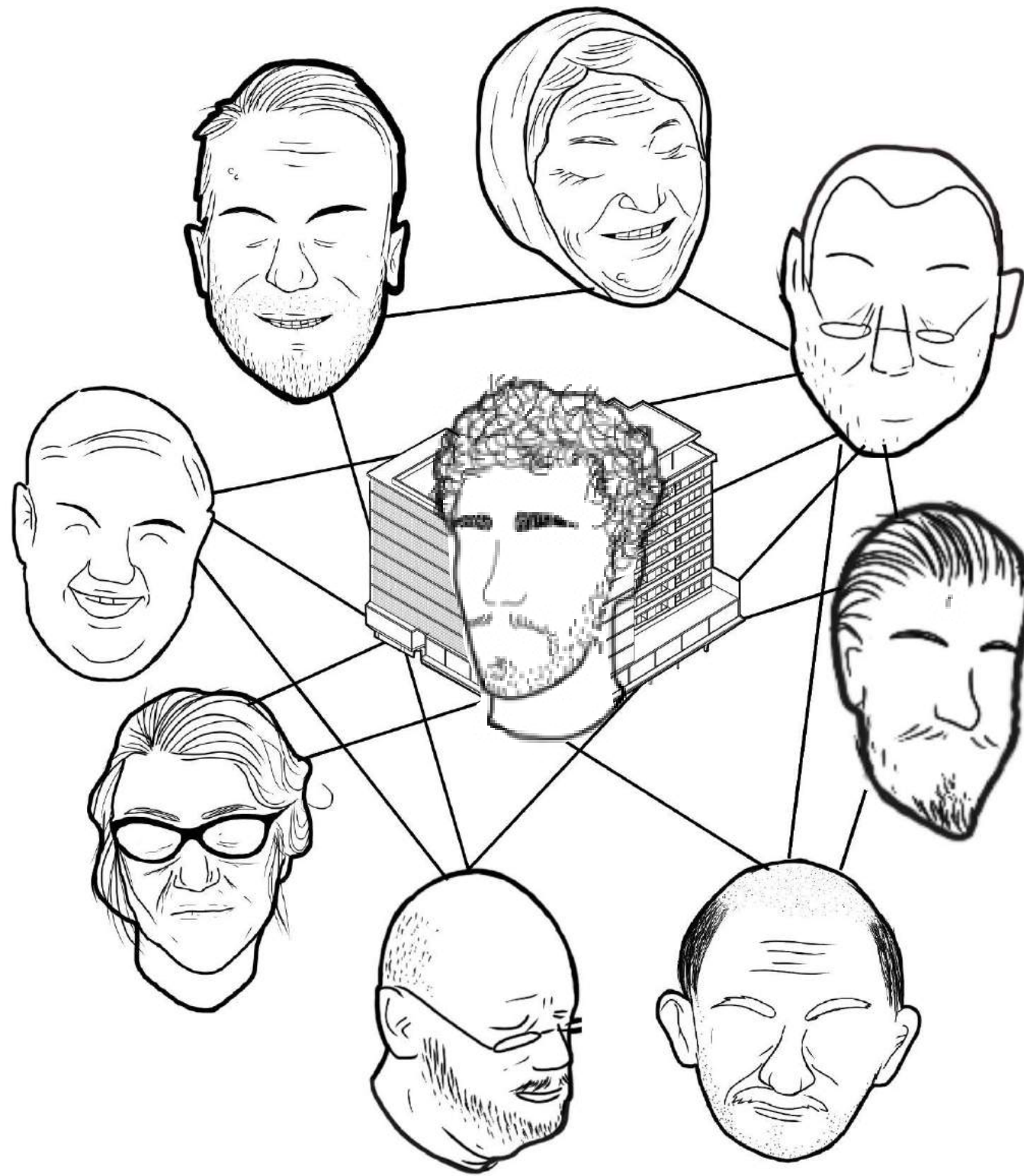# Strand : A collective regeneration

American University Of Beirut

Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture

Department of Architecture and Design

Bachelor of Architecture (BArch)

Thesis by Nicholas Doghlass

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

UNDERGRADUATE DESIGN THESIS
IN
ARCHITECTURE

SUBMITTAL FORM

Strand: A collective regeneration

by
Nicholas Doghlass

ARCH 508/509– FINAL YEAR THESIS I & II
FALL/SPRING 2019-2020

ADVISOR: Raafat Majzoub

Approved by Thesis Advisor:

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_____
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(as listed in AUB Catalogue of current year)

Date of Thesis final presentation: 05/18/2020

Abstract

During my thesis, I have been conducting a social practice at Strand Building in Hamra by inhabiting a space in the building and being a neighbour to its tenants.
After my work and collaborative research with street children in Thesis 1, I was curious about access, privilege and the relational architectural process.
I have been exploring how a participative method based on building users can reshape the approach to architectural design.
How could I use a storytelling and relationship-building to regenerate the Strand building? Can I question conventional building use through manifesting the desires of its current occupiers?

Acknowledgment

Thesis by Nicholas Doghlass

Advisor: Raafat Majzoub

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Table of contents: Part II

Advisor: Rana Haddad

Advisor: Raafat Majzoub

CHANGING POSITION

EXCHANGE

STREET CHILDREN

Observer

VISUAL ACTIONS
TIME
STREET RELATIONS
WHAT DO, SELL

MONEY

FOOD

Passer by who
wants to help

GRATITUDE
FILTERED INFORMATION
COMPLIMENTS
COMPLAINTS

BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP

TIME AVAILABILITY SERVICES
DAY/NIGHT
ATTENTION GO WATCH GAME
OBJECTS THEY LIKE
FAVOURITE TEAMS
COMMON GROUNDS FOOTBALL/SPORTS
FUNNY VIDEOS
TRUTH OR DARE
GAMES LEARNINGS
COIN GAME

Friend

Friend

PLAY
INTERESTS
OPINIONS/IMAGINATION EXPERIENCES **DISCUSS**
STRATEGIES OF SURVIVAL
NETWORK PHONE NUMBER **TRUST**
QUESTIONS

A **collaboration** happens in two ways. It is based on actors that **exchange**. In this case, it is between the **kids** and my **transforming persona**. It incorporates two concepts I learnt from the street children: **Performance** and **Transformation**. What is interesting is that I applied on myself these concepts during my encounter with the children. In the diagram, one can see how my **position** transformed into different instances from being an **observer**, to a **passer by who wants to help** to finally a **friend**. In each position I was able to give and receive different elements from the children. As an observer, I wasn't giving anything to the children, and what I was getting were **visual instances** and information based on **physical actions** they were doing. As a passer by, I only gave them their basic needs that were **money** and **food**, in return I was getting what everyone gets: **Filtered information**, **compliments** and even more **complaints** to maximize their gain. Finally, I was building a **relationship** with them by literary giving them **time**, **attention**, and other elements that came into play such as **games**.
Performance can be seen as the process of performing a certain task. The kids are professionals when it comes it. Weather they are in the **exposed state** or **neutral state** they use different techniques in their performance in order to get **money** or **food** from individuals. On one hand, the exposed state is the state in which the children are in the middle of their performance, their goal is to maximize the money or food, and their means to do so can be seen in all the actions they perform, including: following a passer by, begging or even crying in some cases. On the other hand, the neutral state, is when those children don't want to stand out. These will be developed in the chapter III.
Based on the concept of performance, I adopted different techniques on myself in order to gain their **trust** and get **valuable information** and **ideas** from the children. Among those **techniques**, one can find the concept of finding **common grounds** and **interests** such as sports and in particular football. **Playing games** was also part of the performance. Some games came from their end, and others came from mine. Among them, was a game I called the *Coin Game*. All the players have to be seated in a circular form. Each player has to ask a question to the person next to him, and only the answer is said out loud. After answering, the player tosses the coin. If it is on the French side, then he or she has to reveal the question out loud. If it is on the Arabic side, then the question will remain hidden. This type of game is to **catch the attention** of the children and gain their trust. Other strategies of my performance are explained in the bottom of the page. The whole point is to create a relationship of trust and exchange.
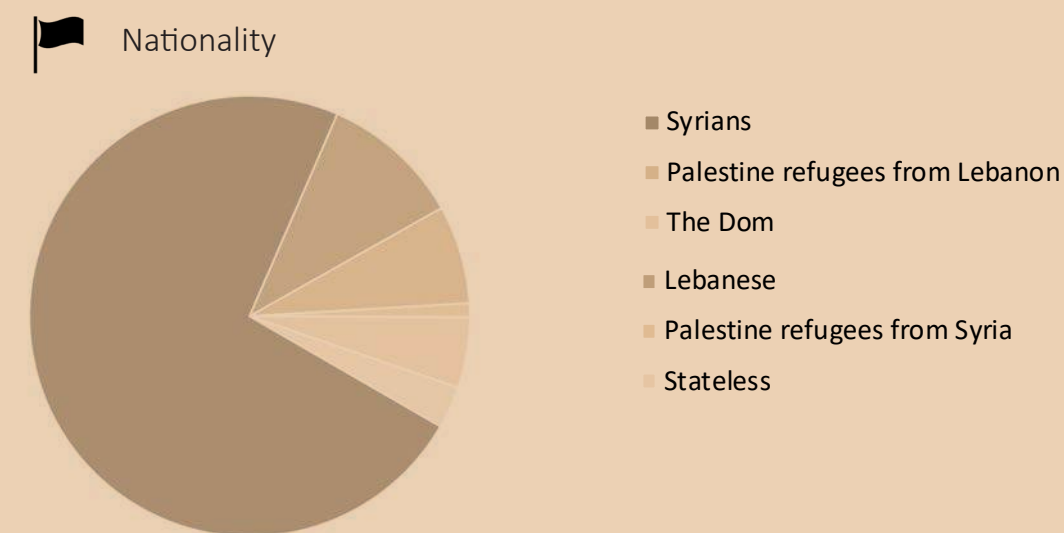
PERFORMANCE

DERIVATION Derivation is a technique I used to talk about subjects that aren't relevant to the research. It is used to divert and talk with the children about subjects that could interest them. It could be as basic as asking what is their favourite colour.

REVERSE Reverse is a technique I used to flip the whole situation. It is about letting the kids ask me questions and know more about me. This technique can be seen as reminder that this collaboration is not one sided.

STIMULI Stimuli is a technique I used to stimulate the children by introducing concepts or topics to talk about and discuss. This can be seen in the last section of chapter IV.

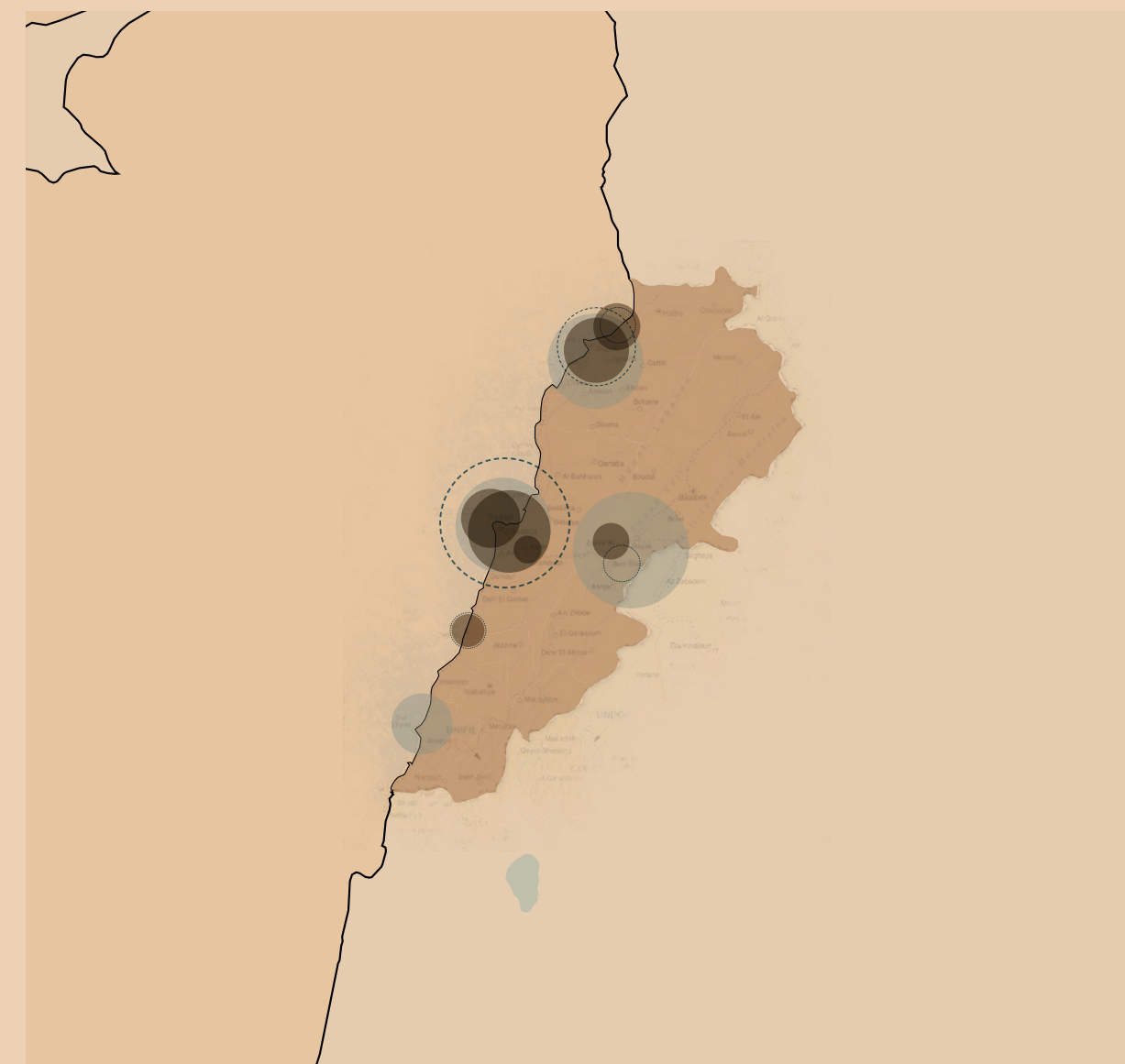Main locations of Syrian influx in relation to nationality of Street Children

Correlation between location of home, workspace and Syrian influx

244

231 089

341 641

106 832

Number of registered Syrian households

🏴 Nationality

- Syrians
- Palestine refugees from Lebanon
- The Dom
- Lebanese
- Palestine refugees from Syria
- Stateless

Location when found: 🧍

Location of their home: 🏠

Bekaa
Saida
Akkar
Tripoli
Greater Beirut

Ailey
Baalbak
Saida
Zahle
Akkar
Beirut
Tripoli

Existing research

CHILDREN LIVING AND WORKING ON THE STREETS IN LEBANON: PROFILE AND MAGNITUDE*
Main actors:

International Labour Organization

Save the Children.

unicef
for every child

Methodology followed during the research: Capture-Recapture*

A = Number of observations in wave one

N = Total Population

B = Number of observations in wave two

3
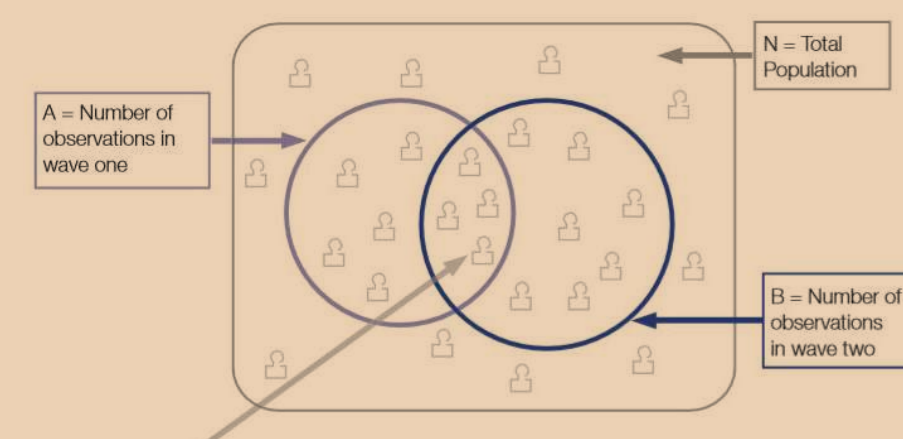
It is important to state that behind the **fieldwork** I have done on the street, I have based my research on **existing work** done by associations such as **UNICEF, Save The Children and ILO** in different areas in **Lebanon**. The "study assesses the cases of more than 700 Lebanese and non-Lebanese children and is the first of its kind to cover the different locations and regions in Lebanon where a relatively high incidence of children living or working on the streets persists."[2] The maps show the correlation between the **Syrian influx** in different regions of the country after the war, and the major **nationality** of the children which is **Syrian**. Indeed, most of the street children reside **illegally** in the country and have to come up with various **strategies** in order to stay here. Their nationality and their legal state are two very important factors in the way they behave and **transform** on the street. The second map also shows the location where these children **work** in relation to their **home**. What is interesting, is that the major area of work converge in **Beirut**, where I am locating my field work and interest.
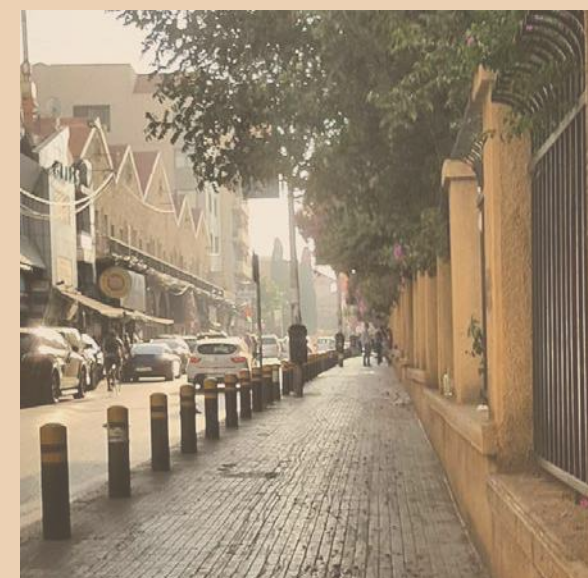
Field work

The **field work** is mainly constituted of three different areas of interest: The **physical environment**, the **interaction with the children**, and **the transformation of space** itself. What I started doing is to explore **different areas of Beirut** where street children are **working**. The work is arranged between **Hamra**, **Sin el Fil**, **Jeser Fiat**, and **Verdun**. What is interesting is that each specific location is characterized by **immediate physical and social components** that create a unique environment for the children. What I did in every area was divided into three parts: First, point out the **physical context of the site** to see how it is shifted and characterized by the **types of users**, second, it is about talking, **interacting** with the kids in order to derive the **profiles** of each interaction there. The third thing done on site is also to understand and to abstract different **transformation of space performed by the children** by their actions. Before discussing them, it is important to say how I profiled them and on what points I focused on. The information is dissected into three areas: The main basic part is constituted of the **age, name, job, and number of family members of the kid**. The secondary information is based on the **time variable on site**. Indeed, based on the field work and existing research, I realized that there are two types time variable that I will be discussing in detail later on: **Time variable and Cash variable**. Indeed, time variable is when children are not old to remain alone on the street, they are given a specific time to stay on the street. Cash variable is seen the most, among boys aged 16-18 years old who work alone during the day and that have to bring back a specific amount of money every day in order to go home. The other two components of the profiling are the **main cash mechanism** (how the money circulates and to who) and second, the **activities performed by the children** during the day on the street and how they **circulate** from their area of work to their home. All of this, first allows me to profile the main type of kids that are placed in this area in order to understand the **type of kid**s that are present in the area based on its characteristics and second it then allows me to understand **why** they are **specifically placed** there and to understand **deeper networks** that I will discuss later on. All of this allowed to put together the t**ransformation of narratives** that will be coming up next, and also **transformation of spaces** derived from different **exercises done with the children**.

[2] Ammar, Alexander. *Children living and working on the streets in Lebanon: Profile and Magnitude.* ILO/UNICEF/SCI, 2015.

4

The main type of kids present there are teenagers who work as **shoe shiners**. One of them is Malek. He is a 15 years old boy who works **individually** on the street. He works as a show shiner in order to provide for a **family of 8** that is located at *Asas*. Therefore, he is **not watched** during the day by an **employer** or someone in charge. He directly provides the cash to his father at home, it is a **straightforward process**. So, his **time variable** is based on cash and **not on time**, he has to provide everyday an amount of **35,000 LL**. If he doesn't meet the requirements, he is either beaten or sleeps outside until he gets the money. His daily routine is to go from his home to Bliss by **taxi**, he roams **entry points of restaurants on the street**, and he also plays football on the street. Here, the idea is that each kid shapes the street and **manipulates** it according to his needs and desires. When he has completed his daily income, he then leaves home using also a taxi. The purpose of using the **"service"** or bus is that officers won't be able to see the parents or people in charge and to trace their movements easily. In bliss, the idea of **competition** is overwhelming among these children.

The **second** type of kids that are more of a minority on Bliss are **groups of kids** that are way **younger**. I encountered there 2 groups. I will be talking about one to illustrate it. The differences between this type and the previous one is that these work as a **group**. They are constituted of three family members, they play and sell together. However, they are way younger than the others, their age ranges from 4 to 7 to 10 years old. They are **watched** during the day by their **employer**. The **cash mechanism** here is more complicated because there is the presence of an employer that stands in between the parent and the kid. Indeed, in many cases, parents make a deal with employers that allow to provide **"protection"** to the kids on the ground in case they are arrested because they have a **contact**. In this case, the kids have to provide an amount of **20 000 LL** per day to the employer, and the rest goes to the family. In other cases, the employer is not in contact with the family, and the kid finds himself **working double**. Moreover, in this case the **time variable** is from 10 am to 9 pm, it is not about how much cash they get but how much **time** they spend on site.

Profile: Individual Kid #1
Name: Malek
Age: 15 years old
Job: Shoe Shining
Background status: Family of 8
Watched: no
Works: Individually

Time variable:

0 — 35 000 LL

Money distribution

father

Movement:

9 AM: *Asas* to *Bliss*

9 AM - 5/6 PM: *Bliss Street*
- *Roams* entry points of restaurants to get *food* and get the *money*
- *Plays* football with other kids in empty parking spots

5/6PM - Cash complete: *Bliss* to *Hamra* Street

Cash complete: *Hamra* to *Asas*

Goes to Network with friends

Profile: Individual Kid #3
Name: Mohammad
Age: 19 years old
Job: Shoe Shining
Background status: Family of 4
Watched: no
Works: Individually

Time variable:

0 — 35 000 LL

Money distribution

father

Movement:

9 AM: *Asas* to *Bliss*

9 AM - 5/6 PM: *Bliss Street*
- *Roams* entry points of restaurants to get *food* and get the *money*
- *Lifts* heavy objects found on the street like stones for example

5/6PM - Cash complete: *Bliss* to *Hamra* Street

Cash complete: *Hamra* to *Asas*

Goes to the Gym or Cafe

Profile: Individual Kid #4
Name: Mohammad
Age: 18 years old
Job: Shoe Shining
Background status: Family of 5
Watched: no
Works: Individually

Time variable:

0 — 35 000 LL

Money distribution

father

Movement:

9 AM: *Asas* to *Bliss*

9 AM - 5/6 PM: *Bliss Street*
- *Roams* entry points of restaurants to get *food* and get the *money*
- *Throws* bottles of water on other kids on the street

5/6PM - Cash complete: *Bliss* to *Hamra* Street

Cash complete: *Hamra* to *Asas*

Stays at home, unknown

Profile: Individual Kid #2
Name: Walid
Age: 17 years old
Job: Shoe Shining
Background status: Family of 3
Watched: no
Works: Individually

Time variable:

0 — 35 000 LL

Money distribution

father

Movement:

9 AM: *Asas* to *Bliss*

9 AM - 5/6 PM: *Bliss Street*
- *Roams* entry points of restaurants to get *food* and get the *money*
- *Throws* bottles of water on other kids to have fun

5/6PM - Cash complete: *Bliss* to *Hamra* Street

Cash complete: *Hamra* to *Asas*

Goes to Network with friends

Profile: Group of Kids #1
Name: Ahmad and Jammal
Age: 5 and 7 years old
Job: Sell Chewing Gum
Background status: Brothers working with employer
Watched: All day

Time variable:

10 AM — 9 PM

Money distribution

father

protection

Employer

Employer

Movement:

10 AM: *unknown* to *Bliss*

9 AM - 5/6 PM: *Bliss Street*
- *Roam* entry points of restaurants to get *food* and get the *money*
- *Give* money every now and then to the responsible who checks on them

5/6PM - Cash complete: *Bliss* to *Hamra* Street

Cash complete: Go Home

Profile: Group of Kids #2
Name: 2 girls and 2 boys
Age: 5, 7, 9 and 10 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Cousins, Families
Watched: No

Time variable:

10 AM — 9 PM

Money distribution

Employer

Movement:

9 AM: *Haret Hreik* to *Bliss*

9 AM - 5/6 PM: *Bliss Street*
- *Roam* entry points of restaurants to get *food* and get the *money*
- *Play* Hide and seek and running on the street at Bliss

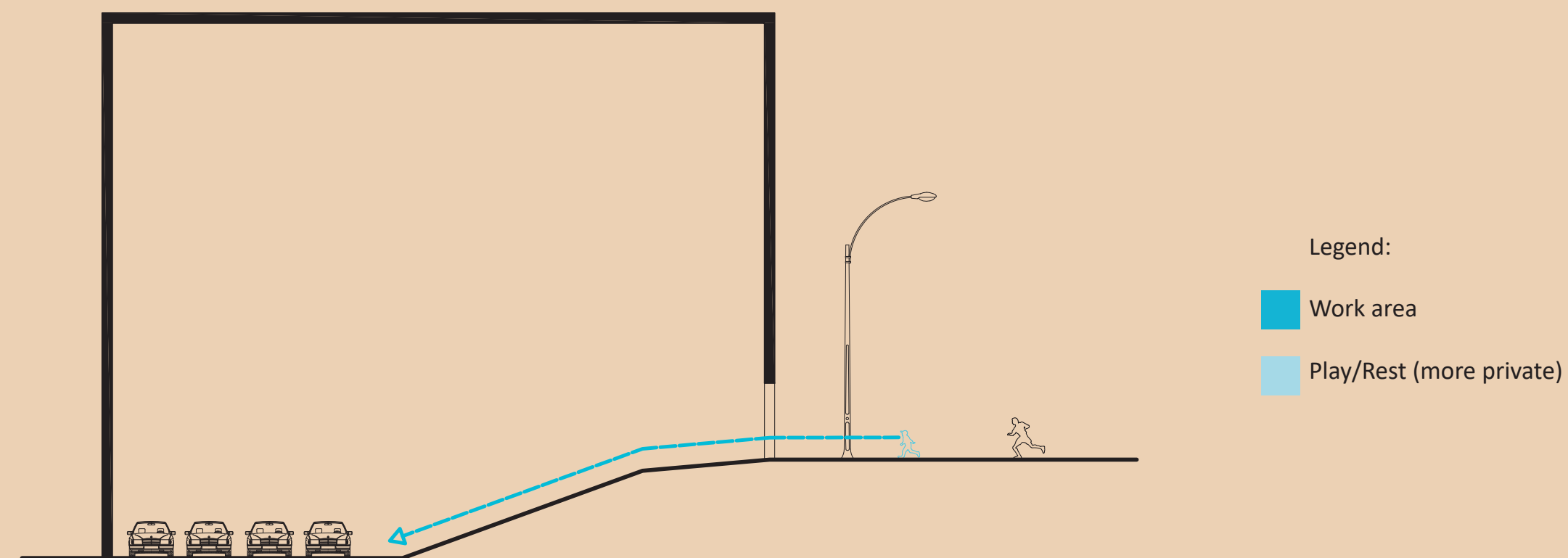**5/6PM - Cash complete:** *Bliss* to *Hamra* Street

Cash complete: Go Home

Bliss, a **highly commercial area** is characterized by the n**umerous restaurants on one side**, and on the other side the **American University of Beirut**. This one sided exposure offers a **bipartite repartition** for street children who focus on the main **flows of students** walking on the restaurant side.

The main **strategies** of the beggars there is to place themselves on the e**ntry-points of the restaurants and shops** that become **hotspots** for them. In this region, the main types of kids are **individuals** that work for their families which brings the idea of **competition**.

(1) The way these children visualize and see space is completely different from other perspectives. Indeed, the whole **convention of interior vs exterior** is reinvented, and the built environment is transformed. For the children there, the i**nterior of the restaurants is extended horizontally** along the whole street, leaving an **exterior** corridor between their interior work-flow and the AUB fence. For them, AUB is transformed into a foreign country that no one can even see. The exterior corridor, which was normally a sidewalk is the space the children use in order to **rest and sit**. It is a space where they don't perform. They are **neutral** there. How to differentiate between the interior and exterior? In this case, it is not at all about the physical aspect of the site, but about the **level and type of activity on the ground floor**. Indeed, the side of the road near the restaurants is highly **activated by customers, passers-by, and students** going in differen**t directions entering the brands. That is why this area alongside with the road is where these kids expose themselves and perform and is seen as the** interior space.
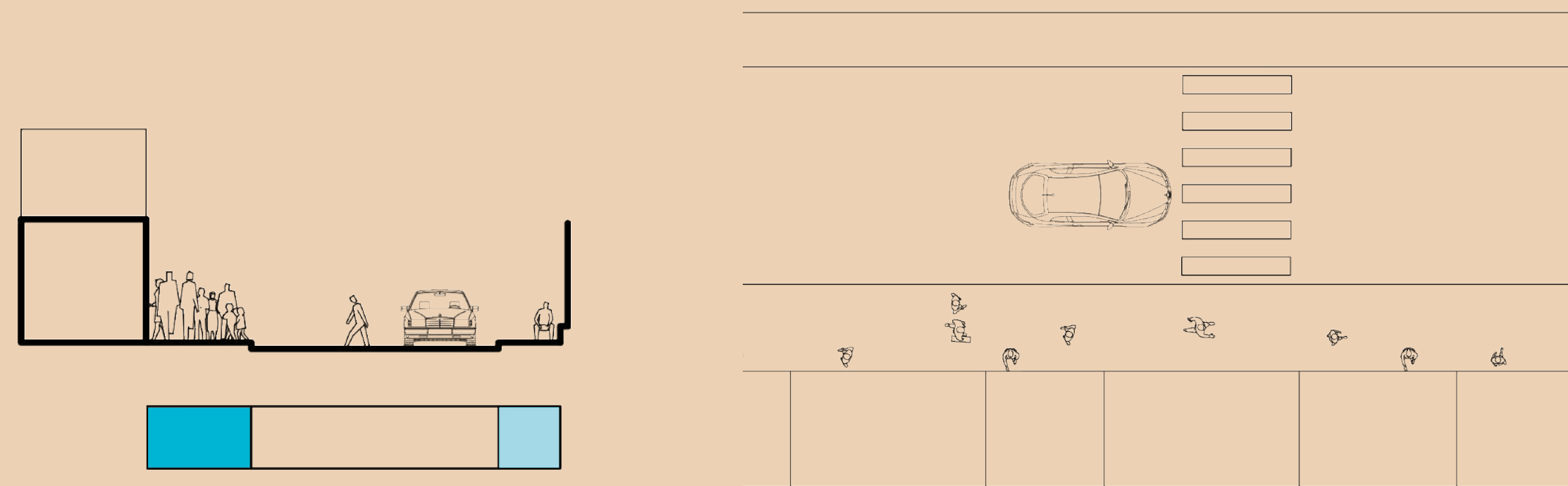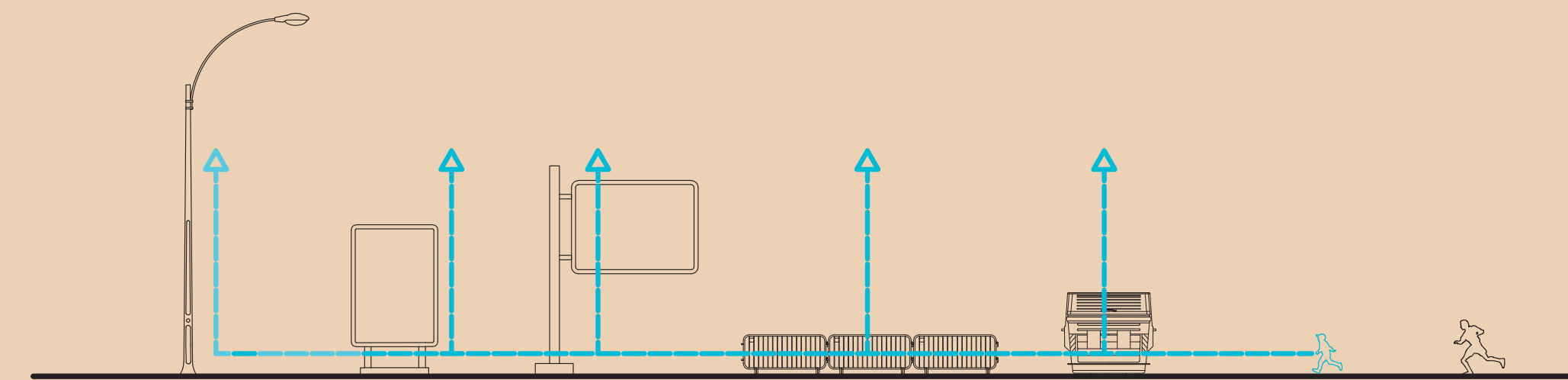
(2) What is interesting is the way these kids **transform the space and manipulate it**. A huge part of their daily life is how they **escape** in case of **chase** from officers. By doing so, they use and manipulate elements and spaces around them in order to create **new spaces to escape and hide.** In this case, the transformation is not limited to space but to **objects**. Indeed, **vertical elements** such as light poles, garbage cans, advertising panels are totally **abstracted** into their **basic geometries.** Indeed, their **primary function** is **replaced** by a new one allowing the children to **climb** them in order sometimes to escape, to hide, or to get to another point. An example of this would be the case of the **1866 Building fire stairs** that I will be discussing later in chapter V.

(3) Other escape strategies on Bliss, include the **underground parking** belonging of the 1866 Building. This private building houses restaurants and hotel rooms. The **threshold** between the **public and private** is a very light area where any user could pass by in order to enter it. However, by entering and running into it, kids transform this **private/public threshold** into an **extremely strict boundary**, and they transform the existing parking into a **hiding pit** in order to escape. Because it is a private residence, the "baladiyeh" or officers are not able to follow them. Indeed, the children in this case have made an "alliance" with the Valet that allow them to go and hide into the parking. This concept of network will be seen in the coming chapter. Moreover, the fact that the parking lot is transformed into this hiding pit only by the **practice of the children** indicates that "places are never established; They only operate through constant and reiterative practice."[3]

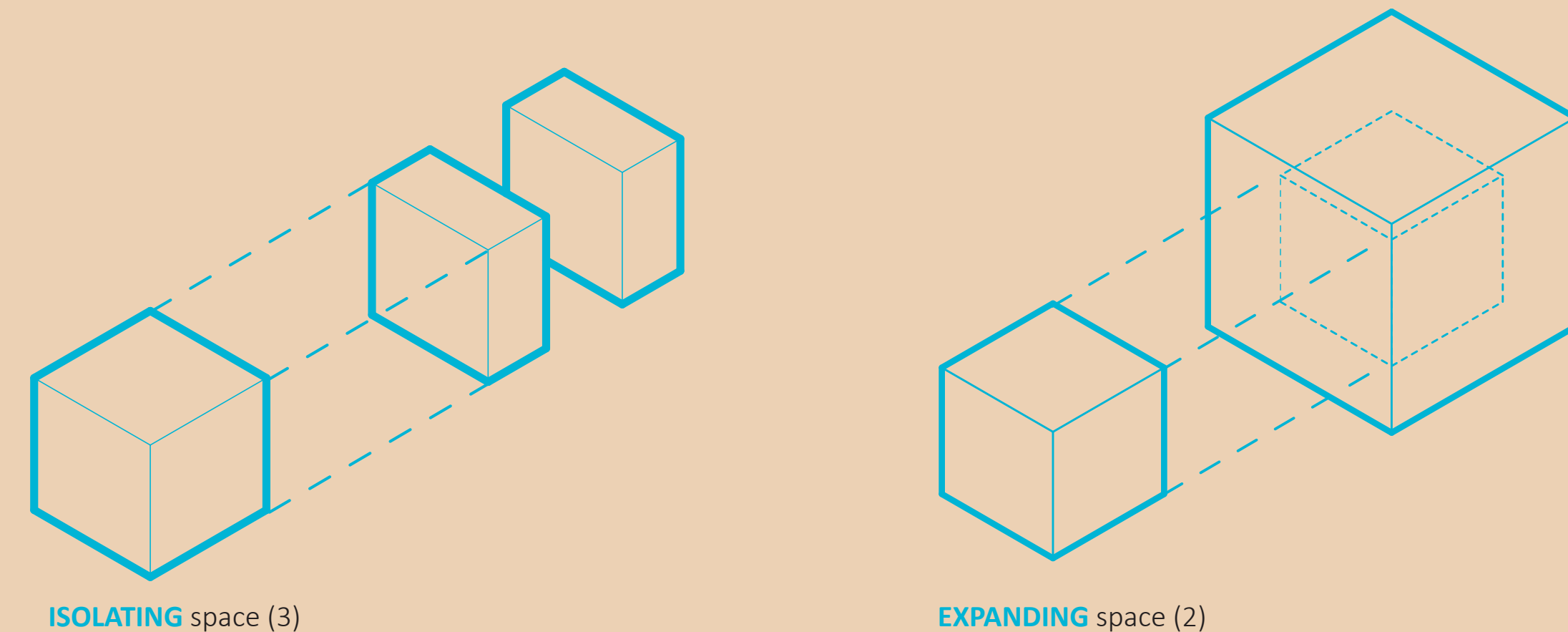(1) Section and plan showing the division at Bliss street of interior vs exterior for the street children


(2) Diagram showing the transformation of objects during the escape of the street children

Legend:

Work area

Play/Rest (more private)

(3) Section showing the transformation of the parking lot during the escape of the street children
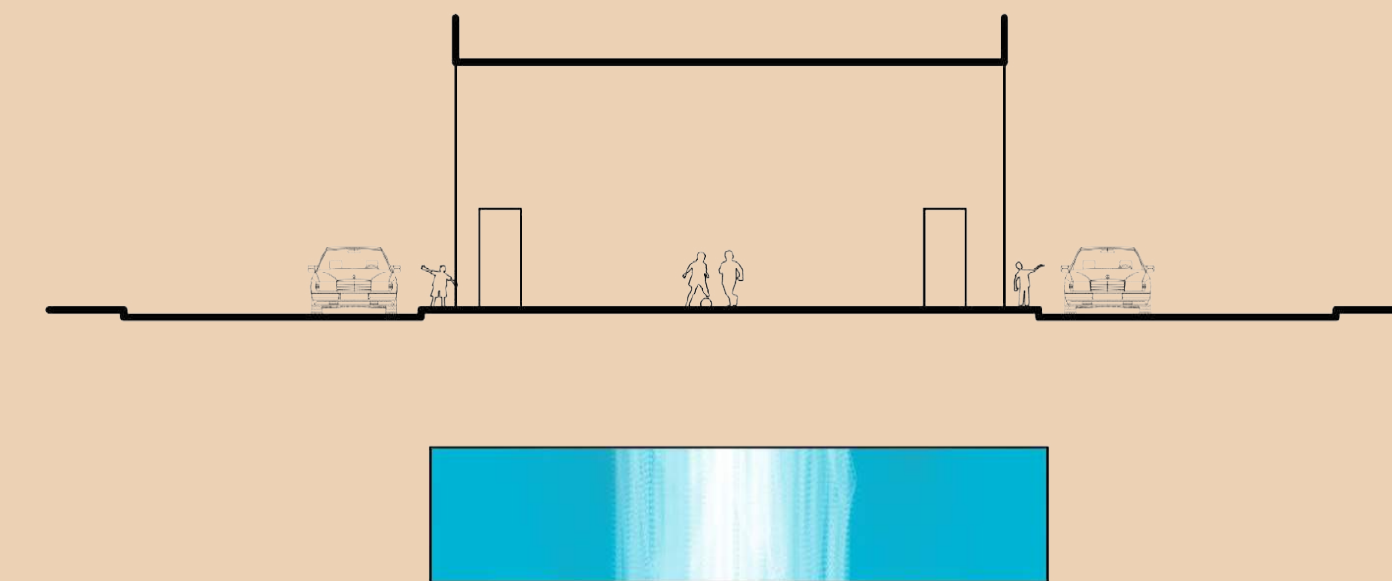

ISOLATING space (3)

EXPANDING space (2)

[3] Cresswell, Tim. *Place: an introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

This region here is strictly characterized by the **bridge** and the **vehicular roads** on both ends of the site. The area underneath the bridge has numerous characteristics making it an **optimal site** for begging. It protects from rain during winter, from the sun during summer, and it has a **double exposure** on two roads coming from **different areas**. None of the children encountered here were working individually. They were all **groups working together** and **spread** on different sides of the bridge where are placed the traffic lights. Alongside them, I also encountered **homeless men** that literally sleep under the bridge, which gives the sense of an extremely **private area**.
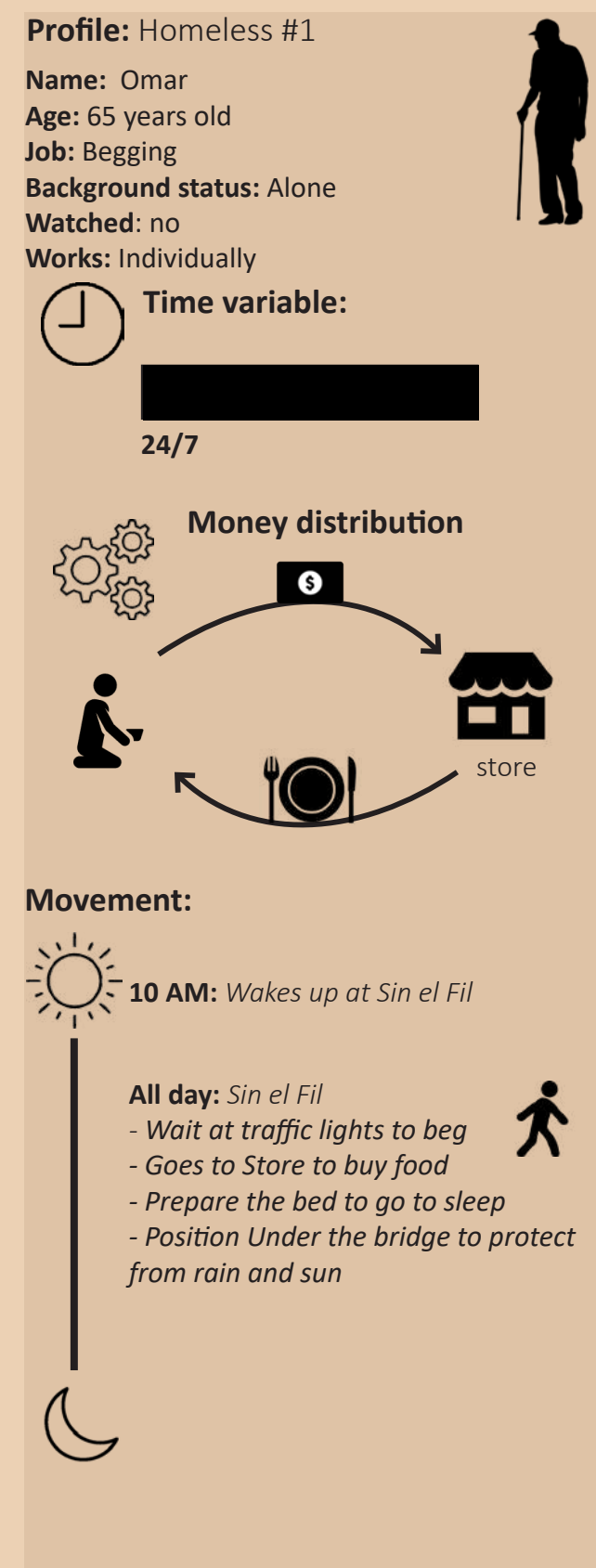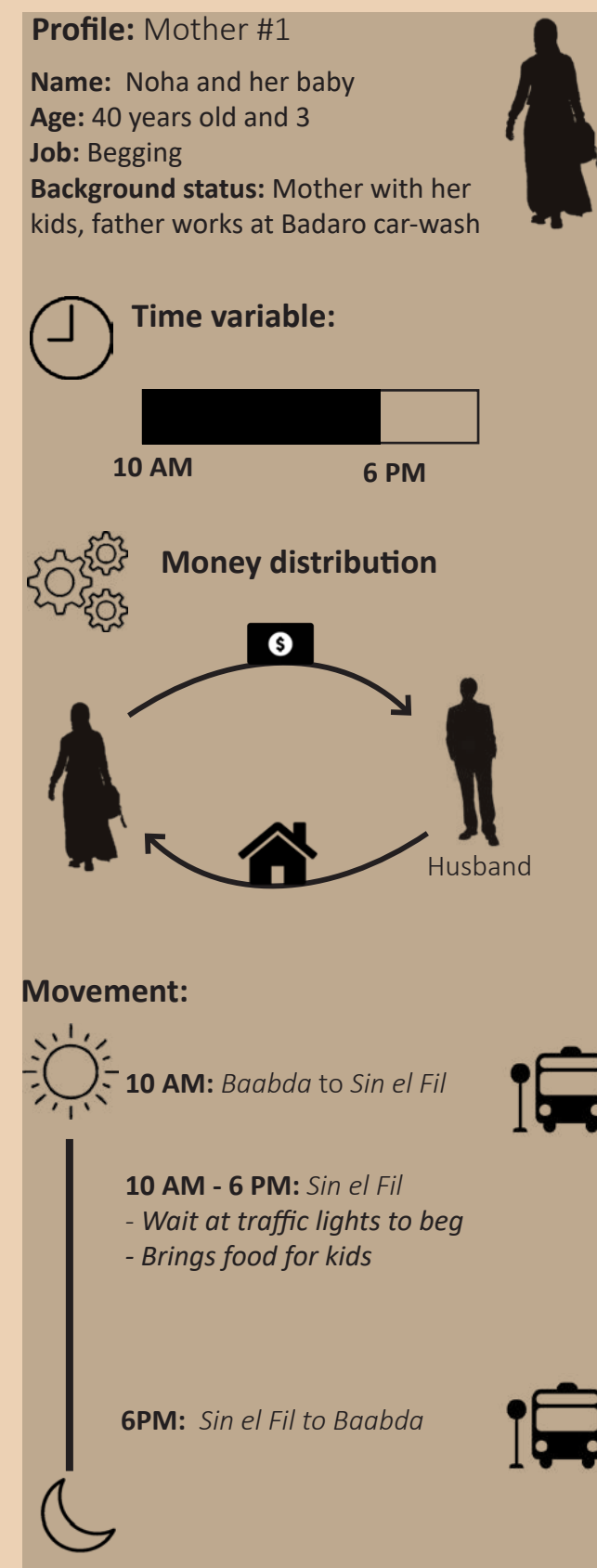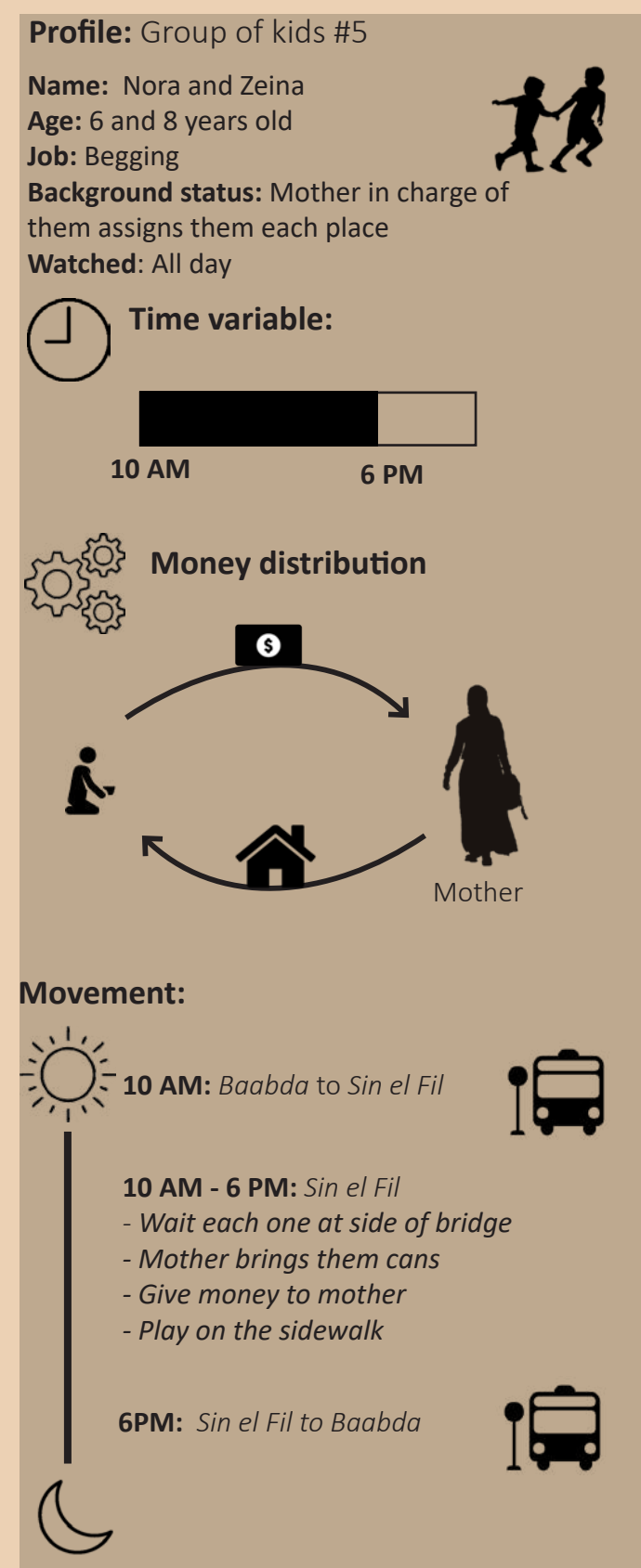
The spaces allow the kids to **work** on both extremities of the sidewalk, and at the same time to have a more **private area** in the centre. **Under the bridge**, the children **play football** next the bed of the **homeless men** sleeping there. (1) In this site, the area created by the bridge "acts beyond its purpose and provides shelter and **homely functions** in a public space"[4] The concept of interior vs exterior space here is transformed. In this area, there are no pedestrian movements. Indeed, when it comes to cars only, the convention of the interior is not about congestion anymore. It is about **safety**. That will be seen later on in **chapter III**.
(2) The plan below shows how Noha sends her children on different **traffic lights** and **intersections** present on site in order to **maximize the income and exposure**. Here another conception of transformation of space comes into play: The **dissection of space**. This is based on the idea of dissecting and organizing the space to maximize exposure.

Profile: Group of kids #5

Name: Nora and Zeina
Age: 6 and 8 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Mother in charge of them assigns them each place
Watched: All day

Time variable:

10 AM   6 PM

Money distribution

Mother

Movement:

10 AM: *Baabda* to *Sin el Fil*

10 AM - 6 PM: *Sin el Fil*
- Wait each one at side of bridge
- Mother brings them cans
- Give money to mother
- Play on the sidewalk

6PM: *Sin el Fil to Baabda*

Profile: Mother #1

Name: Noha and her baby
Age: 40 years old and 3
Job: Begging
Background status: Mother with her kids, father works at Badaro car-wash

Time variable:

10 AM   6 PM

Money distribution

Husband

Movement:

10 AM: *Baabda* to *Sin el Fil*

10 AM - 6 PM: *Sin el Fil*
- Wait at traffic lights to beg
- Brings food for kids

6PM: *Sin el Fil to Baabda*

Profile: Homeless #1

Name: Omar
Age: 65 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Alone
Watched: no
Works: Individually

Time variable:

24/7

Money distribution

store

Movement:

10 AM: *Wakes up at Sin el Fil*

All day: *Sin el Fil*
- *Wait at traffic lights to beg*
- *Goes to Store to buy food*
- *Prepare the bed to go to sleep*
- *Position Under the bridge to protect from rain and sun*

(1) Diagram showing the different areas created by the children

Legend:

Work area

Play/Rest (more private)

Spots of Work

DISSECTING space

(2) Diagrams showing the organizations of the street children on the present traffic lights and intersection allowing the dissection of space

[4] Tietjen, Anne, Svava Riesto, and Rana Haddad. "Doing critique of what design does at Superkilen." *PhD Course: Constructing Criticism*. Vol. 4. No. 13. 2017.

The region here is characterized by a **strong vehicular circulation**. In this area, the kids are also organized in **groups** rather than individuals. **Each two kids** are assigned a **spot** on the **roundabout** to maximize the **income per day**. Here, I was able to meet different **duos of kids** of different age groups. Ahmad and Imad are the ones I spent most of my time with. The **cash mechanism** in this scenario takes a **bigger leap** than in other cases. Here the young children know exactly the **location** of their older siblings and give the money collected to Hassan and Ali who at their turn will give the money to their father at the end of the day. There is less competition, because in this area, one big family group is **"controlling"** the **territory** and works a whole.

The **physical environment** of the area is marked by the **roundabout** and the various **intersections** present around it. In this case, the site is organized around the vehicular circulation. At **most of traffic light**s, one can find a group of kids working together. They are well **spread** around the area. When asked about their siblings or partners, the kids in directly indicated towards their spots. They know exactly where to find each sibling. (1) The section here is a zoom in of one of the spots found, where Ahmad and Imad **play and work throughout the day**. They were able to separate two different areas on site. The **work area**, characterized by the vehicular access on the ground, and the **play area**, that is located at a **higher point**. In this case too, the play is seen as a more **private**, **secluded** area that suggests **safety** for the children. Here, they play with a broken bar during the day as you can see in the bottom left picture.
(2) The plan below shows the same concept seen at Jeser Fiat of dissecting the space and spreading the children on the different intersections to maximize the exposure and the income.
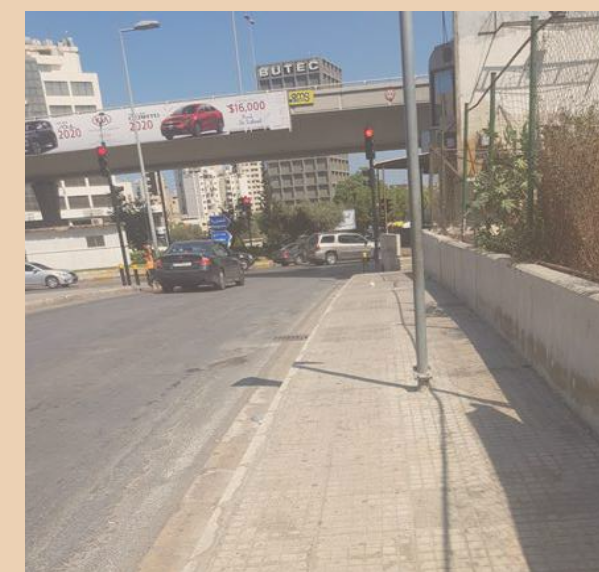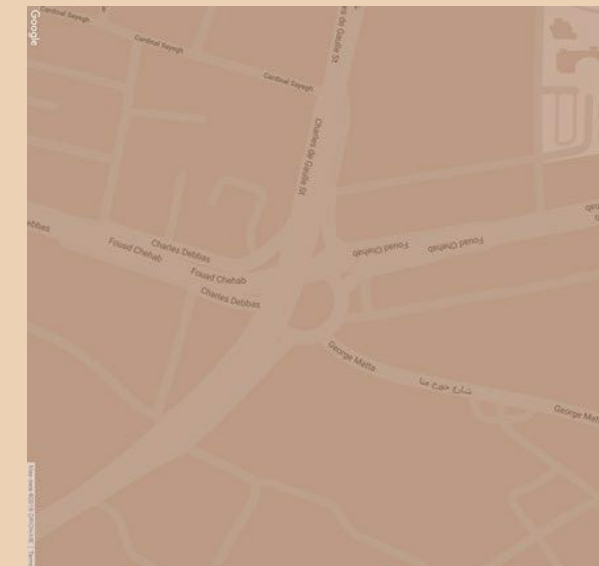
Profile: Group of kids #3
Name: Ahmad and Imad
Age: 5 and 10 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Whole family organized on each traffic light of roundabout
Watched: No

Time variable:

10 AM   6 PM

Money distribution

$

older sibling

Movement:

10 AM: *Haret Hreik* to *Sin el Fil*

10 AM - 6 PM: *Sin el Fil*
- *Wait at traffic lights to beg*
- *Eat Man'ouche from foron*
- *Give money to older siblings at other traffic*
- *Play with the Bar on the higher level*

6PM: *Sin el Fil to Haret Hreik*

Profile: Group of kids #4
Name: Hassan and Ali
Age: 15 and 17 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Whole family organized on each traffic light of roundabout

Time variable:

10 AM   6 PM

Money distribution

$

father

Movement:

10 AM: *Haret Hreik* to *Sin el Fil*

10 AM - 6 PM: *Sin el Fil*
- *Wait at traffic lights to beg*
- *Eat Man'ouche from foron*
- *Gather money from younger siblings*
- *Fight each other for fun*

6PM: *Sin el Fil to Haret Hreik*

Profile: Group of kids #5
Name: Noura and Bassam
Age: 4 and 6 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Whole family organized on each traffic light of roundabout

Time variable:

10 AM   6 PM

Money distribution

$

older sibling

Movement:

10 AM: *Haret Hreik* to *Sin el Fil*

10 AM - 6 PM: *Sin el Fil*
- *Wait at traffic lights to beg*
- *Eat Man'ouche from foron*
- *Give money to older siblings at other traffic*

6PM: *Sin el Fil to Haret Hreik*
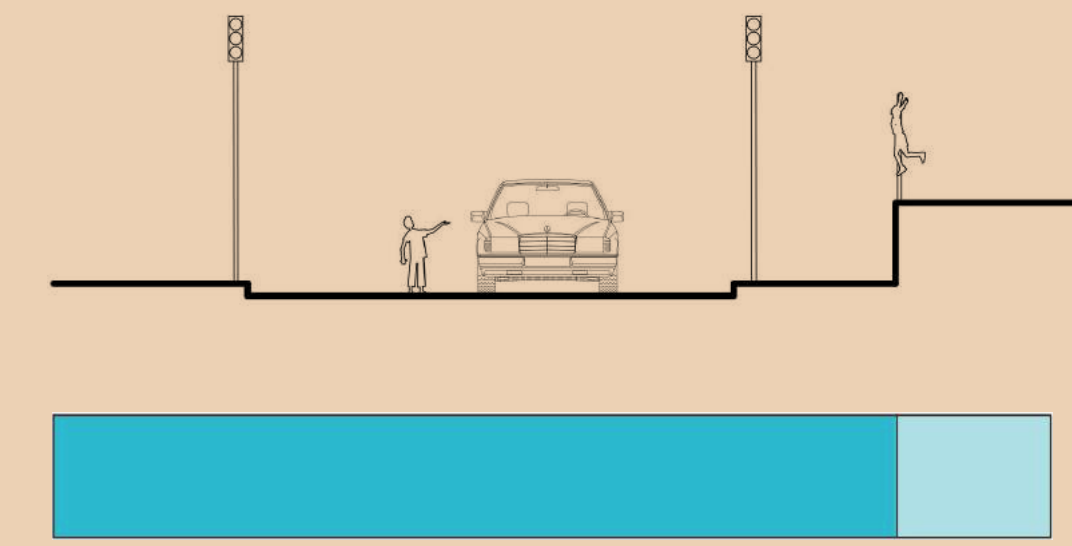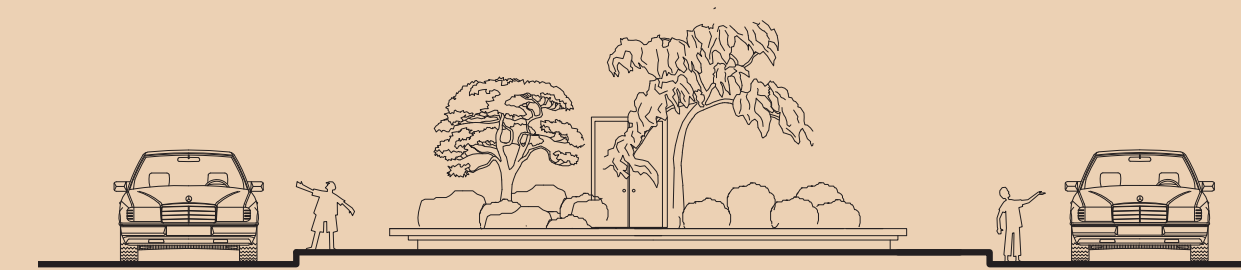
(1) Diagram showing the different areas created by the children
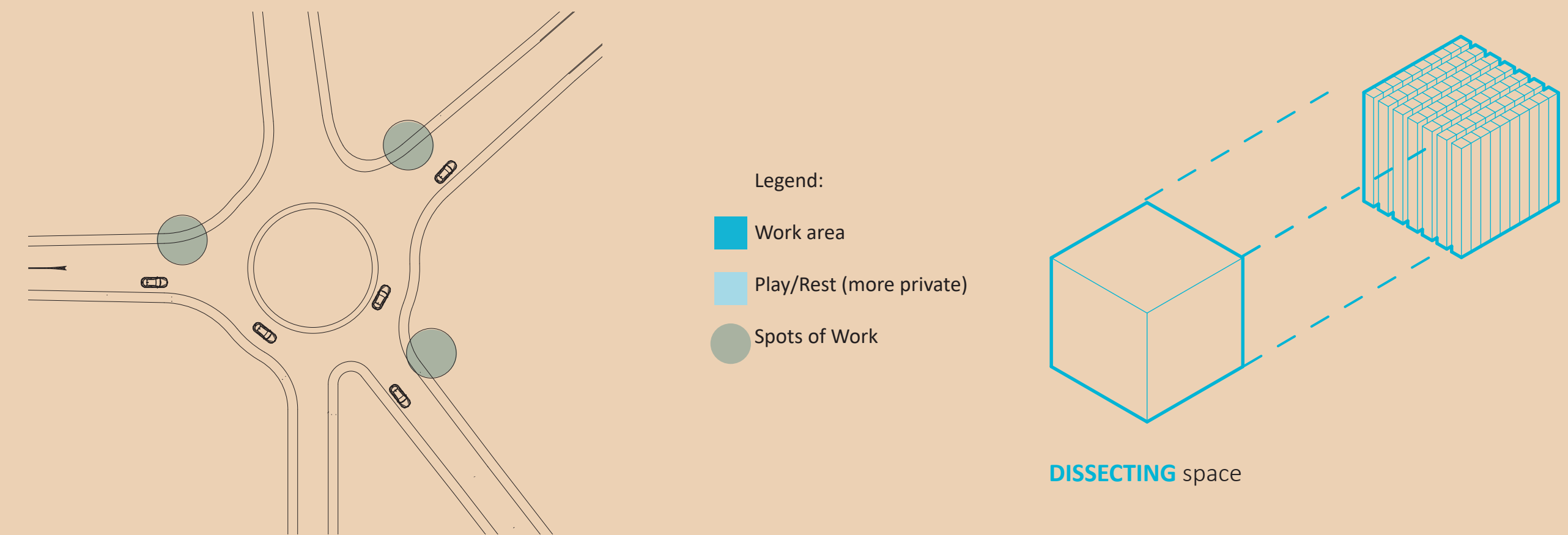
Legend:

Work area

Play/Rest (more private)

Spots of Work

DISSECTING space

(2) Diagrams showing the organizations of the street children on the present traffic lights and intersection allowing the dissection of space
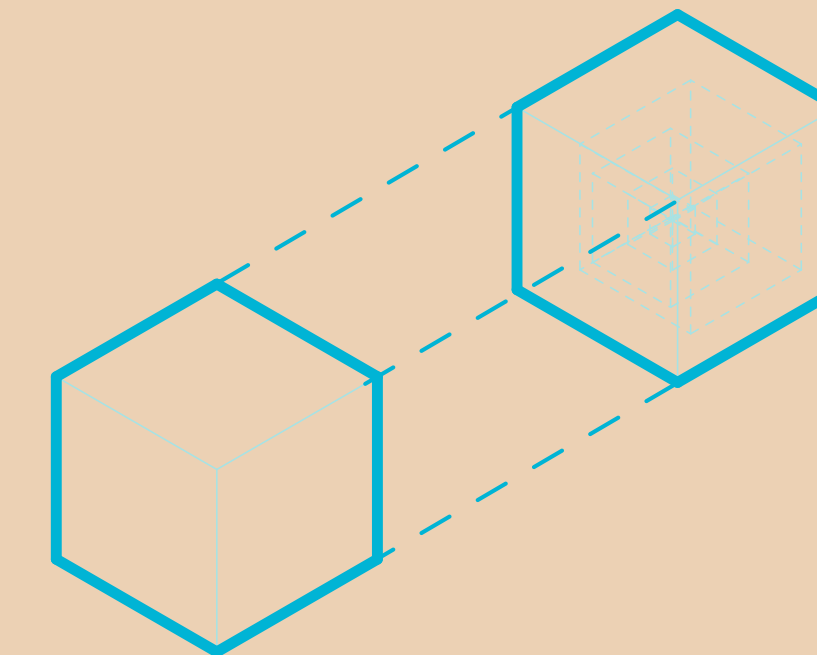
This region here is a **residential** and **commercial** area characterized by landmarks such as ABC mall or the Unesco. One can find there a lot of **groups of children** working together and spread around large areas. Also, there is a high number of **women** working with their children or alone in the area. Here, Mohammad and his sister are not continuously watched during the day. Their **father** checks on them twice a day and brings them **food**. At the end of the day, they go back home using a taxi. Another profile found here would be the **individual woman that works alone** on the street having her children at home. Her **time frame** is shorter than the ones of the kids because she 'has to go back home and take care of her children. She gives the money to her husband in this case.
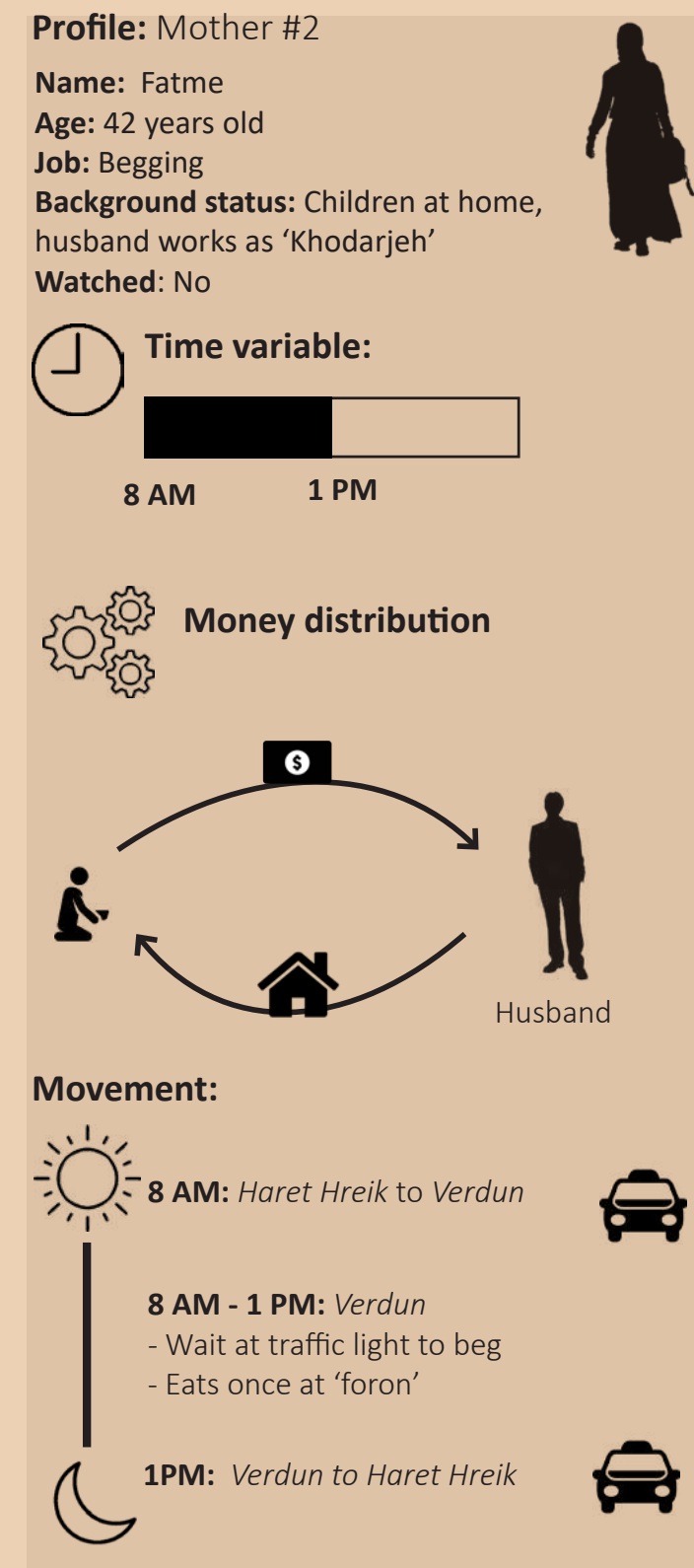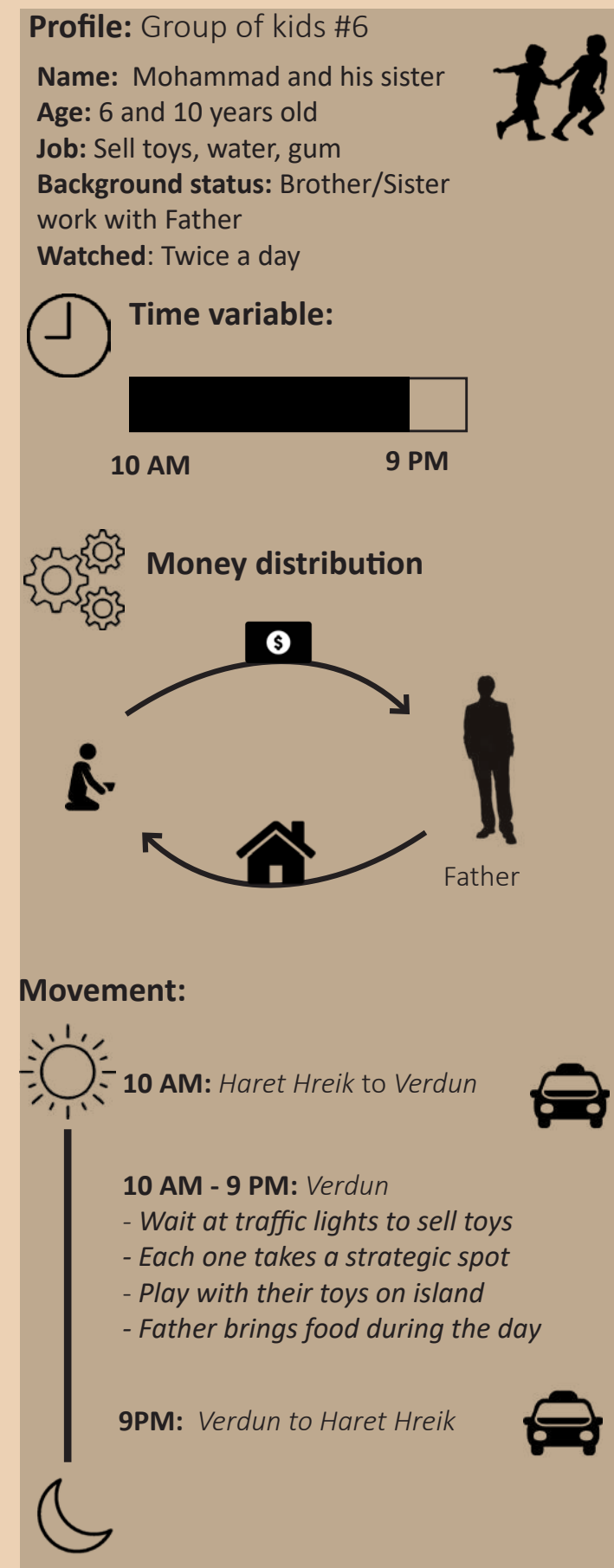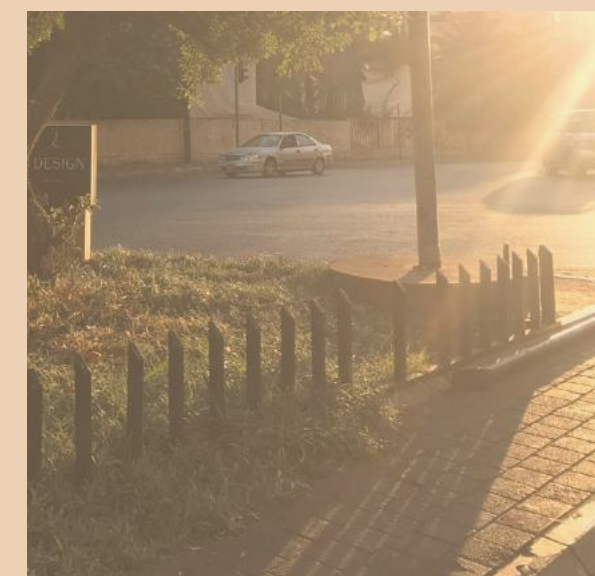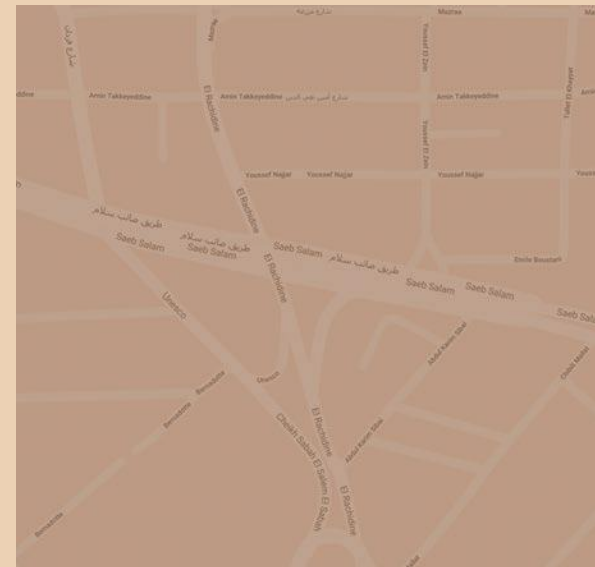
One of the groups encountered are brother and sisters working on each end of an **island**. The first thing that comes to mind is the idea of **dissecting** the space by placing each kid on one end of the planter. The second is the use of the island that has been kind of **privatized**. Children use the **planter as storage** for their toys and food during the day. The **outer parts** are more **public** and serve as **display** for the toys they are actually selling. When one finds himself in an area that only has car movements, the interior space becomes about safety. That is why the planter becomes the space where these children place their belongings. These belongings are both their personal toys but also the objects that they sell that are water bottles or chewing gums. "When humans invest **meaning** in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way it becomes a place."[5] In this case, the **"unused" space** of the planter is transformed into a **place of storage** for these children. That is where the difference between **space** and **place** is highlighted.

Profile: Group of kids #6

Name: Mohammad and his sister
Age: 6 and 10 years old
Job: Sell toys, water, gum
Background status: Brother/Sister work with Father
Watched: Twice a day

Time variable:

10 AM   9 PM

Money distribution

$

Father

Movement:

10 AM: *Haret Hreik* to *Verdun*

10 AM - 9 PM: *Verdun*
- *Wait at traffic lights to sell toys*
- *Each one takes a strategic spot*
- *Play with their toys on island*
- *Father brings food during the day*

9PM: *Verdun to Haret Hreik*

Profile: Mother #2

Name: Fatme
Age: 42 years old
Job: Begging
Background status: Children at home, husband works as 'Khodarjeh'
Watched: No

Time variable:

8 AM   1 PM

Money distribution

$

Husband

Movement:

8 AM: *Haret Hreik* to *Verdun*

8 AM - 1 PM: *Verdun*
- *Wait at traffic light to beg*
- *Eats once at 'foron'*

1PM: *Verdun to Haret Hreik*

Legend:

Work area

Rest/Storage (more private)

PRIVATIZING space

[5] Cresswell, Tim. *Place: an introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

Associations

Among the field work, I also made contact with different associations that deal directly or indirectly with street children. In the country, all of these associations are NGOs working independently from the state. Their goal may be seen as empowering the kids. Because of low budget and resources, they are not able to take the children out of the street, however, they may have other alternatives showing interesting transformation of space.

Arc en ciel

It is a "Lebanese based non-profit NGO, which supports Lebanon's most under-privileged and marginalized communities, regardless of religion, political affilia-tion or nationality."[6] This association is not focused on street children. It does not provide shelters for them. However, it offers spaces called rainbow clubs. These spaces are temporary escapes or mirages for kids where they can do various ac-tivities. It allows them to choose from a variety of activities free of charge during specific hours of the days.

Himaya

"In order to achieve its mission, Himaya works with children as well as their families and environment as a whole. Himaya strives for a radical change on a national level in order to improve the lives of children in Lebanon."[7] This association is in partnership with the municipality which allow it to make temporary deals to protect children. It may provide shel-ters for some kids in case they are exposed to violence. These types of partnerships allow to transform their doors into strict borders as if it was an embassy. When kids enter it, even their parents don't have the right to enter.

CREATING mirages

FILTERING space

"Through the creation of temporary recreation clubs, the association allows the creation of mirages where children could be isolated from their surrounding and play various sports"[8]
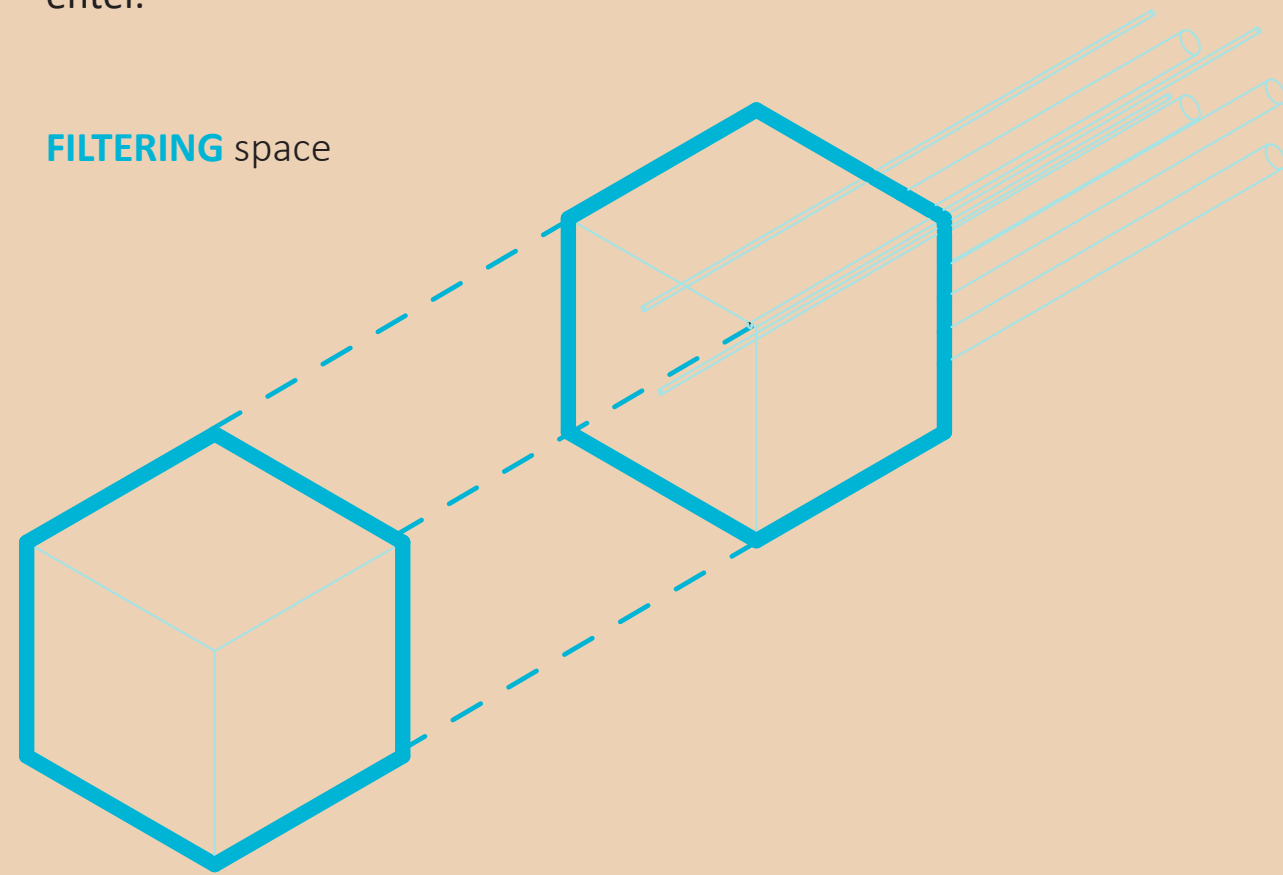
Through the partnership with the municipalities and government, associa-tions such as Himaya allow the filtering of space by dictating who can and who cannot enter their boundaries.

Chapter II: Transformation of narratives

In this chapter, the focus is on the different dynamics present in the front and back seen of the street. These range from the network in the front and back seen of the street, to the graduation system of the children organized by the mobs, and to the clash between the authority and the children. These show and translate specific concepts learnt from the children (and the mobs behind them) that will be explored in detail in the chapter.

[6] "Engage in Development." arcenciel. Accessed December 8, 2019. https://www.arcenciel.org/en/.

[7] Who We Are." himaya. Accessed December 8, 2019. https://www.himaya.org/content/who-we-are.

[8] Nadim Abdo, telephone conversation with the head of Youth Program at arcenciel, 5 October, 2019.

Ecosystem of Malek in Bliss
Street

Owner

Owner

Landlord

Father

Employee Bliss House

Employee Tonino

Politician

Shaweesh

SC 3

Mother

Intermediate

SC 2

Manager

Owner

Waiter X

Employer on site

SC 4

Clients

SC 3

Officer X

Valet

Officer Y

Contact
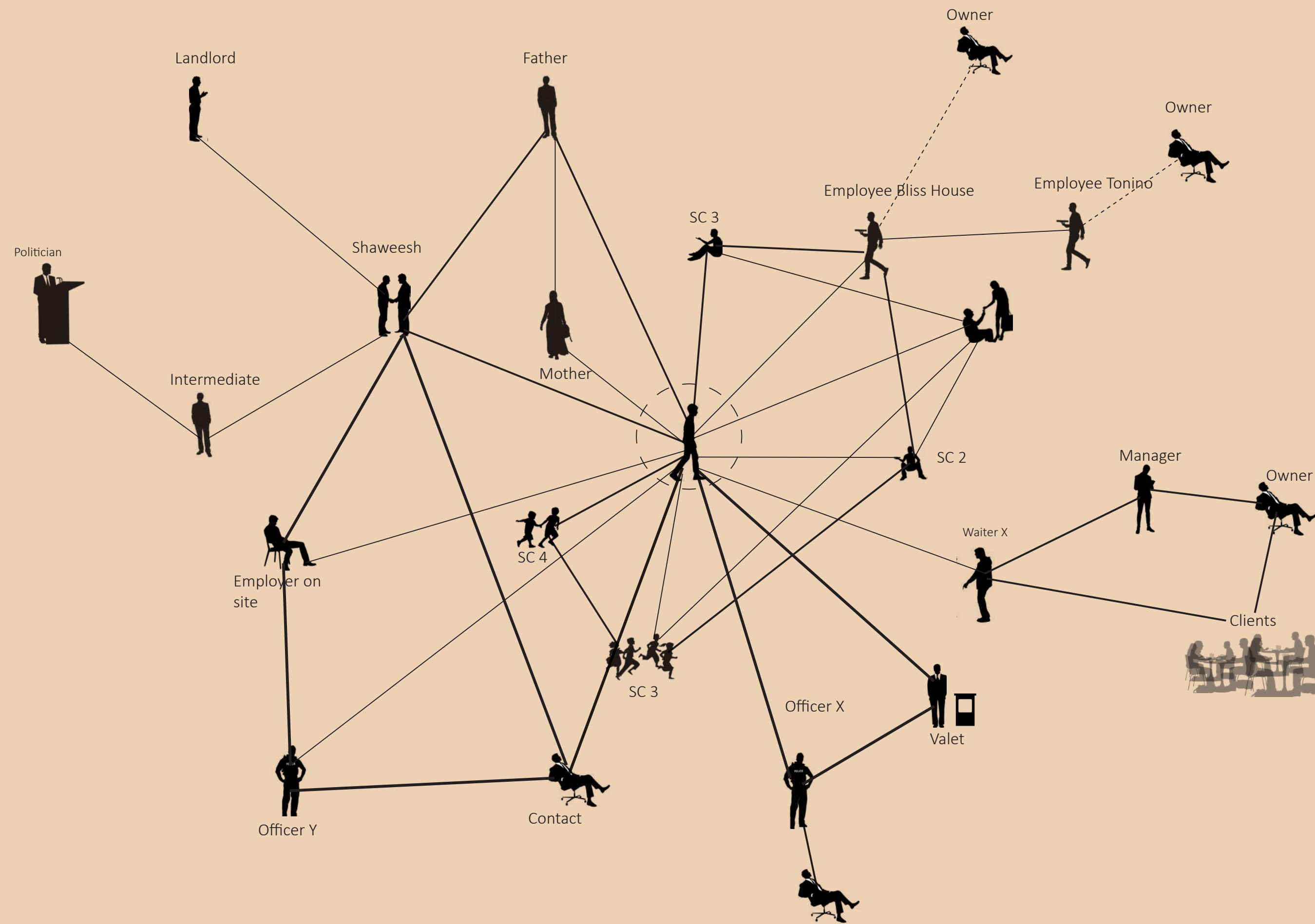
The first **transformation of narrative** I will discuss is the transformation of **network on the front and back scene of the street**. Indeed, it is obvious that the topic and issue of street children is not limited to their actions and their immediate surrounding. There is a much **deeper intricate network** of people pulling the strings and fighting back and force. It is an **ecosystem**. The background of a street child is constituted of different actors. There are the people **in charge of him**, his father, mother, employer, his **family members** such as his or her siblings, and other actors such as his employer, the landlord, the *shaweesh*, being **background characters**. These can give more information on the **type of street child** we are talking about. Then, there are a different set of characters that are on site, on the street. These characters differ from site to site, they can either be **enemies or alliances**. They are **used** by the children in order to **survive** on the streets. In this exercise, I started by creating the **specific network** of Malek in Bliss. He is part of extremely intricate loops and cycles of actors. In the web created, one can see his relationship with different **layers** of characters. In the background, one can find his family: constituted of his father and mother that have a relationship or deal with his **employer**. Indeed, instead of paying for rent, his **father** makes his children work under the **Shaweesh**. The Shaweesh being the person who rents the space and takes in return money or labour. Moreover, the kid also has different alliances on the street like for example **waiters** of small restaurants giving him **food** or **money** because their **boss** are not present. In other cases, the waiters can be seen as **enemies** such as at Urbanista for example. In this case, the **owner** doesn't want his **clients** to be **disturbed** by the children. Other elements come into play too, because the Shaweesh has an **employer on site** that has **contacts** in different jails that allow the kid to get out in case he is **imprisoned**. That is when one can be exposed to **officers** that are **bribed** and others that are not. So, from this point on, children have also to find ways to fight those enemies by creating **new alliances** on site. In the case of Malek, one of his defence mechanism is the **Valet parking** who allow him to **hide** in the 1866 Building's parking when he is being chased by an officer. Each actor in this web has a say and a **weight** in **shaping the street** showing that "places are performed on a daily basis through people living their everyday life."[9] This diagram showcases different connections present on the front and back seen of the street, **but what about nature of these connections and exchanges happening?**

[9] Cresswell, Tim. *Place: an introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014

Landlord — Shaweesh — Father
$ / $ or Labour / Labour
Land / Tent or Apartment / Home

Landlord — Shaweesh — Employer on site
$ / $ Supervision of kids / $ 20.000 LL/Day
Land / $ / Instructions

Officer X — Valet, friends on site
Escape / Escape route / Conflict of interest
Arrest / Bonding / Blocks the arrest

Officer X — — Officer X
Escape / Beating
Arrest / Labour or Prison time

$ SC 2 — protection — SC 2 — fight
stealing / escape / fight

Waiter X — Manager — Owner — Clients
fight / $ / $ / $ / begging/selling
begging/selling / responds to oder / responds to oder / responds to oder / annoyed

Shaweesh — Employer on site — Contact or Wasta — Officer Y
$ Supervision of kids / relation of power / responds to order / escapes from him
$ / $ / $ / frees the kid

Father — Mother
Labor / Labor
Home / Care or Home

Employee Bliss House — Employee Tonino — Owner
free food / free food / $
gratitude / friendship / lies

play/help — SC 3 — play/help — SC 2 — play/help — SC 2
play/help / play/help / play/help

competition — SC 3 — competition — SC 2 — $ or food
competition / competition / pity/bonding

In this exercise, I wanted to show and understand the **complexity** and **diversity** of **exchanges** happening in the daily life of Malek. All of these are **negotiations of space, resources, services or feelings** between different **characters**. Malek can be seen at the **beginning** of the exchange, the **middle** or at the **end** of it. These different characters, weather they are **alliances** or **enemies**, exchange with the children. Some characters have hybrid exchanges together like the street children among themselves: In some cases, they **help** and **support** each other and in other cases they are seen as **competition** when it comes to getting money and marking their **territory**.

Alliances

Background Network

Family *Outsiders*

| 2 | 2 |

People in charge

| 2 | 2 | → | 1 |

Street Network

Main character

Settlement background

| 2 | 2 |

Enemies
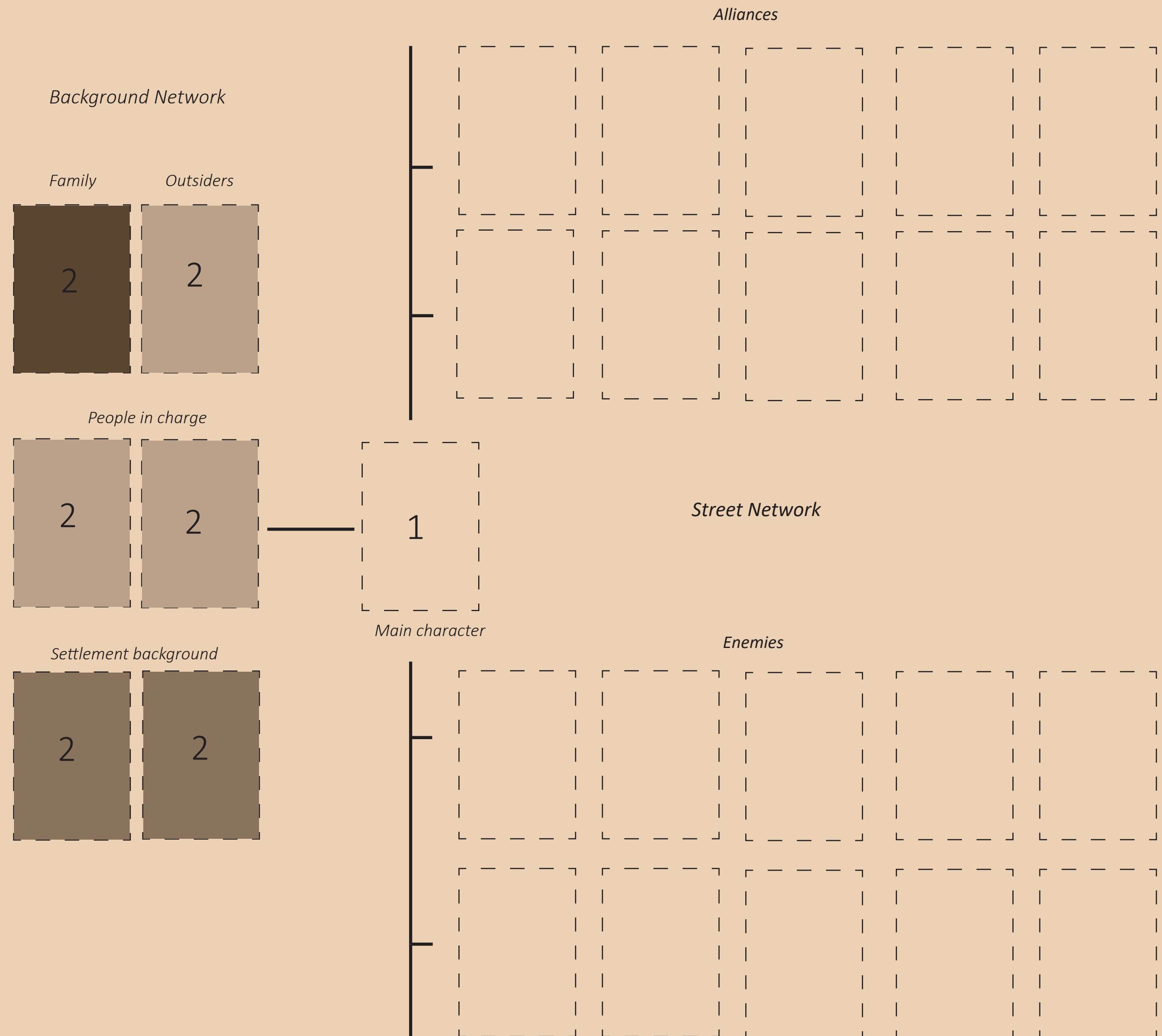
By putting together the network of Malek, what I created was a **snapshot** of the **endless possibilities** one could have from the street. What I decided to do was to create a **board game** based on the **actual dynamics** of the street. It is important to state, that the children are not the only actors that transform the street on the daily. The **city transforms every day** and is **shaped** by various actors. Why a board game? This board-game has as purpose to **simulate** the different possibilities and networks present on the street based on **each type of character and perspective**. It allows to see narratives that transform based on the **point of view** of the **main character**. Some of the cards can only be placed as **background information** of the main character showing the **different typologies present**. Other cards can either be placed as **allies or enemies on the street**. Each card or character is based on an existing character encountered through the field work or through the stories told by the children and fed also by existing research done by UNICEF, Save the children and ILO. When you choose to place a specific character as the main one, the city will take a shape according to him. Based on this game, many questions come into play. **What if you were a child among those? What if you were a passer-by? How would the network shift and negotiations change?**

How does It work? It is constituted of different steps. It is divided into two types of cards: the **background characters** and the **street characters**. The **first step** is to choose the **main character**. The **2nd step** is to choose the **background characters** that are constituted of three types of cards: Family, People in Charge, and settlement background. After building the background, the **3rd step** is about **simulating** what those children do on the daily: **building up your network** on the street. From now, by pulling each card, the user will be able to create **enemies** or **alliances** based on his luck. This whole game allows to understand the game these children play in order to **survive** the street through **alliances**, it also allows the user to see how the whole **narrative transforms** and unfolds based on the main character chosen. So, the interesting part would be to try to place a **passer-by** who just wants to go eat as **main character** which will **flip** the whole scenery of alliances and enemies.

These can be seen as the **different cards** created for the board game. As mentioned previously, there are two main types of cards. The background cards (different nuances of brown), and the cards on the street. **Examples of the background cards** would be: The family members, the mother, the father, *shaweesh* and employer. **Examples of cards on the street** would be: Passer by, clients, street children, employer, waiter, valet and officers. Each card is characterized by the **name or the type** of character on the top of the card, and the **number** on the right. The number indicates the **version** of the card. Each character has different versions in order to simulate **different scenarios** since the street transforms on the daily. For example, if you look at the *darakeh* cards: the version number 1 is a *darakeh* that just got his job and wants to impress his boss, so he would do anything to catch the children. The version number 2 is a *darakeh* that is bribed by the employer and won't go after the kids so he is not seen as an enemy on site, and the third version would be the *darakeh* that is bored and would like to catch the children for fun.

DARAKEH #1

His mission is to catch the kids. He just arrived and wants to impress his boss. He would chase them endlessly to bring them to arrest them and catch their employers.

DARAKEH #2

Him and his friends are bored at work. They would like to catch and beat those kids for some fun.

PASSER BY #2

This guy passes by this street everyday. He knows everyone there and has become friends with the kids there. He often gives them food.

CONTACT #2

He is friends with the employer of the kids. He tells all his subordinates to not arrest them since he is taking a part of the profit.

PASSER BY #3

He is often scared of those kids who can be extremely rude and violent. He wants them out of here.

STREET CHILD #1

This kid is 17 years old. He has to provide 30.000 LL every day. He works as shoe shining and talks to every person he sees. He is friendly and gets bored alone on the streets.

OWNER #1

He owns a high end restaurant. He does whatever the clients want, he cannot accept the presence of street children near his restaurant. His employees have to listen to him.

CLIENTS #2

One of these two cannot stand to see these children on the street. He gets pissed and would even beat them if he has the chance.

CLIENTS #3

This couple came here to eat. However, they wouldn't mind giving to children on this day a part of their meal.

LANDLORD #2

He owns a land with a couple of apartments that he rents out.

EMPLOYER #1

His task is to supervise the kids on site and make sure they are doing their job. He stays there all day.

FAMILY #3

Family of 8 children.

STREET CHILD #6

These two kids work together on site and are always watched by someone. They remain at the street from 9 am to 6pm. They beg, and sometimes they hold on to strangers to get money.

OWNER #2

He owns little kitchens such as tonino or bliss. He isnt present on site. His employees can do whatever they feel like.

SHAWEESH #1

He rents a tent to a family for 60 to 100$. He also gives them the option to pay by labour. They all work for him. And he has a contact on the street.

FATHER #4

This man tries his best to provide for his family. He provides an education for his kids.

FATHER #3

This man is extremely poor and doesn't have a choice but to put his kids on the street. They provide for the family while he is at work.

FAMILY #2

Family of 4 children.

CLIENTS #1

They came in to eat. They do not have the patience nor the will to talk to the children that are annoying them.

STREET CHILD #2

This kid is 12 years old. He has to provide 35.000 LL every day. He works as shoe shining and often makes fun of passerby and does many pranks. He has to compete to get what he wants.

DARAKEH #3

He had in mind to arrest the kids, however the employer on site knows him and his boss. He is bribed, therefore wont go near the kids.

MOTHER #2

This woman stays at home to take care of some of the kids.

MOTHER #2

This woman stays at home to take care of some of the kids.

FAMILY #5

Family of 8 children.

WAITER #1

This waiter is kind hearted and does not mind offering everyday some leftovers to the kids. He works at a small restaurant.

WAITER #2

This waiter doesnt mind offering some sandwiches and water bottles to the kids when his boss is not around.

WAITER #3

This waiter's main concern is his job. He has to make the clients feel comfortable and his boss happy.

LANDLORD #1

He has a land that he rented in order to place a settlement there of tents. He works hands in hands with a shaweesh.

FATHER #2

This man beats his children and has made a deal to make them work on the street. He gets everyday an amount of money.

STREET CHILD #3

This kid is 4 years old. He just sits on the sidewalk begging and waiting for strangers to provide food or money. His mom watches from afar.

VALET #1

He is really friend with the kids of this street and can provide them with an escape zone from the darakeh #1 through the private parking space.

VALET #2

He is here to do his job. He just arrived a month ago and does not have any personal relation with the kids on the street. The only thing he knows is that they shouldnt roam around the residence.

PASSER BY #1

This guy is late for work. He just wants to go to cross the street and get to his car.

CONTACT #1

He is friends with the employer of the kids. He tells all his subordinates to not arrest them since he is taking a part of the profit.

EMPLOYER #2

His task is to give instructions to the kids in the morning and come back later at the end of the day to collect the money.

EMPLOYER #4

He doesnt have any contact with the kids parents. He is just present on site and ask the kids for money or he would beat them.

STREET CHILD #5

These kids belong to the same family and they play and work on the street. They beg and sometimes sell water bottles or kleenex. They have to stay at work from 9 till 4pm.

MOTHER #1

This woman is on the street and begs with her kids. She assigns for each one of them a startegic place to sell.

FAMILY #1

Family of 2 children.

STREET CHILD #7

This kid is 17 years old. He has to provide 30.000 LL every day. He sells various objects ranging from water bottles to chewing gum. He is ready to steal in order to sell.

WAITER #4

This waiter would like that street children be taken out of the street, but he believes its not his job to provide for them. He gets pissed easily when he sees them.

FATHER #1

This man rents his daughters during the day to get an income from them of 20.000LL. He rents them to a woman on the street.

Board game: Networks and interactions on the front and back-seen of the street

Family

Outsiders

FAMILY #3

Family of 8 children.

People in charge

MOTHER #2

This woman stays at home to take care of some of the kids.

FATHER #3

This man is extremely poor and doesn't have a choice but to put his kids on the street. They provide for the family while he is at work.

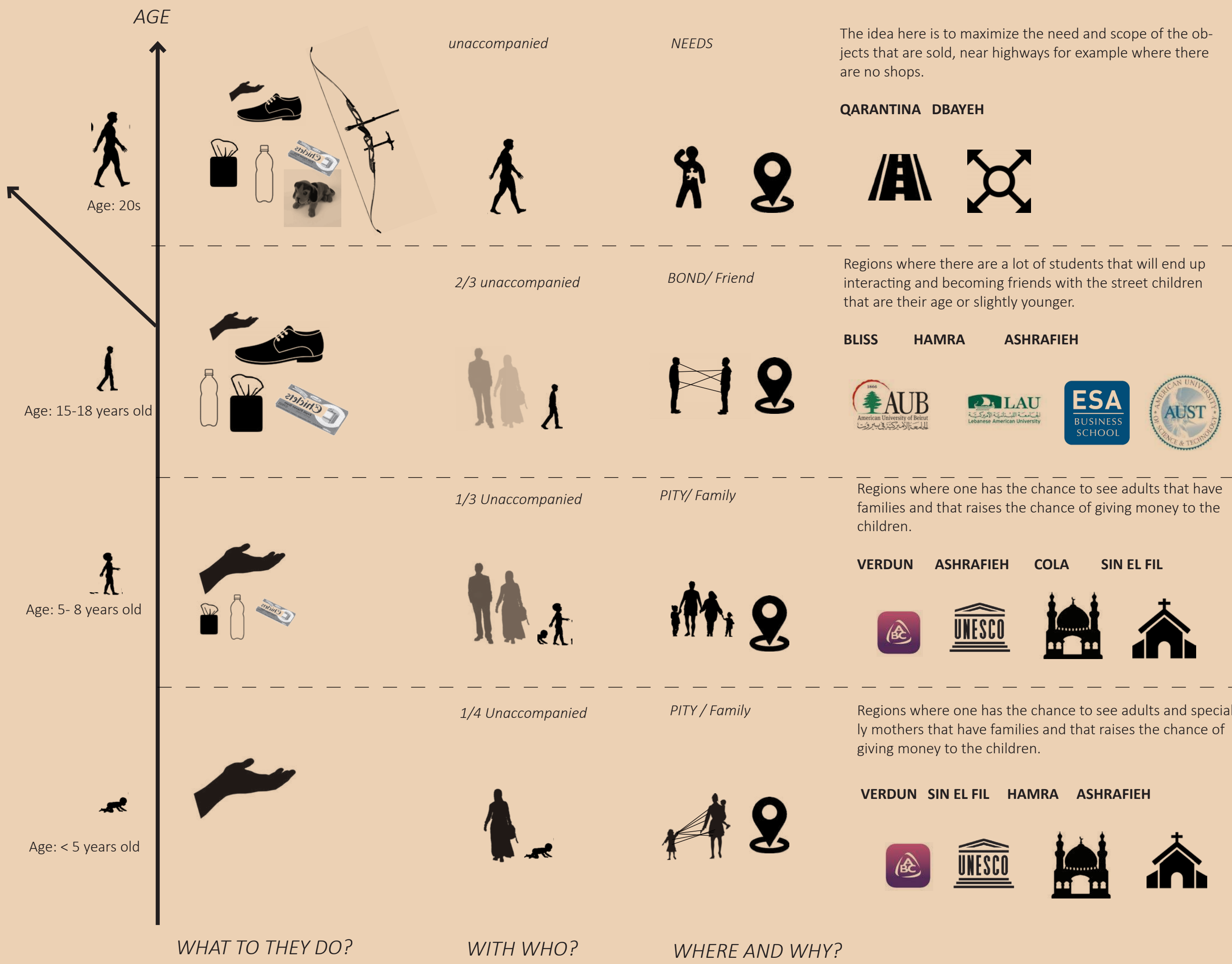*Settlement background*

LANDLORD #1

He has a land that he rented in order to place a settlement there of tents. He works hands in hands with a shaweesh.

SHAWEESH #1

He rents a tent to a family for 60 to 100$. He also gives them the option to pay by labour. They all work for him. And he has a contact on the street.

STREET CHILD #1

This kid is 17 years old. He has to provide 30.000 LL every day. He works as shoe shining and talks to every person he sees. He is friendly and gets bored alone on the streets.

Main character

Alliances

WAITER #1

This waiter is kind hearted and does not mind offering everyday some leftovers to the kids. He works at a small restaurant.

DARAKEH #3

He had in mind to arrest the kids, however the employer on site knows him and his boss. He is bribed, therefore wont go near the kids.

CLIENTS #3

This couple came here to eat. However, they wouldnt mind giving to children on this day a part of their meal.

PASSER BY #2

This guy passes by this street everyday. He knows everyone there and has become friends with the kids there. He often gives them food.

STREET CHILD #7

This kid is 17 years old. He has to provide 30.000 LL every day. He sells various objects ranging from water bottles to chewing gum. He is ready to steal in order to sell.

VALET #1

He is really friend with the kids of this street and can provide them with an escape zone from the darakeh #1 through the private parking space.

OWNER #2

He owns little kitchens such as tonino or bliss. He isnt present on site. His employees can do whatever they feel like.

PASSER BY #3

He is often scared of those kids who can be extremely rude and violent. He wants them out of here.

DARAKEH #1

His mission is to catch the kids. He just arrived and wants to impress his boss. He would chase them endlessly to bring them to arrest them and catch their employers.

STREET CHILD #2

This kid is 12 years old. He has to provide 35.000 LL every day. He works as shoe shining and often makes fun of passerby and does many pranks. He has to compete to get what he wants.

WAITER #3

This waiter's main concern is his job. He has to make the clients feel comfortable and his boss happy.

DARAKEH #2

Him and his friends are bored at work. They would like to catch and beat those kids for some fun.

Enemies

VALET #2

He is here to do his job. He just arrived a month ago and does not have any personal relation with the kids on the street. The only thing he knows is that they shouldnt roam around the residence.

CONTACT #1

He is friends with the employer of the kids. He tells all his subordinates to not arrest them since he is taking a part of the profit.

CLIENTS #2

One of these two cannot stand to see thse children on the street. He gets pissed and would even beat them if he has the chance.

OWNER #1

He owns a high end restaurant. He does whatever the clients want, he cannot accept the presence of street children near his restaurant. His employees have to listen to him.

AGE

unaccompanied

NEEDS

The idea here is to maximize the need and scope of the objects that are sold, near highways for example where there are no shops.

QARANTINA   DBAYEH

Age: 20s

2/3 unaccompanied

BOND/ Friend

Regions where there are a lot of students that will end up interacting and becoming friends with the street children that are their age or slightly younger.

BLISS   HAMRA   ASHRAFIEH

Age: 15-18 years old

1/3 Unaccompanied

PITY/ Family

Regions where one has the chance to see adults that have families and that raises the chance of giving money to the children.

VERDUN   ASHRAFIEH   COLA   SIN EL FIL

Age: 5- 8 years old

1/4 Unaccompanied

PITY / Family

Regions where one has the chance to see adults and specially mothers that have families and that raises the chance of giving money to the children.

VERDUN   SIN EL FIL   HAMRA   ASHRAFIEH

Age: < 5 years old

WHAT TO THEY DO?   WITH WHO?   WHERE AND WHY?

This diagram shows how these children, based on their age or gender, are assigned **specific tasks** and are placed in **specific areas** in order to maximize their **income**. In this transformation, which is the transformation of the **graduation system**, I try to tackle down the **strategies used by the mobs** in the back-scene of the street. These strategies revolve around different questions: "**What do they do? With who? And where?**" These questions are then put in relation to the **age and gender** of the child. In this paragraph, I will be talking about main **conclusions** I was able to come up with during the **exercise**.

When the kids are **younger than 5 years old**, there main task is normally limited to **begging**. Indeed, they are the ones that inspire the most **pity**, so they do not need to do much or find a task to do. Moreover, they are obviously accompanied on site by an employer or their parent in order to make sure they are doing their job. The interesting part is that young children ranging from **a year to 10 years old** are in general, placed in areas such as **Verdun, Ashrafieh or Hamra near specific landmarks such as malls, hospitals, schools**. **Why are they placed there?** They are placed in locations that will **attract pity from families and specially women**. Other areas that we already saw during the fieldwork would be **roundabouts** and **traffic lights** where one can find an **exposure** to strong vehicular circulation.

As the kids get older, they start to perform more **diverse tasks**, this can be done by selling objects such as water bottles, tissues chewing gum or even roses. However, they reach a certain age where they attract **less and less pity**, that is why they need to **add value** to what they **sell** or to what they **do**. That is the reason one can find many **15-18 years old** working as **shoe shiners or selling coffee**. These kids around this age are less accompanied on site because they are more **independent** and many of them work directly for their families. At this age, these kids are placed in a totally different strategic position: one can find them near u**niversities such as AUB, LAU, AUST or ESAA**. **Why are they placed there?** In this case, it is about creating **a bond** because of the **age similarity between male students and the children**. It is about using this **relation** in order to get more money from them. At this stage, **girls graduate** from the street and are not present anymore when they around **16/17 years old**. This is due to the fact they normally get **married at this age**. Finally, when they are older than 18 years old, they attract the l**east pity**. That is why they search for **needs** and not human connection; they are placed at areas where one cannot easily find shops such as **Quarantina** highway for example.
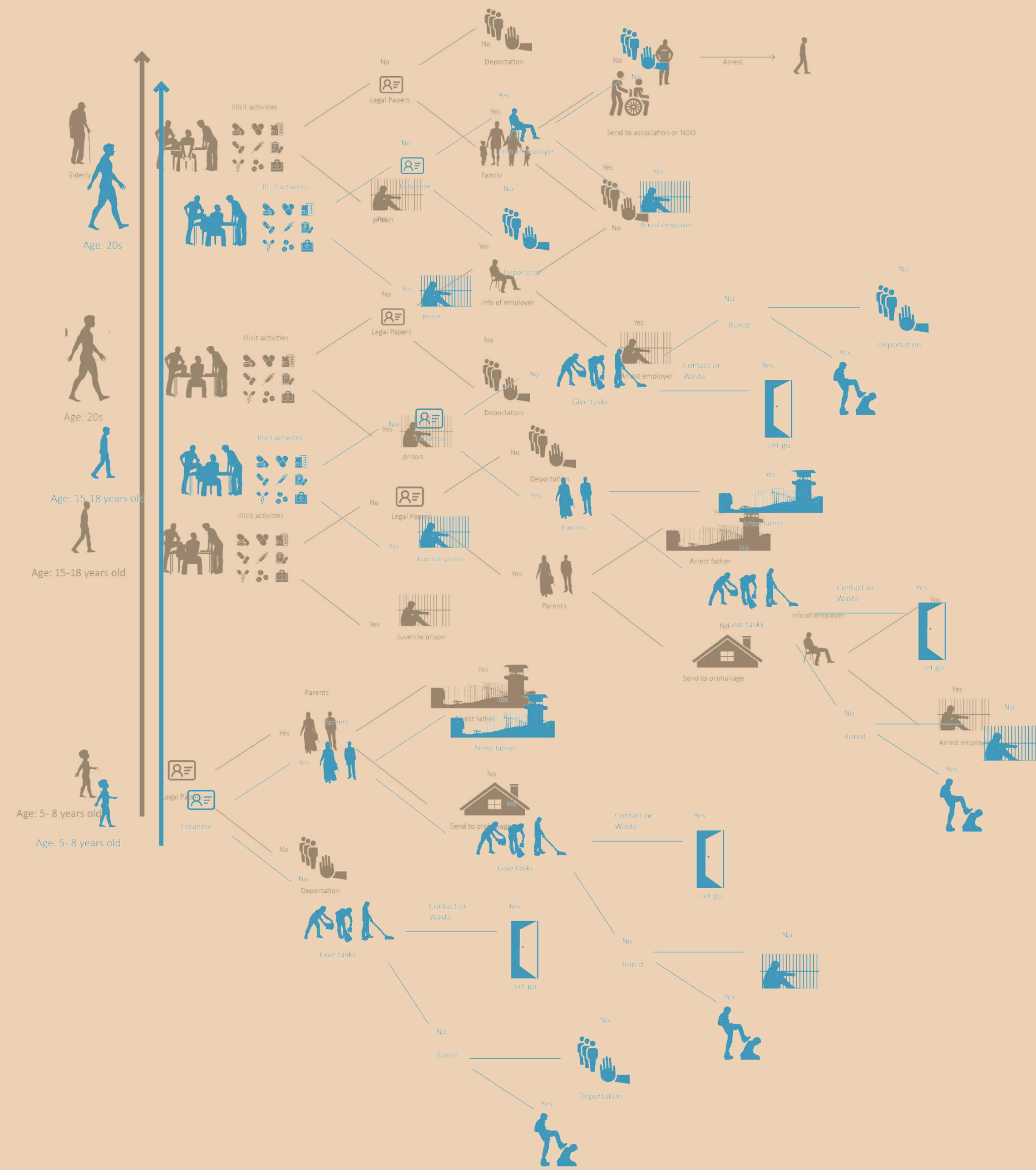
The third **transformation of narrative** is based on stories told by the **children** that **clashes** with the ones told by a **police officer or a *darakeh***. What is interesting here is **not the content** itself, but the way the **same reality** is **twisted** based on the perspective of the story teller. For this **exercise**, I went and asked the same series of questions to an **officer** and to the **children** in Bliss. The idea of **authority** is essential in the way these children **behave** on the daily. I created a **hybrid diagram** colliding **both versions of reality** as an **algorithm** from which each decision leads to another. The **blue version** is the **reality of the children**, and the **brown** one is the reality of the **officer**. The questions were about the different steps and actions taken by the authority when they decide to **arrest a child** on the street. It includes their **decision making** and also their **actions** towards the children based on their **age**. The **criteria** behind the **imprisonment** of a kid **transforms** completely from a version to the other. Indeed, the brown version indicates that the criteria is to check if they have **legal papers** or not, whether the blue one indicates that the criteria is to check if they are **Syrian or Lebanese** regardless of the papers. Another transformation is the presence of different actions that are only present in the blue version. Indeed, based on the children's reality, the officers would sometimes **beat them up** or **give them random tasks** before freeing them. In the brown version, the only actions taken towards those children are **deportation and imprisonment**. Then based on the age, one can find **common points** in both **realities**. The checking of **illicit activities** is present in both realities. Moreover, officers tend to be harsher and more straightforward when it comes to older children. This exercise allowed me to visualize the how the same reality transforms in this environment based on the perspective of the story teller which in this case, highlights the clash between the authority and the street children.

In Bliss street, the space is characterized by two different sides of the road. One side is highly dense because of the presence of restaurants that attract the pedestrians and specifically the AUB students. Because of their presence, street children focus on this side of the street to perform and expose themselves in order to maximize their income. Because of this, pedestrians start to walk on the other side of the road in order to avoid them. **Street children are shaped by the street and shape it in return**. Moreover, as discussed previously, when I was with Malek on the side of the restaurant, he told me "Let's go outside."- referring to the other side of the street.

Plan of Bliss Street showing how street children transform and are transformed by different flows of circulation
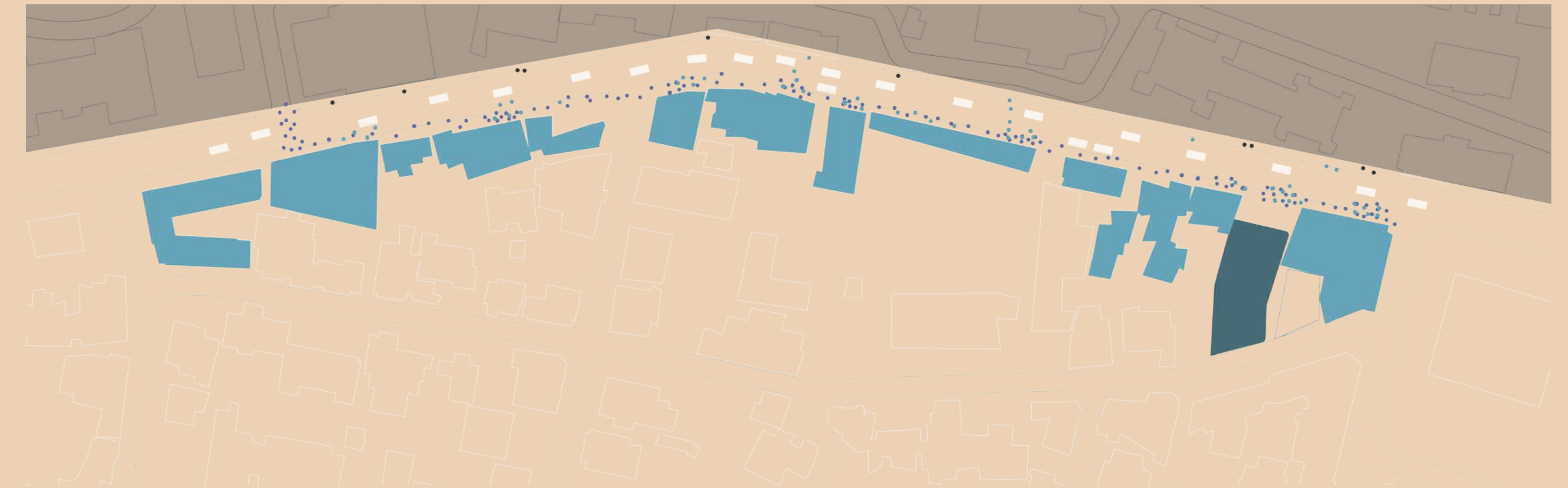
Chapter III - Transformation of space: Interior vs Exterior conventions

In this chapter, the focus of the transformation of space is on the conventions of the interior and exterior spaces for the street children. What makes a space an interior space? What are the conventions created by the children?

The **interior space** is characterized by the different directions and flows of circulation on the side of restaurants. It is where the kids find **congestion of people**, thus exposure. The **exterior is the less congested area** on the right. It becomes an area where these kids can take a **break from their work and rest**. The **cars** in this case are **separators** between the interior and the exterior.

Different actors shaping and shaped by the street:
Street Children:
Pedestrians:
Pedestrians avoid kids:
Cars:
Street Children:

Hot spots:

Potential escapes:

Forbidden land:
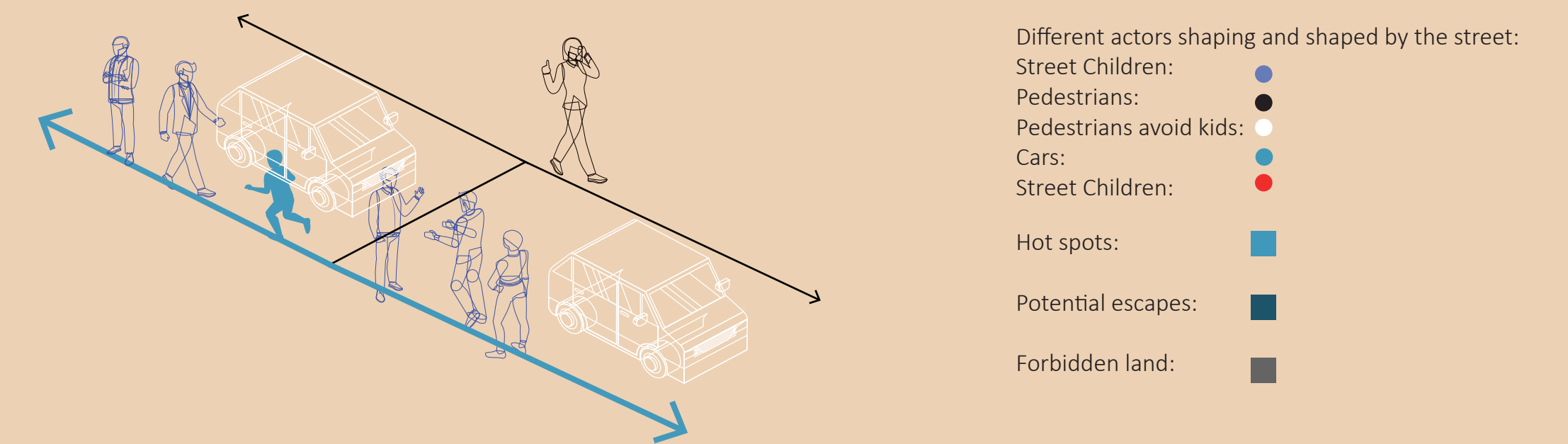
Cars as separators, People as clients

City as map   City as street children

Bliss street
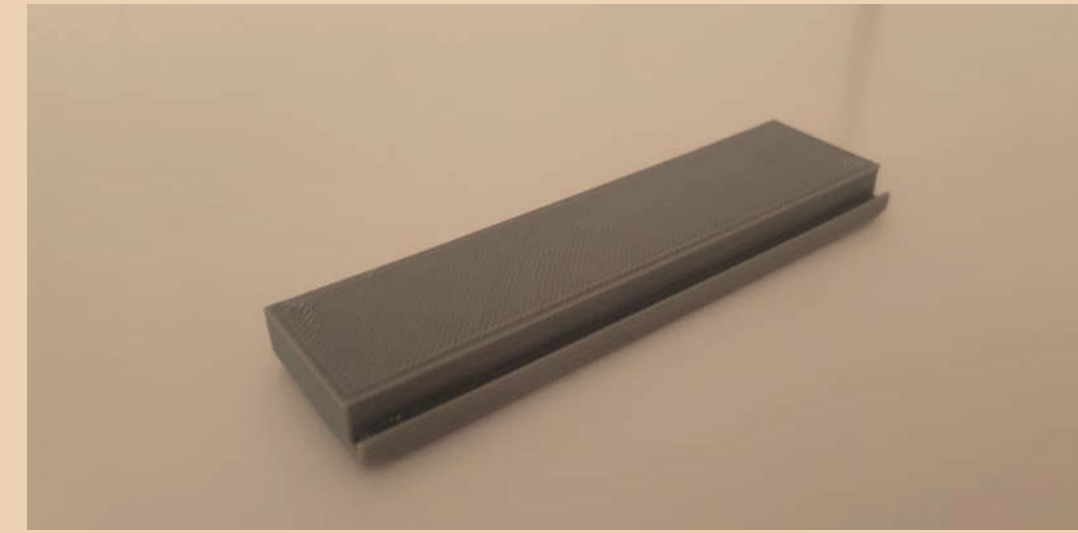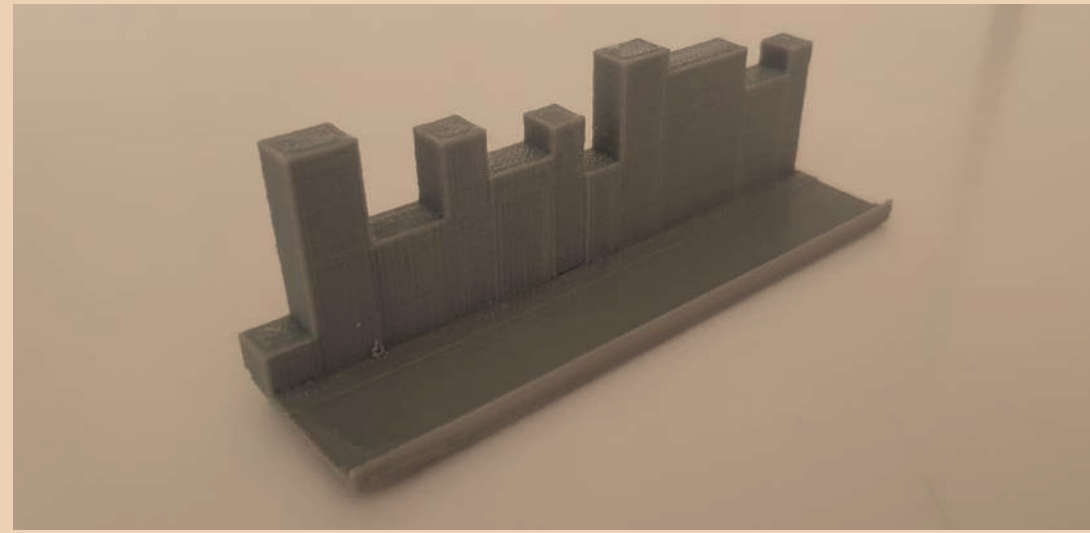
Cars and pedestrian: Interior as congestion of work

Jeser Fiat
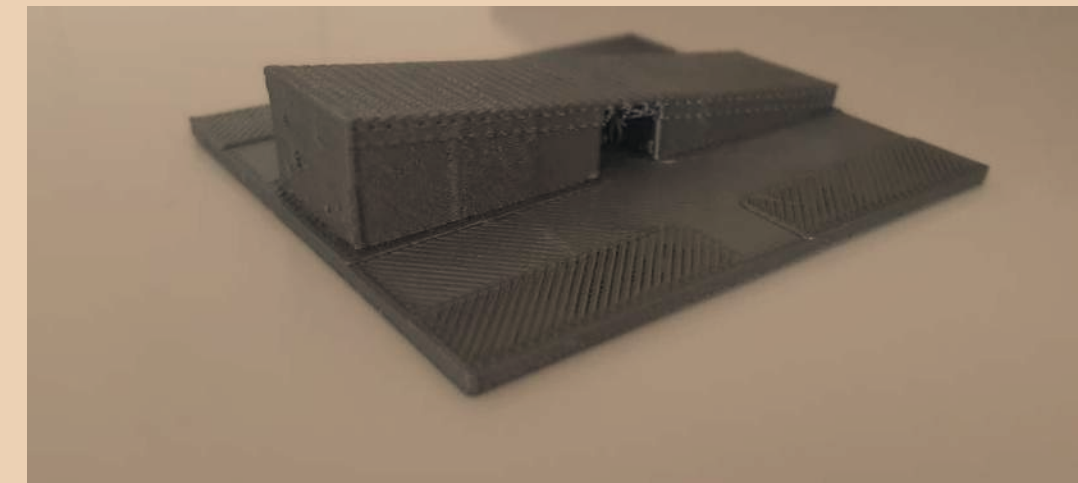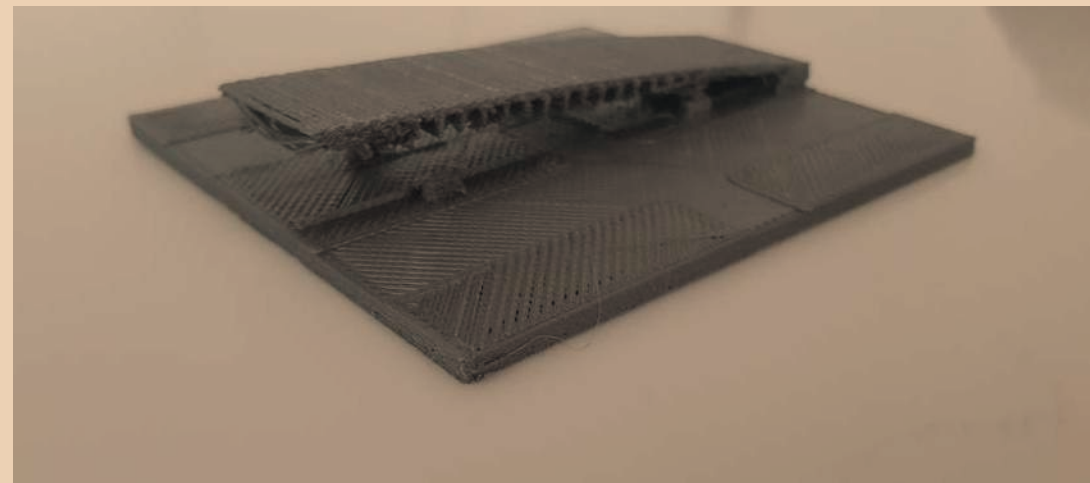
Cars: Interior as a safety

These pictures show a **series of models** that translate the transformation of a **city as a map** to the city **for a street child**. It highlights two conventions of interior vs exterior spaces. Each model can be transformed into two different parts. The first site is **Bliss**, which works like Hamra, shows how the previously strict boundaries between the **building** and the **exterior** are **manipulated** in order to create an **extension of the interior horizontally along the street**. It also shows how the **floors of the buildings** are not present and are **cut vertically** because kids don't have **access** to them. The convention of interior vs exterior in a site where one can find pedestrian movement is about **congestion**. At Jeser fiat for example, the standard visualization of space is characterized by the bridge, however for the children and the homeless, the highway is **extruded** towards the ground creating an **interior space in order to play and rest there**. In sites where one can only find **car move-ment**s, the interior space becomes about **safety**.

Chapter III - Transformation of space: Creation of Hotspots

In this chapter, you will be able to find different exercises concerning the creation of hotspots. I define "hotspot" as an attraction point to the children. These are the highlighted elements of the city that they visualize. You will be able to see the transformation of the city as a map to the city based on street children. Moreover, a really strong transformation would be the events of the 17th of October allowing transformations that will shape the children, and also my collaboration with them.

This exercise is based on the transformation of the city as a map to the city as perceived by the street children. The first concept is that street children **disregard elements** that are **beyond the ground floor**. (1) Façades, details, balconies that are beyond the plane are erased. This may be due to the **idea of access** limited to the ground floor. The importance or value of a building does not have any relation with its height or program on the higher floors. The highlighted elements are called **hotspots**. (2) These are the attraction points of the street children. In this section, we learnt that they can be linked to the **brands** that could be seen as **way-finding system**. The ground-floor is transposed and shapes the city for the children. An interesting correlation is the **width of the facade** with the **importance of the hotspot**. (3) That is a convention I used in order to draw the sections, as you can see in the diagram. The other parts present on the ground floor can be seen by the children but are **disregarded**. The only vertical elements that go beyond the ground floor are in this case, **the trees**. (4) For the children, the trees here are transformed into **hiding pots** where they can hide and wait in case they are being chased. These are new locations created by the children that go beyond the ground floor. The whole conception of escape will be seen in detail in the coming chapter. Finally, the part in the ground is a **variable** that shows how much time kids can spend in an area before getting worried. It shows their **escape strategy**, the way they move around space based on the idea of **being chased**. The **anchor points** are always the **intersections** because have more options to escape. This part will also be investigated and requestioned in the chapter.

Sections comparing the city as a map to the city based on the street children: Transformation of Hamra
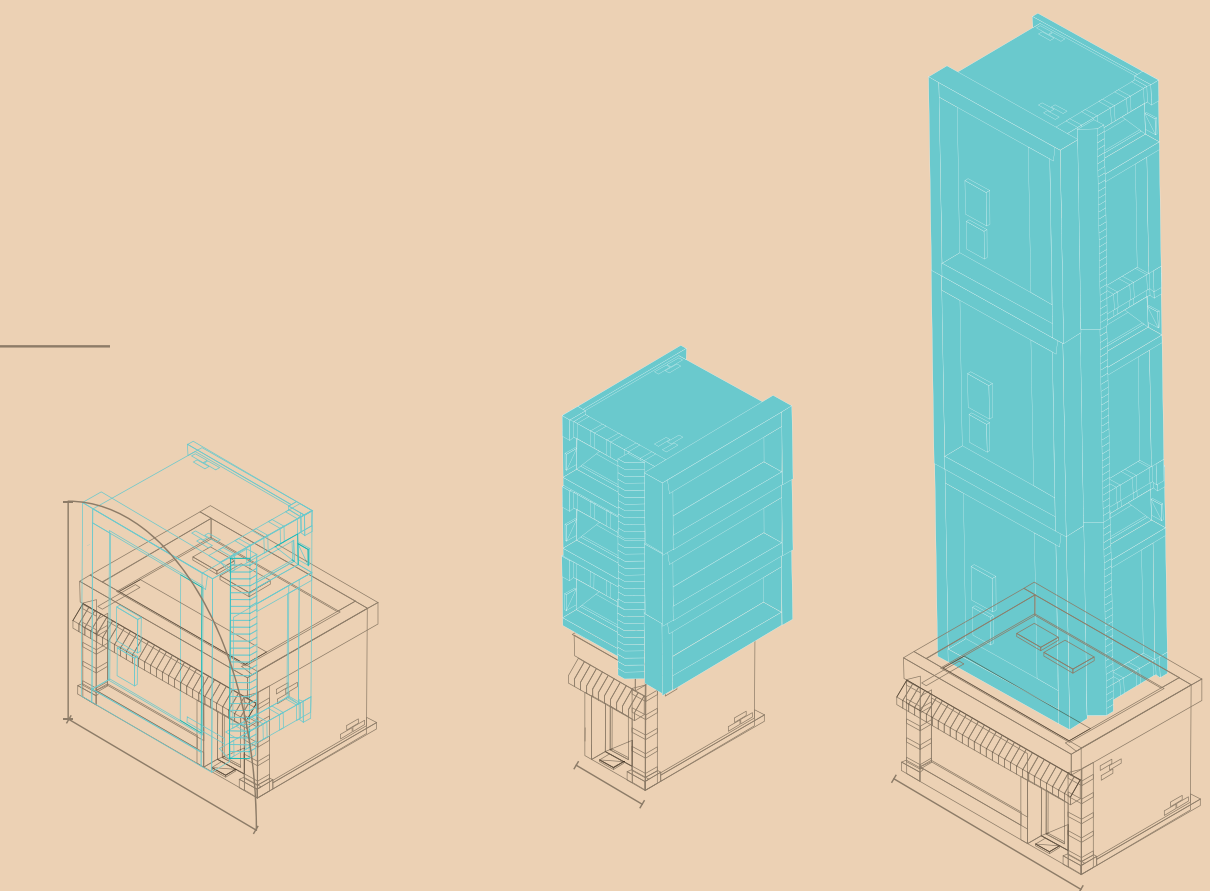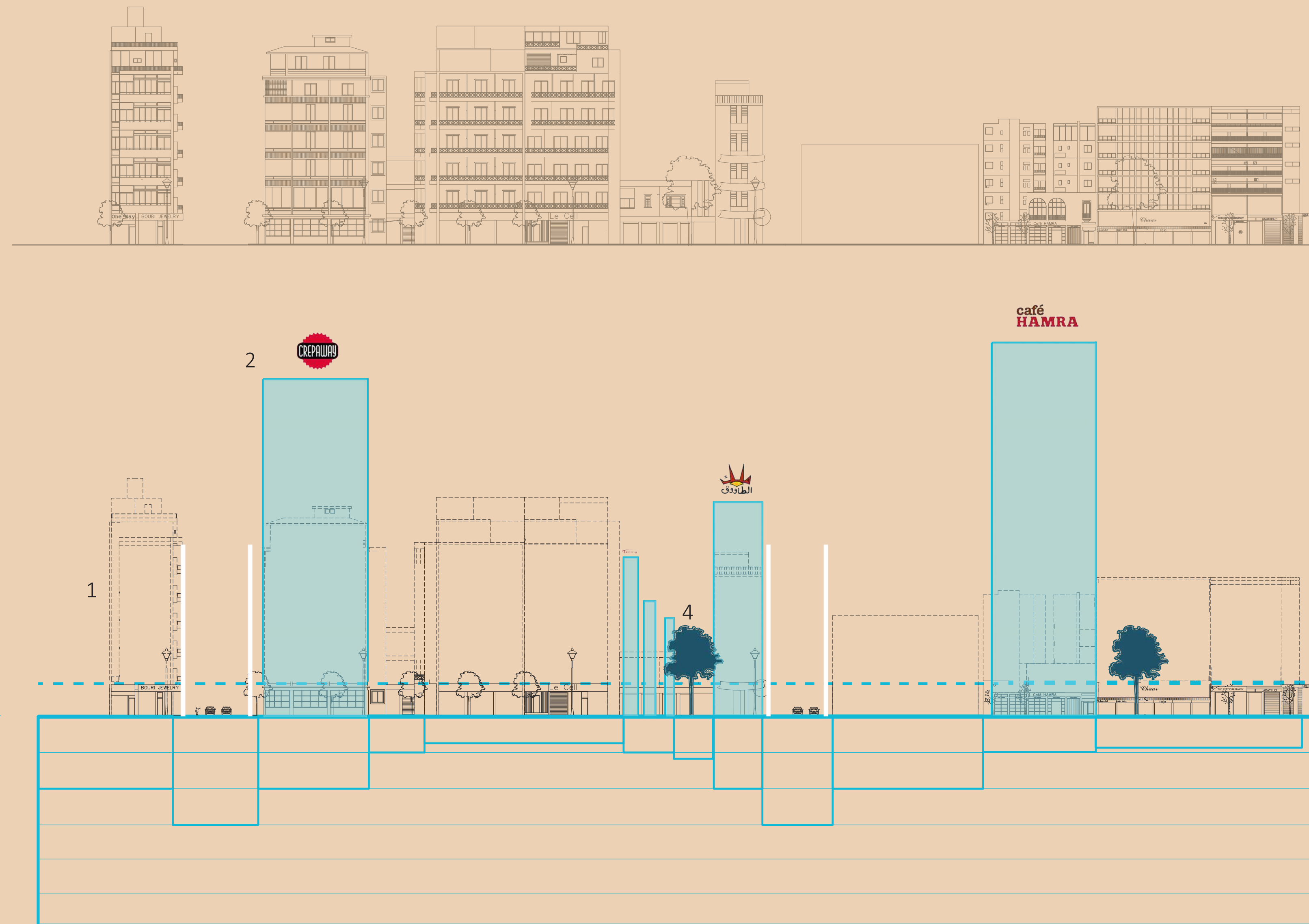
(3) Isometric showing the making of a *hotspot*: A possible correlation between the width of the facade of a brand to its value

Strategies: hotspot as the biggest exposure of facade of brand

Legend:
- City as map
- Car intersections
- Hot spots
- Potential escapes

During the **17th of October revolt**, a huge amount of people filled the streets of Beirut and more precisely some areas such as **Martyr's Square**. It can be said that "one of the most historically important squares of the downtown is the Martyrs' Square, the former heart of the city-centre"[12] These areas of Beirut had become **exclusive** for a **specific social class**, and can be described as "**privatized**, enclosed and monitored spaces for residence, consumption, leisure and work."[13] It is hard to talk about downtown Beirut without mentioning **Solidere**. Indeed, with the reconstruction of Beirut by this private company, "the area transformed from a pre-civil war melting pot of classes into an upper class and luxurious enclave of Beirut"[14]. Having people of **all social classes using and reclaiming** those spaces, enabled the birth of many phenomena that will be discussed in this chapter.

Sections comparing the city as a map to the city based on the street children: Transformation of Riad El Solh

(2) Diagram showing the location of Street Children at the intersection of the different activities
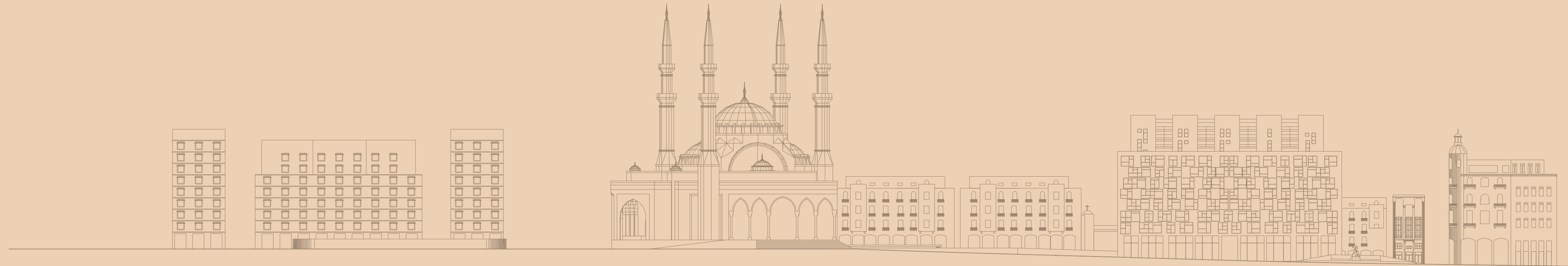
Because of the **concentration of people** present there, the **same children** I was seeing in Bliss and Hamra, were present at Martyr's Square. What is interesting is the way they were looking at the space in terms of hotspots. These Children were able to **adapt** to the **transformation of the city** quickly because they transform on the daily. In these sections, I show the **creation of hotspots** by the children during the times of revolt. The hotspots discussed previously are here characterised by a **new set of logics.** These are **people's congestion** and not necessary the built environment or restaurants. The most important area for the kids would be the main **intersection** of the **three congestions** present on site. (1) When one looks at the plan in relation to the section, he or she can see that the strategies of the kids in this case are to merge where most people are present in **a passive state**. Indeed, the biggest hotspot is located at the intersection of the **tents, the stage, and the truck** where people protest. (2) On another note, the only building that remains intact in all realities is the mosque. (3)

Plan showing the congestions of people relevant to the street children at Riad El Solh

1

3

- City as map
- Revolution
- Hot spots

[12] Harb, Mohamad Khalil. "Living and Imagining City Spaces: The Case of Beirut." *The Journal of Politics and Society* 25, no. 2 (2014): 102-137.

[13] Caldeira, Teresa PR. "Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation." *The urban sociology reader*. Routledge, 2012. 419-427.

[14] Harb, Mohamad Khalil. "Living and Imagining City Spaces: The Case of Beirut." *The Journal of Politics and Society* 25, no. 2 (2014): 102-137.

Diagram showing the transformation of the graduation system and strategies of the mobs during the revolution

Age: 20s	*unaccompanied*	*NEEDS*
Age: 15-18 years old	*unaccompanied*	*BOND/ Friend*
Age: 5- 8 years old	*unaccompanied*	NEEDS
Age: < 5 years old	*1/4 Unaccompanied*	*PITY / Family*

QARANTINA   DBAYEH

In this case, the goal is not to see specific types of individuals since the street "children" or not children anymore; they are less likely to feel pity towards them. The idea here is to maximize the need and scope of the objects that are sold, near highways for example where there are no shops.

Regions where there are a lot students that will either interact and becoming friends with the street children that are their age or slightly younger.

BLISS   HAMRA   ASHRAFIEH

Regions where one has the chance to see adults that have families around that raises the chance of giving money to the children.

VERDUN   ASHRAFIEH   COLA   SIN EL FIL

Regions where one has the chance to see adults and specially mothers that have families and that raises the chance of giving money to the children.

VERDUN   SIN EL FIL   HAMRA   ASHRAFIEH

WHAT TO THEY DO?   **WITH WHO?**   **WHERE AND WHY?**

Children transform on the daily, making them the most adaptive during the revolution

The **graduation system** I constructed, in which each type kid would be placed somewhere strategically has **completely shifted** during the revolution. The same kids present in different areas such as Hamra, Bliss, Sin el fil were spotted at **Riad el Solh**. Their **locations** have all changed, but also their **profession** and what they do. I was able to see Malek, one of my main collaborators, who was originally at Bliss, at Martyr's Square. He went from **shoe shining to selling coffee** in less than a day. It is fair to say that the fact that street children transform on the daily made them the **most adaptive** during this time of change, when the whole city transformed.

(2) Isometric showing the idea of camouflage that happened during the time of revolution

The children were not the only ones to transform during this time. Indeed, these diagrams show **different phenomena** I was able to witness and analyse during and after the **17th of October transformation**. The first one would be the **loss of identity** of the people during the times of revolution. (1) Because of the loss of **social status**, street children were able to go to the street and **blend in with the people**. (2) What is interesting is that this **"public space"** , was the least prominent for something in this nature to happen. During Beirut's reconstruction, "all efforts were concentrated downtown, which is now perceived as an **exclusive zone** for a greater part of the population."[15] As I said earlier, this exclusivity was **temporary destroyed** during this period of **reclamation**. I was also able to witness street children **playing in between people**. In this unique scenario, the **work and play** area of the children were mixed and merged together. The whole conception of **escape** was not relevant anymore because of the **flattening of authority**. (3) A specific social conditioning of people literally changed the whole meaning of this place. "Instead of thinking of place as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations."[16] From these phenomena, a question is raised: **What is the difference between hiding from a friend and hiding for your life?**

What is the difference between hiding from a friend vs hiding for your life?
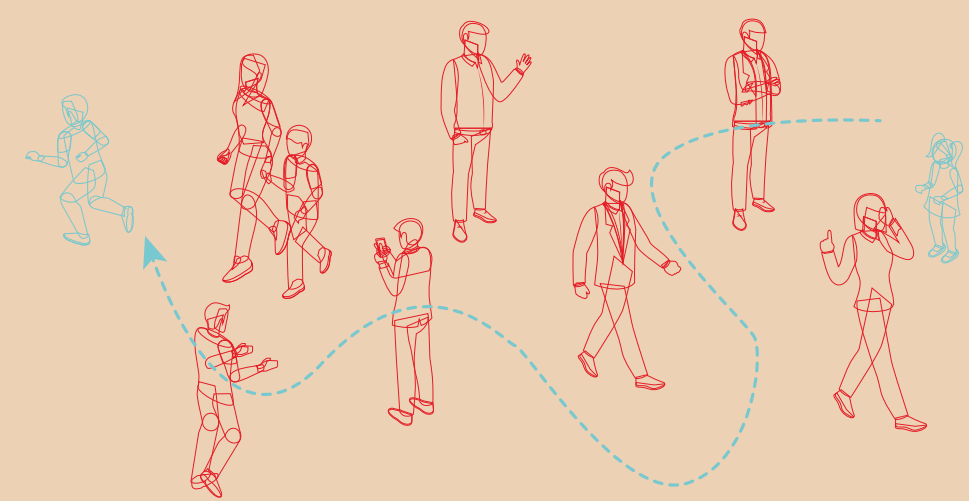
(3) This flattening of authority allowed the street children to merge their space of work and their play areas. Their clients became their playing elements.

(1) Isometric showing the loss of identity and status that allowed the street children to blend in during this time

Loss of identity during the times of revolution allow to accept the children

[15] Martinez-Garrido, Lourdes. "Beirut Reconstruction: A missed opportunity for conflict resolution." *Al Nakhlah* (2008).

[16] Massey, Doreen. *A global sense of place*. Aughty. org, 2010.

The act of playing in between people shows the **flattening of authority** during the time of revolution. What if this idea is applied to their previous mechanisms of moving around space? **Would street children be more visible? Would they settle?**

After the phenomena encountered during the time of revolution at Riad el Solh, I decided to go back to the children at Bliss and raised with them new questions. This exercise is about imagining with them, what would change **if they didn't have to run anymore, what if they weren't chased anymore?**

That is when the **variable** I created previously on the ground of the section becomes even more relevant because it transforms from one section to the other. Indeed, in normal times, the intersections of the cars are seen as **anchor points** by the children because they allow them to **escape** in case they are chased. However, during the **exercise** they clearly showed that these spaces of escape would be **irrelevant** for them. Their answers were that they would spend their time **in front of the restaurants**. So, there would be a direct correlation between the hotspots and the time they would spend there. In the second section, one can clearly see this correlation and also the fact that these children would **settle** way more than before.

Another idea would also be that Malek, Walid and others started talking about shops they would open on the street in case they were not chased anymore. These different shops range from "Biya3 foul" to "Biya3 Kaak" passing by "Biya3 dekhan".

Sections comparing the city based on the street children's reality to what they would do in case of flattening of authority

- Revolution
- Hot spots
- Potential escapes
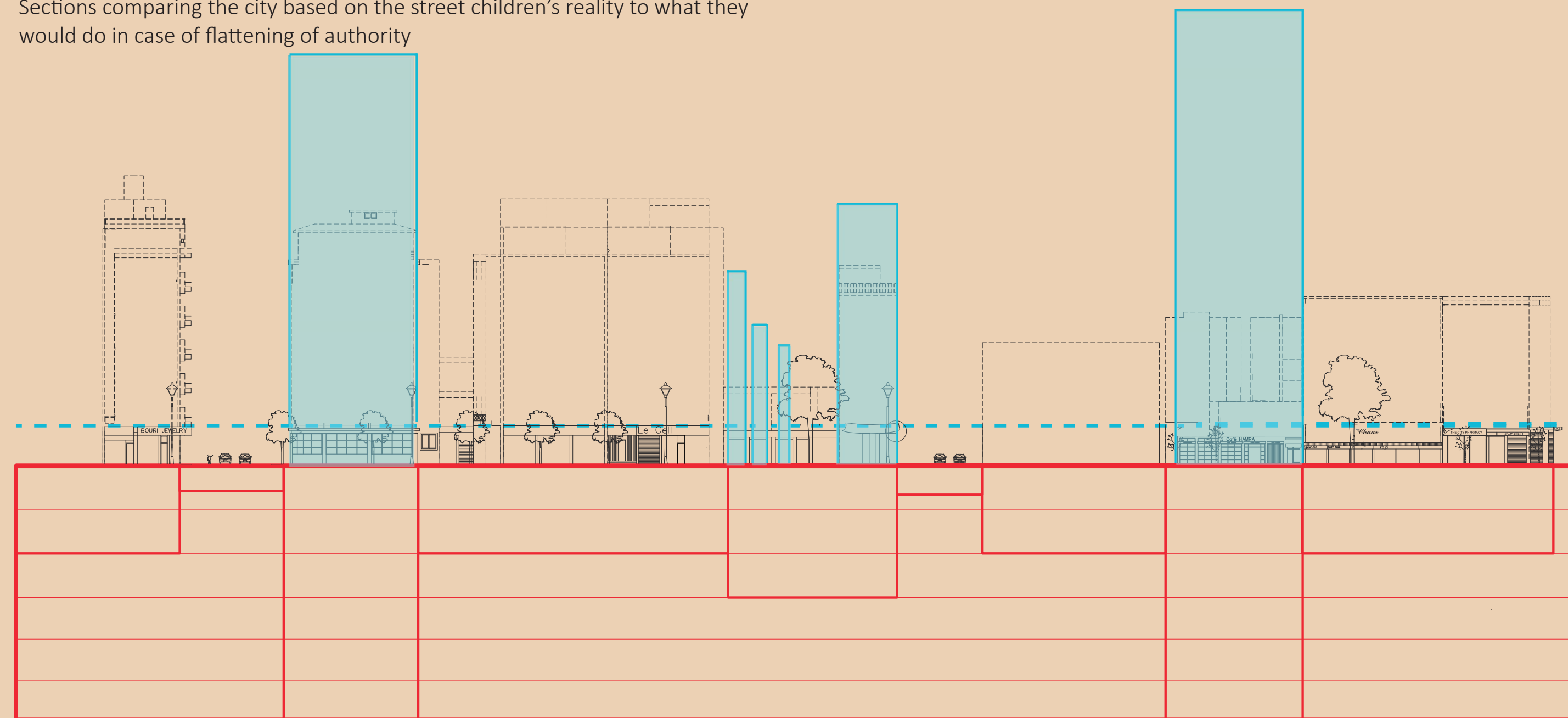
Chapter IV- Transformation of space: Back to square one: Activation of space through escape/hiding strategies

What happens is that even after requestioning different concepts because of the events of the 17th of October, the children went back to their way of life and understanding of space: which is mainly about escape. Therefore, in this chapter, I go by different exercises of dissecting the spacial scenario of escape on different scales in order to extract further strategies and mechanisms adopted by the street children.

Sections comparing the city based on the map to the city based on the street children: transformation of 1866 in case of escape
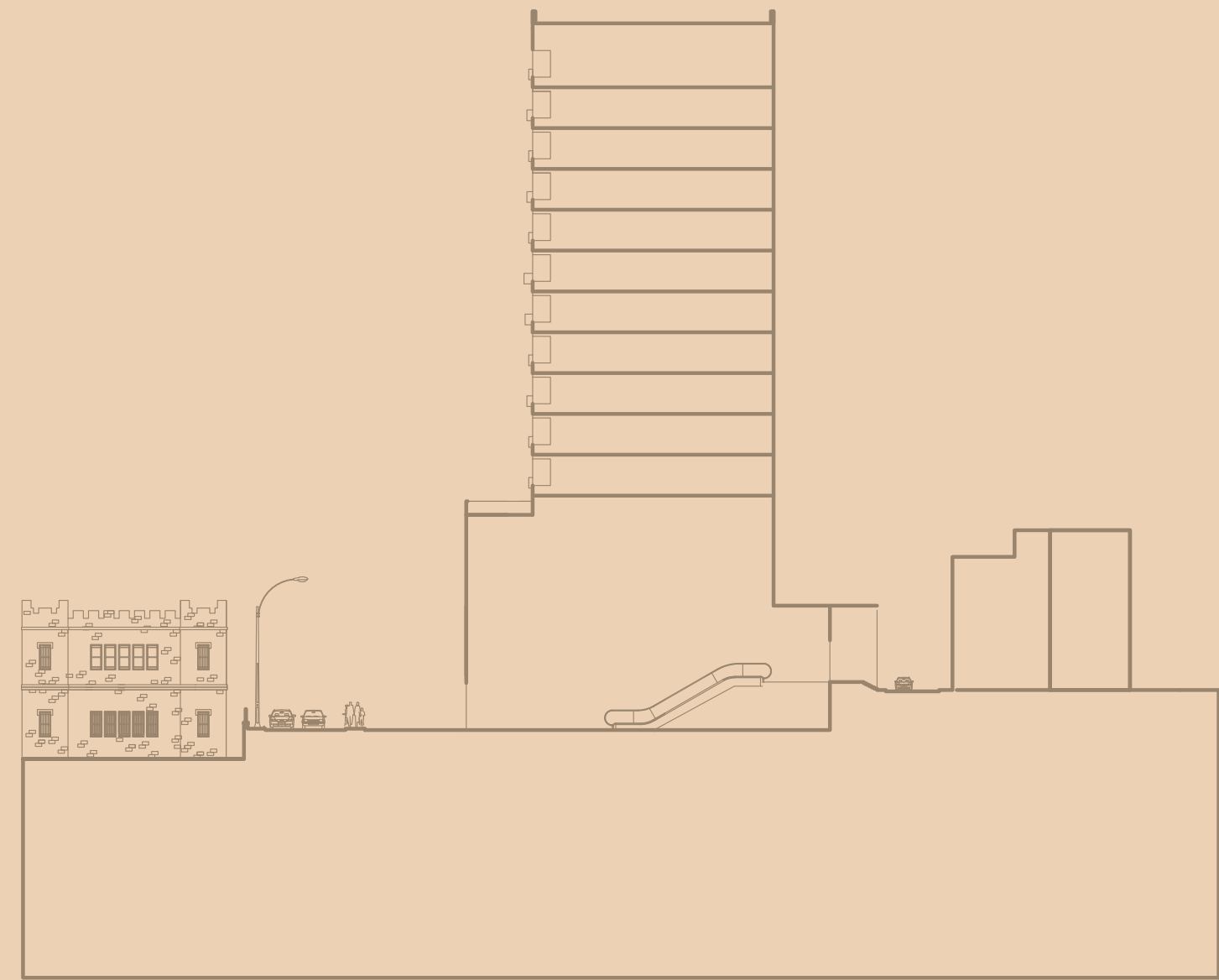
1866 Building at Bliss is a hotel that houses different restaurants at its ground floor. The main restaurants exposed to the outside are Urbanista and Paul. For Malek, Walid, Mohammad and other children at Bliss, 1866 is a not a **standard building**. It is a key component of their **strategies** and the way they circulate on Bliss. Whenever we reach it, one can easily see how important it is for them. Indeed, the configuration of the building allows the children to **escape or hide in different means, in case of chase**. As I said previously, the **"Baladiyeh" or officers** come often after the children, and as you can see in the transformation of narrative in chapter II, they chase them to beat them, give them various tasks, or to put them behind bars. That is why, **being illegal on the street**, the kids see those **escape routes** as a main element of their daily lives.

In this **series of sections**, I put in contrast the building as seen by the map and the way it transforms when it is seen under the **street children's scope**. After this transformation, the actions of the street children create **different planes** that were not present before. Some of these boundaries are restrictive like the fence of AUB which is transformed into a **inaccessible land**. On one hand, the **horizontal planes** can be seen as the **vertical limit of access** of the street children in the different buildings. On another hand, the **vertical planes** can be seen as the **horizontal boundaries** related to the street children.

The first transformation is **"Connecting".** It is the idea that the actual configuration of the building allows the connection of Bliss Street and the upper street. This allows to **connect these two points** in a **shorter** way that the actual road. In this case, the children enter the building and use it as a **connector** through their escape. It is not about hiding and waiting, but running and escaping.
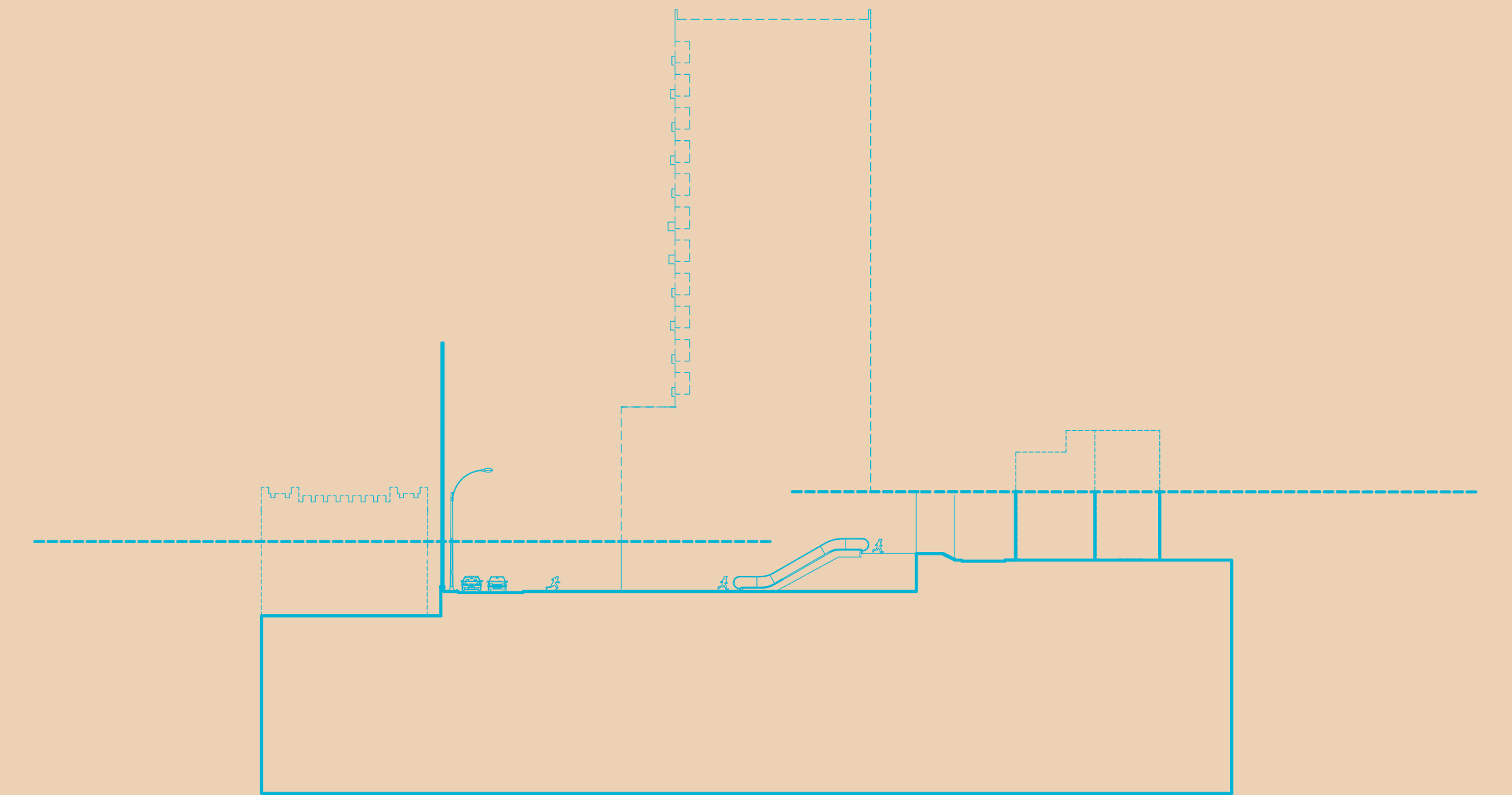
City as map

Horizontal plane: Vertical boundary of access against Street Children

City based on street children

Vertical plane: Horizontal boundary by Street Children
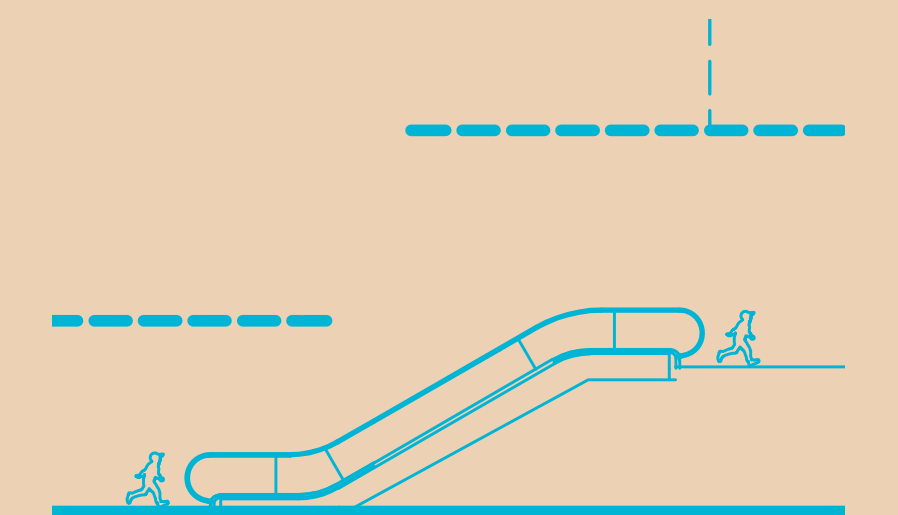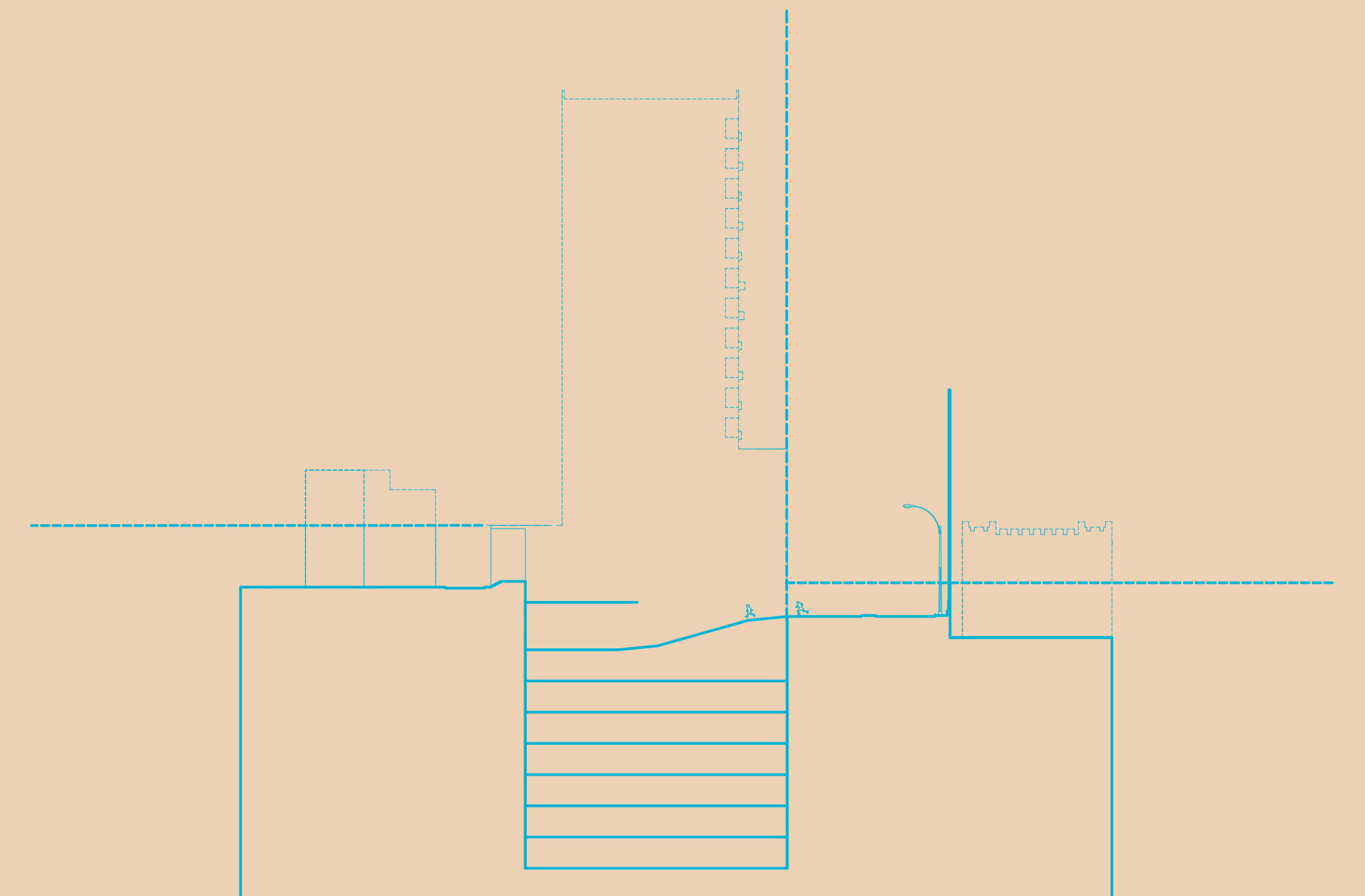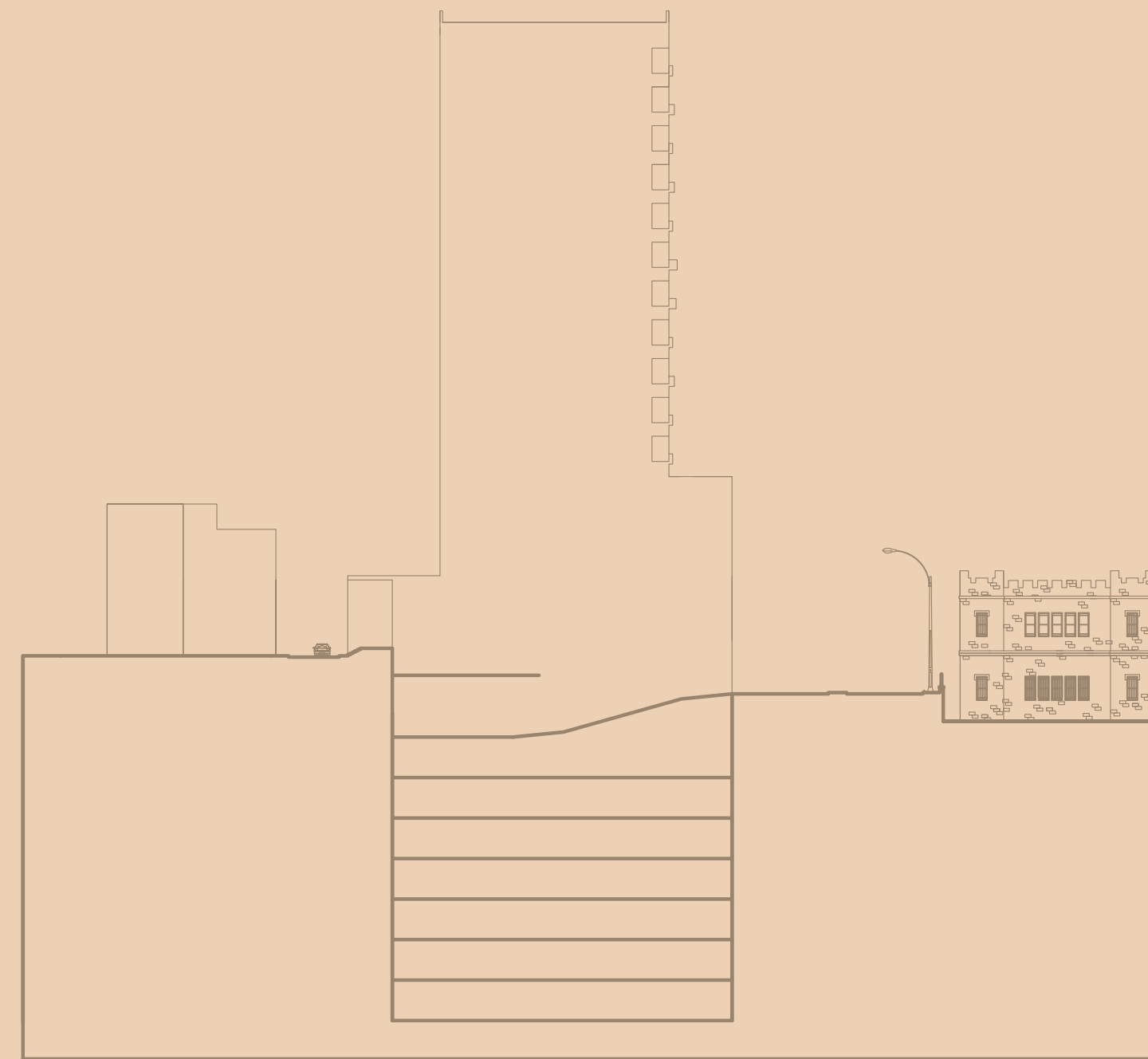
The **second transformation** would be **"Isolating"**, it is the idea of the parking lot that is used as a hiding pit for the street children. What is interesting in this case, is that the **threshold** once present between the private and public is transformed into a **boundary** where the kids can go and hide. According to Malek, when they are chased, if the officer haven't seen them go down the parking, the **Valet** there would lie and deny the fact that these kids are down there. Moreover, the fact that there are 7 floors of parking allow to broaden the options of **hiding behind cars** for the kids. In some cases, even if the officer chases them and enters the parking, the kids would **wait and remain hidde**n until hey get a **signal** from the Valet.

City as map

Horizontal plane: Vertical boundary of access against Street Children

City based on street children

Vertical plane: Horizontal boundary by Street Children

Activation of space through escape/hiding strategies: Bliss 1866 transformation
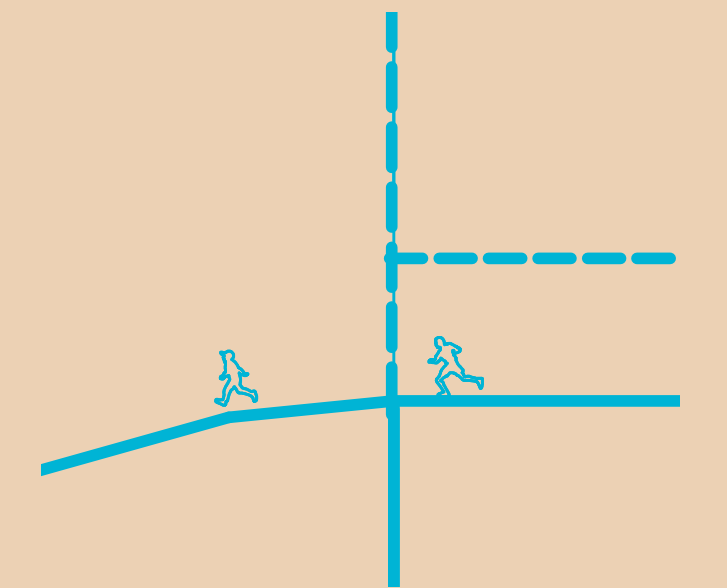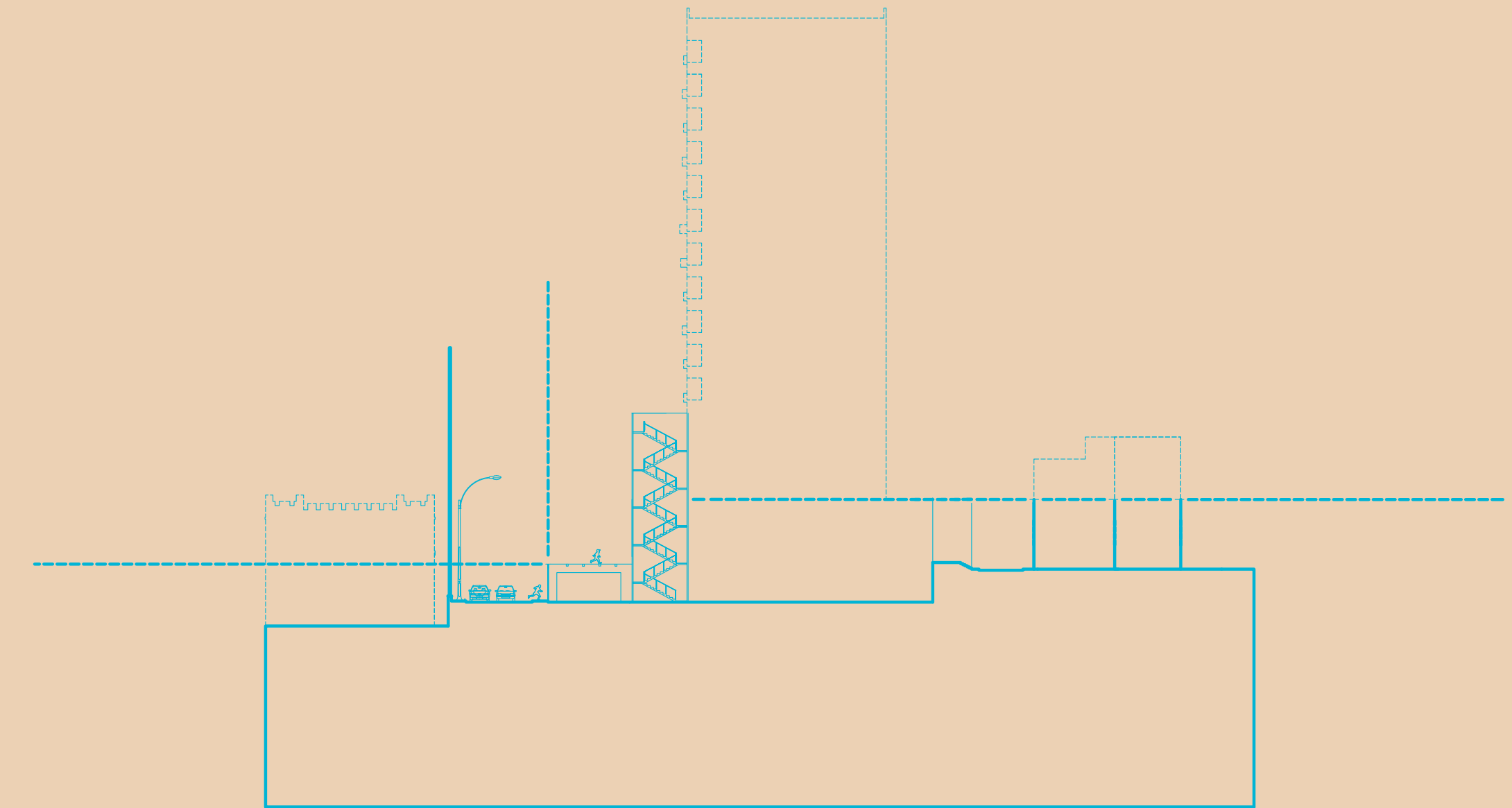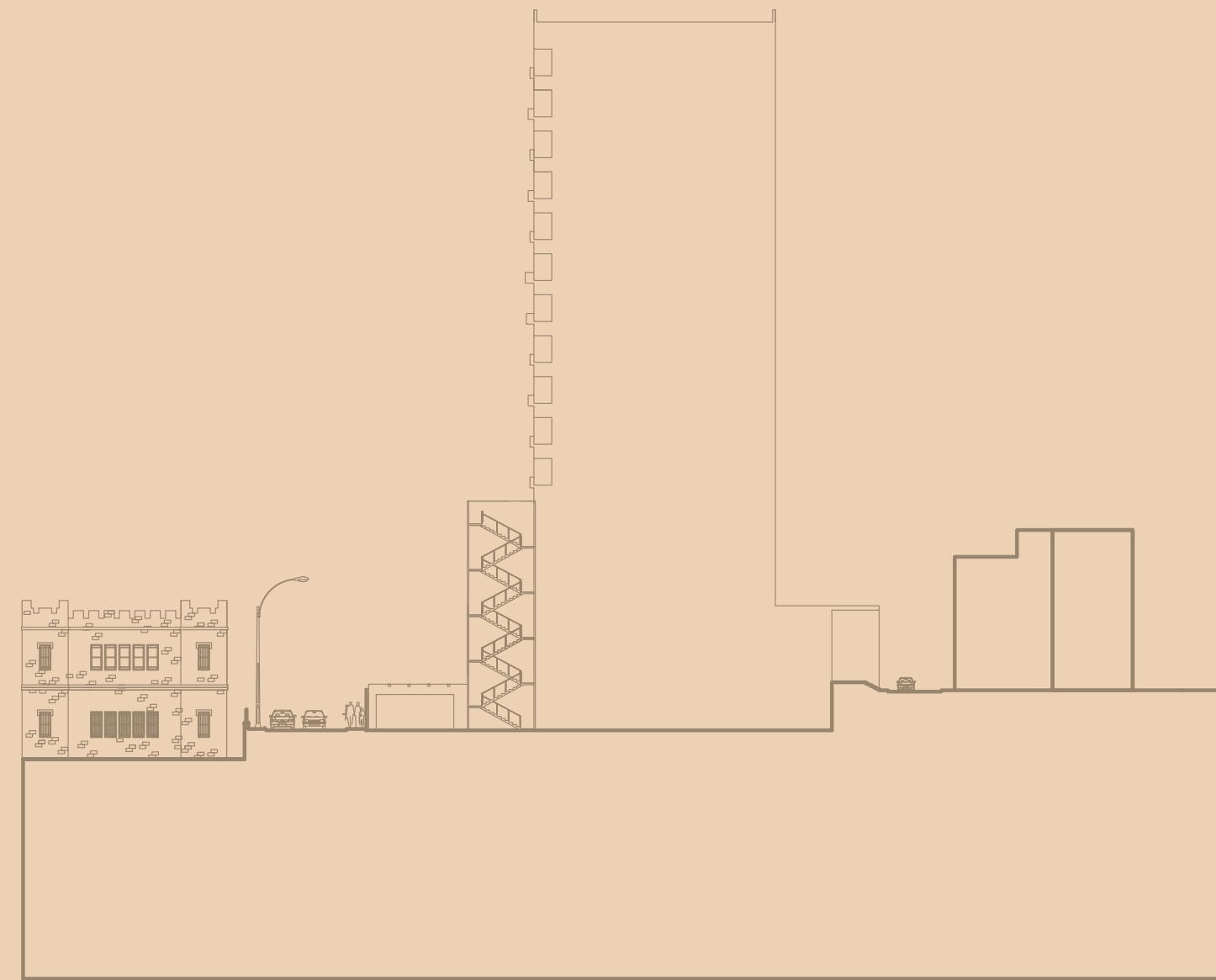
The third transformation which is the most interesting one is **"Expanding".** That is the scenario that I will be dissecting in the coming pages in order to extract further strategies from it. In this scenario, the children **climb a container** that is next to Urbanista to reach the **fire stairs** of the building. To climb it, they use small **advertisement panels** on the facade of the container. The transformation allows the **creation of a circulation** that was not present before. Through their actions, street children **expand the space by activating spaces or objects** that were not activated beforehand. **The wall is not anymore a wall**. By simplifying an element around them to its **basic chore physical characteristic**, street children are able to **modify** it. A similar logic can be seen in a completely different scenario and by a different type of activity, like skateboarding for example. Indeed, "skaters, encounter the wallness of the wall-- when riding up a wall, they sense the change from floor to wall, such that it presents itself to the skater as a surface which becomes a wall under their very feet."[17] In this case, skaters use the part of the wall as an **extension of the ground**, in a somehow similar understanding that the one adopted by the children. They are able to **transform space** through their **practice**.

[17] Borden, Iain. "Body Architecture: Skateboarding and the Creation of

Super Architectural Space." Routledge, 1998. 195-216.

City as map

Horizontal plane: Vertical boundary of access against Street Children

City based on street children

Vertical plane: Horizontal boundary by Street Children

49

50
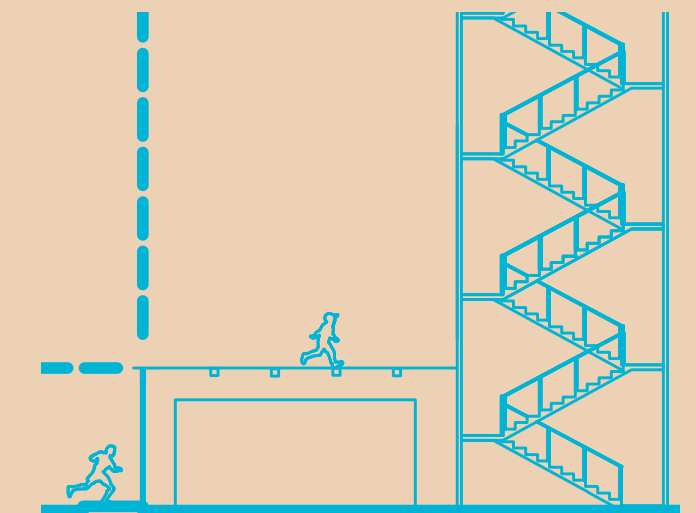
The idea here is to use actual scenarios of escape and chase of the kids and **explore them spatially**. The main actors are **the kids and the state**. The negotiation of space, the use and transformation of different objects during the chase will be explored. The exercise is also about challenging the kids to find new means of escape in the space by **changing variables** in the chase, and thus creating new scenarios that will transform the space and the objects. The goal of this exercise is also about extracting the essence of this **activation of space**.
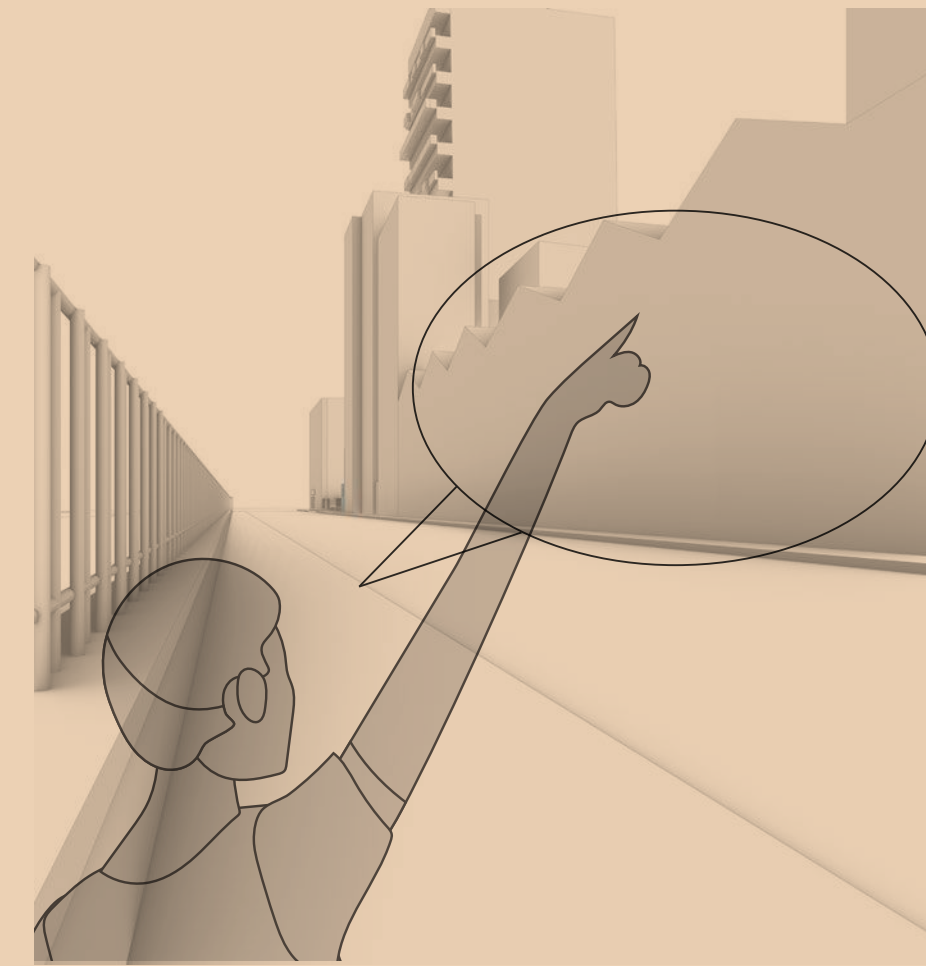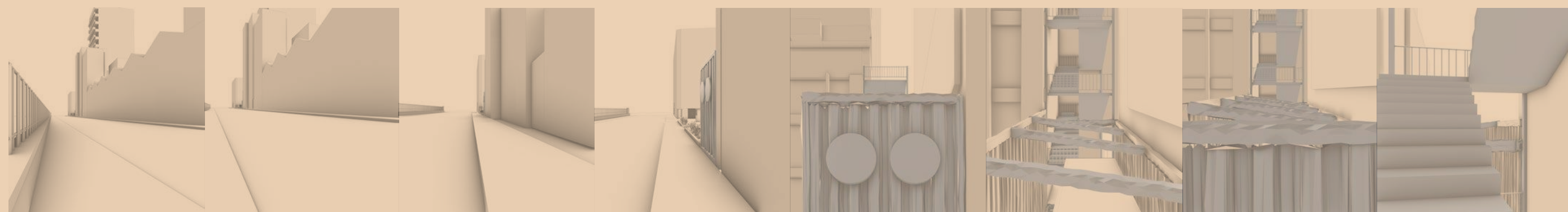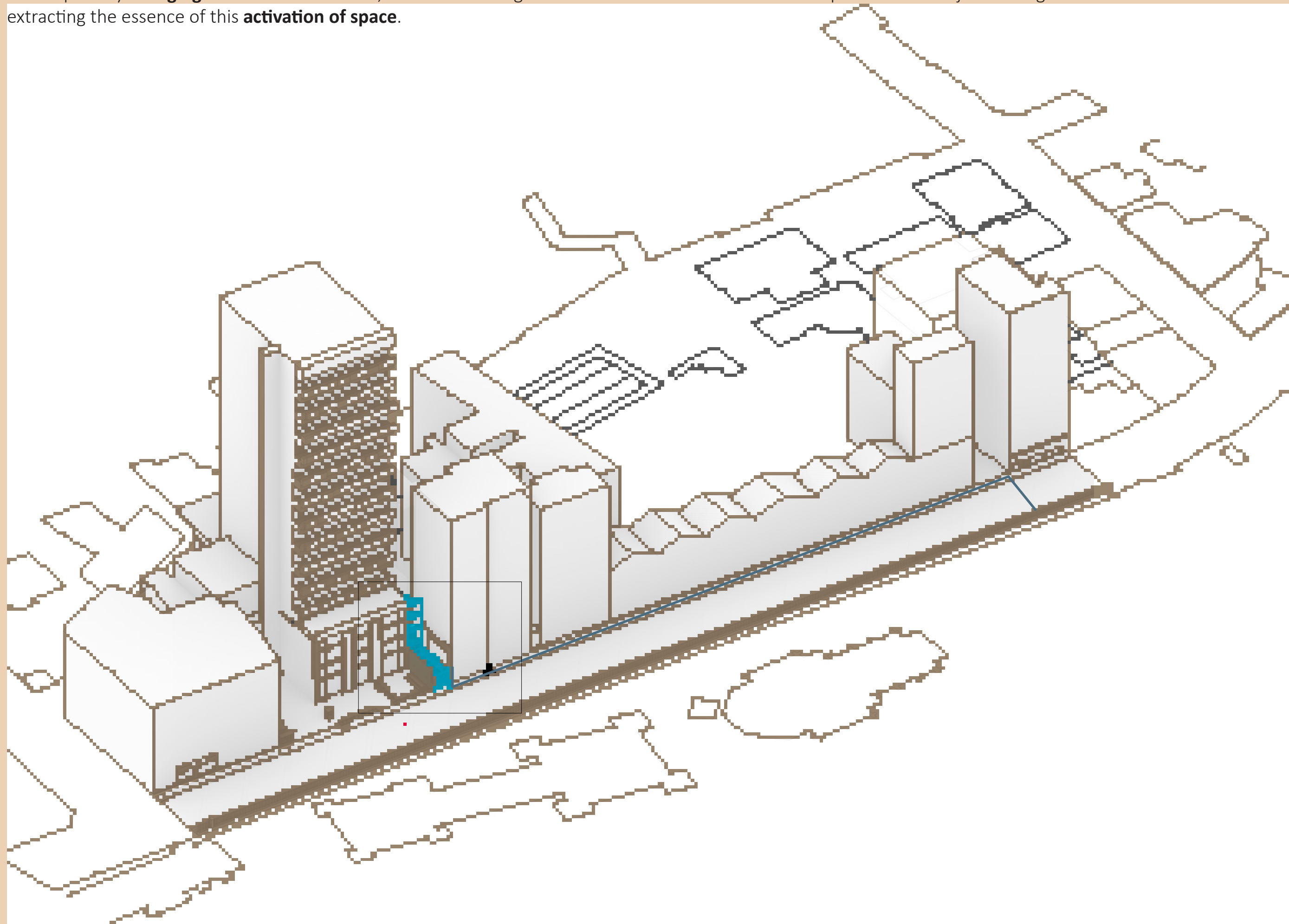
Alerting
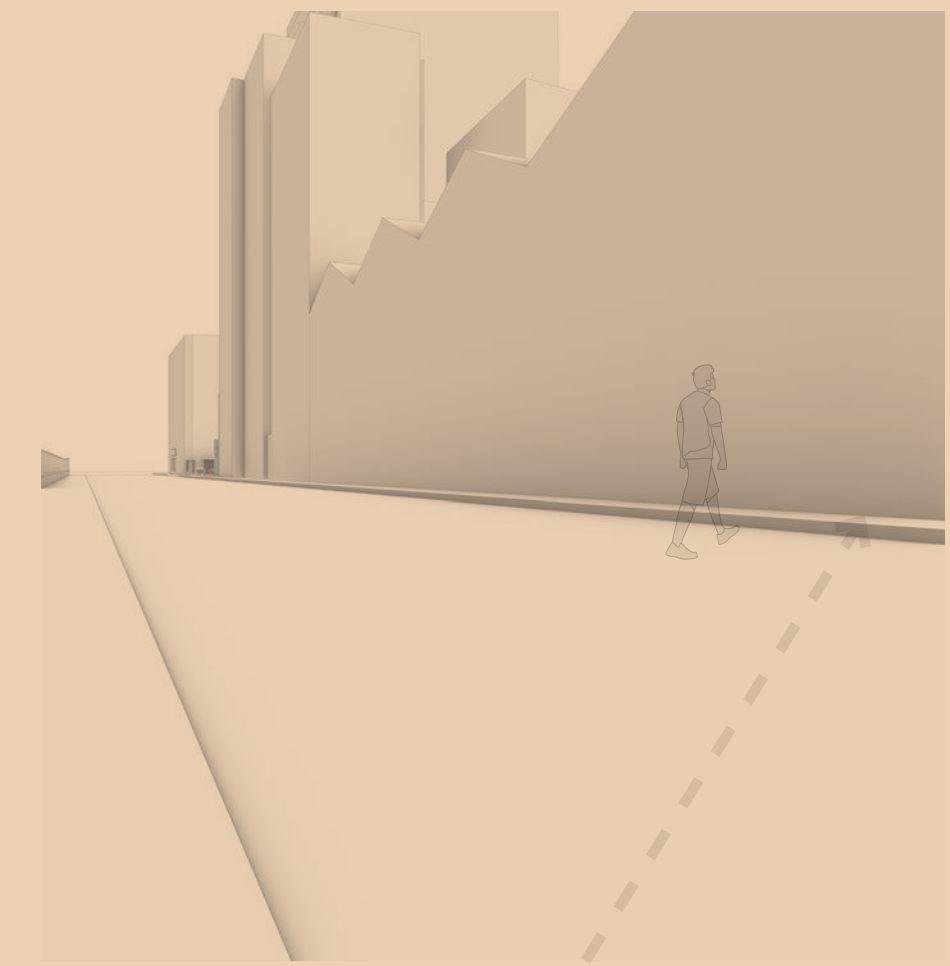
Shifting
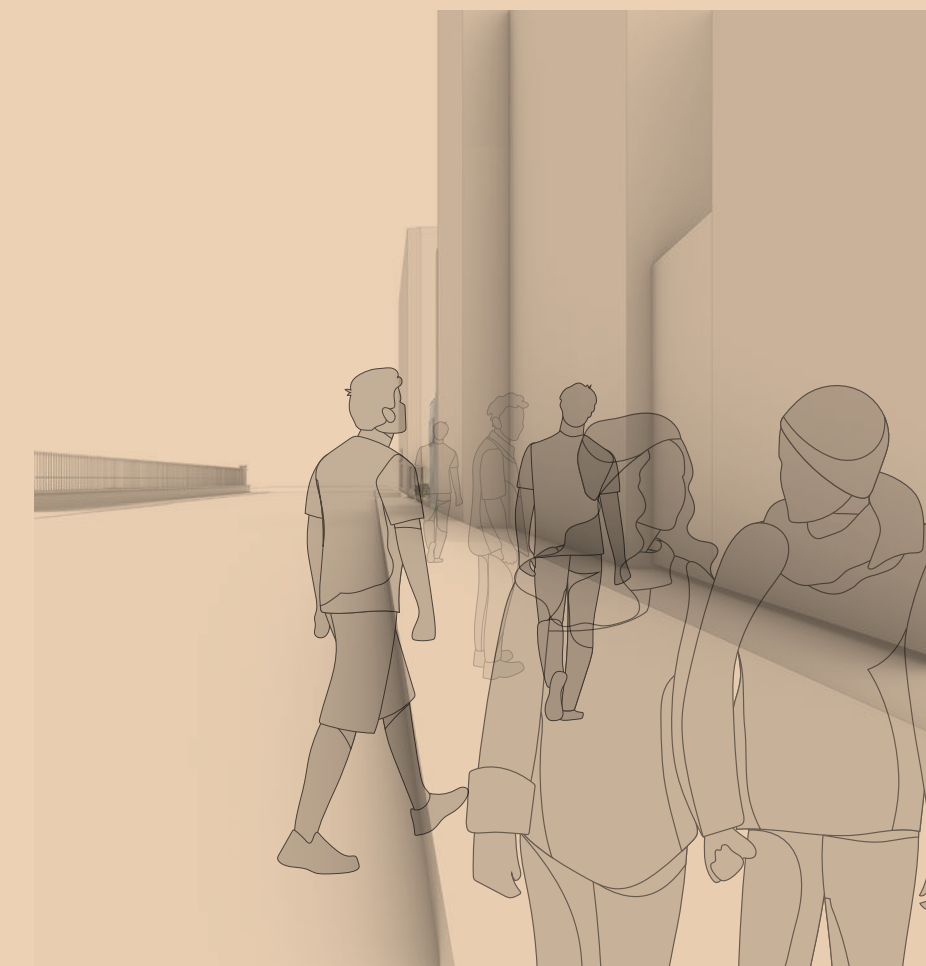
Blending
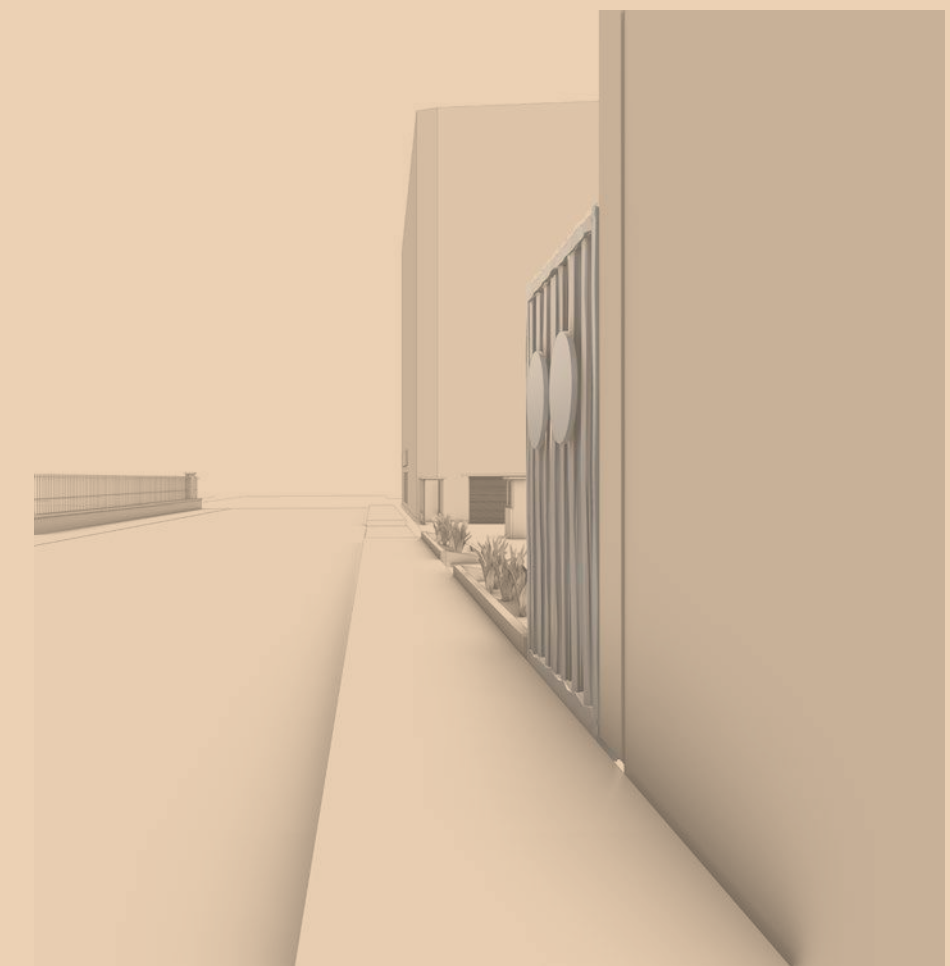
Detecting
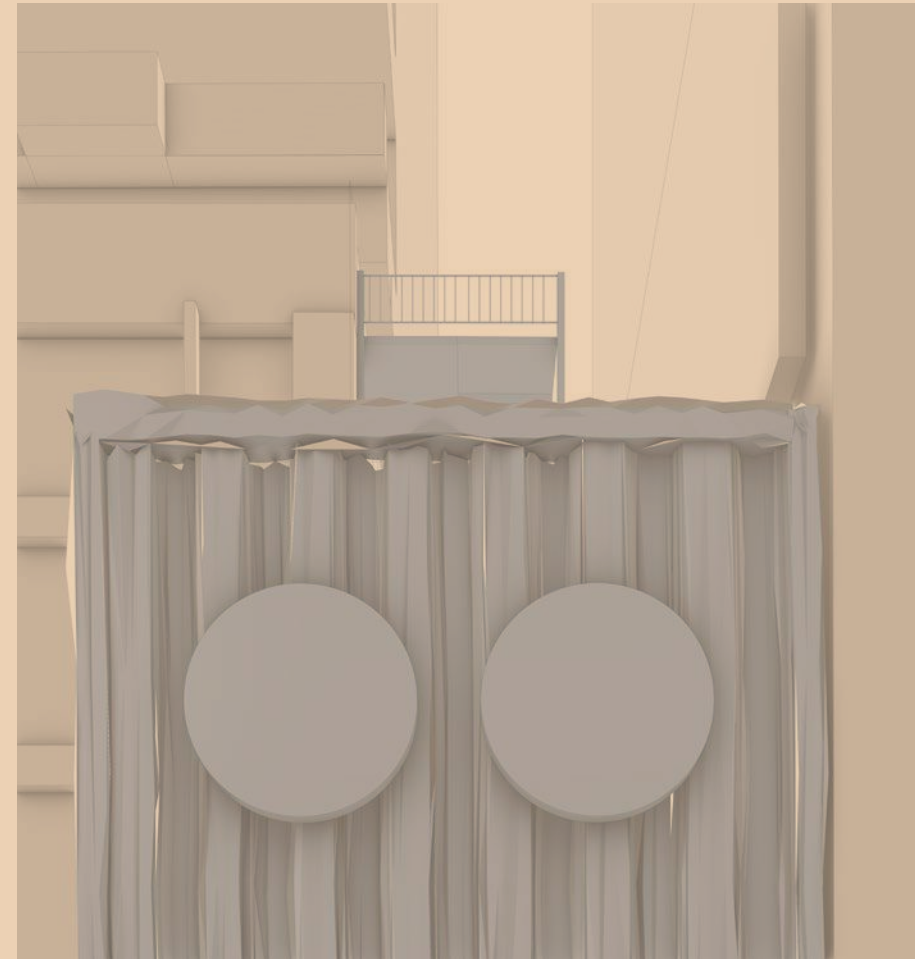
Transposing
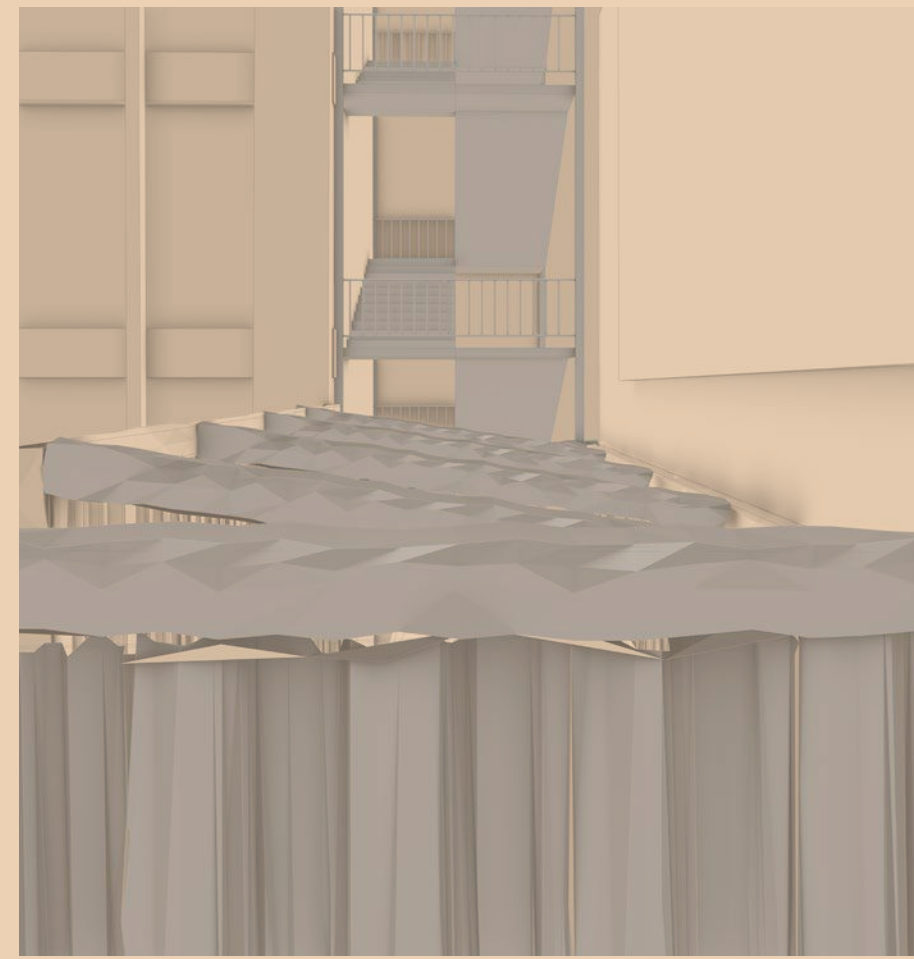
Activating

Activating

Isolating

In the dissection of the spacial scenario of chase, I was able to **extract** from it **different steps and actions** linked to the strategies of the kids in case of escape. As one can see in the vignettes, the first action is to **alert other children** in case of chase, in this step these children act as **watch towers**. By shouting "Baladiyeh!", other kids will know of the situation and will be able to act accordingly. Next, comes the idea of **shifting**, which is about changing directions in order to lose the officer that is chasing you. Here, the idea of directions is really important, Walid told me that the more you change directions the better. That is due to the fact that it will confuse the officer that is behind you. In this case, the **shift** would be from the exterior space to the interior space where one can find a lot of **congestion**. One of the most important aspect that we have been seeing during the research is the idea of **camouflage**. And here comes the idea of **blending in** with the people present on site. After this, it is about **detecting** a means of escape, and that is when the children locate the container as a possible way of escaping. Here the idea is to **transpose** the horizontal circulation into a vertical one. **A wall is a wall until you climb it.** After climbing the container, the children are **activating** this space that was not activated before. They jump on the steel bars in order to finally reach the stairs. At this final step of the escape, their action is about **isolating** and **hiding** their body behind the stairs. All those different actions are extremely specific to this one scenario. There are many variables that come into play: the size of the kid, the number of officers chasing him, their will to follow him and many more. **What if I would change one of those variable? What would the kid do? How would he escape?**
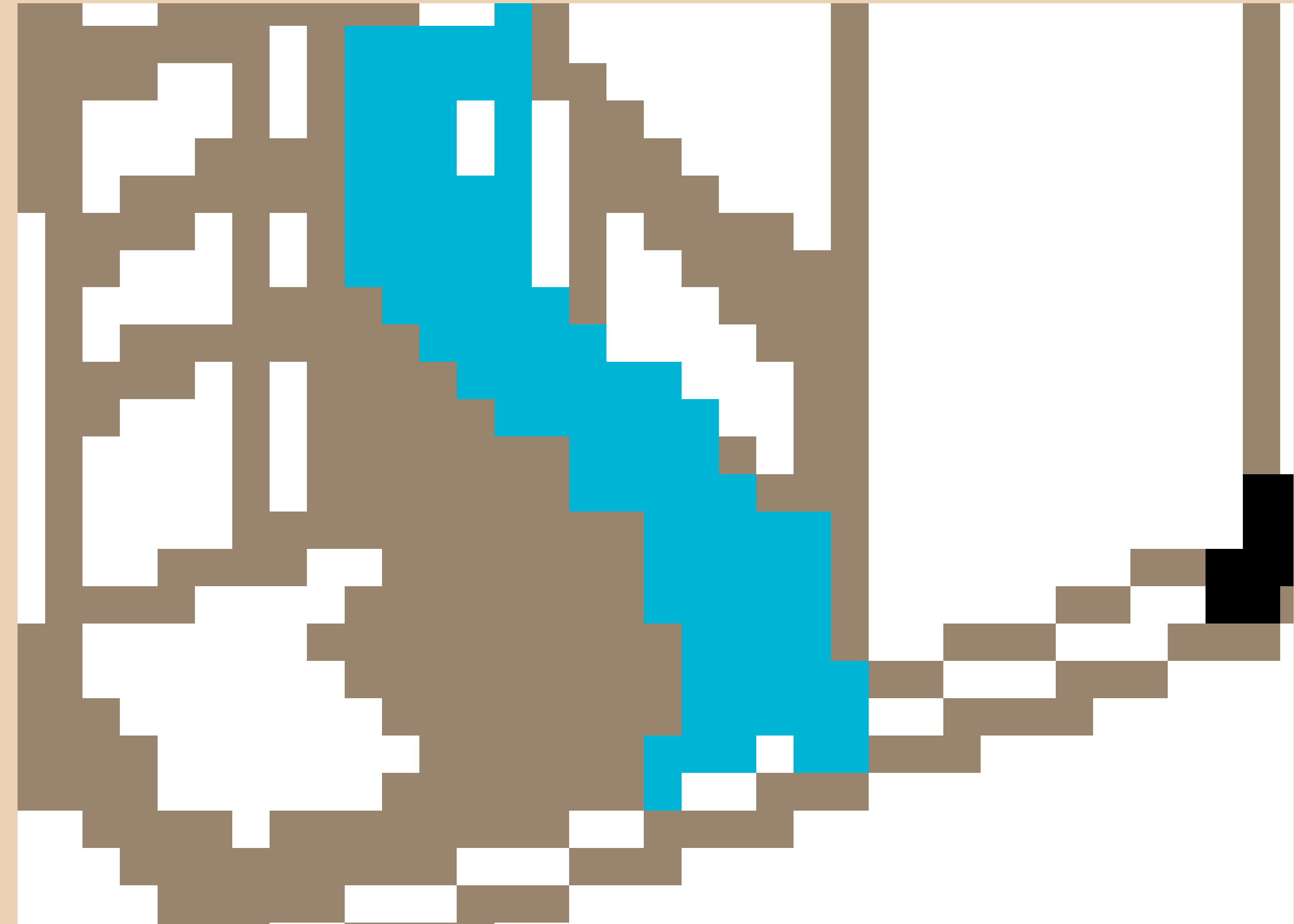
In this isometric, one can see what would happen to the space and the scenario if we changed one of the variable of the scenario. **What if the kid was younger and shorter? What if he could not climb the first boundary? Would it activate and alter other functions of the space to do so?** The challenge that I suggested to the kids, was what if the kid that was escaping was Ahmad or Jammal. If it was one of them, then the main limit would be their size, since they are way shorter than Malek. We realized that he wouldn't be able to climb the facade of the container like before, and we had to come up with a **new way of activating the area**. "Thinking of place as **performed and practiced** can help us think of place in radically **open and non-essentialized ways**, where place is constantly struggled over and **reimagined in practical ways**."[18] With this new constraint, we came up with the idea of using the **bench** of the restaurant where he could stand on and reach a **spotlight** present on the side of the other wall. By thinking about **place** as "a **template for practice**—an unstable stage for performance"[19], we can imagine and wonder **how new performances or practices will alter the space** and create a new functions for the objects present around us.

In this case, I decided to change another variable in the scenario. It is not about the kid anymore, it is about the officer. Indeed, what if the officer haven't seen this kid during the chase. Would he bother climbing on the container to get to the fire stairs? Here, we came with another idea that is to use the generator inside the container as a camouflage. This new action would activate the generator in a different way than it was before and it would allow the kid to hide behind it temporary.

[18] Cresswell, Tim. *Place: an introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014

[19] Ibid.

(1) Stairs of 1866
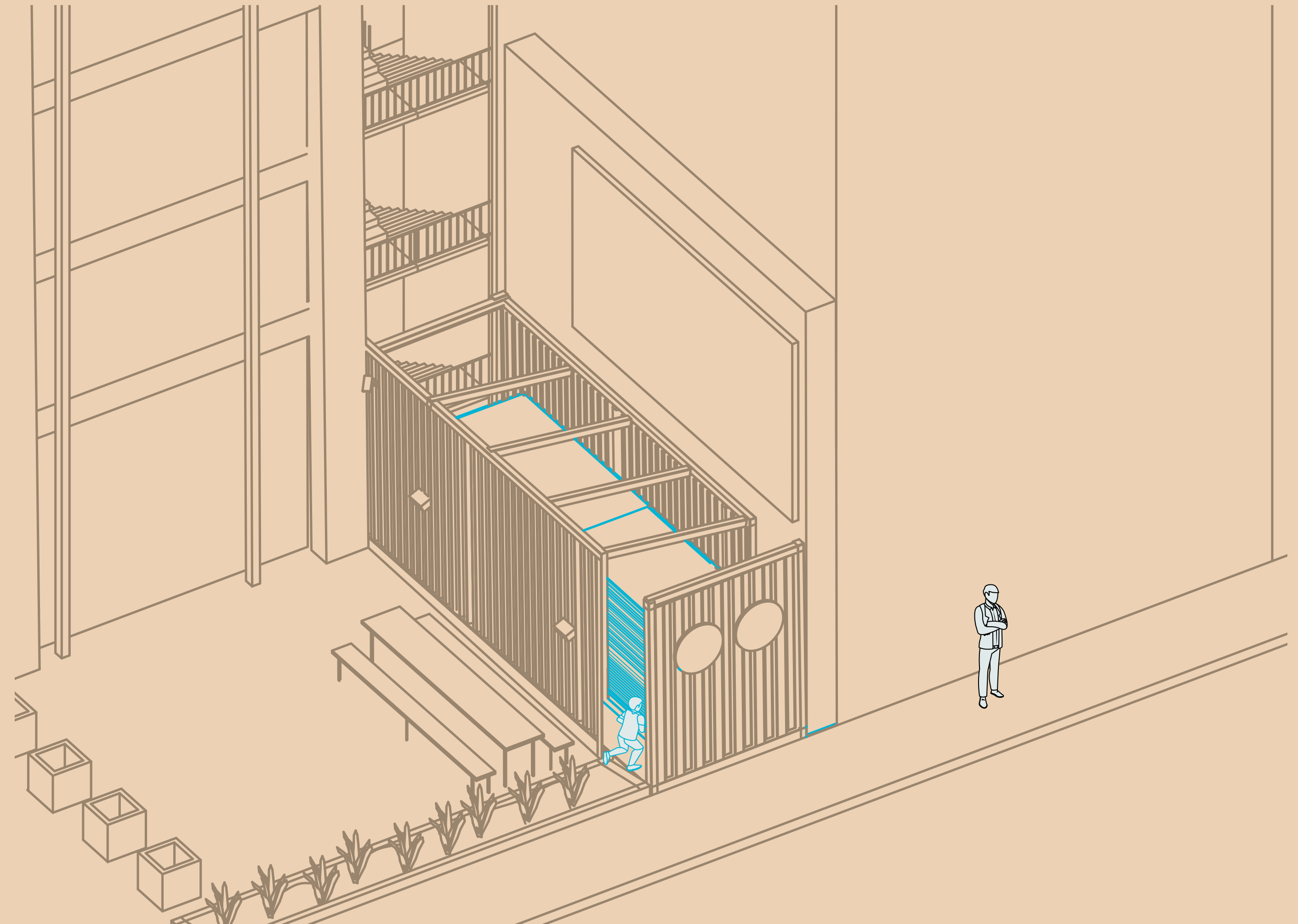
This exercise is **hybrid**. It is about **translating** concepts discovered with the **kids to objects** to better understand and try to materialize those characteristics. It is also about digging even deeper in the case of the stairs as a scenario of chase. The focus is really not on the nature or content of the objects, but about the **mechanisms** implemented into the objects. The first concept extracted from the children is the idea of **transformation**. They go from one state into another that is completely different in order to **adapt** to the changing environment of the street. The second concept would be the presence of **two different states**: an exposed and a hidden one. Indeed, based on the performance of the kids, one can find them in two major extreme states: **being active and exposed** while working, and **being totally hidden and disappearing** in case of chase.

(1) These stairs are the final destination or step in the scenario of chase that I dissected. These two isometric show the two states of transformation of the objects that I created. The idea here is to implement in those objects the concepts and mechanisms found in the way street children operate. The first state is when the objects are not used: they blend in with the context. And the second, is when they are totally exposed and used by the children. Here the two types of objects are **storage elements** where they could **hide** some belongings, and others are objects that would **enhance their escape**. The nature of the objects are not important in this exercise, it is more about the fact of using concepts seen and extracted from the street children into objects.

(2) This object can be used as a **hiding storage area** that can be either **exposed or totally disappear in the context**. The advantage is that in Lebanon they are often not filled with water and can be found in many areas of the street. In this case, the idea is to highlight those two states of exposure and total disappearance. It would allow the object to be used by the children in order to hide some belongings, extra money they got for example, and then being totally camouflaged in front of other actors.
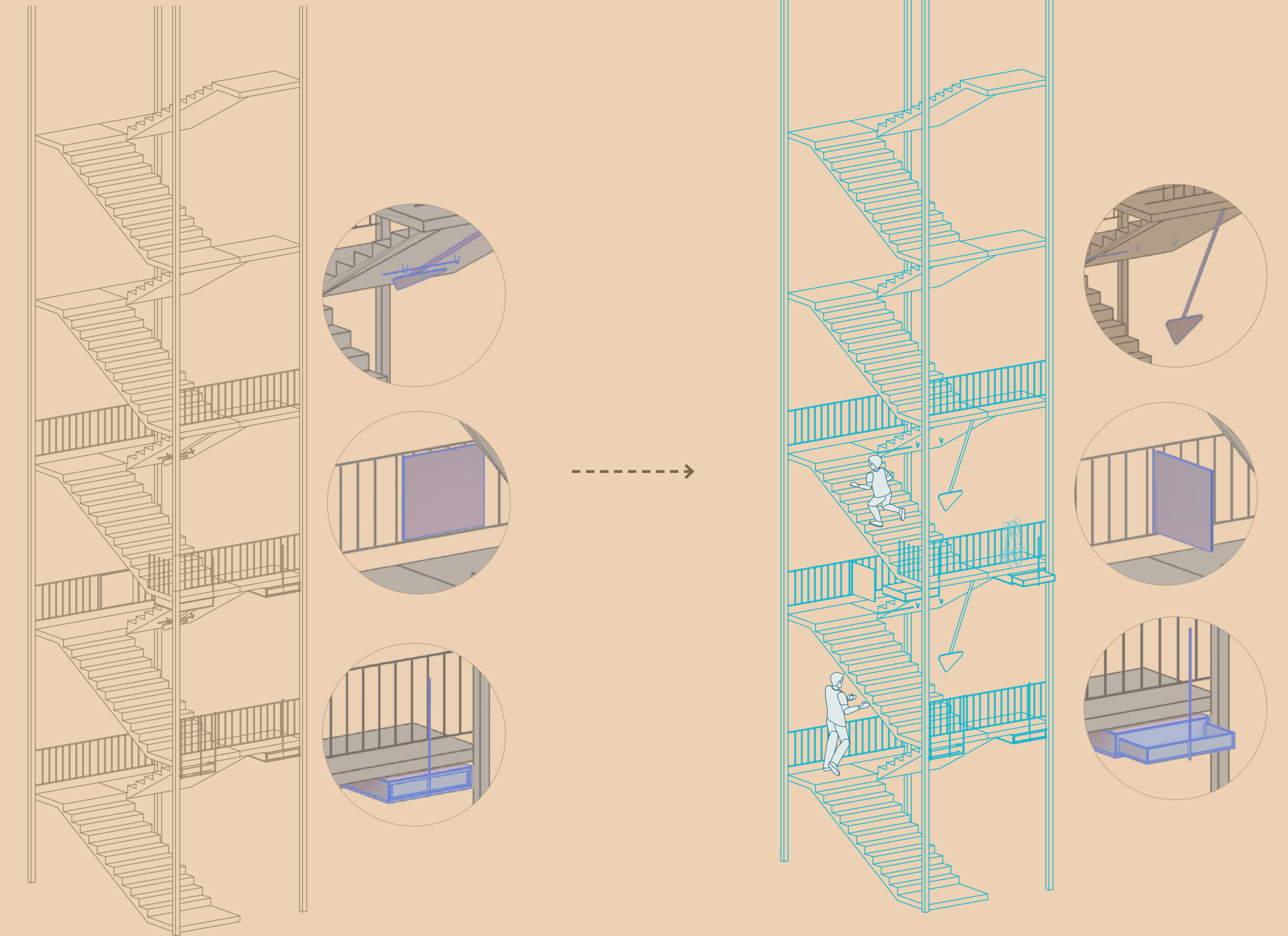
(2) Car-Stopper
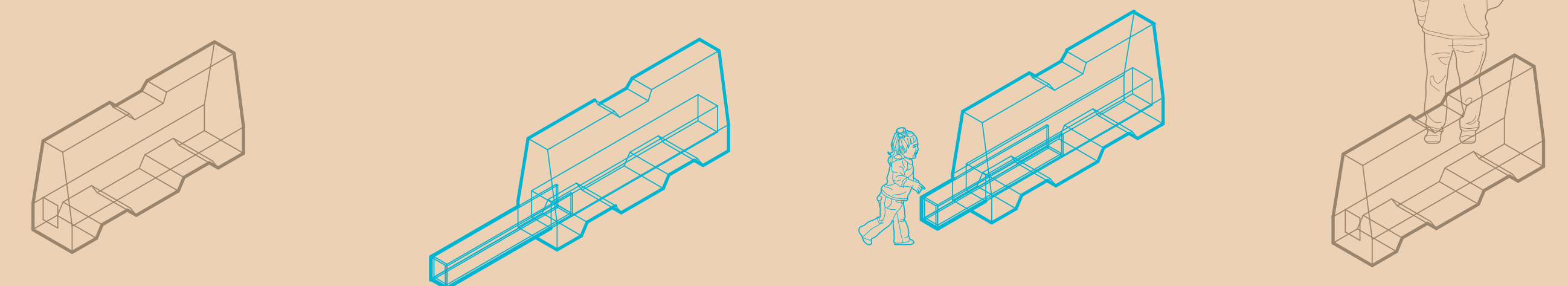
Chapter V- Projecting

In this chapter, the focus is dissected in three main parts. First, it is about extracting the systems, mechanisms and logics present in the actions and thinking of the street children. Second, it is about going through exercises of exploring what could happen with this system. The final one is about digging further in the idea of the double agent.

The idea of this exercise is to be able to **abstract** and **extract** the essence of the **mechanisms** performed by street children. It is dissected in different **themes** or areas of interest: **Visualize space**, **Escape**, **Survive**, **Modify space**, **Build alliances**, **Interact** and **External change.** By doing so, I came up with an ongoing web of **lessons learnt** from the children. Some of these can directly come from **actions** performed by the children, others come from the way they **think** or **visualize** their surroundings. The exercises that I am currently doing are to see the **possible relations** of these **mechanisms** with other **user groups or processes**. It is about finding **entry points** at different levels. Another exercise is also the **extraction of lessons learnt from the collaboration** itself and not from the content.

Visualize space

And simplify surrounding elements —— **ABSTRACT**

Elements that do not meet the hotspots criteria —— **DISREGARD**

The built area by creating a hierarchy of hotspots —— **FILTER**

The width of facade to importance of hotspot —— **TRANSPOSE**

Specific parts of street of congestion and safety —— **INTERNALIZE**

The interior spaces and the exterior ones based on a criteria —— **SEPARATE**

The different ranks of hotspots and attraction points —— **CATEGORIZE**

Escape

REPLACE —— The function of an object with a new one

CONNECT —— Spaces that were not linked before

ALERT —— Other individuals while escaping

SHORTEN —— The distance between two points

ACTIVATE —— A space that didn't have a specific function and was not activated

SIMPLIFY —— A wall is a wall until you climb it
—— Reduce objects to basic characteristics of scale/texture/geometry

BLEND —— Use bodies of people or objects to camouflage

Survive

ALLIANCES —— Get income
—— Conquer parts of street
—— Create a defence mechanism

DETECT —— Locate possible checkpoints where one can hide

ALERT —— Other kids while escaping as watch towers

CONQUER —— Expand one's territory

REPEAT —— Go to the same places every day to reinforce one's territory

FAMILIARIZE —— Make the surrounding personal
—— Talk/Interact with people

Modify space

When one creates a space that was not present by performing an action —— **EXPAND**

When a threshold is turned it into boundary —— **ISOLATE**

When a group organizes itself and spreads in a space —— **DISSECT**

When one links two spaces that were separate —— **CONNECT**

When one simplifies a space to its chore characteristics —— **SIMPLIFY**

Build alliances

AUTHORIZATION —— Earn the right of staying in front of space

LIMIT —— Deny the access of a space from enemies

DEFEND —— Allow to create a defence

PROJECT —— Allow to prepare in case of chase

INCOME —— Get money or food in return

Interact

When one sees an object as an extension of his/her body —— **MERGE**

When one changes the function of his/her object based on a need —— **REPLACE**

When one changes the position of an object of another kid temporarily —— **DISPLACE**

When one is in the exposed area and wants to sell —— **DISPLAY**

When one escapes and has to get rid of the object —— **DISPOSE**

External change

MIGRATE —— Change one's location to a new one based on needs

ALTER —— Change one's state from hidden to exposed or vise versa

DISRUPT —— Change one's habit and life cycle to adapt to the environment

ADAPT —— Change one's job and function

The idea of this exercise is to be able to **abstract** and **extract** the essence of the **collaboration** done during the semester. It is basically forming lessons learnt from the experience of the research and not the content itself. In this case, it is not about the content of the research, but the

Collaboration

PERFORMANCE As key role in one's relation with others

EDITING Going through loops of editing work

EXERCICES Create exercises that will create questions of what did and what will do

CONVERSATIONAL Collaboration seen as a conversation of exchanges, ideas

PERSONA Building up a persona when in contact with a specific group

PERSONEL A personal and engaged research process will get extremely specific findings

TRANSFORM City transforms on the daily

DYNAMIC Work as a dynamic that can go into loops of change

LOOPHOLES City transforms on the daily

In this chapter, the focus is dissected in three main parts. First, it is about extracting the systems, mechanisms and logics present in the actions and thinking of the street children. Second, it is about going through exercises of exploring what could happen with this system. The final one is about digging further in the idea of the double agent.

HACKING

SIMPLIFY — When one simplifies a space to its chore characteristics
Wall is a wall until you climb it

BLEND — Use bodies of people or objects to camouflage

ISOLATE — When a threshold is turned it into boundary

PERSONA — Building up a persona when in contact with a specific group

DOUBLE AGENCY — As key role in one's role and in the object's identity

In the diagram, one can see how these children transform completely based on the people that are in front of them. Indeed, when they are in front of potential clients, these children perform and are totally exposed. However, when they are in front of an officer, they are in a different state and transform complete to hide and disappear. The process of this exercise would be to think about applying to myself concepts seen with the children's actions and manipulation of space.

The concept of being a double agent can be seen on different levels. It is first seen at the level of the children. The same children can be found in two different states: the first one being in an active and exposed way, when they perform in front of potential clients, the second one is when they totally disappear when in contact with an officer.
The **double agency** is also seen in the way objects transform. Indeed, how does a **traffic light** become a **clock**? How does a **planter** become a **storage area**? How does a **beam** become a **bridge**? How does a **parking lot** become a **hiding pit**?

What if I applied on **myself, as an architect,** the concept of double agency? It would be about creating spaces as an **image**, and at the same time having hidden spaces that are **camouflaged**. It would be about being two different agents at the same time.

In what ways could I be able to wear two different hats while designing?

Double agency adopted

In what ways does it provide a strategic location for the children?

What is the strand?

"The building is composed of two wings, an office block along Hamra Street and a residential block along quieter Jeanne d'Arc Street, with a shared core and a commercial base. The Strand building is iconic for its aluminium façade meant to veil the structure from the southern sun exposure and to cover heating and cooling pipes. However, its cultural significance goes beyond mere aesthetics. During its peak, the Strand building was a centre for commercial and cultural gatherings, with a clear passage linking Hamra Street to Jeanne d'Arc Street (which in turn starts at the American University of Beirut's Main Gate), allowing more accessibility to the shops, the open air courtyard, and the cinema."[20]
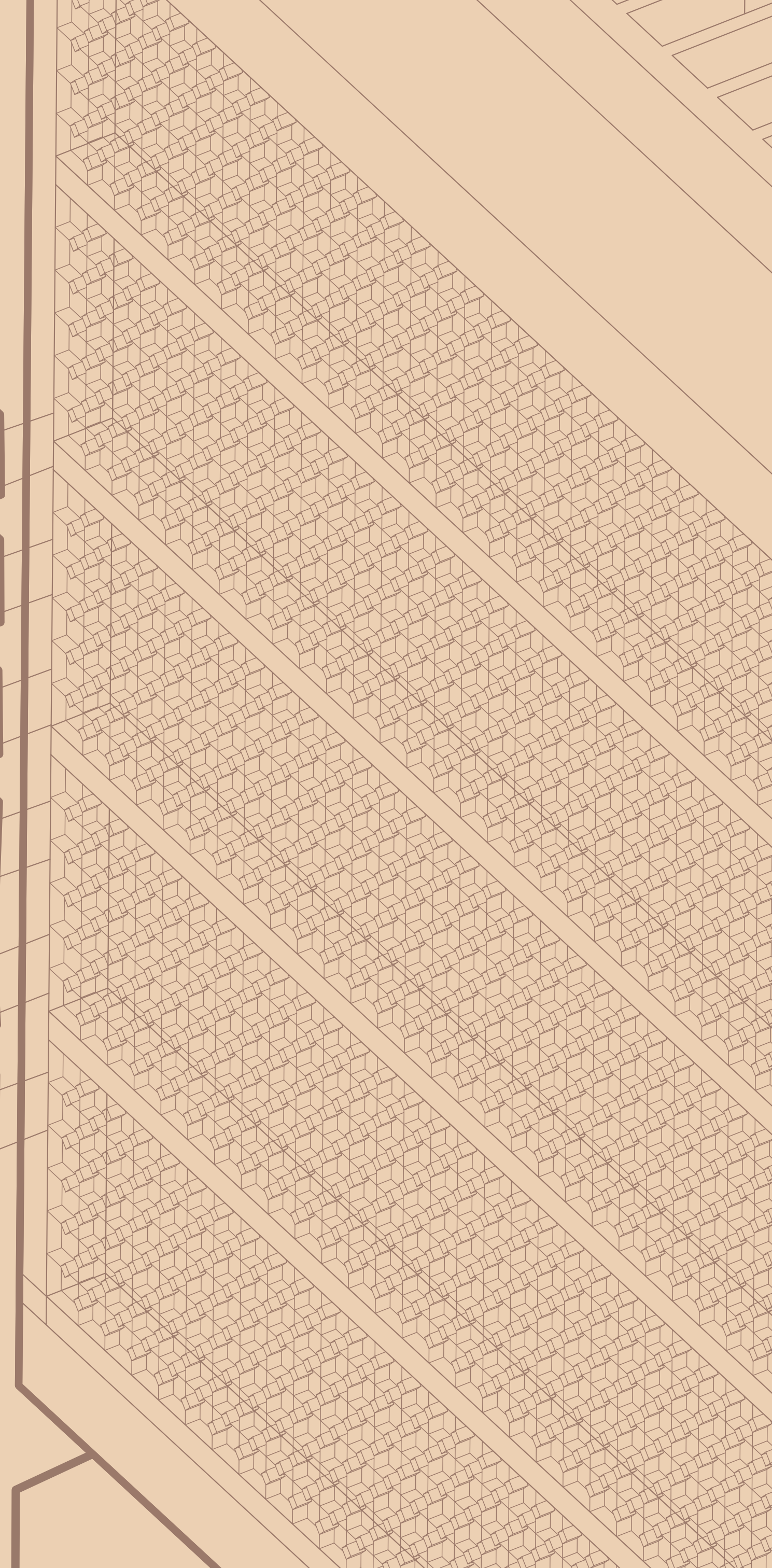
[20] "Beirut." Columbia GSAPP. Accessed December 21, 2019. https://www.arch.columbia.edu/summer-workshops/2016/beirut

The strand is located in the heart of the **existing network** of the children which is between Hamra and Bliss. It is precisely at the intersection of Jeanne d'arc street and Hamra street. It has an **interesting location** because it can be seen among the various **hotspots** discussed previously.

In what ways does it provide strategic characteristics?

Ammar, Alexander. *Children living and working on the streets in Lebanon: Profile and Magnitude*. ILO/UNICEF/SCI, 2015.

"Beirut." Columbia GSAPP. Accessed December 21, 2019. https://www.arch.columbia.edu/summer-workshops/2016/beirut

Borden, Iain. "Body Architecture: Skateboarding and the Creation of Super Architectural Space." Routledge, 1998. 195-216.

Caldeira, Teresa PR. "Fortified enclaves: The new urban segregation." In *The urban sociology* reader, pp. 419-427. Routledge, 2012.

Cresswell, Tim. *Place: an introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

"Engage in Development." arcenciel. Accessed December 8, 2019. https://www.arcenciel.org/en/.

Harb, Mohamad Khalil. "Living and Imagining City Spaces: The Case of Beirut." *The Journal of Politics and Society* 25, no. 2 (2014): 102-137.

Janz, Bruce B. "The Territory is not Map: Place, Deleuze and Guattari, and African Philosophy." *Philosophy Today* 45, no. 4 (2001): 392-405.

Makdisi, Saree. "Laying claim to Beirut: Urban narrative and spatial identity in the age of Solidere." *Critical inquiry* 23, no. 3 (1997): 661-705.

Martinez-Garrido, Lourdes. "Beirut Reconstruction: A missed opportunity for conflict resolution." *Al Nakhlah* (2008).

Massey, Doreen. *A global sense of place*. Aughty. org, 2010.

Tietjen, Anne, Svava Riesto, and Rana Haddad. "Doing critique of what design does at Superkilen." *PhD Course: Constructing Criticism*. Vol. 4. No. 13. 2017.

"Who We Are." himaya. Accessed December 8, 2019. https://www.himaya.org/content/who-we-are.

The **existing configuration of the facade** of The Strand gives it an added value in terms of **camouflage**. Indeed, the building from the outside can be seen as a block that limits all **visual contacts** from the outside. One can't really know what is happening on the inside.

During my thesis, I have been conducting a social practice at Strand Building in Hamra by inhabiting a space in the building and being a neighbour to its tenants.
After my work and collaborative research with street children in Thesis 1, I was curious about access, privilege and the relational architectural process.
I have been exploring how a participative method based on building users can reshape the approach to architectural design.
How could I use a storytelling and relationship-building to regenerate the Strand building? Can I question conventional building use through manifesting the desires of its current occupiers?

Lessons learnt during FYP I
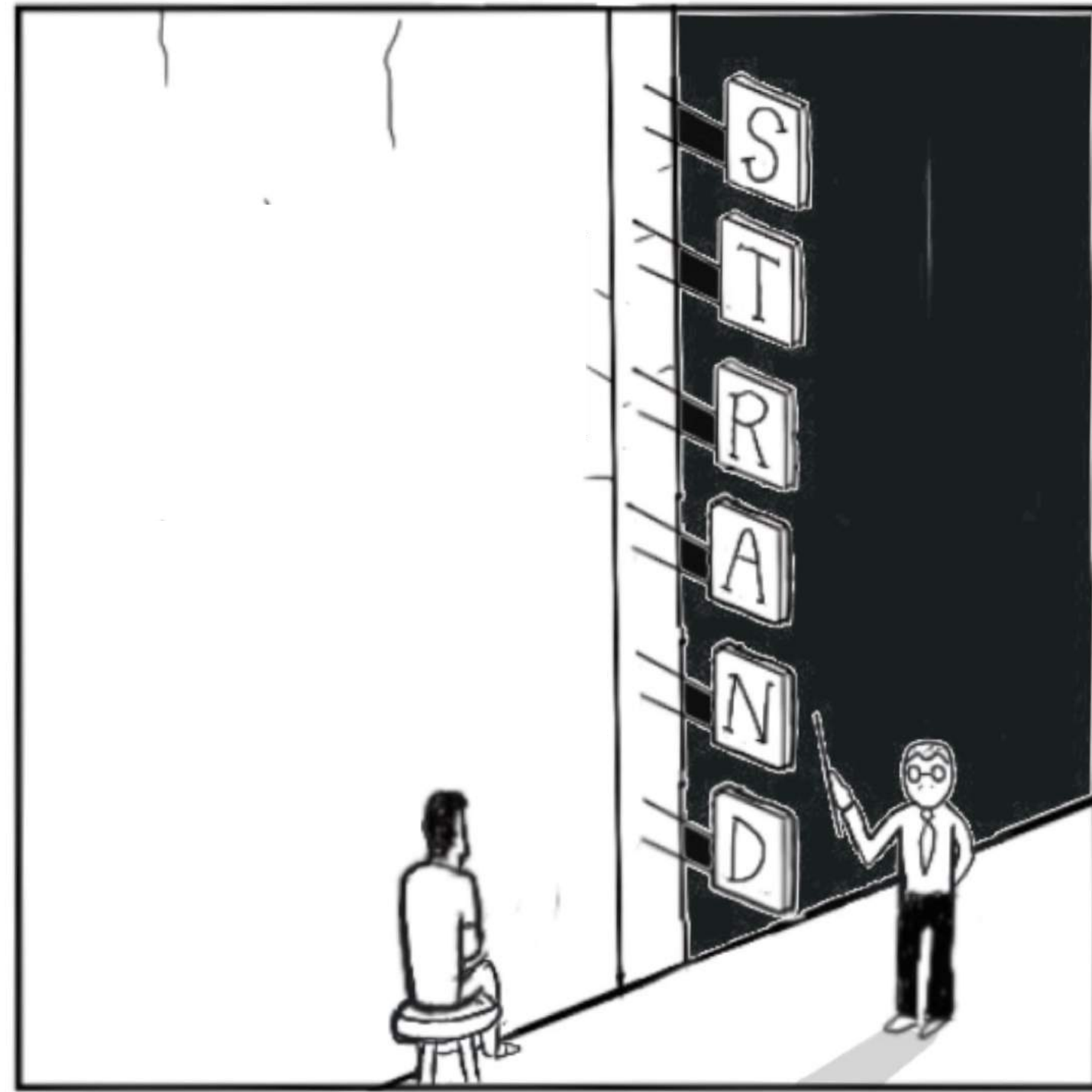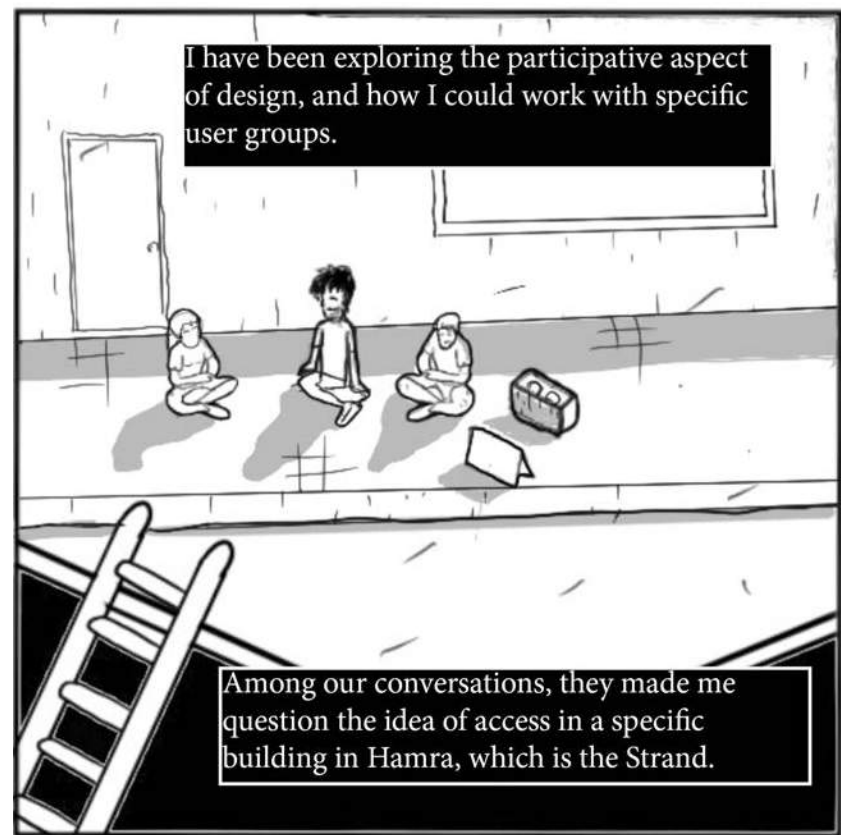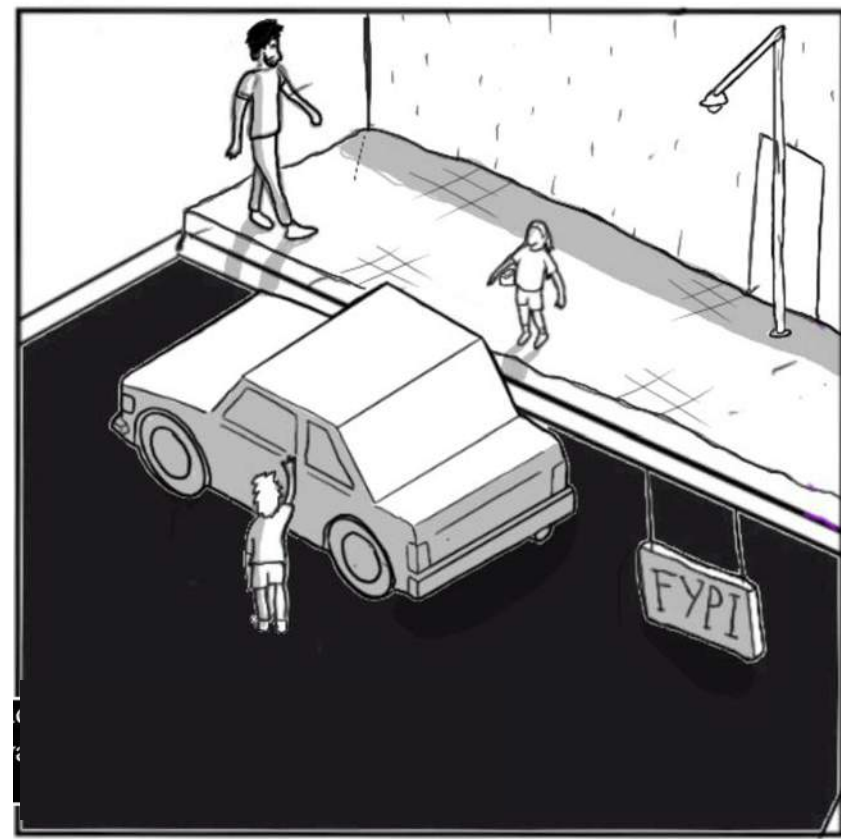
During FYP I, I collaborated with street children in order to learn and extract logics and strategies from their appropriation of the street. I investigated in Beirut, what street children see and how they interact with the street.

The exchanges between me and the children were the essence of the thesis. Many lessons learnt came from the collaboration itself – concept of adapting to different situations, building up a persona when in contact with a specific user group, engaging in an extremely personal research process, and understanding the conversational aspect of the research.

During the research process on the street, I came in contact with the Strand Building. This building, located in Jeanne D'arc Street, initially caught my interest because it is an iconic building and was central to the network of street children going from Hamra to Bliss due to the hotspots surrounding it. Another important factor was that the children couldn't enter it; **Which made me first question its accessibility.** On the inside, the building was constituted of active, inactive and abandoned individual spaces. When I started tackling the Strand, I included these concepts on my approach and the idea of access became even bigger.

Publications
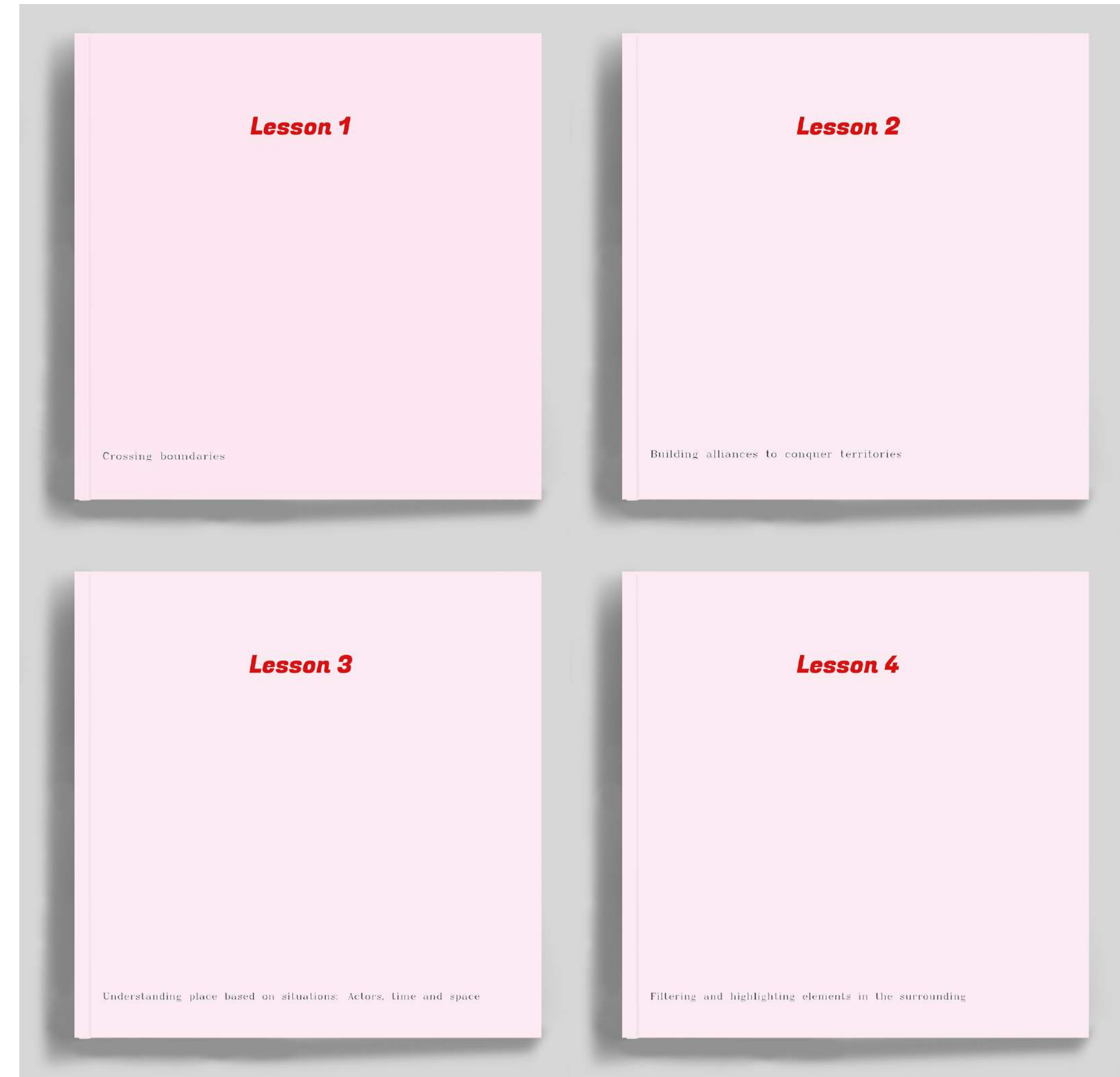
The publications' purpose is to mainly showcase and locate the different lessons learnt done during thesis 1 explaining each observation, and at the same time show their applications on the way I tackled the Strand building. These are translated into 4 different books that are coded Lesson 1, 2, 3 and 4 and can be read in relation to the Narrative/Survey seen later on.
I used these lessons in order to understand the building spacially, and create the different relationships with the users.
The 4 lessons were: Building alliances, crossing boundaries, understanding space based on situation and filtering space.

Observation of the lesson

I was able to witness street children trespassing and crossing different forms of boundaries. As an example, I could discuss an escape scenario happening Bliss when they escape from the "baladiyeh".
In this scenario, Malek activates a space that was not activated before by using in a different manner. By climbing the container to reach fire stairs, he was able to cross boundaries on the public/private dimensions, but also on the conventional and physical conventions. He literally created a new means of circulation and understanding the space that was not here before.
What I extracted here is the idea of using one's body and abilities to cross specific boundaries that are set. For the children, this aspect can be seen in survival modes, however, this idea can be used in several manners in order to modify space.

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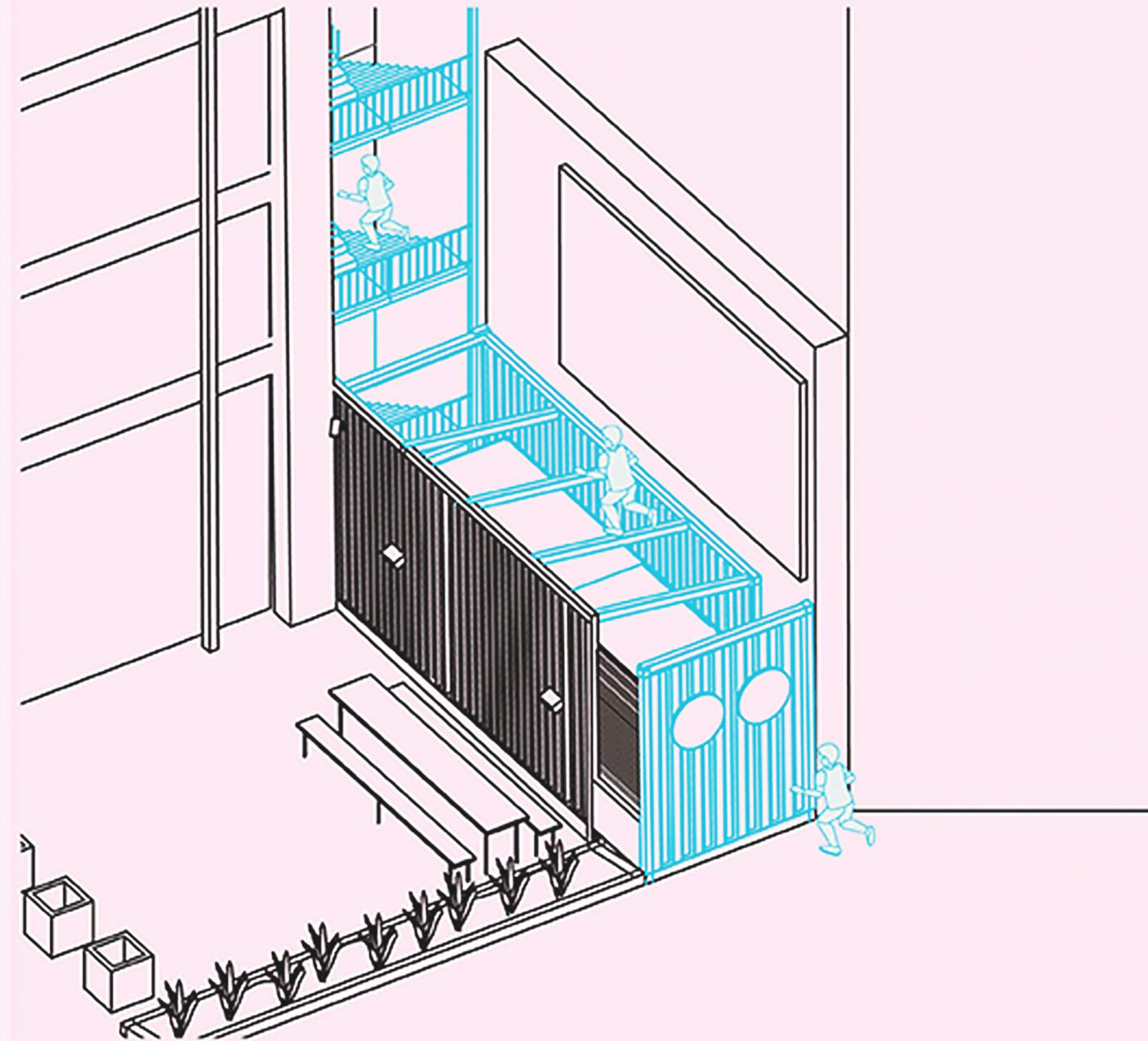
Case of restaurant
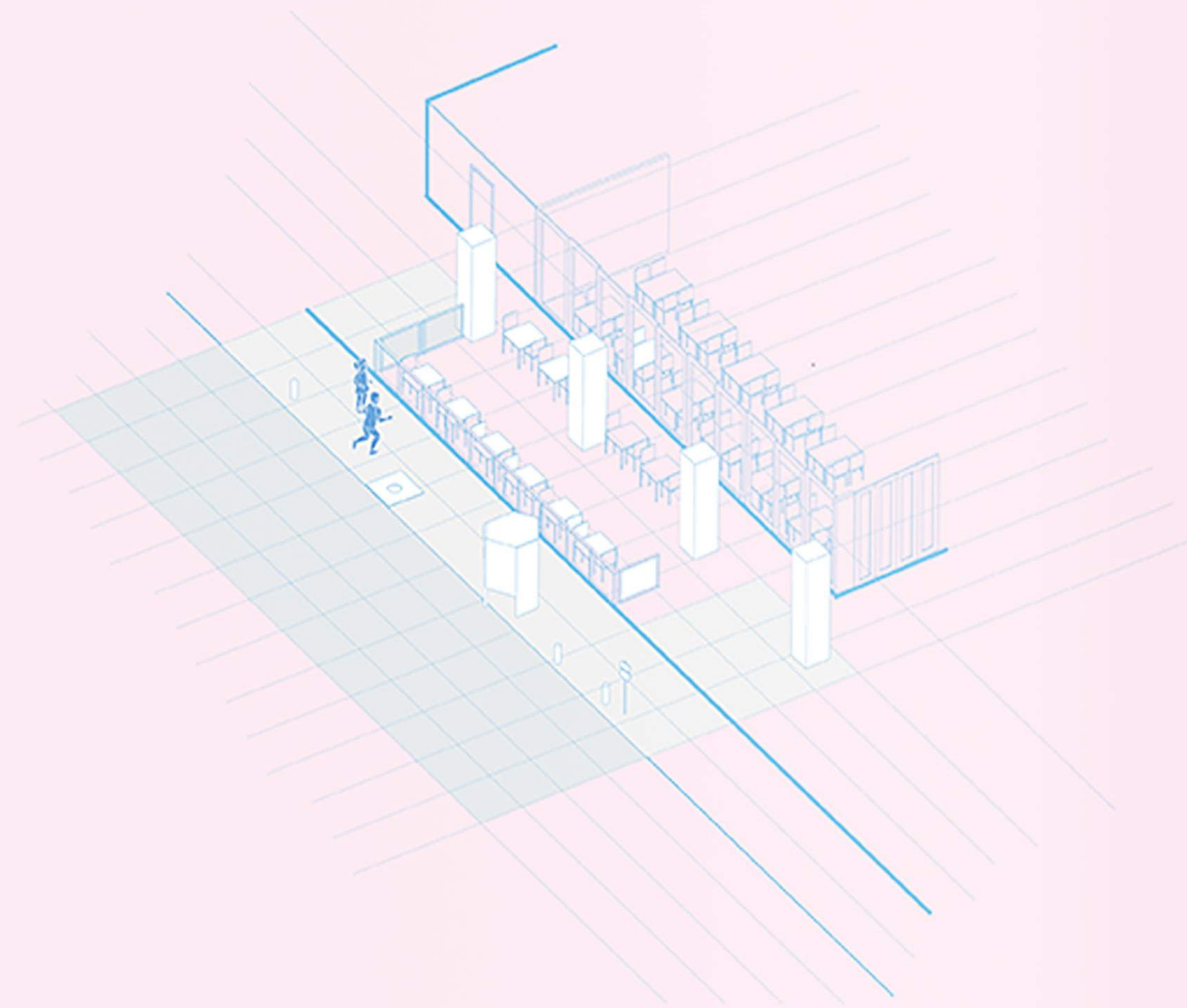
The first time I crossed boundaries in Strand was on the edge of the building. Indeed, the initial spacial scenario of this edge between private and public, is the fact that the children are not allowed in the restaurant but also on the sidewalk where the tables are placed.
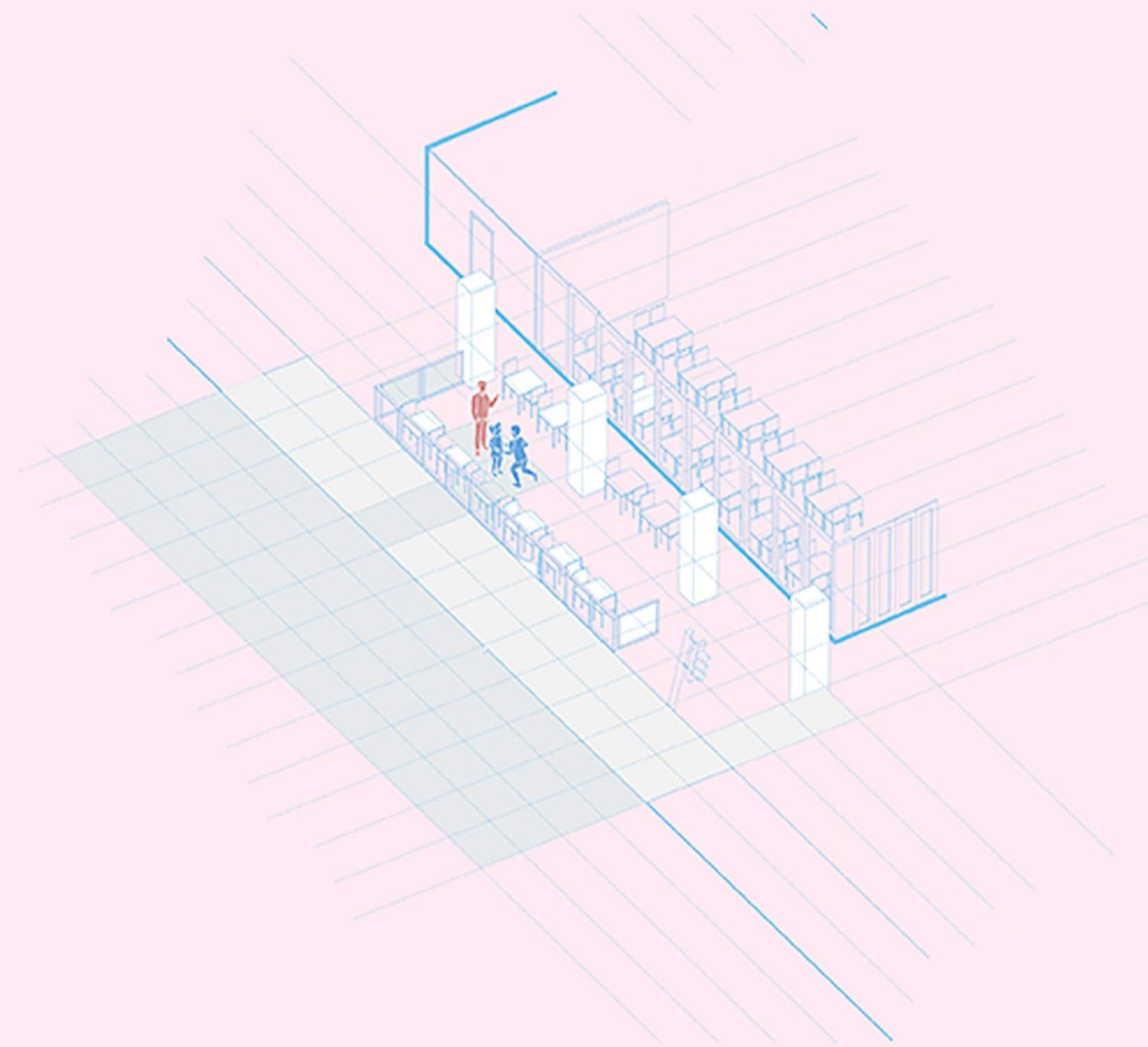
What I decided to do, was to use my "status" to channel the children into this area and to eat with me. I did this to test the different negotiations that were going to take place. I was able to renegotiate the boundaries present there. What happened is that the waitress Fatima, didn't have a problem with this because I was with them. However, the manager came a couple of minutes later and asked us to move away.

3

4

Case of natour
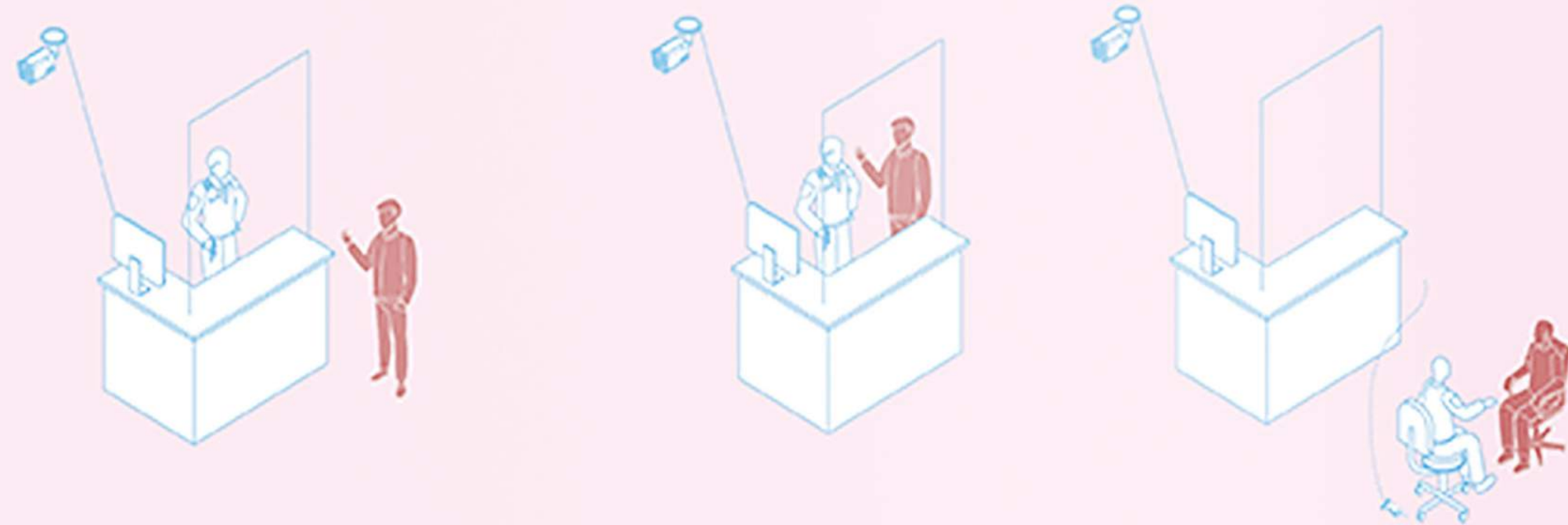
The second interesting use of my body to cross boundaries could be witnessed with the "natours" of the building. Indeed, our encounters evolved and the spacial scenario changed based on my behaviour. First, I was speaking to them as an outsider, but it didn't take much time for me to "invade" their area, which is the area behind the desk where the screens of the security cameras are placed. After a couple of encounters, I was not only able to access their "private" areas, but was also able to draw them out of this area. At the end of the day, we started pulling the chairs out of their working zone and talked in this new area.

Case of "Wakeel"

As the time went by, I started to expand the encounters with other agents in the building in order to finally reach Tony, the "wakeel". During this encounter, what I did is that I directly entered his office without warning nor appointment. When I was there, I sat down directly and gave him my full proposal. (Can be seen in the Book "Building Alliances") The result of this was him assigning his secretary to give me full access to any space in the building, but also more interestingly allowing me to have my own workspace in the building.

Mapping of intrusions
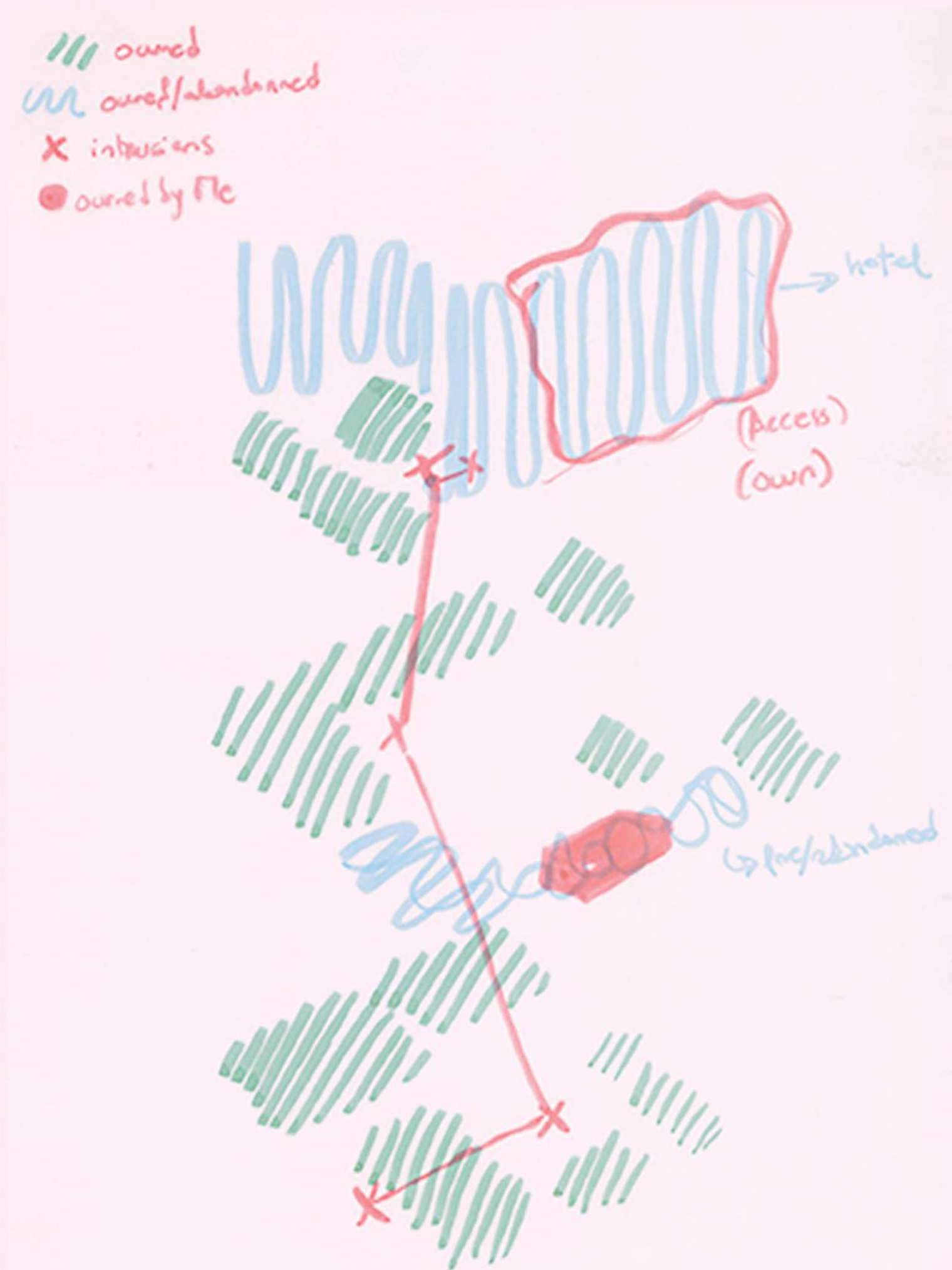
What I did is that I tried to map the different intrusions/encounters I did in the building in relation to the existing levels of ownerships of spaces.

As you can see, my intrusions happen on different levels. On the ground floor are my encounters with the restaurant, with the natours, on the first floor it is with Ahmad the worker, and finally on the 4th floor I interacted with Randa the secretary and the main wakeel Tony. The free space is marked in blue, it is constituted of abandoned offices and the hotel that is locked. I was able to obtain full access to the hotel, and also to literally own a work space which is part of the "deal" I got.

Observation of the lesson

. The background of a street child is constituted of different actors. There are the people in charge of him, his father, mother, employer, his family members such as his or her siblings, and other actors such as his employer, the landlord, the shaweesh, being background characters. These can give more information on the type of street child we are talking about. Then, there are a different set of characters that are on site, on the street. These characters differ from site to site, they can either be enemies or alliances. They are used by the children in order to survive on the streets. In this exercise, I started by creating the specific network of Malek in Bliss. He is part of extremely intricate loops and cycles of actors. In the web created, one can see his relationship with different layers of characters. Moreover, the kid also has different alliances on the street like for example waiters of small restaurants giving him food or money because their boss are not present. In other cases, the waiters can be seen as enemies such as at Urbanista for example.

From this, the main lesson learnt is based on building alliances with different agents in your surrounding in order to survive or to conquer territory. It is based on the way you behave and exchange with agents.

1

2

85

86

The first exchange I had was in the restaurant Sam's on the edge of the building. What I did, is that I used the idea of repetition, and went there at the same time every day and got the same order. I interacted highly with Fatima, the waitress and the cashier. What I gave was mainly attention to details, such as for example the music that was playing there. That is where we started to open up more, and exchanged songs on pieces of paper. The second input I also gave was the test I created by allowing the children to come and sit on my table. That is when Fatima, the waitress allowed me to do so despite the remarks of her manager that came later on and told the children to go away. The idea here was also to test if the waitress could be considered an "ally" after having these different exchanges with her on daily basis. This was preparing the ground on the edge of the building where street children normally manipulate the line between private and public.

3

4

Fouad, the first natour I interacted with, works on the ground floor from 3 till 7 pm. When I saw him, I introduced myself as N'oula, an engineer coming from AUB to work on maintenance with the owner of the building. I highlighted how the building was significant for our university and how it was before. In order to approach him, I used the strategies of finding common grounds of conversations and interests. These were constituted of the actual economical crisis that is happening and also mainly the importance of family. After seconds of talking, I asked him to give me my name and complained that he already forgotten it. That is when he said Mario, which became our "inside joke". By giving him these trials of proposals I was able to get insights on his boss' interest and attitude. So, I had the chance to alter my proposal and prepare it for later on. The main attribute of this exchange was the amount of time and interest I showed to him. By directly making jokes, and asking him more private questions of the building, he felt he had to give me all sorts of funny stories and experiences happening in the building. From this encounter, I was able to already get a lot of specific stories regarding the building and agencies here, allowing me to engage with them on a more personal level. The object we exchanged here was a paper he had in his hand, writing all sorts of ethnicities in the country and also in the building mainly because of OMT present there. Moreover, he has been in the building for more than 13 years and made it clear he didn't allow any street child in the building, despite allowing cats in.

سوري ١

سورايا ٢

حبشي ٣

بنغلادشي ٤

مصري ٥

فلبيني ٦

TIME AVAILABILITY

ATTENTION JOKES QUESTIONS

COMMON GROUNDS CRISIS FAMILY FUNNY VIDEOS

TRIALS OF PROPOSALS

CAMERAS

DAILY ROUTINE

BOSS'S ATTITUDE AND OPINION COMPLAINTS

ABANDONED BUILDING'S PROBLEMS

NAMES OF JANITORS

5

6
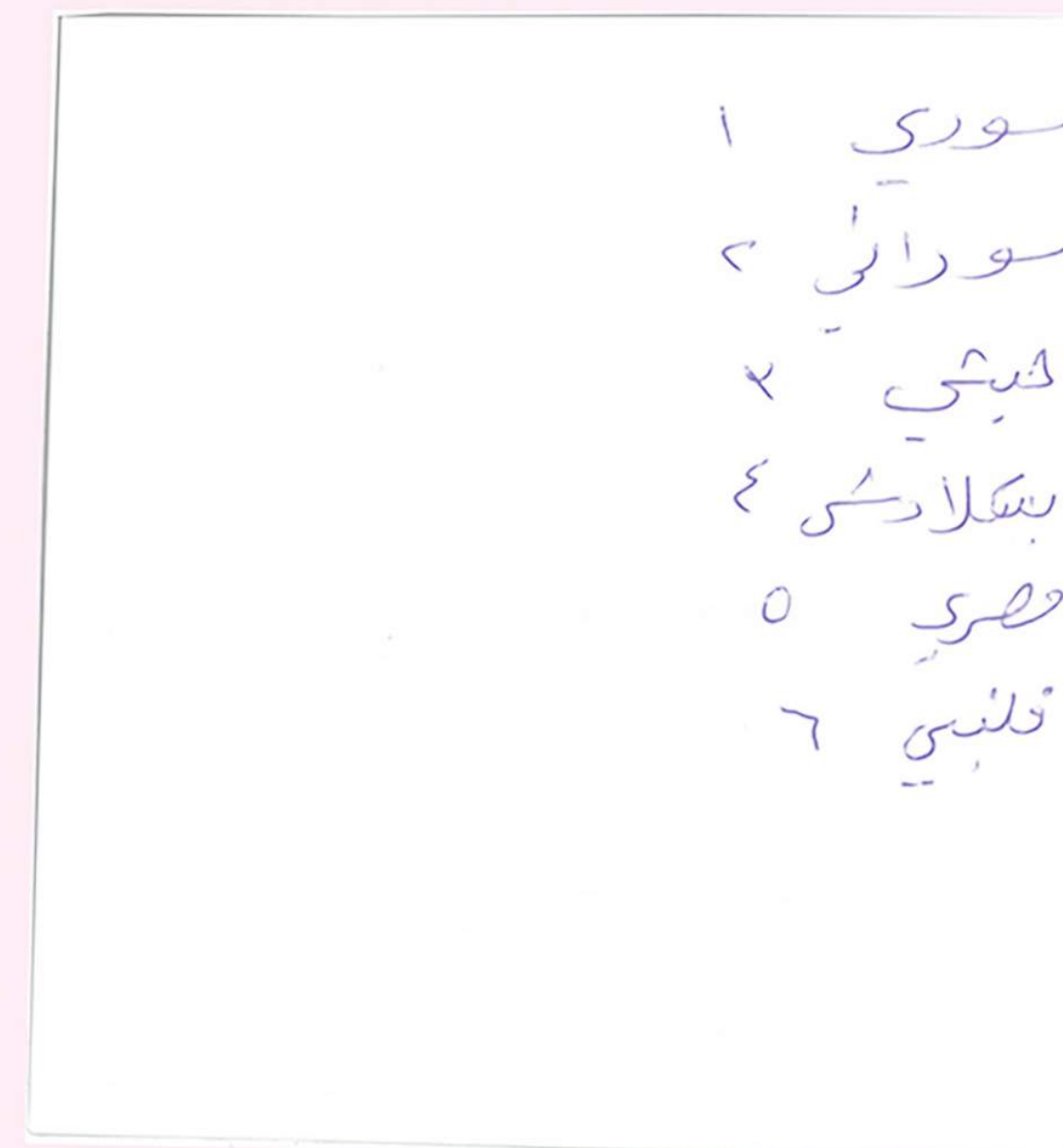
In the second shift, when I approached Abed the second natour, I already knew his name, and other intricate stories related to the building. I also introduced myself as N'oula the engineer and I was accepted much more faster than with Fouad because of this baggage I started having. He directly showed signs of trust and engaged in a conversation where he opened up about his problems regarding the crisis and the new generation. Among our interactions, I introduced him to games such as the one in the picture where I would draw for the both of us because he wasn't allowed to play on his shift. Based on my questions, he also opened up on the way he secured the ground floor without even looking at the security cameras, by only focusing on one main view. The interesting part here was to witness how the space and the level of control changed based on the type of natour present there. The evolution in this interaction could be witnessed in the fact that when we talked first he stayed behind his desk, to then allowing me in and finally whenever he sees me, he would leave his desk and pull two chairs outside for the both of us, leaving the cameras behind.

PRE-INFORMATION

AVAILABILITY

TIME

ATTENTION

JOKES
QUESTIONS

COMMON GROUNDS

CRISIS
FAMILY
FUNNY VIDEOS

GAMES

X/O

OPINION REGARDING CRISIS
OPINION ABOUT CHILDREN
STRATEGIES OF SECURITY

PLAY
DISCUSS

MAPPING OF ETHNICITIES

OWNERSHIPS IN BUILDING + STORIES

7
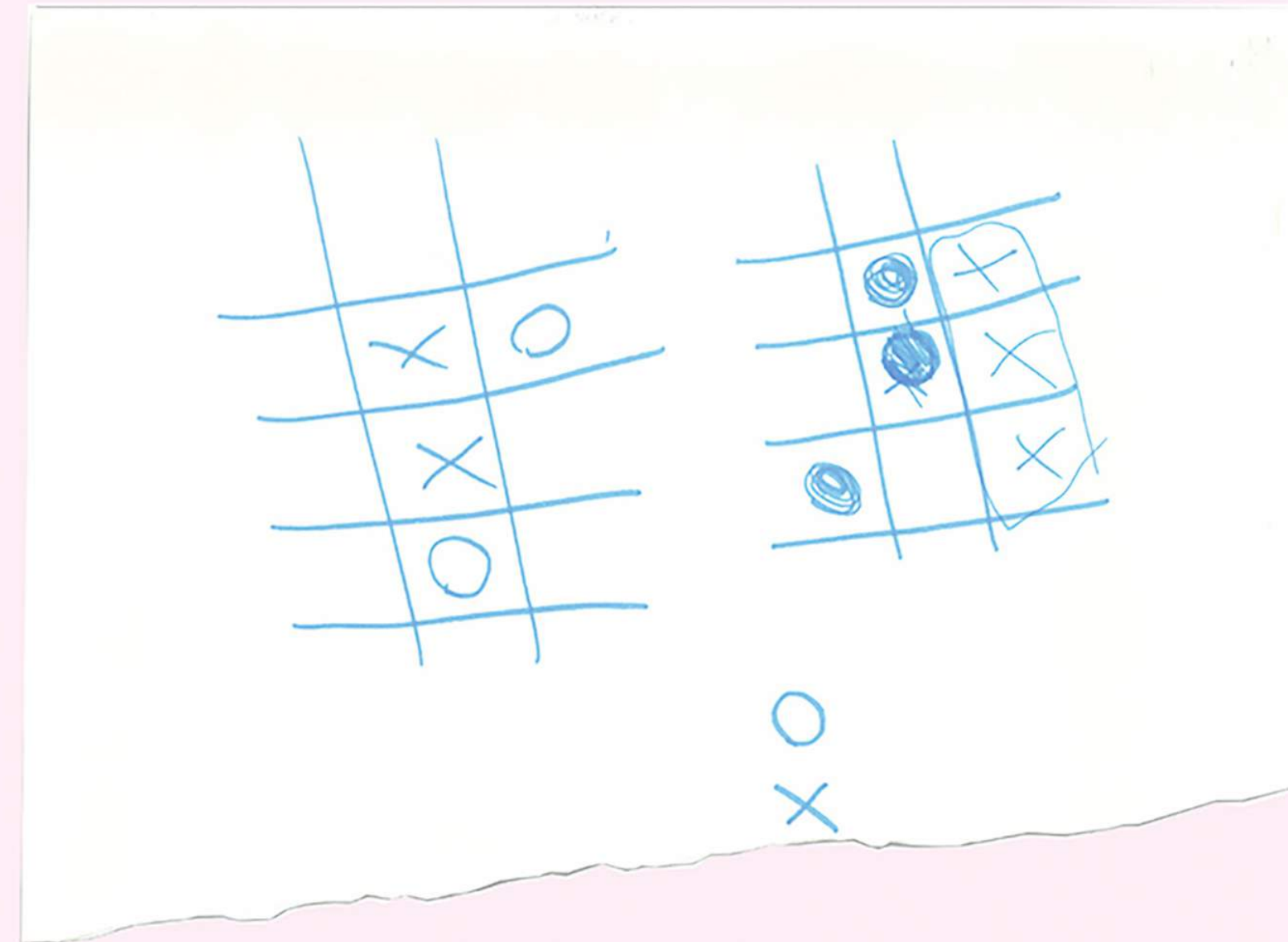
8

Character 5: Ahmad worker

Exchange

Ahmad is a worker at the main brand located on the first floor. He only knows the main owner of the building by name. When I saw him the first time on the first floor, I already knew a lot about the firm he works at and also some specific stories that happened there. When I saw him, I acted as if we knew each other from before and asked "do you remember me?". He felt awkward and replied yes. From this point on, thinking I came as an architect to work on the building he made me a tour of the different security cameras on this floor. What is interesting is that from the outside the building can be seen a as block, however on the inside, it is dissected since the ownerships on the first and ground floors are completely different and belong to different agents. From this encounter, I also learnt about the tensions existing between Salim, the owner of this firm and Tony the main "wakeel" of the building. I also asked a lot about the timing of the agents in the building to understand how space transform based on these.

PRE-INFORMATION ABOUT FIRM
AVAILABILITY
TIME
ATTENTION
JOKES
QUESTIONS
COMMON GROUNDS
CRISIS
FAMILY
FUNNY VIDEOS

SECURITY SYSTEM
TIMING OF PEOPLE
TRUST
HIERARCHY OF WORK
OPINION ABOUT CHILDREN
DISCUSS
SYSTEMS IN BUILDING
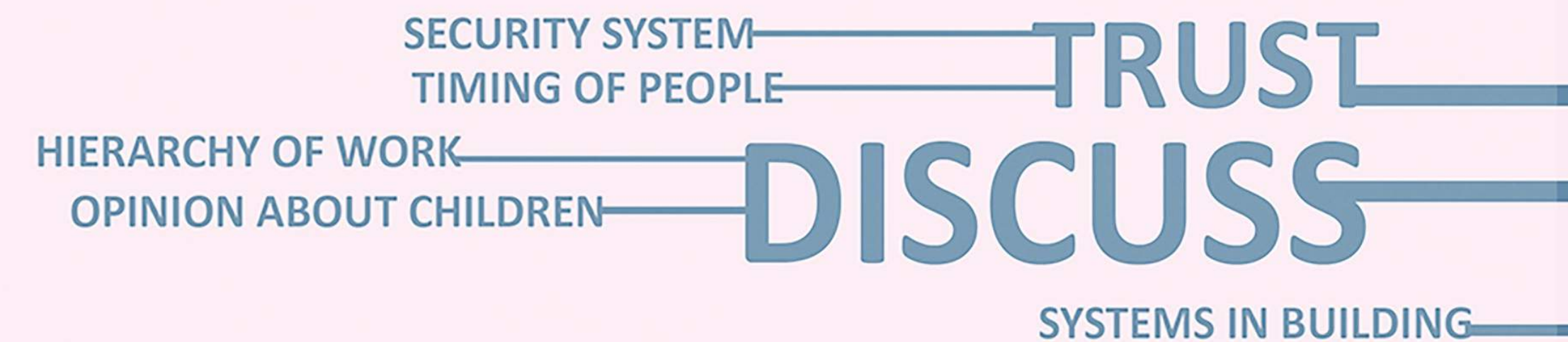
Finally, after days of interactions with agents in the building, I met with Tony. As soon as I introduced myself as Nicholas Doghlass, an architect from AUB, he told me that the "chabeb" talked good about me. I entered his office and directly started talking about the importance of this modernist building for my project and for architecture in Beirut. Based on Fouad's input I did not go with the proposal of maintenance because he already had people in these areas. What I did instead is that I proposed to draw the building in 3D in softwares that he could showcase in his office and to other people in different views. In the whole interaction I used "technical" words such as "Modernist" , "spacial qualities" and "axonometric". What is interesting is that he got really excited and proposed to send me all drawings of the building to my personal email being "nicocooll@hotmail. com". He also assigned Randa to give me access to the locked down Hotel whenever I wanted and needed to. However, I didn't stop here. I remembered the story about the ownerships in the building, and told him that the 1st floor didnt belong to him. That is when I touched a weak point. He raised his voice and claimed that he owned everything there. That is when I asked my final demand: Using one of the abandoned offices for me since I would be working "for him". He accepted, and I ended up "owning" a space in the building with a direct view to Jeanne D'arc Street.

STATUS — AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT
ARCHITECT

SYNTAX — ENGLISH WORDS
TECHNICAL TERMS

PROPOSAL — DRAW BUILDING IN 3D
REDESIGN POSSIBILITIES
DEMANDS

PROVOCATION ABOUT POWER

ALLOW TO STAY
ALLOW TO TAKE PICTURES
ALLOW TO ENTER ANY LOCKED AREA — ACCESS

QUESTIONS   PHONE NUMBER — TRUST

SPACE TO OCCUPY — ACCEPTANCE
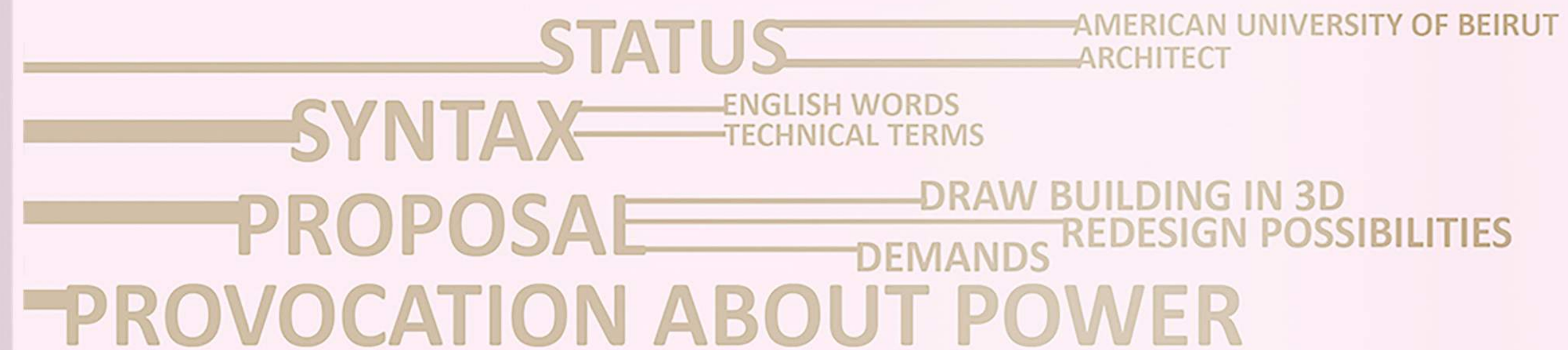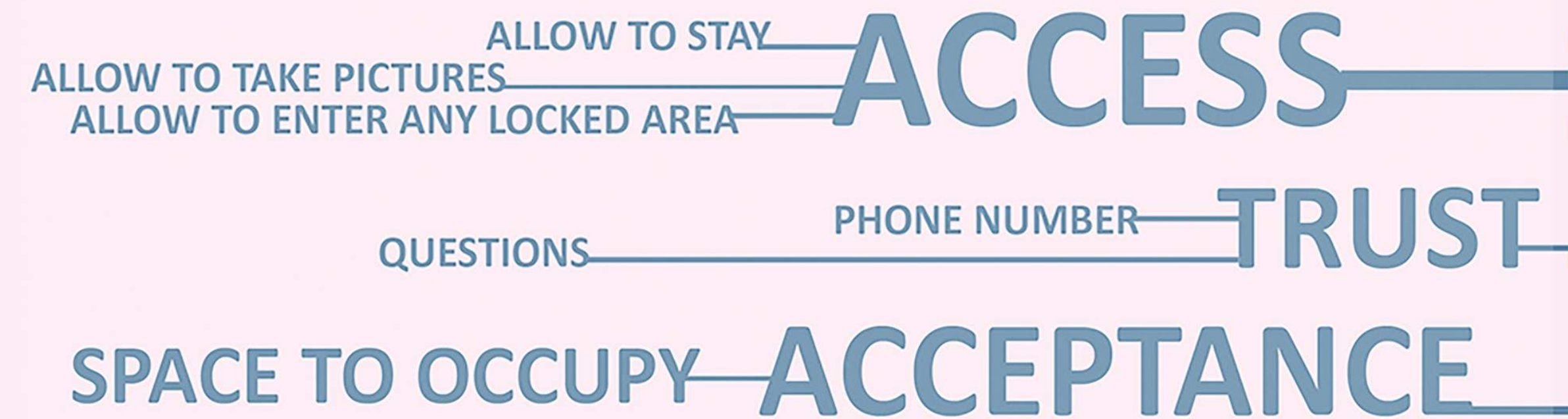
Observation of the lesson

The children were not the only ones to transform during this time. Indeed, these diagrams show different phenomena I was able to witness and analyse during and after the 17th of October transformation. The first one would be the loss of identity of the people during the times of revolution.   Because of the loss of social status, street children were able to go to the street and blend in with the people.   What is interesting is that this "public space" , was the least prominent for something in this nature to happen. As I said earlier, this exclusivity was temporary destroyed during this period of reclamation. I was also able to witness street children playing in between people. In this unique scenario, the work and play area of the children were mixed and merged together. The whole conception of escape was not relevant anymore because of the flattening of authority.   A specific social conditioning of people literally changed the whole meaning of this place. "Instead of thinking of place as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations."
The lessons learnt here is the idea of understanding space based on situations that are dependant on three variables: Actors, space, and time. Through theses situations, one can visualize and understand the same physical space in complex and multi-manner.

1

2

Fouad's ownership and activation of space in Strand

He often visits Tony on the 4th floor because of their strong bond

Fouad has been in the job for the last 13 years, he doesn't let any kid enter the building, he is focused on all 6 cameras placed in the office

Around 5pm he gets a sandwich from Sam's, the restaurant on the ground floor
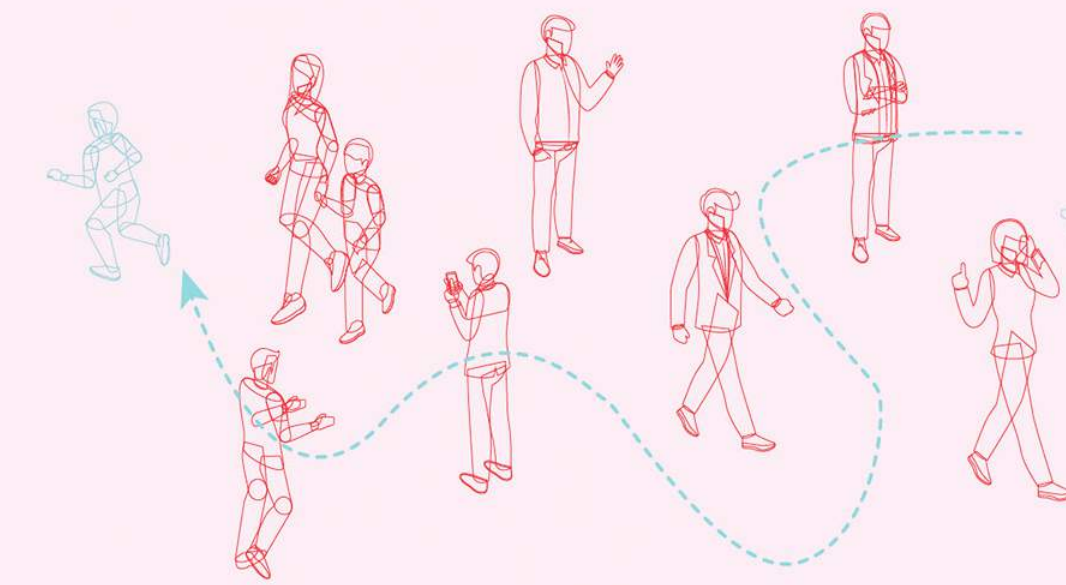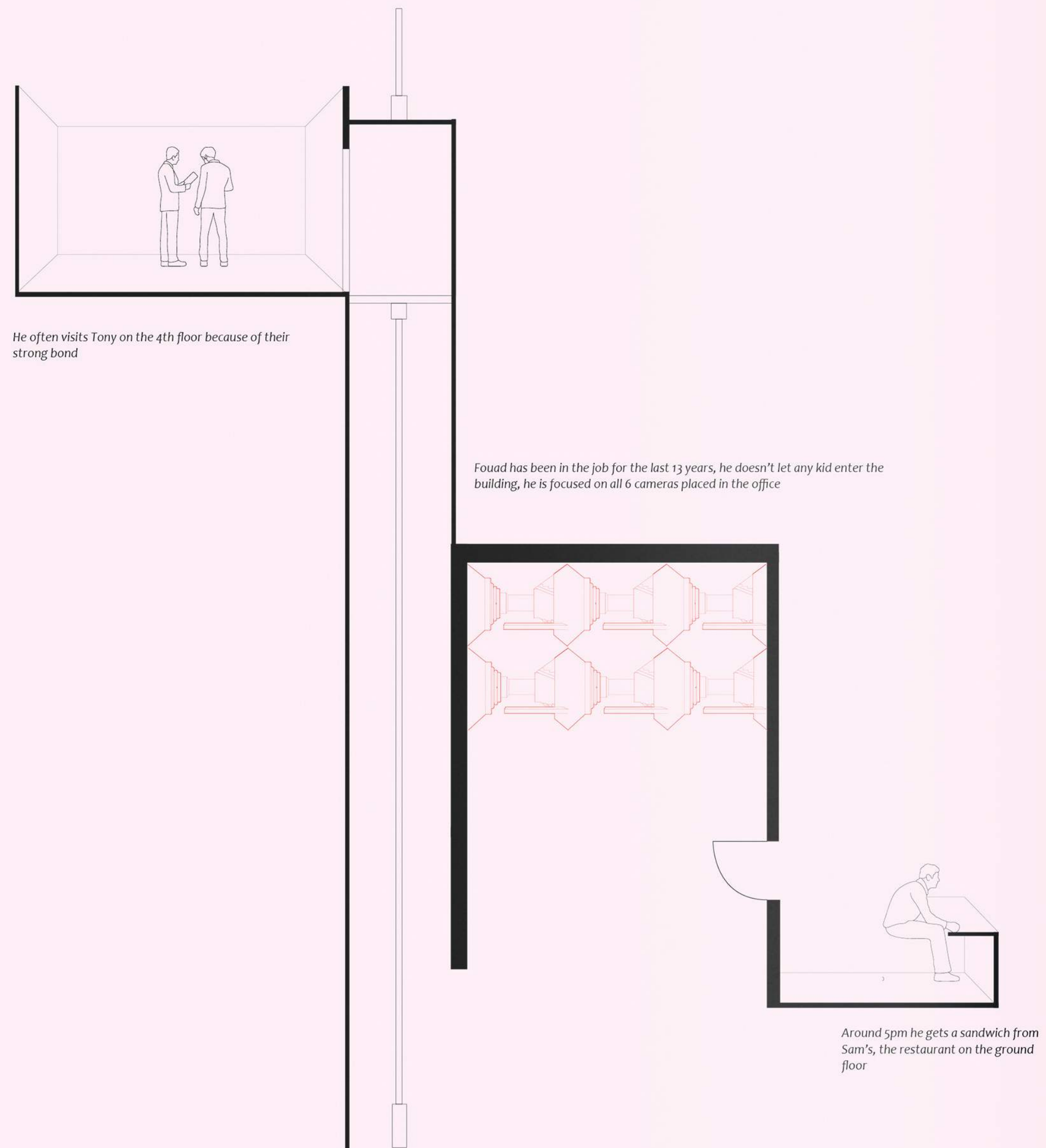
In this drawing, I am exploring how the space is formed based on Fouad's use and focus of the space. Indeed, during his shift, Fouad's focus is entirely directed to the 6 cameras placed in his office. He takes his job very seriously and is at different places at the same time. His only escapes from this multi-dimensional exposure are when he goes out to eat and when he interacts with Tony. Indeed, he is only responsible of the ground floor and takes the elevator directly to the fourth floor where Tony is based. The rest of the building is somehow in-existent to him.

3

4

Abed's ownership and activation of space in Strand

The only vertical connection in the building for him is when he uses the toilets which is once or twice per shift

He only uses the stairs because he doesn't trust the elevators

Abed focuses on one main view during his shift, the main passage, elevators and stairs access

At 4pm everyday, he leaves his shift to pray in the back room
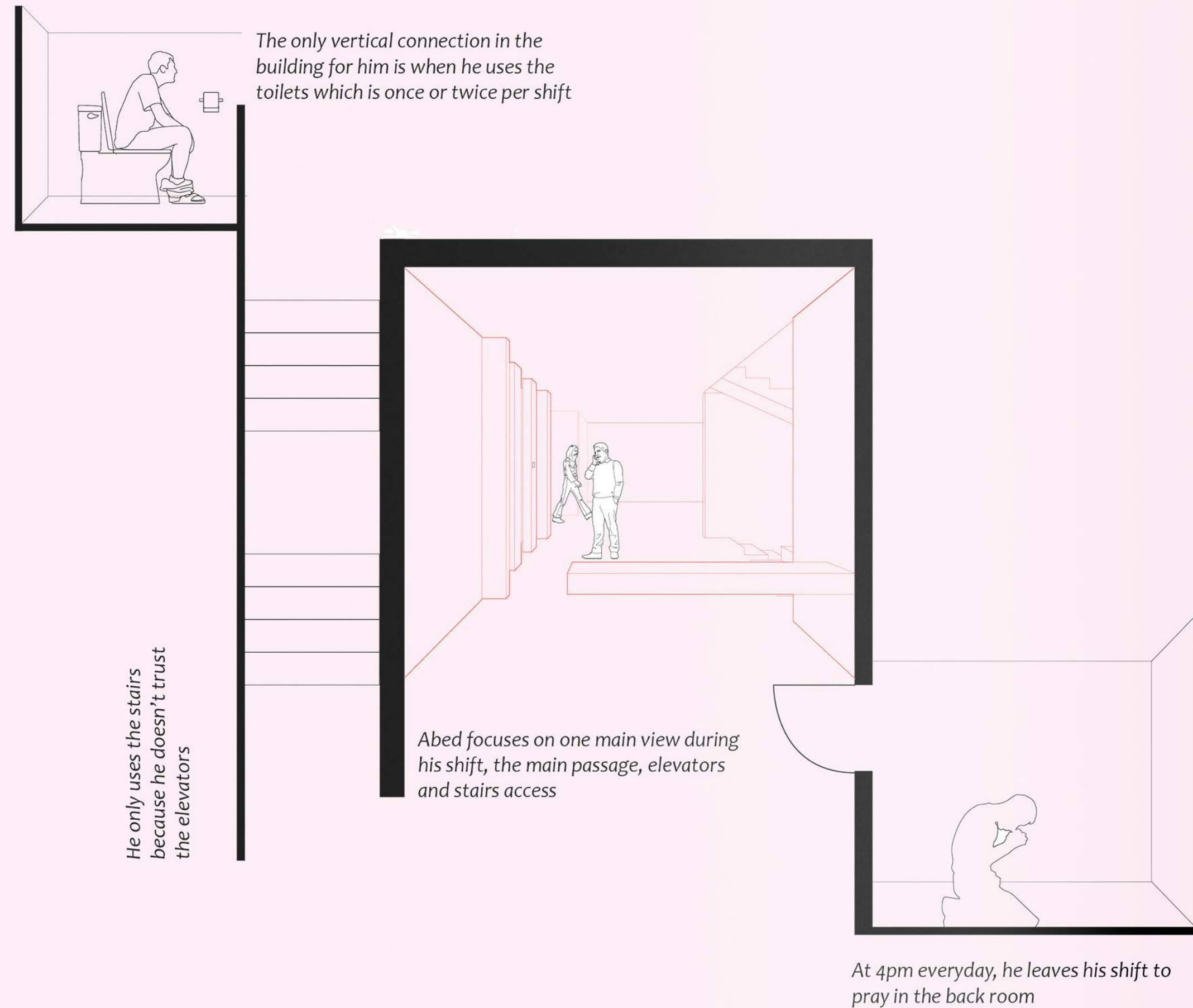
By simply changing the main agent in these spaces, the whole understanding and meaning of these spaces change. Indeed, here I am showing how these spaces are understood and explored under Abed, the second natour. The ground floor's focus is transformed because he doesn't believe in the security systems of the cameras and only focuses on one main view which is constituted of the elevators and the stairs. Moreover, his escapes are first to pray in a space that is more private to him in the back of the office. The only time he uses the building vertically would be to go to the bathrooms and he does not use the elevators because he believes they don't really perform.
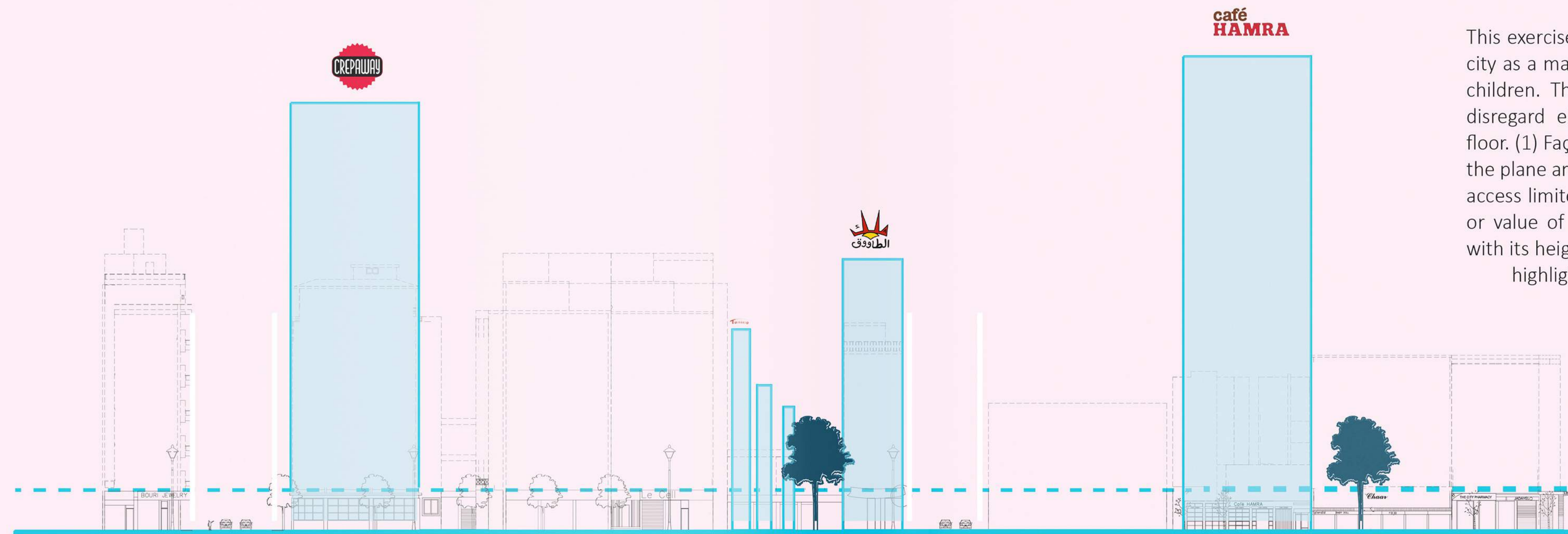
5

6

Observation of the lesson

café **HAMRA**

This exercise is based on the transformation of the city as a map, to the city as perceived by the street children. The first concept is that street children disregard elements that are beyond the ground floor. (1) Façades, details, balconies that are beyond the plane are erased. This may be due to the idea of access limited to the ground floor. The importance or value of a building does not have any relation with its height or program on the higher floors. The highlighted elements are called hotspots.

CREPAWAY

1

2

Ownerships and control in Strand
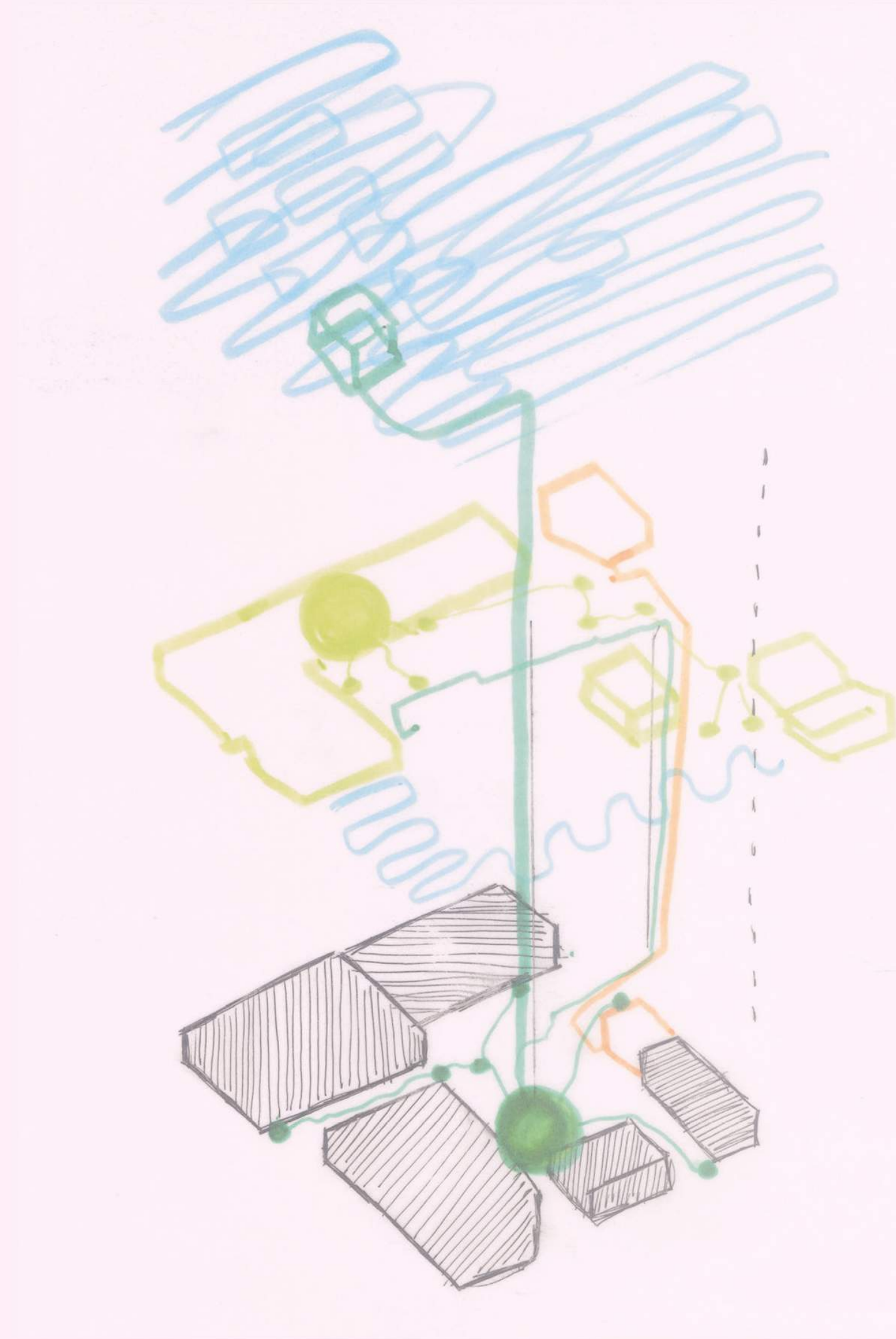
In this diagram, I am highlighting the different ownerships present in the building. On the ground floor, the shops and restaurants can be seen as individual plug ins that work on their own. However, in the leftover space, the main ownership is based on the natour who is responsible of the different entry-points of the building against robberies or street children. On the first floor, the spaces shifts completely and the ownerships is to somebody else. Indeed, here a firm is responsible of all the security cameras to protect itself from robberies that happened before. Moreover, one can also clearly see abandoned offices that are left open. This freespace is also seen in the 4th 5th 6th 7th and 8th floors where there is a locked abandoned hotel. Finally there are some vertical links between agents despite those interruptions, such as Tony's office and Fouad's from the 4th to the ground floor. There is also the link between the "serraf" and OMT on the 1st floor. Looking at the building through these different ownerships and power systems allow to understand the space and prepare for possible opportunities.

3

4

Levels of control
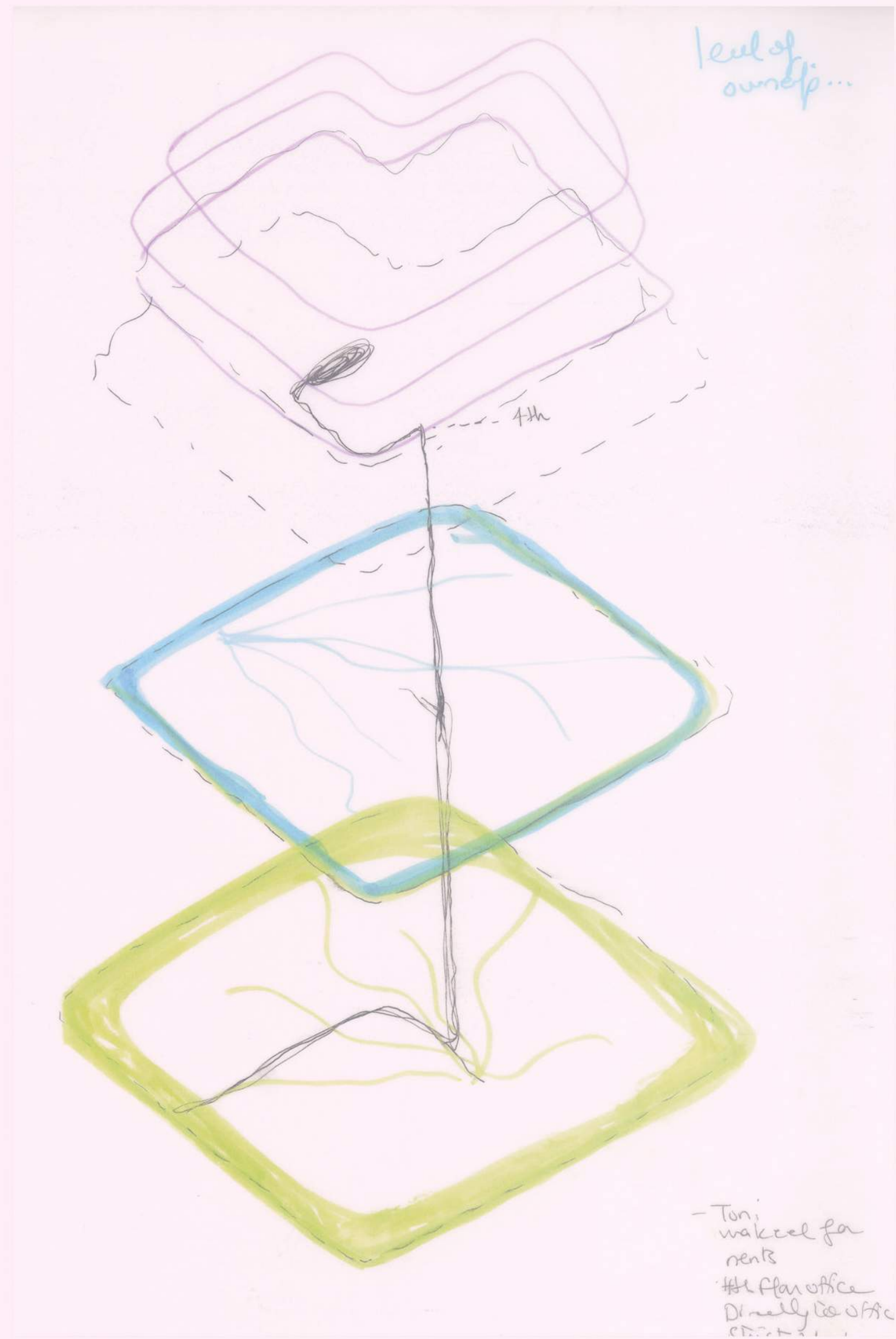
This diagram highlights the level of ownerships and "lock" each floor presents. Indeed the ground and first floor because of the security systems can be seen as the most intricate elevels to infiltrate.

The beginning: application on Strand

This is one of my first interactions with the building, on the ground floor with the waitress of Strand. This is where I tried to sneak in street children to have a meal with me. By applying some of the lessons learnt on myself as an individual and as an architect, I was able to find my way through the building, claim a space, and inhabit it.
This Narrative showcases the exchanges I've had with the agents of the building, the applications of the lessons learnt, and also a spatial survey and understanding of the building.
 I also use this visual narrative format as a design tool as I moved forward with the project.

Here you can see me interacting with the main janitor of the building and getting different types of information regarding the main owner of the building Tony.
I presented myself as an architect who wanted to work on the Strand building to renovate and innovate it and was told that Tony was not interested in maintenance. Fouad was mainly complaining about the fact that the whole building is partially abandoned except some offices such as an agriculture firm on the 1st floor. I later used those information to get closer more quickly with other agents of the building.

Fatima: waitress ground floor

The first encounters have to be made at the edge of the building..

I have been having the same lunch everyday for the past week

10:00 AM

Kids come eat with me!

I'll go check, its normally Marc the cashier.

Take this, he wrote the song for you.

Kika
6ix9ine ft
Tory Lanez

BOOK 1- PAGE 3

Hey Nicholas, as usual Taouk with Hommos instead of toum?

Hahahaha yes.
Do you know who is playing the music?

BOOK 2- PAGE 3

11:30 AM

Take this, he wrote the song for you.

Fouad: janitor #1 ground floor

The second encounter, has been Fouad the natour

1:00 PM

2 hours later...

So, this is everything you need to know about the building...

What's this in your hand? What about the security system? Do you guard everything here? The economical crisis...

BOOK 2- PAGE 5

Work from 3 to 7pm

Hello! My name is N'oula, I've been sent from AUB to work on the maintenance of this building. I am fascinated by it.

I am responsible of all of this floor regarding security cameras.

Mesheh, el wakeel 3ala tabe2 el rabe3.

Eh ba3den bchoufo. Bess jeye e23od ma3ak abel.

My main boss, Tony is responsible about the whole building, however he won't accept your proposal. He is very da2i2. He lives on the 4th.

Work from 3 to 7pm, Abed is the second natour

BOOK 3- PAGE 3

Abed: Janitor #2 Ground floor

Here I am talking and playing with the second janitor, applying the lesson of crossing boundaries, and knowing more about the ownerships in the building. I was told by Abed, that Tony is the main wakeel of the building, and that there were another agriculture firm on the 1st floor where a guy named Ahmad worked. I was told several stories that I could use later on with Ahmad such as the fact that there has been some robberies lately in the building.

Ahmad: employee 1st floor

Here, you can see my interactions with Ahmad, and how I started to get even more information on the building's ownership and system. He told me that the only active firm on this floor other than his, was OMT.

Ahla be Abed! Kifak? Ana mhendis bel jem3a el Amerk-eniyeh.

5:00 PM

STRAND max

2 hours later...

I am winning today ya n'oula! Shu sayir ma3ak?

Ahla be Abed! Kifak? Ana mhendis bel jem3a el Amerkeni-yeh.
7kit ma3 Fouad mberih. Khabarneh 3an el ossas hon. Yalla jeye e23od ma3ak

On the first floor, we are not responsible. There is a brand who owns the floor in terms of security. There are some tensions with Tony. Ahmad is one of the workers there, he is responsible of the whole floor. He works for Salim.

BOOK 2- PAGE 7

AHMAD SALIM

TONI

ABED FOUAD

BOOK 3- PAGE 5

On the ground floor, me and Abed work directly for Tony who is the "wakeel" of the building.
On the 1st floor, there is a brand that is "in charge" of the security there. Ahmad is the guy with a saksouke he is the one who closes the shop every day.

Ahla habibeh! Ta3 23od ma 3ande shi...

BOOK 1 - PAGE 5

So, these are the security cameras in this space. We as a brand are re-

A couple of minutes later

5:00 PM

E

So, these are the security cameras in this space. We as a brand are responsible of the floor.

BOOK 4- PAGE 3

BOOK 2- PAGE 9

On the first floor, we are not responsible. There is a brand who owns the floor in terms of security. There are some tensions with Tony. Ahmad is one of the workers there, he is responsible of the whole floor. He works for Salim.

Hello! Ahmad? Do you remember me? I am Nicholas the architect from AUB who came once to work on the building.

Finally, I reached Tony's office and it turned out that he had already heard about me because of the other janitors. He directly welcomed me, and that is where I presented myself as an architect who wanted to work on the Strand building because of its amazing heritage, being a modernist building. I told him I would create sketches and a 3D model of the building along some ideas of design. He was really interested.

That is when we got a deal. However, to do this, I asked from him if I could have a space in the building because a lot of the spaces were abandoned. I also mentioned the tensions between him and the ones on the first floor by asking him if he owned the whole building. That is when I got my own space in the building.
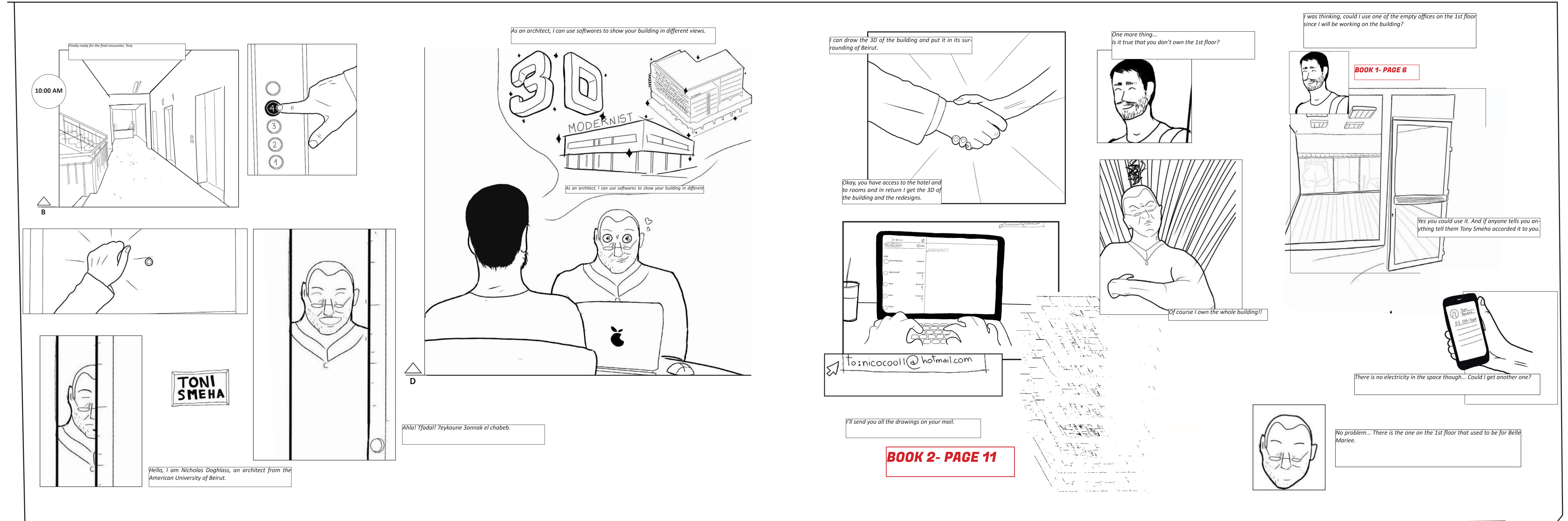
Access: the space

This was my first milestone in this project. In this time of economic scarcity, I generated a space for a limited amount of time, in one of the most iconic buildings at Hamra and made it my own. It made me think a lot about access, and tactics of access specifically. My desire to activate this building lead to this partial claim for space, where would I go from here?

Exposing my work to Hamra street...

An interesting exposure from three different roads

Here, you can see my office space from the street

BOOK 1 - PAGE 7

2.4 M

4 M

AHMAD

FOUAD

ABED

BELLE MARIEE

DOGHLASS ARCHITECTS
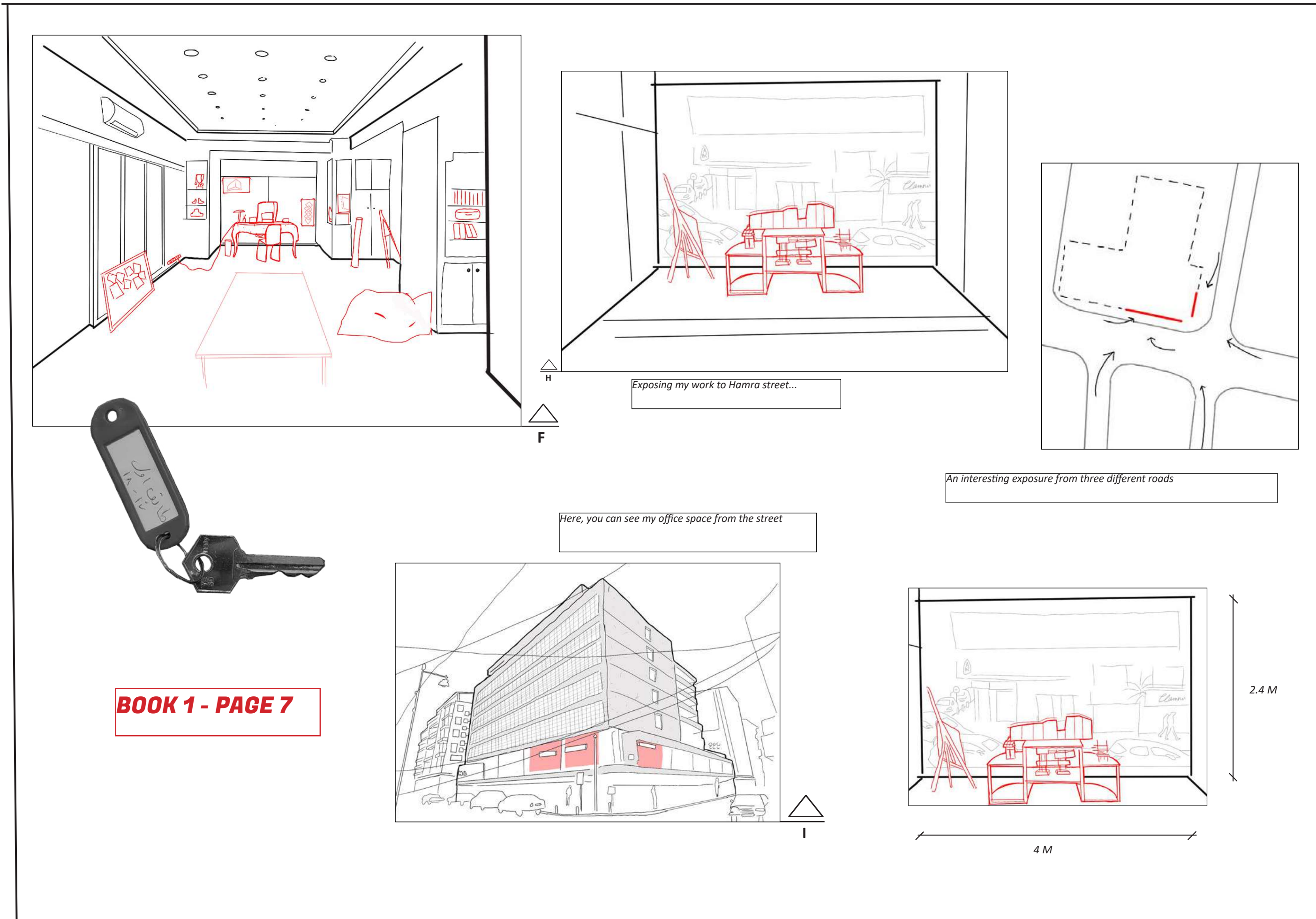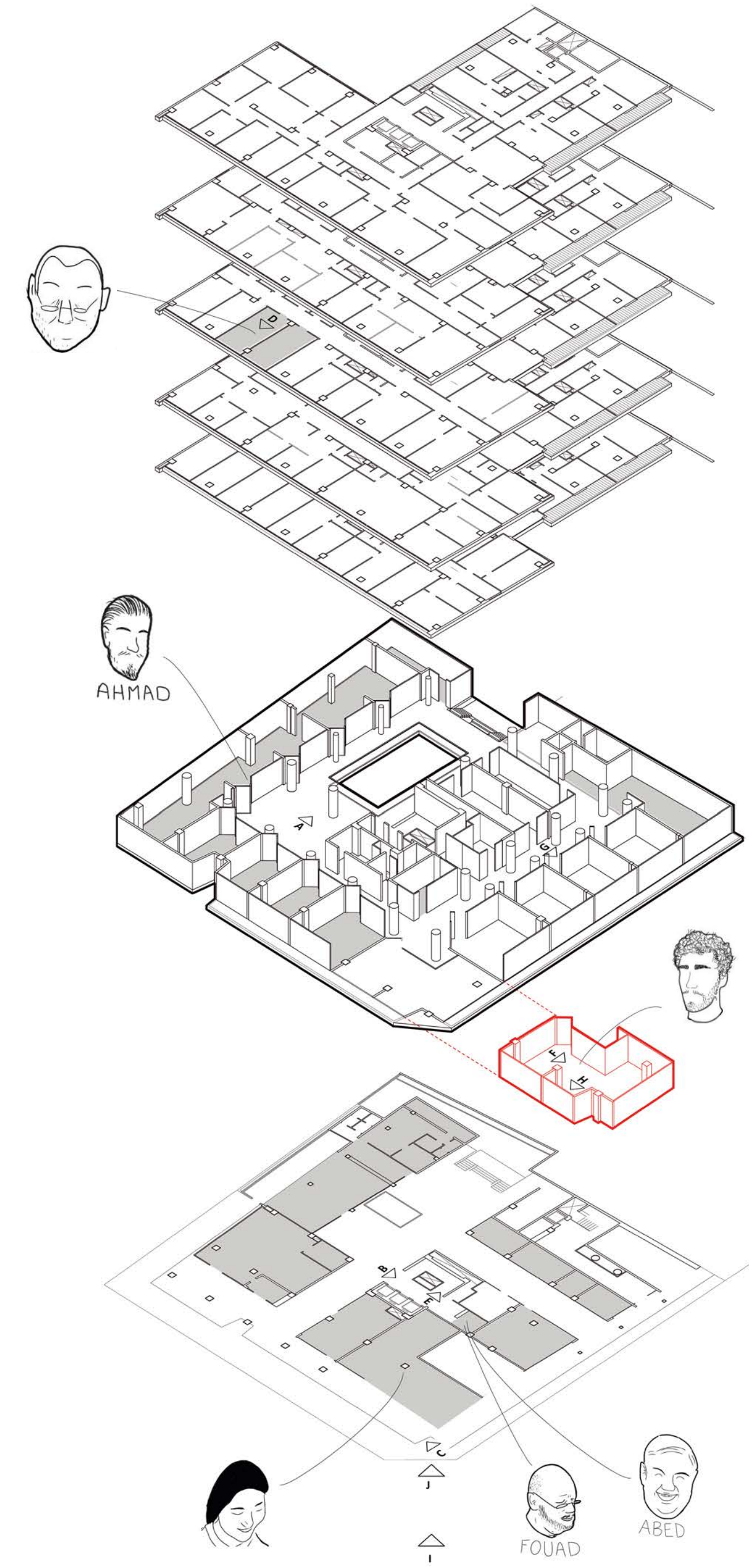
The first activation of space was to make it my working space. *This meant that I became the official neighbour to a few of the building's tenants and staff. How can a young architecture office be of service or be part of this existing micro-community? For starters, I decided to conduct a participative design approach, where I try to re-imagine the Strand based on the relationships with the users.*

115

116

Photograph of the whole space showing my desk facing Jeanne D'Arc Street

Photograph of my models exposed to Hamra Street on one of the vitrines

Access: the space

Another activation of the space was done when during a feedback session with guests jurors. *In this case, we invited guests for a jury of our projects, and I hosted other students of the class to present their project in the space.*

The generation of access was spread and allowed new ways of activating the space. The space allowed us to see all projects simultaneously, get feedback from jurors and place the projects as an exhibition. *In this activation, I was the link between the different agents in the space.*

Salem, a fellow student presenting his project to the jurors

Tala Salman presenting her project to the jurors

Access: the objects

Whenever I am presenting the project, I bring a set of objects that evolve and represent what is happening at my space at Strand. Among the objects, one can see everything I pin up at the space, what I present to the owner of the building, the exchanges I've had with the agents, the rewards, and the drawings. I do this because the project, the space and the agents are real factors in the project and evolve throughout the semester.

The two types of objects present here are the site-work and the posters. The posters were in most of the cases sketches that I already drew of Strand and its surroundings for the narrative presented before. However, I was able to re-use those sketches ant to re-purpose them for Tony, showing how I was working on the building itself and not necessarily its people.

Site work

Posters

Access: the objects

The two types of objects present here are the exchange objects and the reward. The exchange objects are elements that I have received by interacting with the agents of the building. Most of them were already seen in context in the narrative. Finally, the reward, which is basically the key of the space represent my main channel through which I was able to interact with the agents further more in the project, by being a neighbour for them.

Exchange
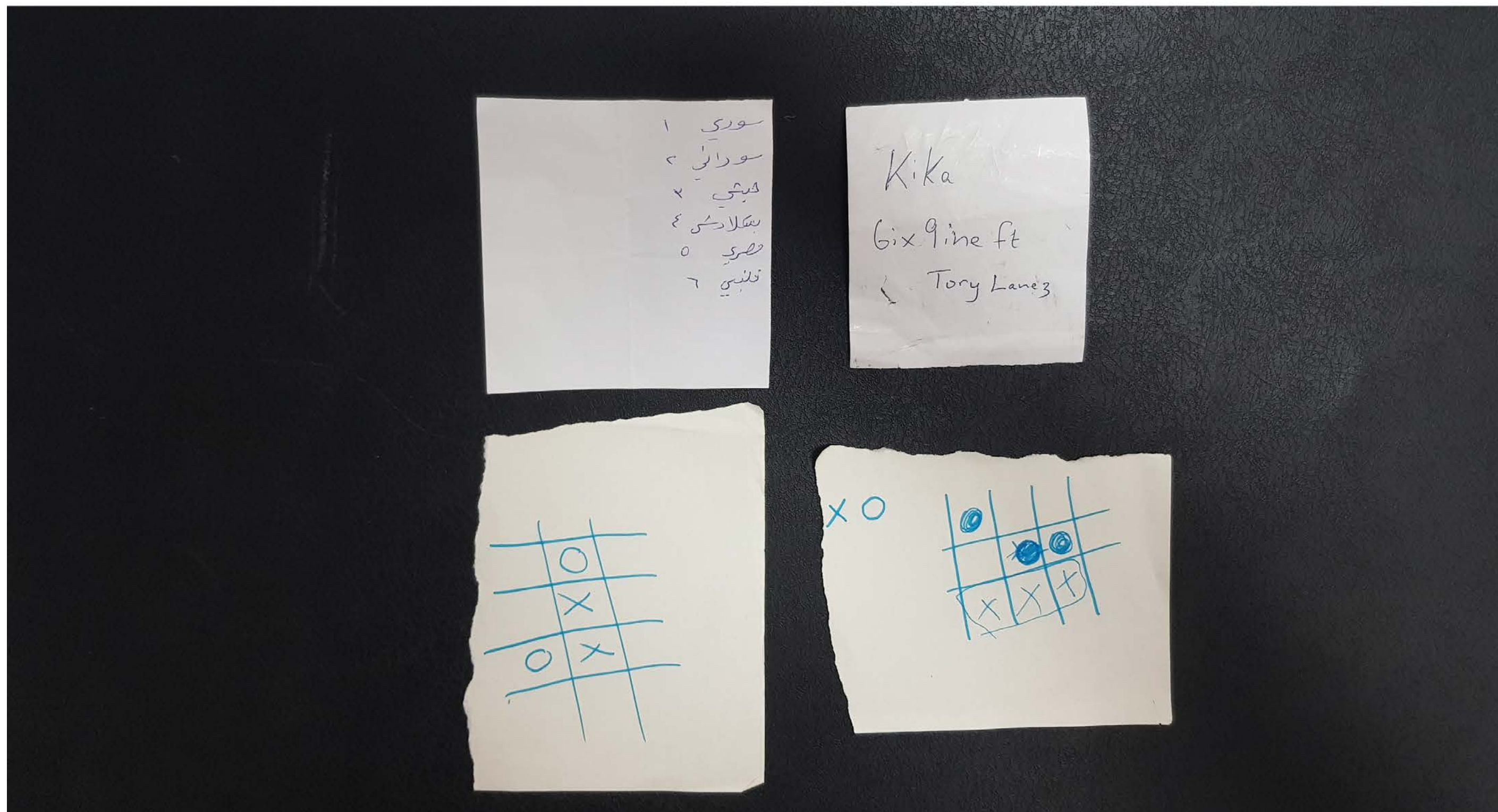
Reward
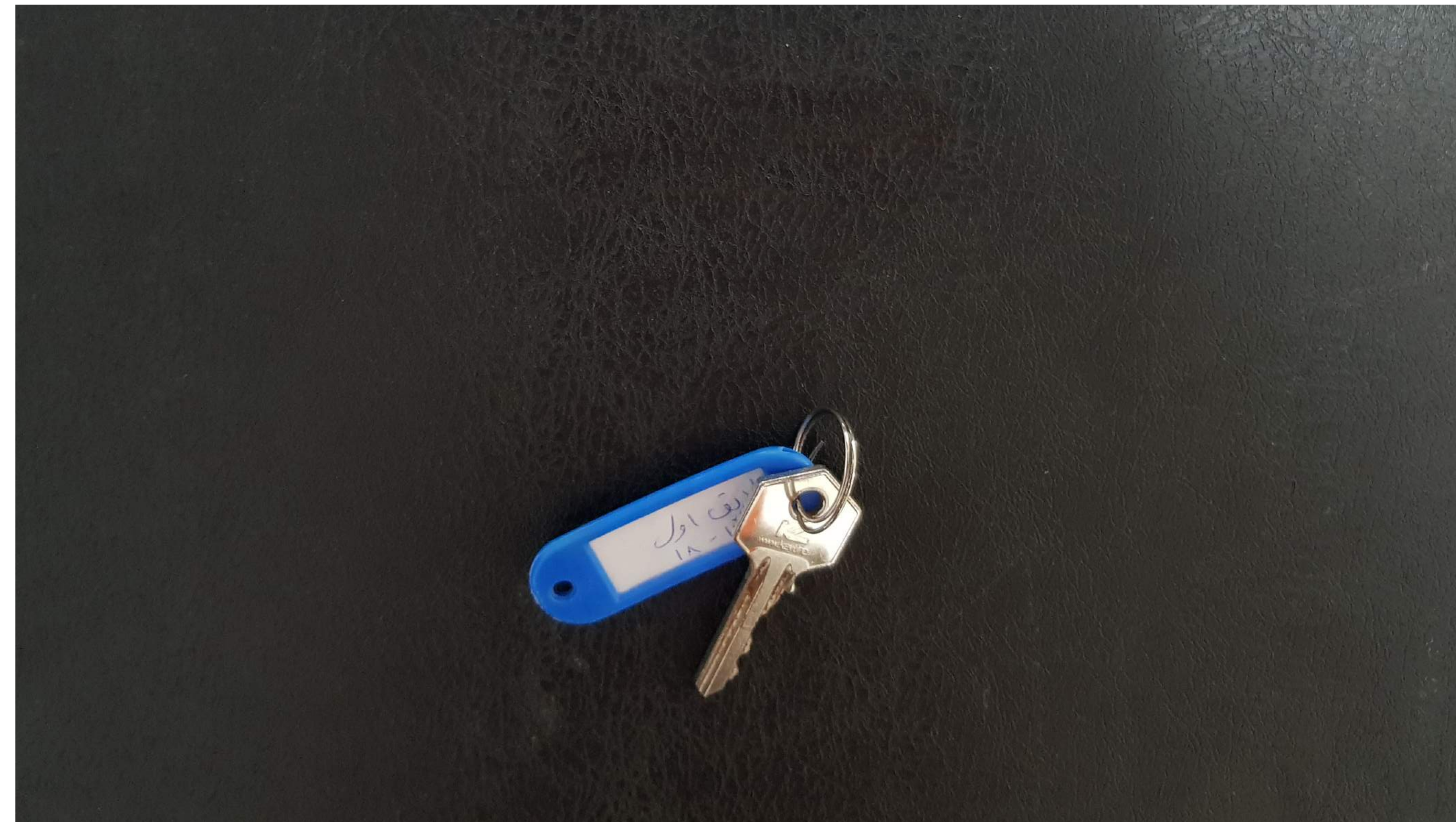
Colouring book

Continuing with the idea of accesses, here is a colouring book I created for the Street Children in Hamra.
The sketches are constituted of the existing elements of Strand and Hamra, mixed with elements the children could relate to, such as their favourite super heros. *The conventional sketching and understanding of the built environment is used to create this bridge and this access to the children.*
All of this is done through an activity that can be performed by children, which is in this case colouring.
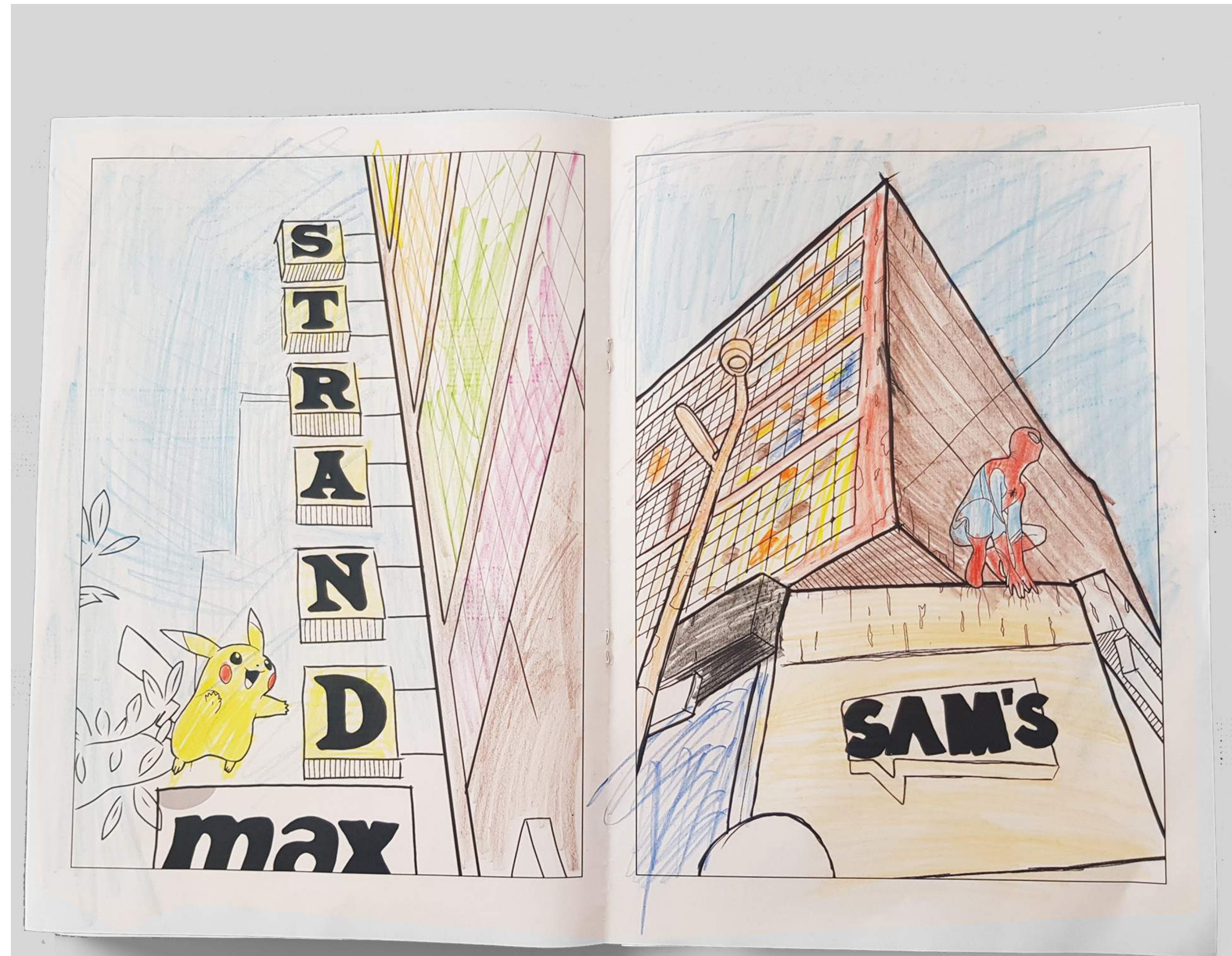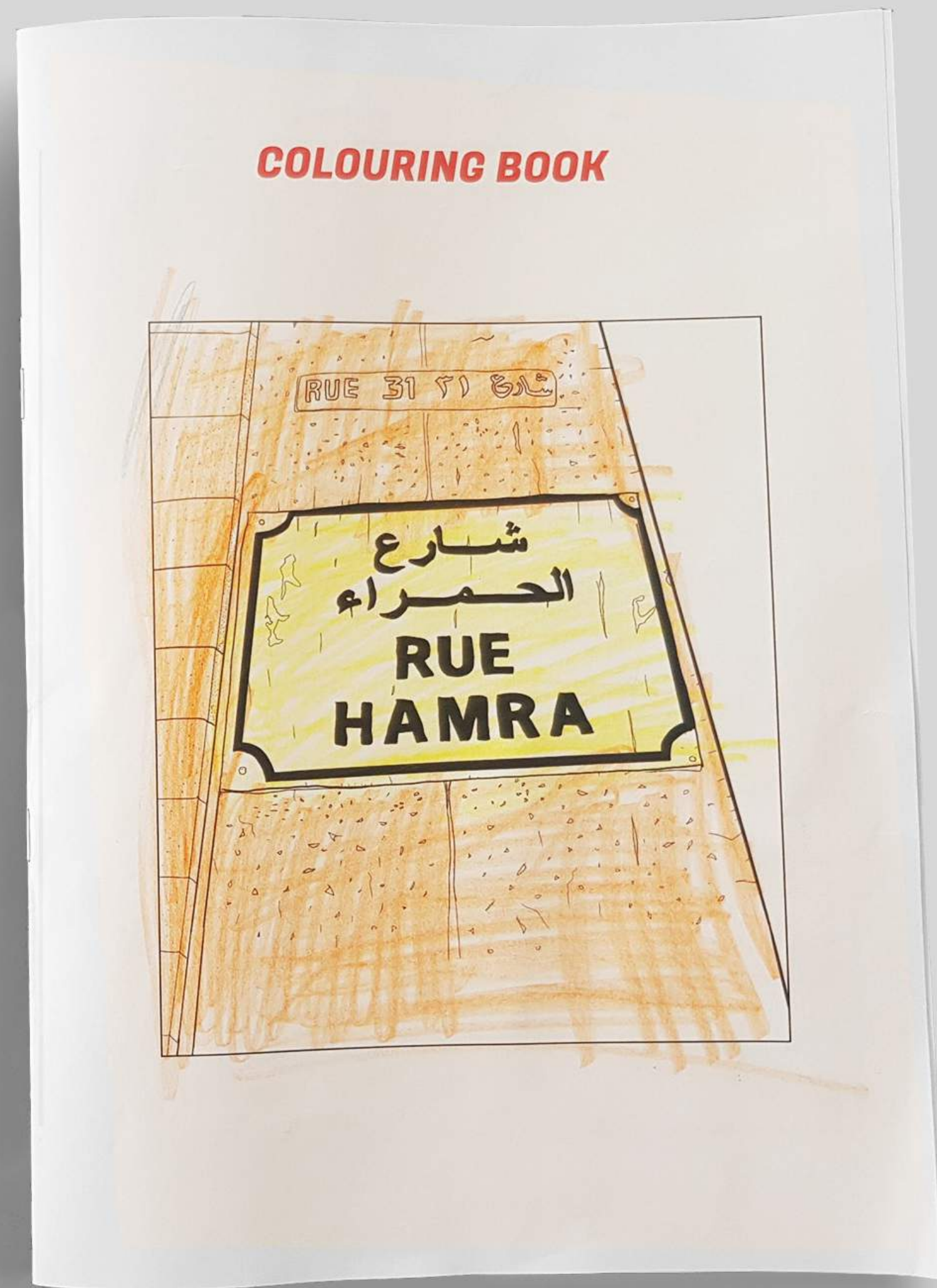
A main idea is that my works are recycled and can be understood based on the format in which they exist: The same sketch can be presented to Tony the owner, at AUB in the spacial narrative and also to the street children based on their language. *The idea of layering of languages and generating accesses on different levels is a continuous concept in my project.*

Strand as a character

In this mix of architectural drawings/comics I am showcasing the Strand as a character in my encounters. By translating its design characteristics and urban strategies, I am showing her as a living agent that has been hosting people since the 60s.

Understanding the building based on its history, structure, program, materials also allowed me to narrow down and guide my decisions in the actual design.

History

DAR AL HANDASAH NAZIH TALEB & PARTNERS
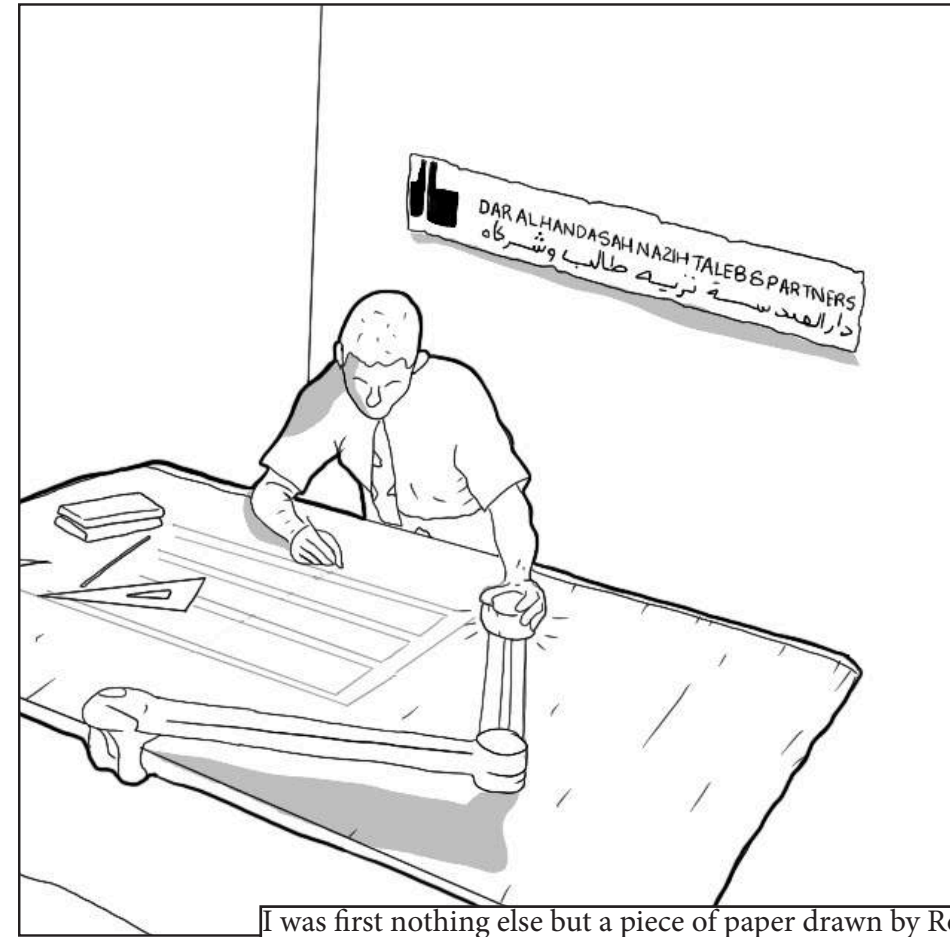
I was first nothing else but a piece of paper drawn by Robert Wakim in 60s. I was told that I would become the new thing.

RUE 31 31

شارع الحمراء
RUE HAMRA
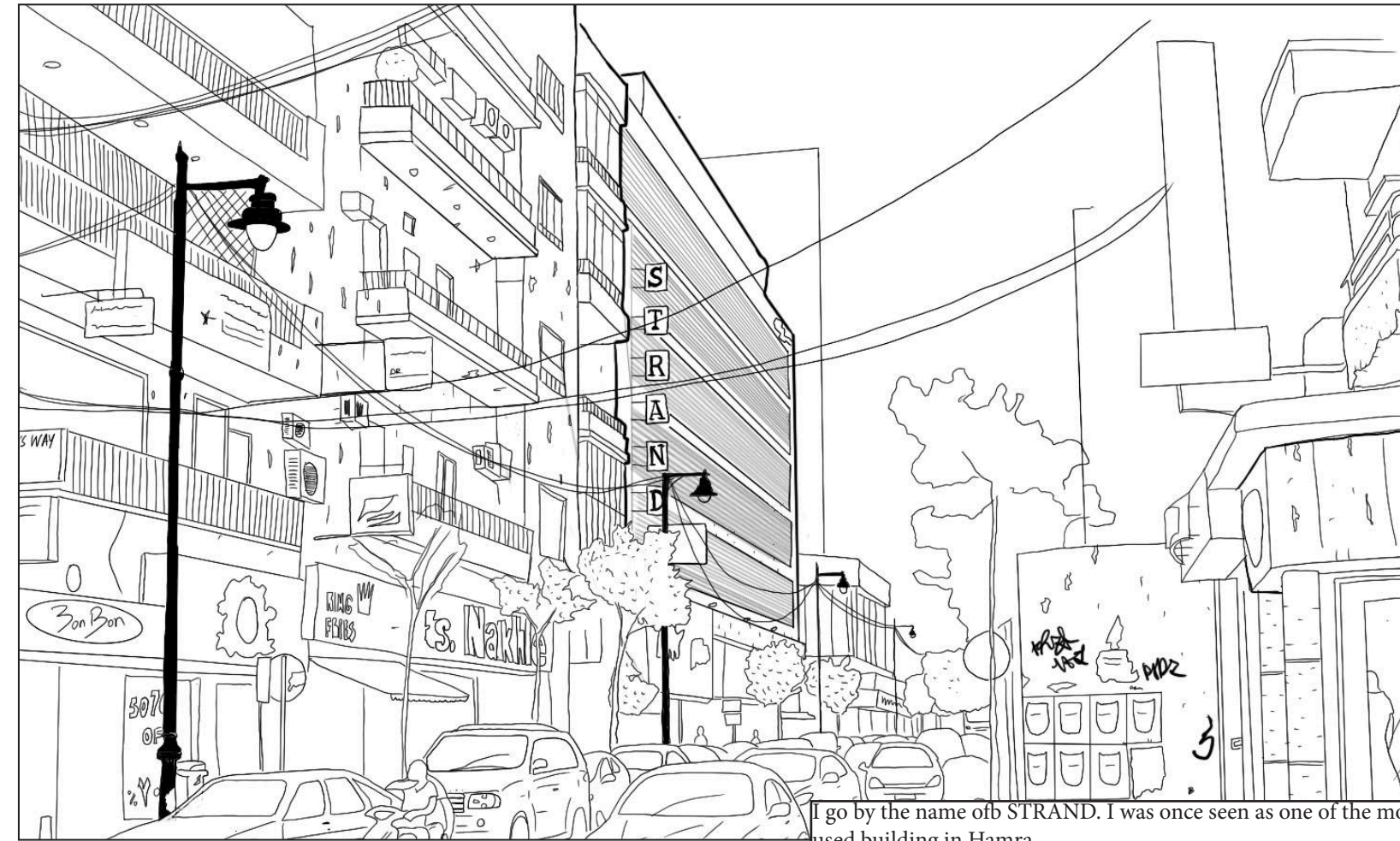
S T R A N D

I go by the name ofb STRAND. I was once seen as one of the most used building in Hamra.

In **Strategies-exposure**, I am tackling the main characteristic of Strand of being located at the intersection of Jeanne D'arc and Hamra Street and inviting people in. Moreover the logic of the 1st floor is to offer an exposure to the street. It is now partially abandoned, the only present spaces are an agriculture firm, a shoemaker and a workspace for sewing.

In **Strategies-Structure** I am tackling down the ground floor and how the street enters the building. Another component would be the column structure which allows it to have a partially raised ground floor. What is interesting is that until now, the ground floor is completely used, which means that I won't be designing it. It is now constituted of a cafe, two supermarkets and a travelling agency.

Strategies-exposure

Plan strategie

Axo 1st floor showing the exposure of the shops on Hamra Street

My floor was raised. as an extension of the ground.

RESIDE STRAND

Snack Bar

Axo 1st floor showing the exposure of the shops on Hamra Street

My goal here was to allow people to enter me. I am located on the intersection of Jeanne D'arc Street and Hamra Street.

Strategies-Structure

Axo ground floor showing the main street strategie - access + columns

My stairs size would allow a lot of people to come in...

I was about hosting people from different background for cultural purposes. About art, cinemas.

5.4 m   4.5 m   0.6 m   0.6 m   3 m

Strategies-Skin

Axo South-East
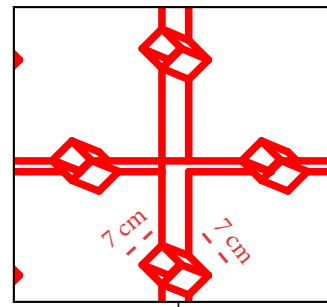
The metallic skin is composed of motives with a depth of 30cm allowing to protect from the sun.

29 m

7 cm

7 cm

4.5 m

4.5 m

20 m

24 m
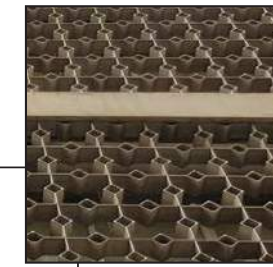
My metallic skin would allow me to protect my inhabitants on my side exposed to the soutern sun

Strategies-Courtyard

North-West axo showing the courtyard that is exposed to the neighborhood and to the 2 blocks.

16 m

21 m

11 m

20 m

Empty space not used exposed to the two adjacent blocks and to Northern Light.

West Elevation showing the courtyard exposed to cluster of buildings.

My internal pool was housing an important sculptor done by Zeven Hadichian. Was a center for art.

My courtyard or gap allows me to host people in relation to the sky and open up to it always.

History - Jeanne D'arc facade

2.1 m

1.5 m

My East facade on Jeanne D'arc Street is composed of empty repetitive balconies.

17 m

1.5 m

After the first floor, I have a shy relationship with Jeanne D'arc Street.

I always allowed people to exchange with the outside world.
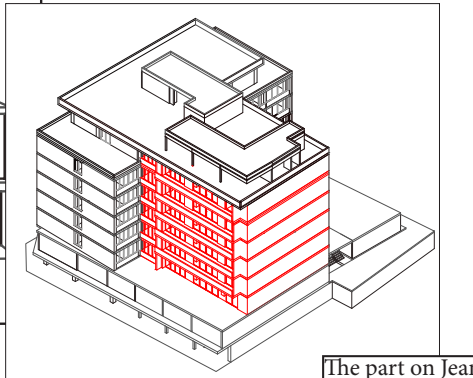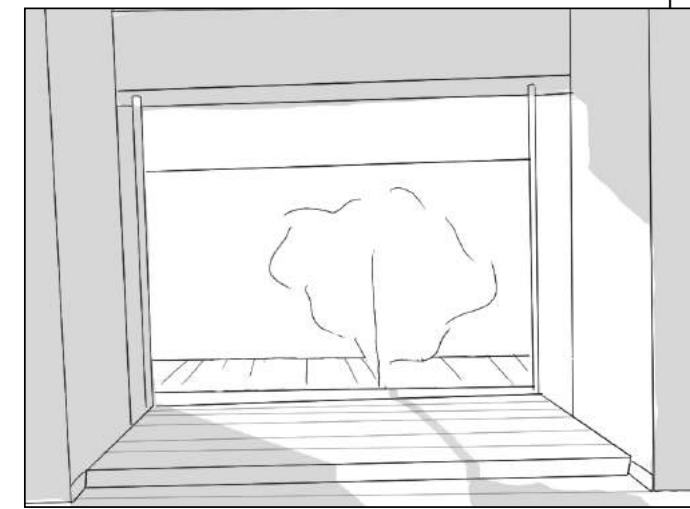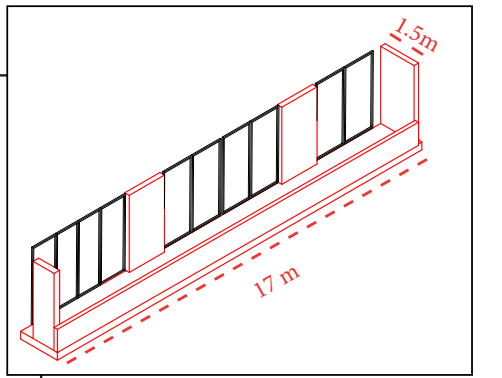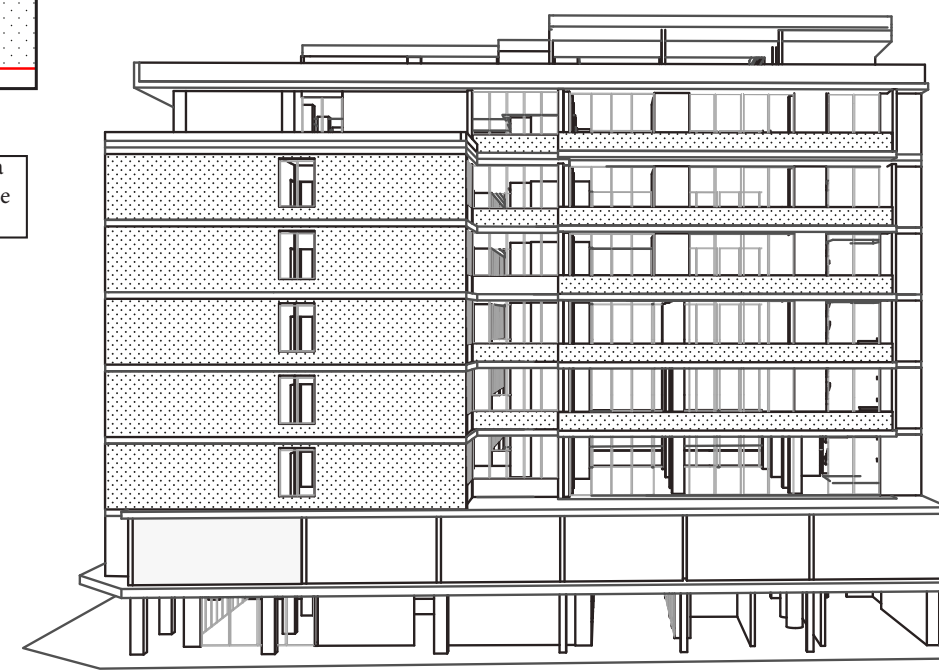
The part on Jeanne D'arc Street was an hotel that is now completely abandoned. My keys are with Tony.

History-Undergrounds

0.4 m

-1

-2

-3

-4

-5

DOCTOR ZHIVAGO

STRAND

My name always popping out onto to the streeet to allow people to notice me directly.

Now my 5 undergrounds are all composed of parkings that allow a lucrative income to Tony.

I was able to attract people because of my cinemas. Was the first cinema ion the middle east to showcase Doctor Zhivago.

Material and fonts extraction

5th-
FLOOR

4th-
FLOOR

3rd-
FLOOR

2nd-
FLOOR

1ST
FLOOR

GF

Outside
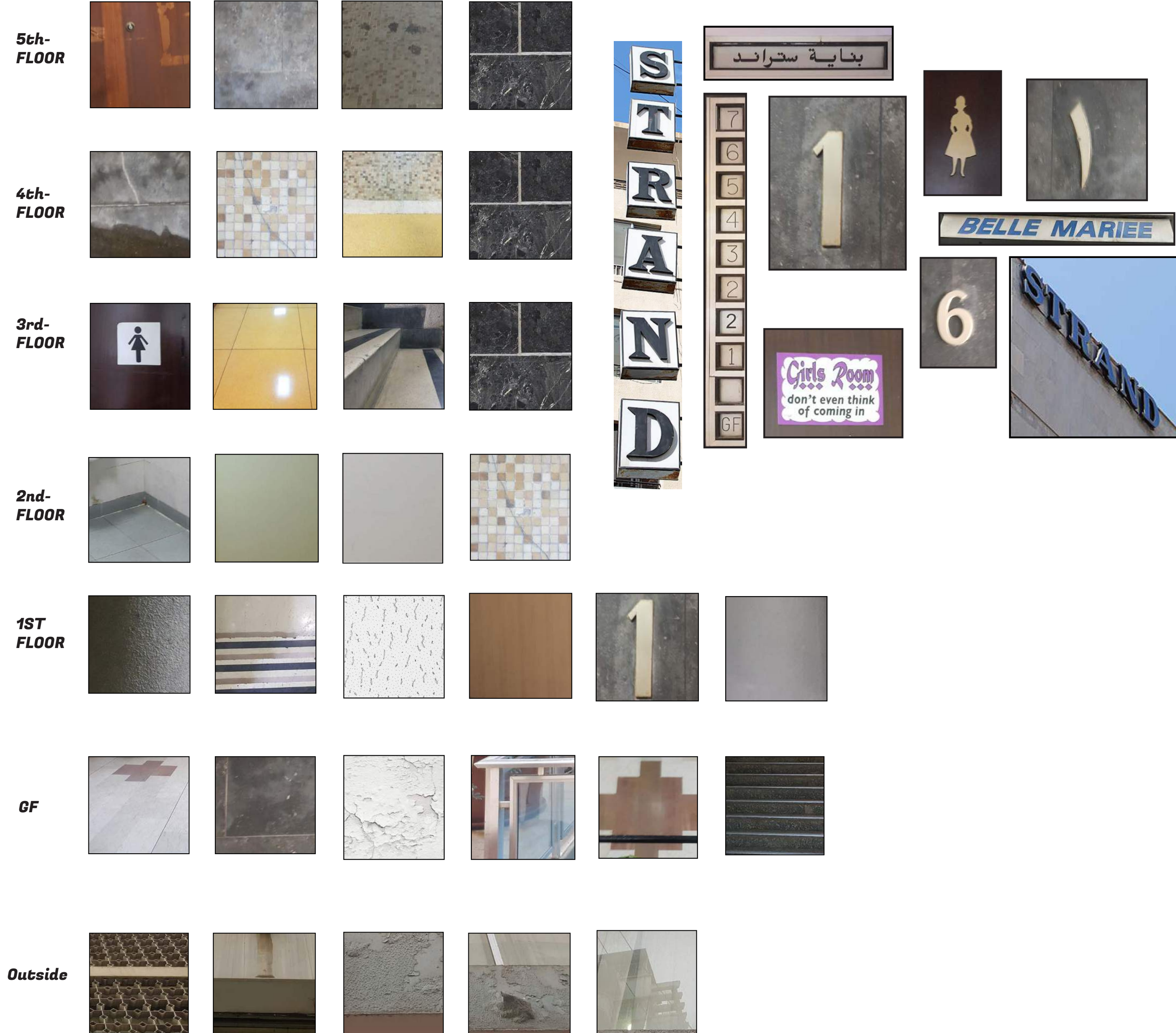
In this exercise, I also thought it would be important to extract the existing materials and fonts present in the building. *Because other than its design, history, program, structure, and its people, the building's materiality and textures over time are also part of Strand.*

The present materials in the interior include:

Concrete, plaster, ceramic tiles, dark marble, glass, wood, aluminium frames, steel handrails and various patterns of stone finishes.

In the exterior, the main components would be glass, concrete, stone, and of course the steel pattern of the South Facade.

The fonts that were located could be seen as different layering that came throughout the years. Some of the fonts such as "Strand" on the outside, written in english and arabic were here from the start. However, others, such as the fonts used of the shops, like "Belle Mariee" were added later on and were used during a specific time frame.

My site analysis not only reflects the building as a character, but very importantly, its occupant community.
The existing agents of the building all have different activations, understanding and desires in relation to the space at Strand. Through exercises and exchanges with them, as an inhabitant of the building I have been exploring the relational architecture process.
My aim was here to transform the building into a literal ecosystem of its characters. Their dream interventions intertwined in almost co-existing ecosystems woven with each other.

Here you can see two of the main characters I chose, and drew stories based on their desires. *The three characters are Randa, Ahmad and Tony.*

These drawings showcase the different input I've had with the characters that may lead to their potential desires with the spaces. It is translated into this spatial promenade and conversation where we are both depicted, and every information or design clue is represented. These would later on be translated into actual design questions and modifications that will be applied on the building. Each section is dissected based on the type of information that is acquired.
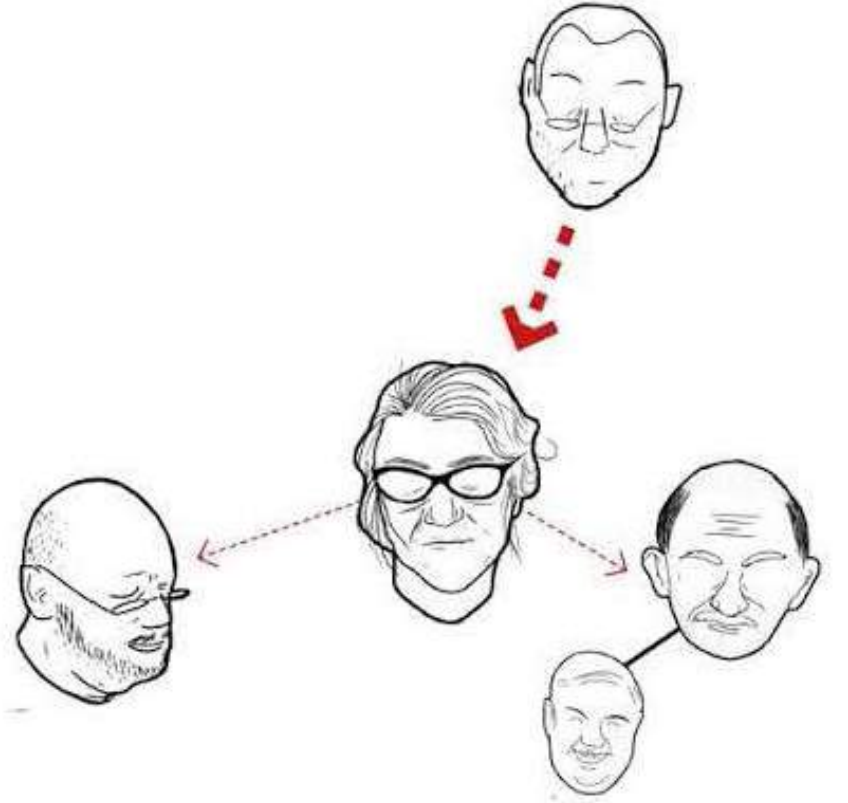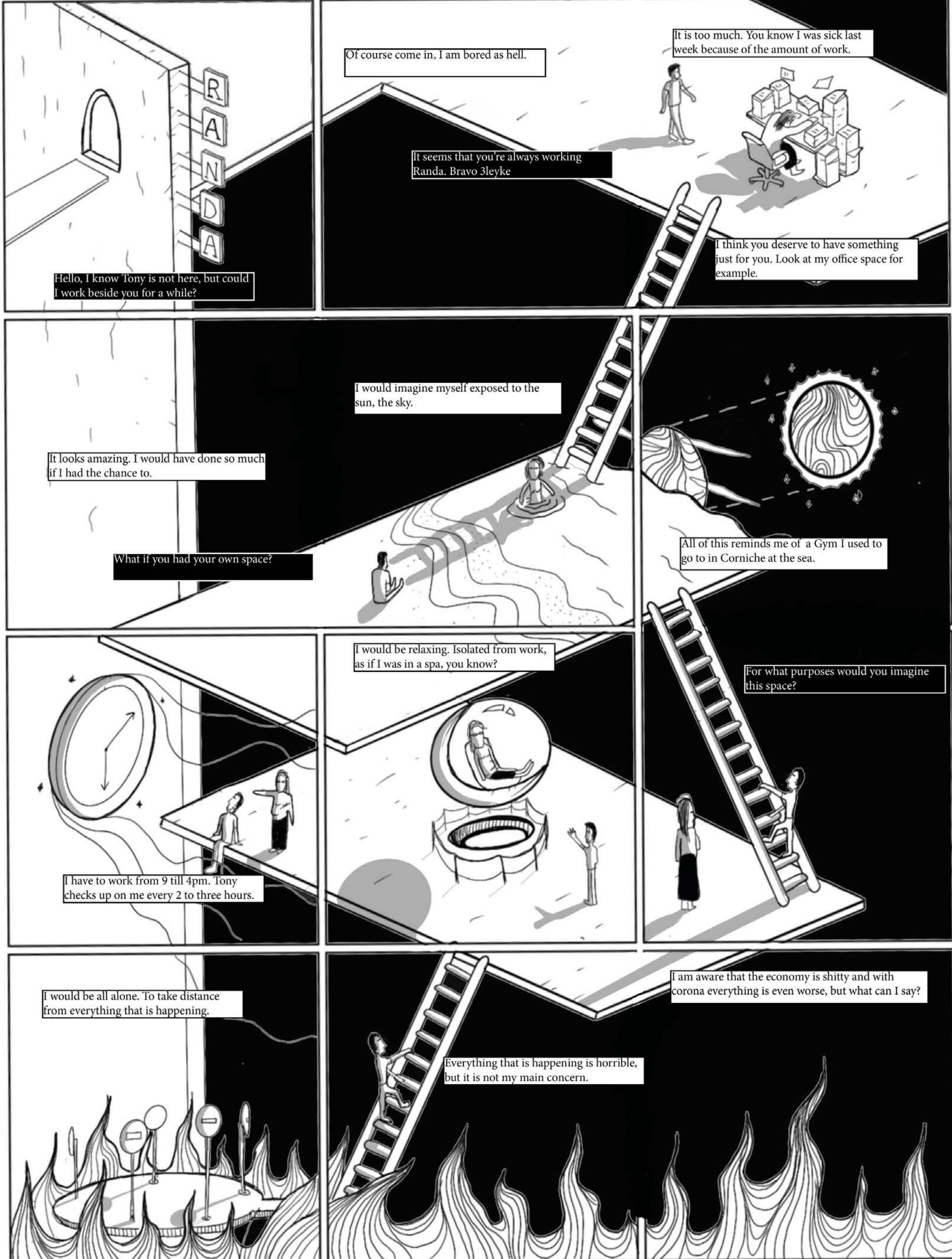
The character sheet is an item I created for each character, depicting their status in the building, their relationships with the other agents, and finally where they are situated. Randa is the secretary of Tony, and she is situated in her office on the 5th floor.

The desire sheet:
The first section of the comics shows Randa complaining about her job, and saying she is tired of it. Her only activation of space in Strand is her office. The second section, based on conversations we had, shows her main desire in Strand: she would love to be at the beach, enjoying a sunset. Moreover, during our interactions, she always mentioned the idea of relaxation, of having an escape from her routine. Finally, an important criteria is that she doesn't care about what happens with the Strand or with Beirut in general; She only thinks about herself and her space.

The second character is Ahmad. He is a syrian worker at an agricultural firm on the 1st floor.

The desire sheet:

The first section of the comics depicts his activation of space in Strand: he is in charge of watering the plants present on the 1st floor along the courtyard. Based on our conversations, he depicted a desire of having those plants evolve into a garden, where he could have plantations and bring his family to hang out. The garden would also be able to house other people such as kids, and other people of Hamra.

He also mentioned his boss, and how he gave him everything he had. So changing or altering the agriculture firm on the 1st floor wouldn't be an option.

The third character is Tony, the main owner of the building. He is the boss of Randa, and his approach is different from the two previous ones.
The desire sheet:
Owning all the keys to the spaces, his main concern is about the fact that the building is being more and more abandoned.
The scope of his desire is larger than the two other characters: he sees the Strand as a whole, and is interested in reviving parts of its history, but mainly to get money. His main desire would be to attract people into the building.

Characters' desires
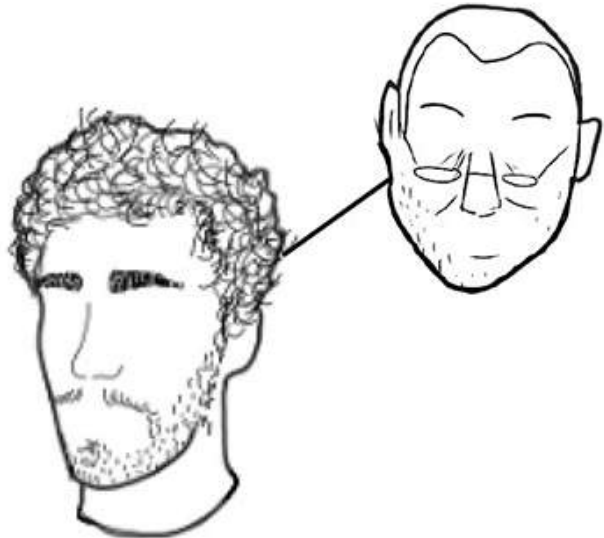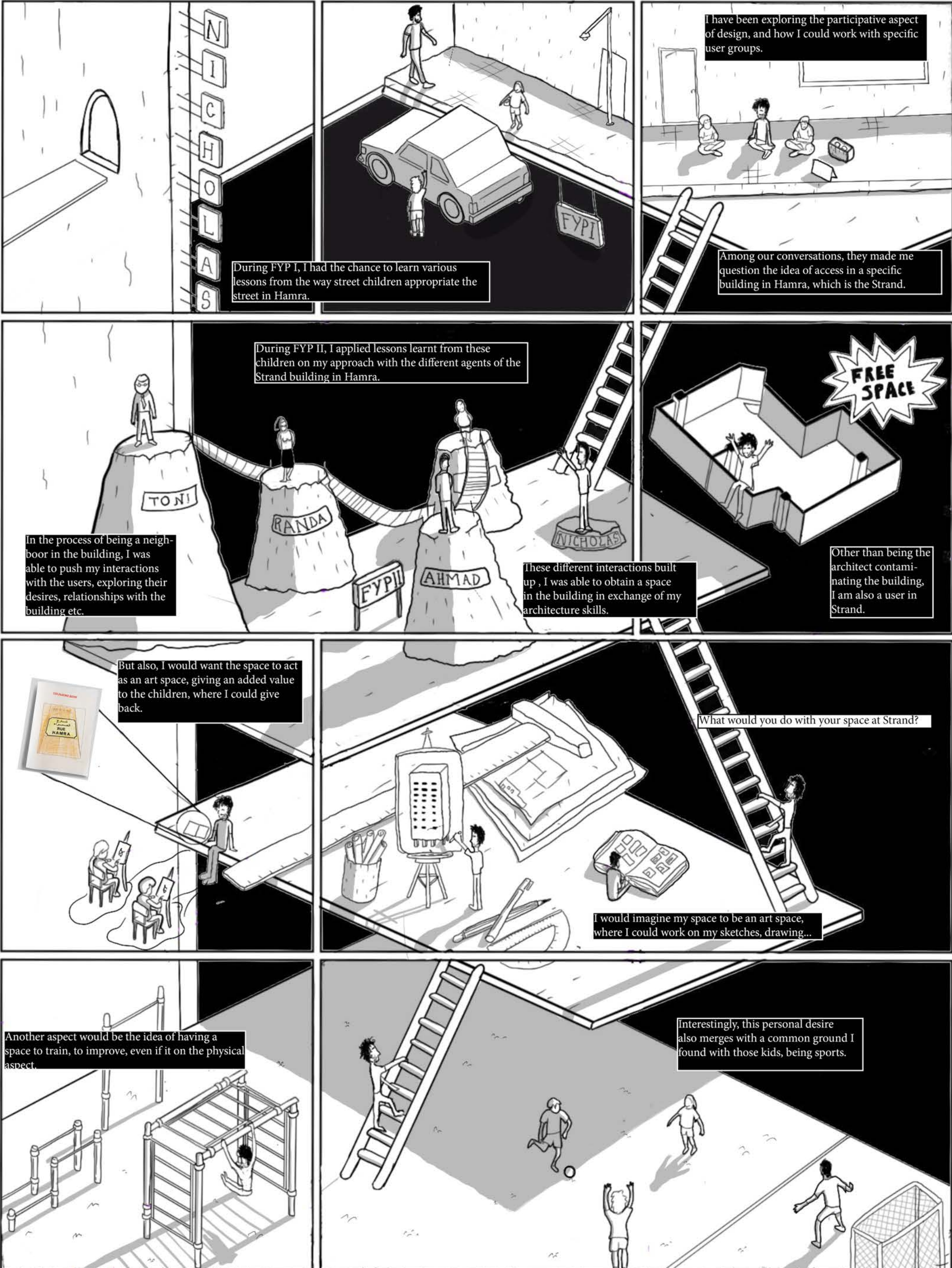
I also decided to include myself as the 4th character in this design game. While acquiring the space I was able to interact and exchange with these users which is the key to the manifestations of their desires in Strand.

The desire sheet:

During my thesis research last semester, I was able to learn different lessons from the street children that I later on adapted into my approach with the building and its users. An important point is that it is the children that first made me question the idea of access in Strand.

By having a space in Strand, I was able in the process, to be a neighbour and push my interactions with the users, exploring their desires and relationships with the building.

My starting point has been the office space of the building on the 1st floor that I claimed. My desires are based on crossing past experiences and parts of who I would like to become in this space. The first desire would be for me to have a space where I could work on my skills like drawing, painting and sports. And second it would be about bringing an added value to the lives of the street children I encountered in the past year that are present in the region. These combinations give birth to common ground spaces of sports and art centers.

Design methodology: Desire matrix as an ecosystem
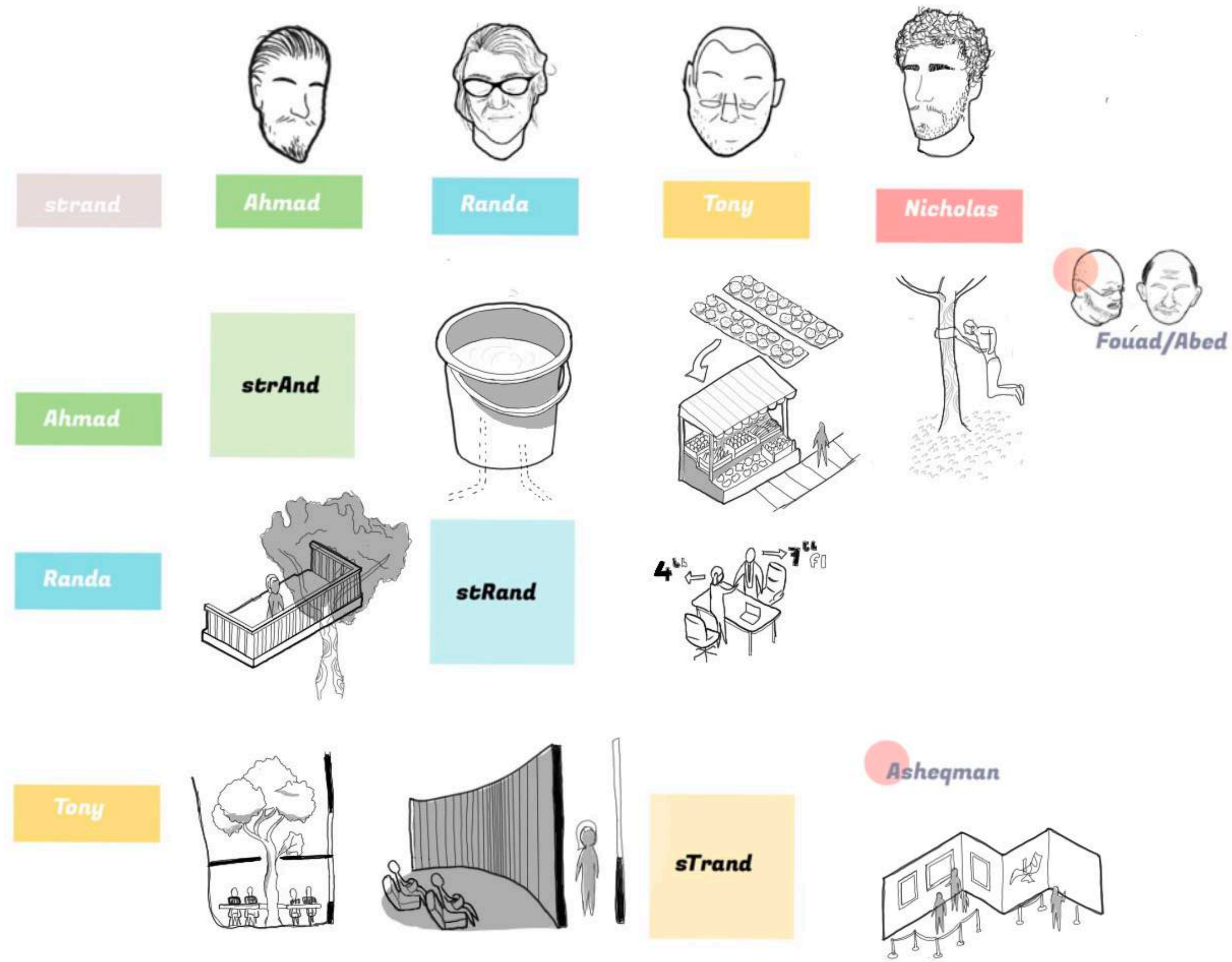
The second part of the design methodology is the Desire matrix. It is about thinking of these different narratives and spaces as an overall ecosystem.

Intersecting program
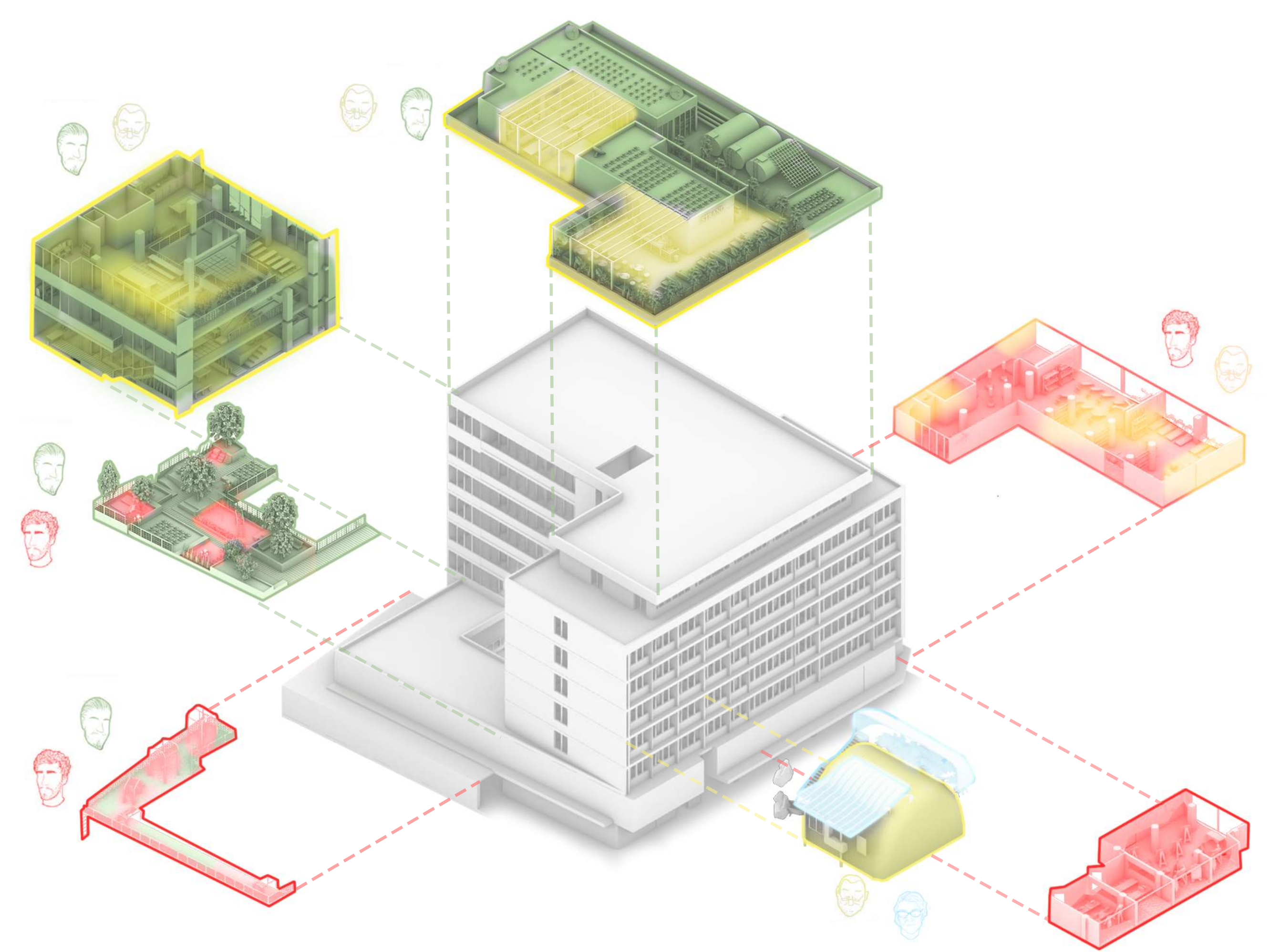
This diagram showcases the program in the building and the different interactions happening between the spaces. By intersecting for example Randa and Tony's desires, I would start thinking of using the same curved walls for Tony's cinema and Randa's beach. Intersecting Ahmad and myself would create a garden mixed in between sports and plantations. The same garden would in its turn, intersect Tony's desire, to create an indoor working area.

What is interesting is that my process constituted of these exercises is a gamified one, which is one of my learnings from street children.

**1st floor:
Art center + Gym
South-East axo**

A

B

C

D
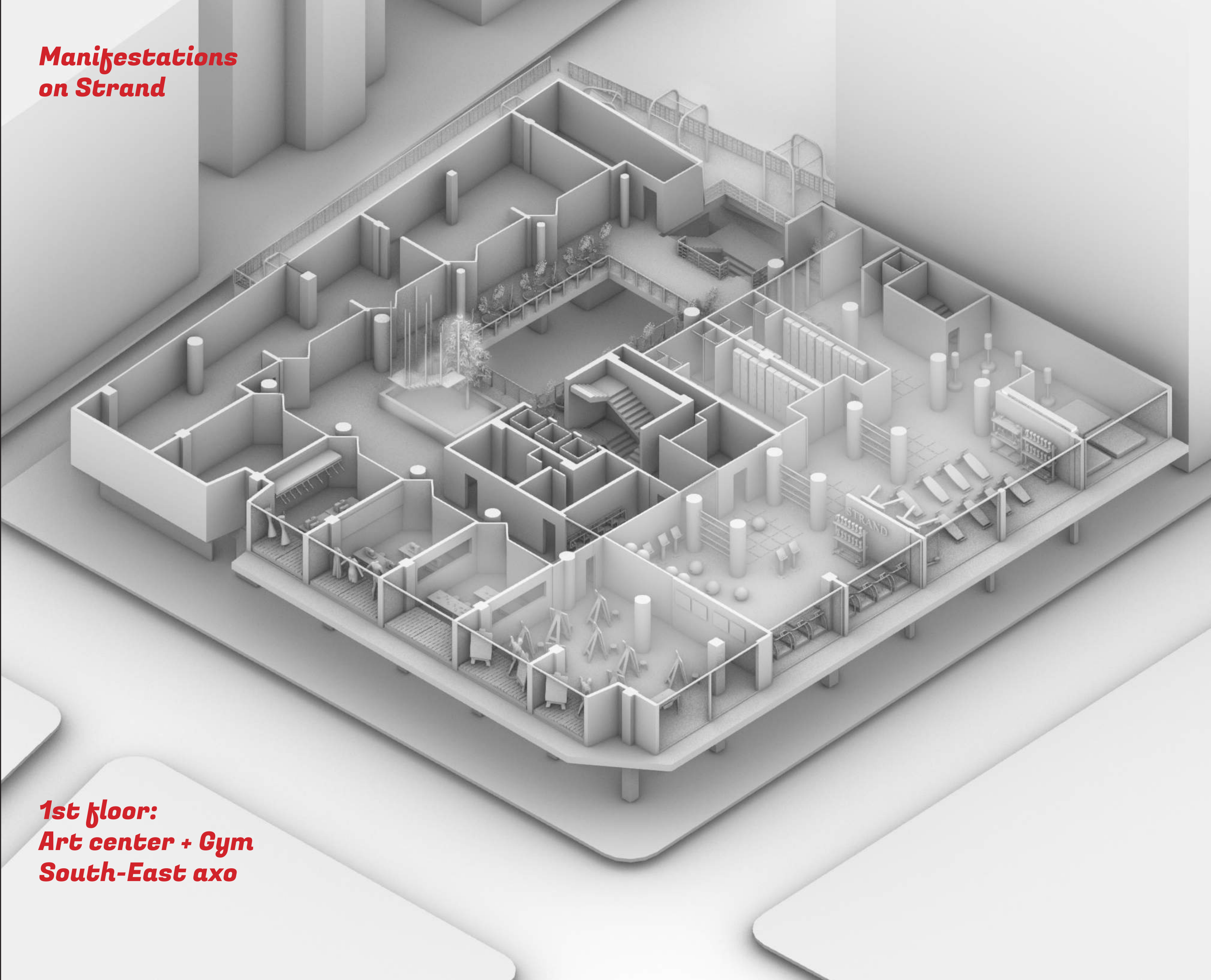
On the 1st floor, you can see my desire activated in relation to Tony. Highlighted in white are the areas I intervened on. It is where my space was initially located. Here I am taking advantage of the existing built aspect of Strand and its strategy to be exposed to the street.

The first one is the result of my sports desire with Tony's real estate aspect which can be seen on the right hand side. This gives birth to a conventional gym having an exposure to Jeanne D'Arc street, leading to AUB. Here the intervention was about removing the existing unlit corridor, and expanding the gym into one major space.

Tony

Nicholas
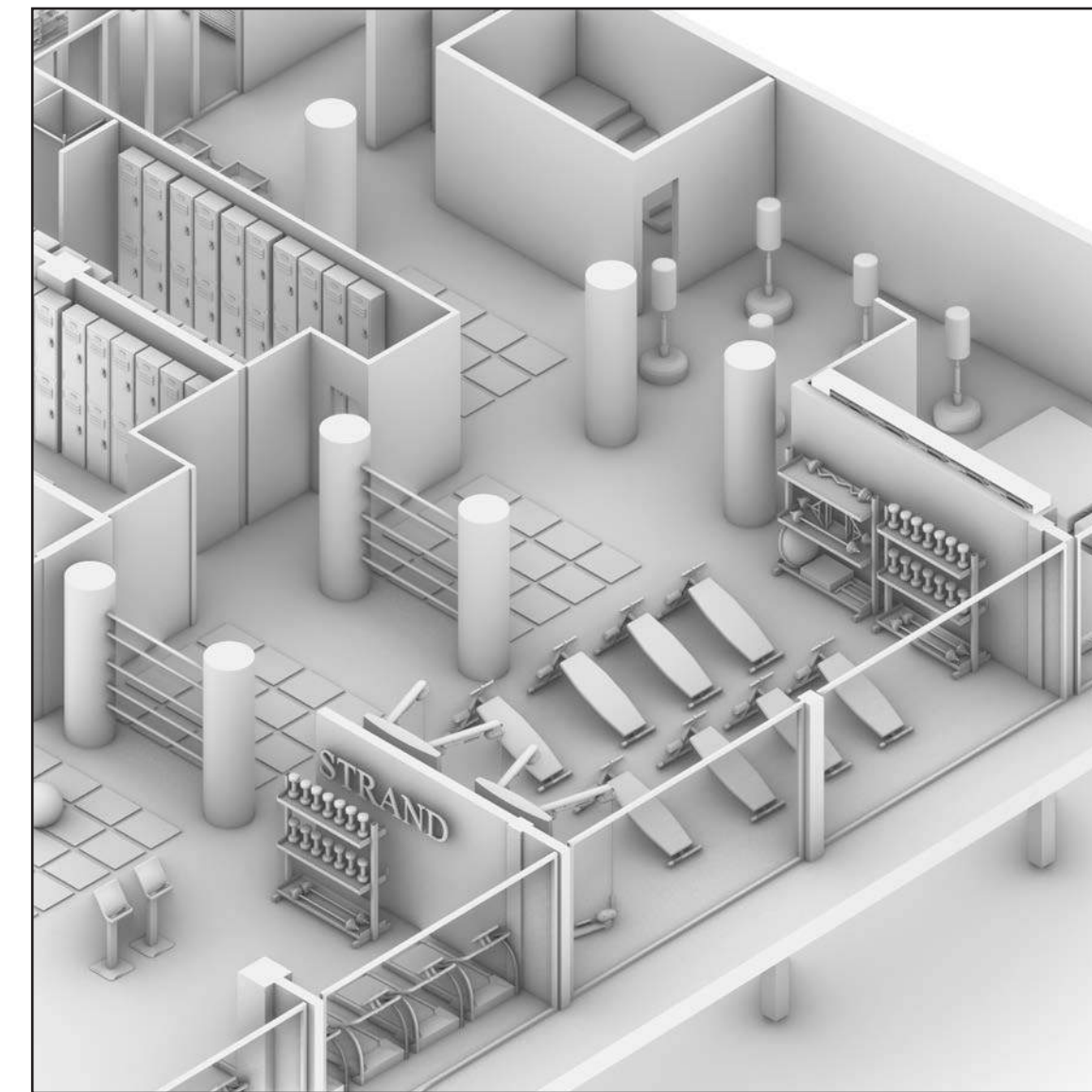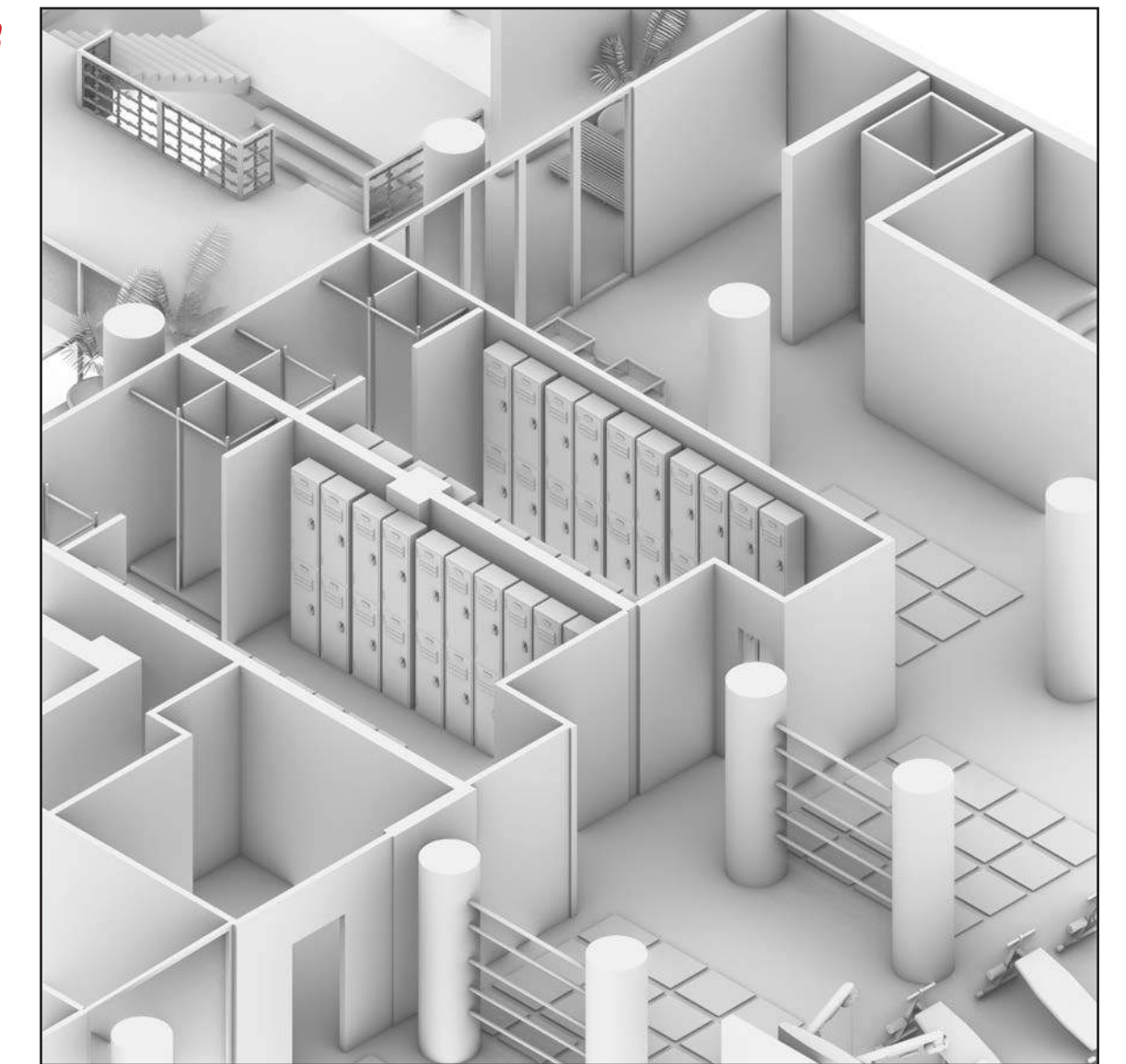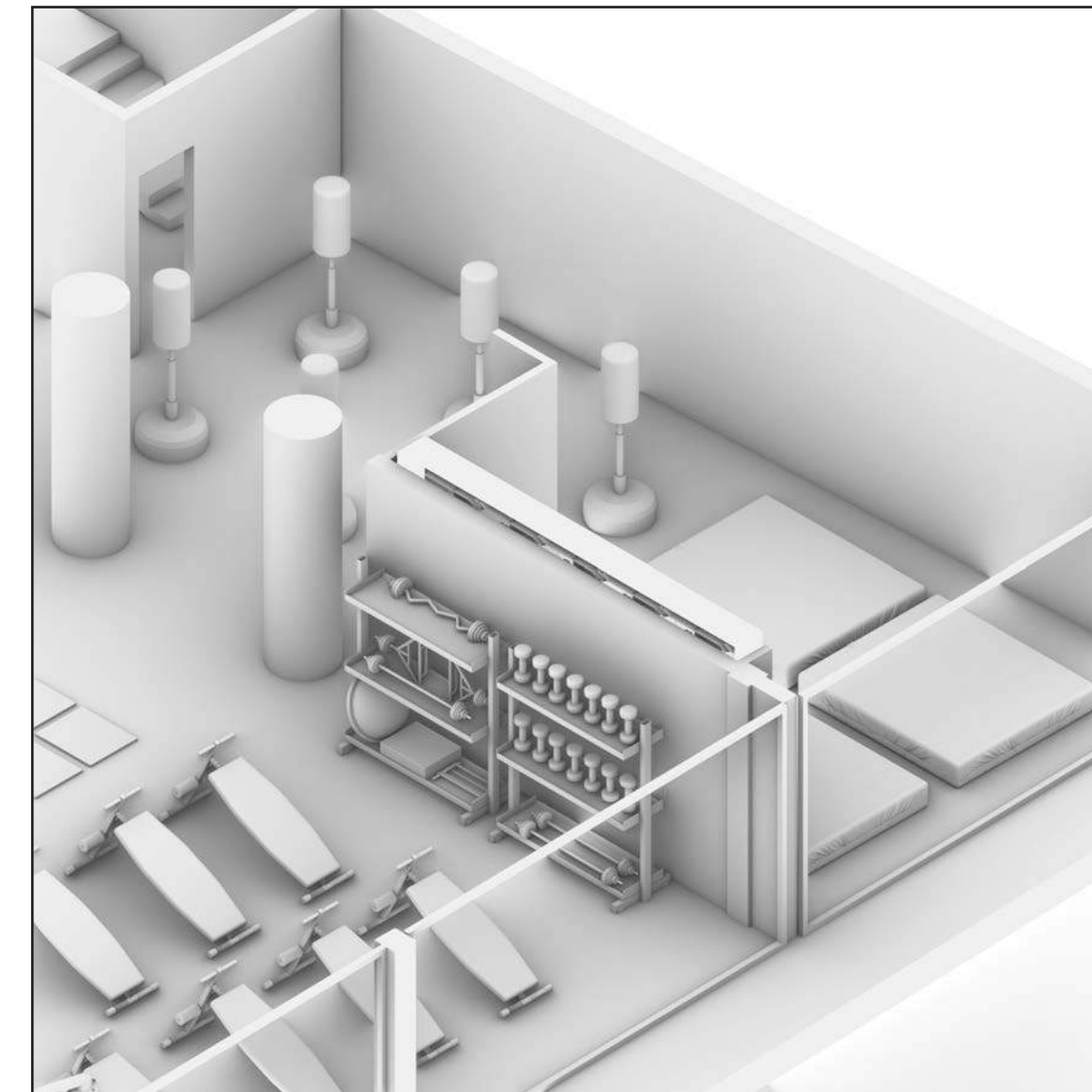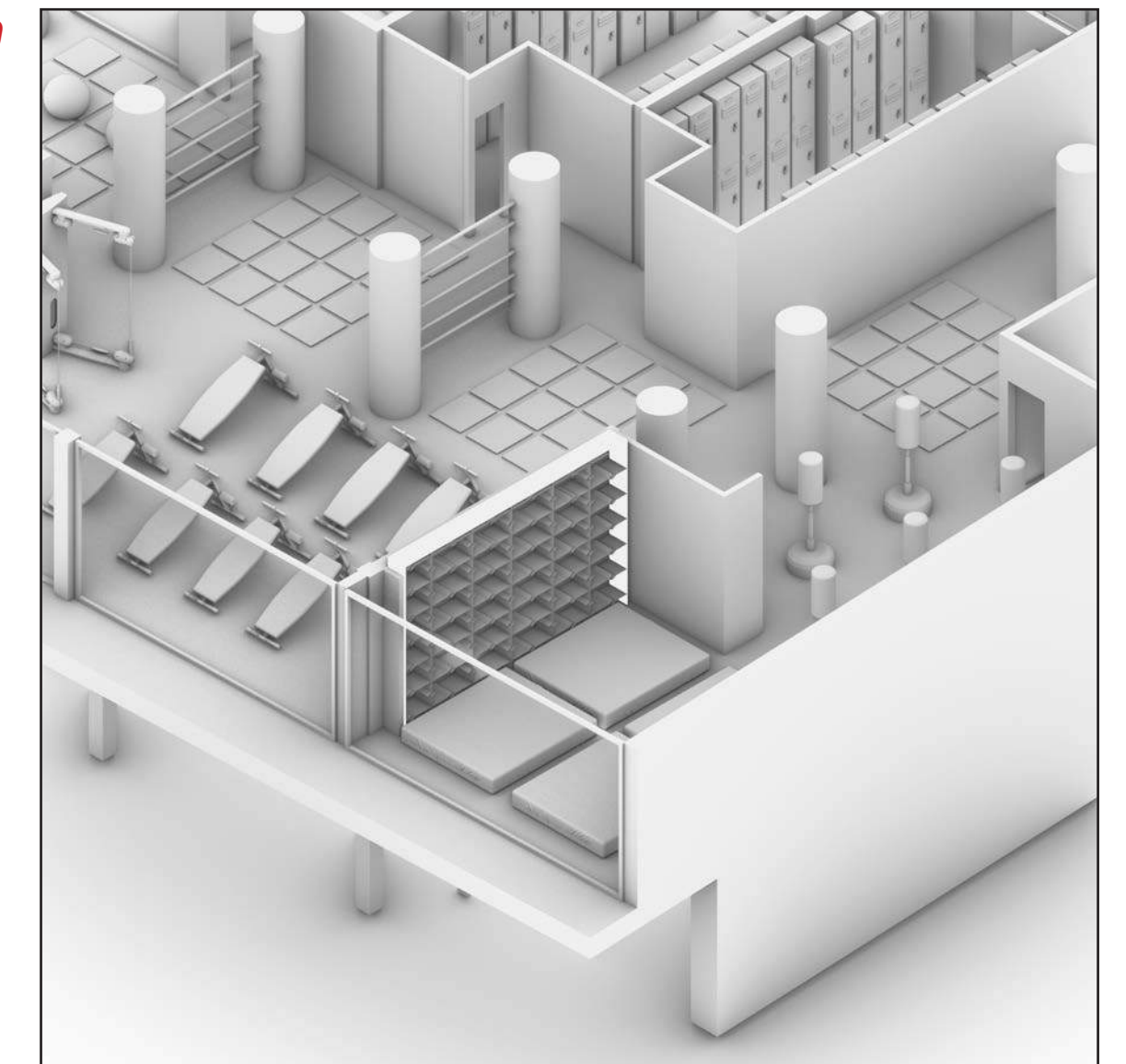
(B) The way the gym works is that the entrance is located near the main stairs, and can be accessed by both elevators, the one of the hotel, and the one of the offices. **(A)** The gym uses the already existing structure and partitions, and presents different types of workouts in each compartments such as cardio, and weightlifting. **(C + D)** The third part is a climbing wall leading to the terrace upward where the sports evolves and merges with Ahmad's garden—will show this element in more detail later.
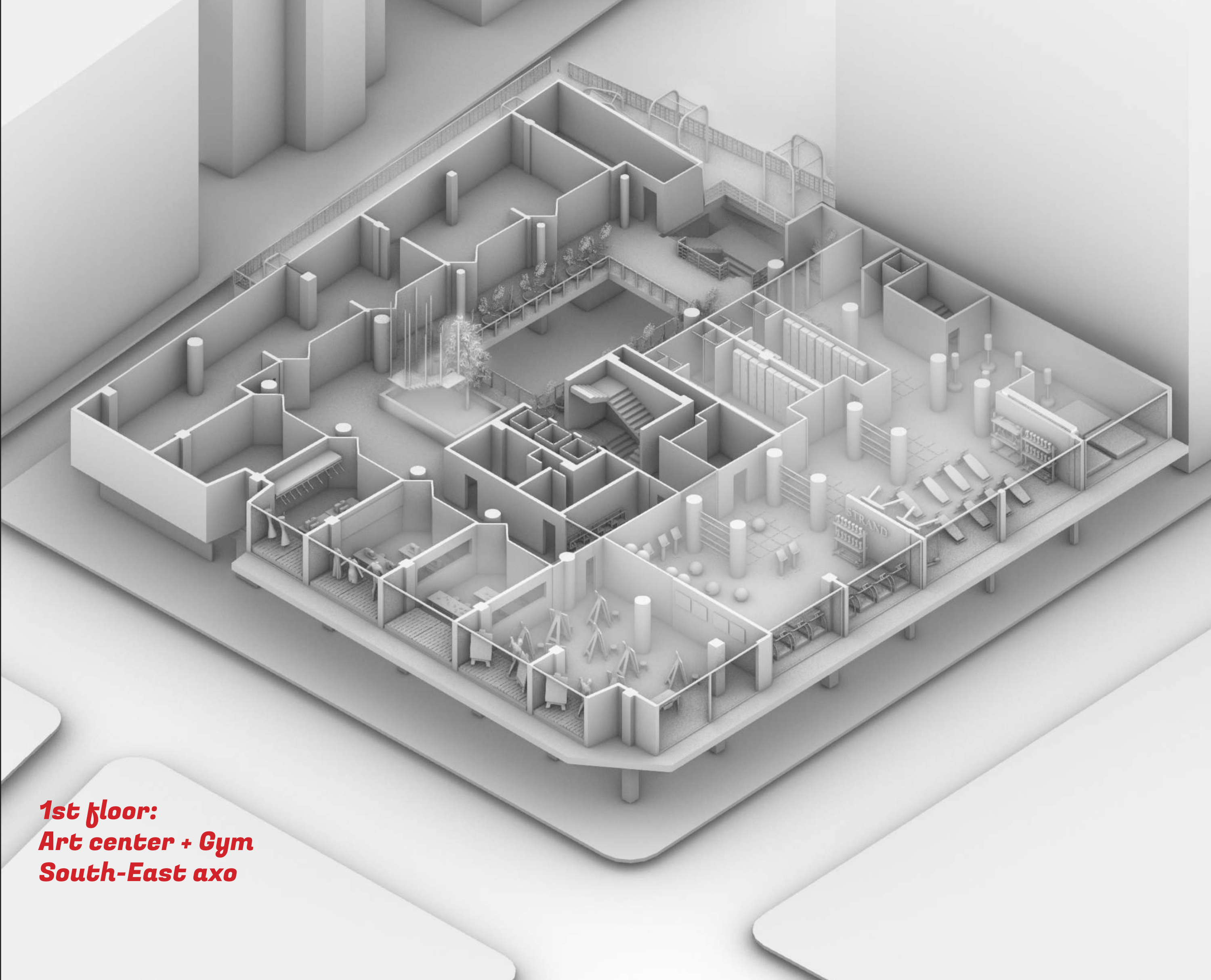
1st floor:
Art center + Gym
South-East axo
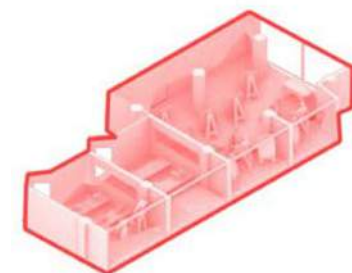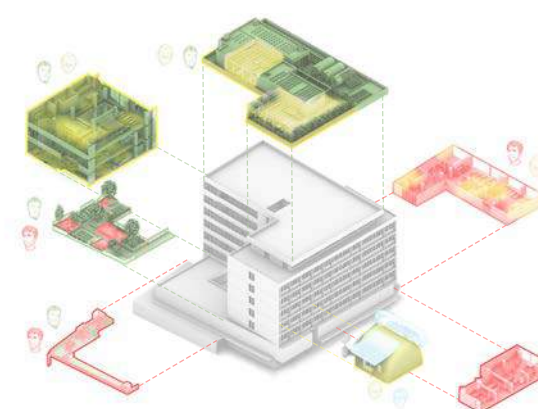
The second minimal intervention here can be seen on the exposure to Hamra Street. *In this case, I collaborated my art desire with two existing characters in the building to create an art center for children.*
My space is located on the edge of the building, next to it, I created a shoemaking workshop lead by Em Moussah, and on its left side you can find Nayef's workshop about sewing which is next to his existing working space.

Nicholas

A   B   C   D

Yalla Malek wa'ta tkhallessa mnenzal mnekol 3and Sam.

La' habibteh, lezim t'arbeh el blouseh ba3ed aktar.
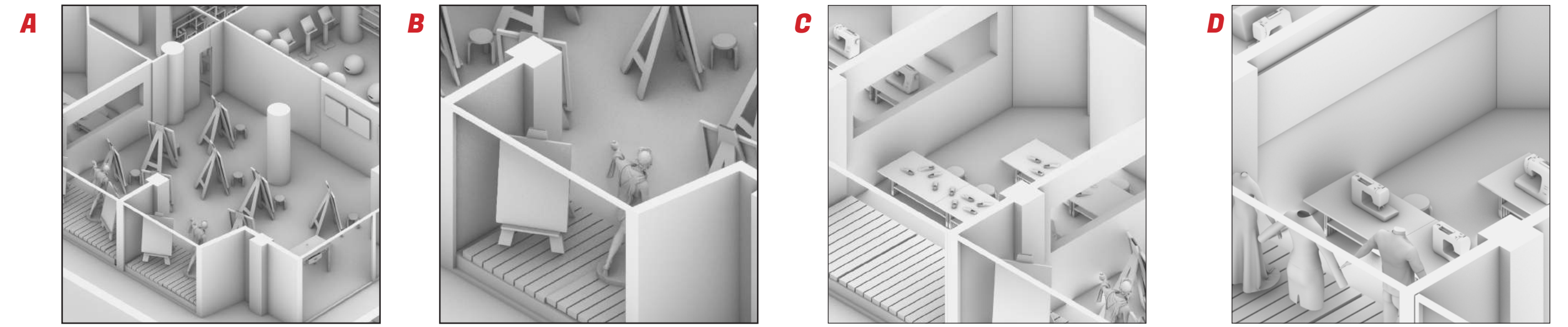
D

(A) In these zoom ins, you can see on the left side my actual space where I would be teaching and drawing. *(B)* The wooden podiums would be used to showcase the objects designed to the street.
My intervention here was also about opening up these spaces to one another allowing a visual connection between the different workshops.
(C) On the right handside, you can see Em Moussah's space. *Nayef and Em moussah are two existing agents on the 1st floor;* Em moussah being a shoemaker, and Nayef a seamstress. *(D)* This drawing showcases the three spaces next to one another and how they are being activated.

**2nd floor:
garden, working area
and exhibition space
North-East axo**

Nicholas

Ahmad

Ma kenno yekhlaso hal finals, finally fina to work out aa rawa'

Lek Ahmad, stawoh shi el khasset?

I shifted the view of the building on the East, North side, which is exposed to Jeanne D'arc Street. *Here one can see on the right side Ahmad's garden evolving from the 1st floor unto the roof of the courtyard.* You can also see it entering the hotel in the middle where Tony and Ahmad's desires intersect to create a working area for start-ups with an indoor garden. The upper part is an exhibition space where I merged my art desire with Tony's. The exhibition space is be based on a set of railings on the existing structure of the building. These railings would allow to shift sets of gypsum panels in countless ways in the space. Moreover, the main core of stairs and elevators allow you to reach a lounge leading to all the spaces.

The main logic of the garden is to allow the users to be immersed in it and having a main wooden path that is surrounded by different insertions of plantations/workout elements and seating areas at different levels. The logic and language of this garden can be understood as an extension of the street. In this zoom in, you can find two different types of negotiations: where 1.2 m is required for the olive tree, it allows to attach dips bars for the sports. At the same when plants only require 50cm of soil, another element can be attached such as the ropes. In this comic strip, one can see how the garden is being activated and negotiated: having students doing a workout in the back, and Tony and Ahmad talking about the plantations in the foreground.

2nd floor: garden
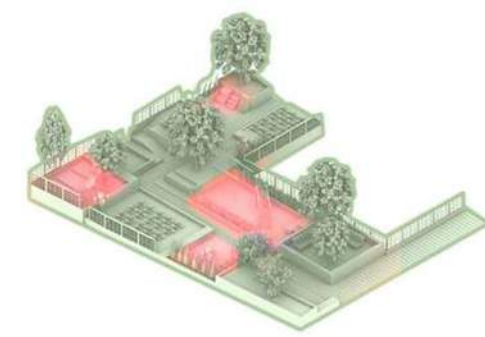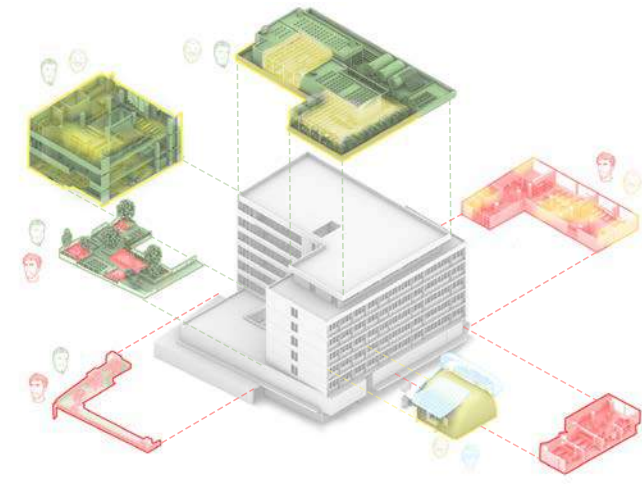
Ahmad   Nicholas

A
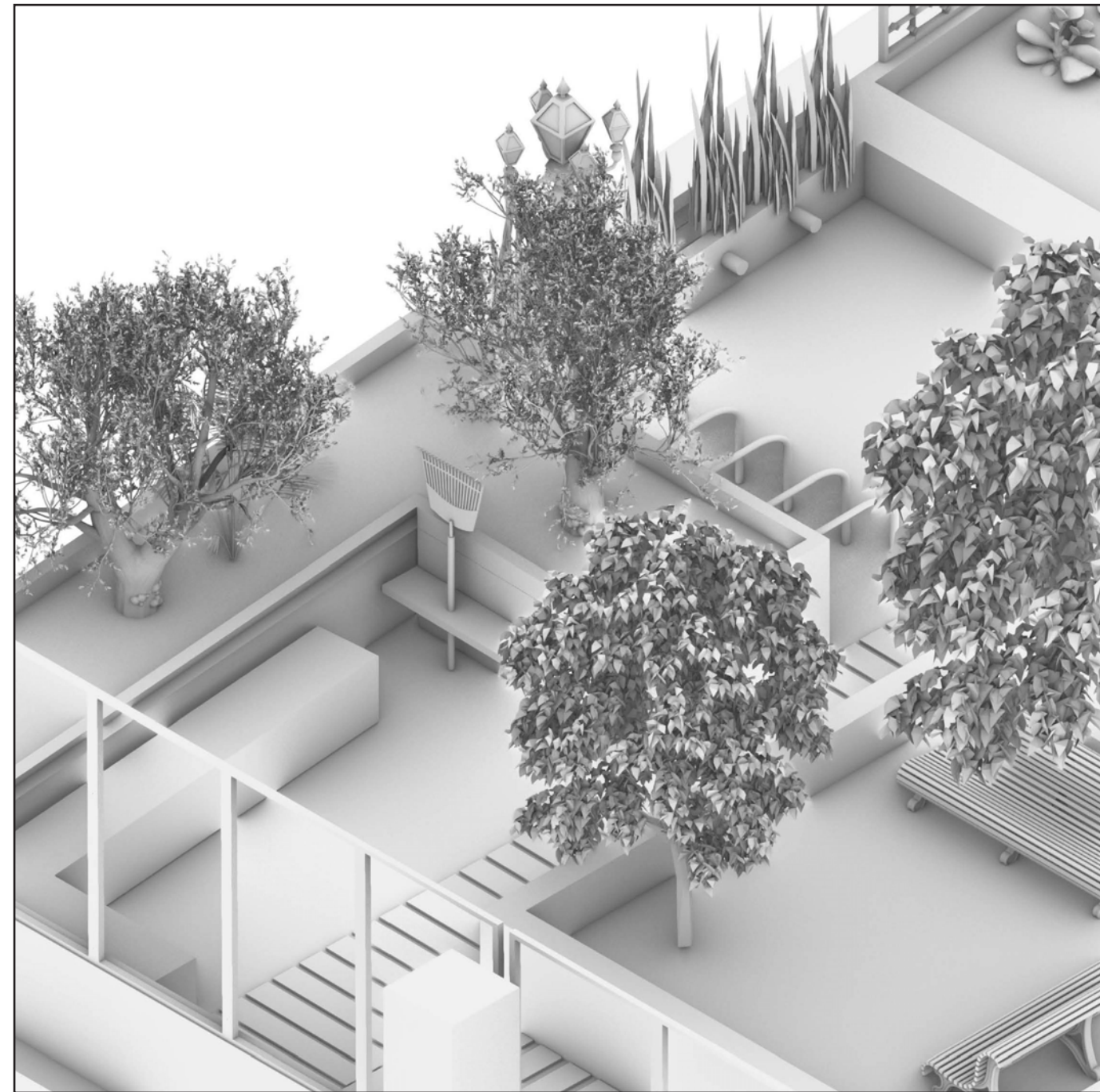
B

C
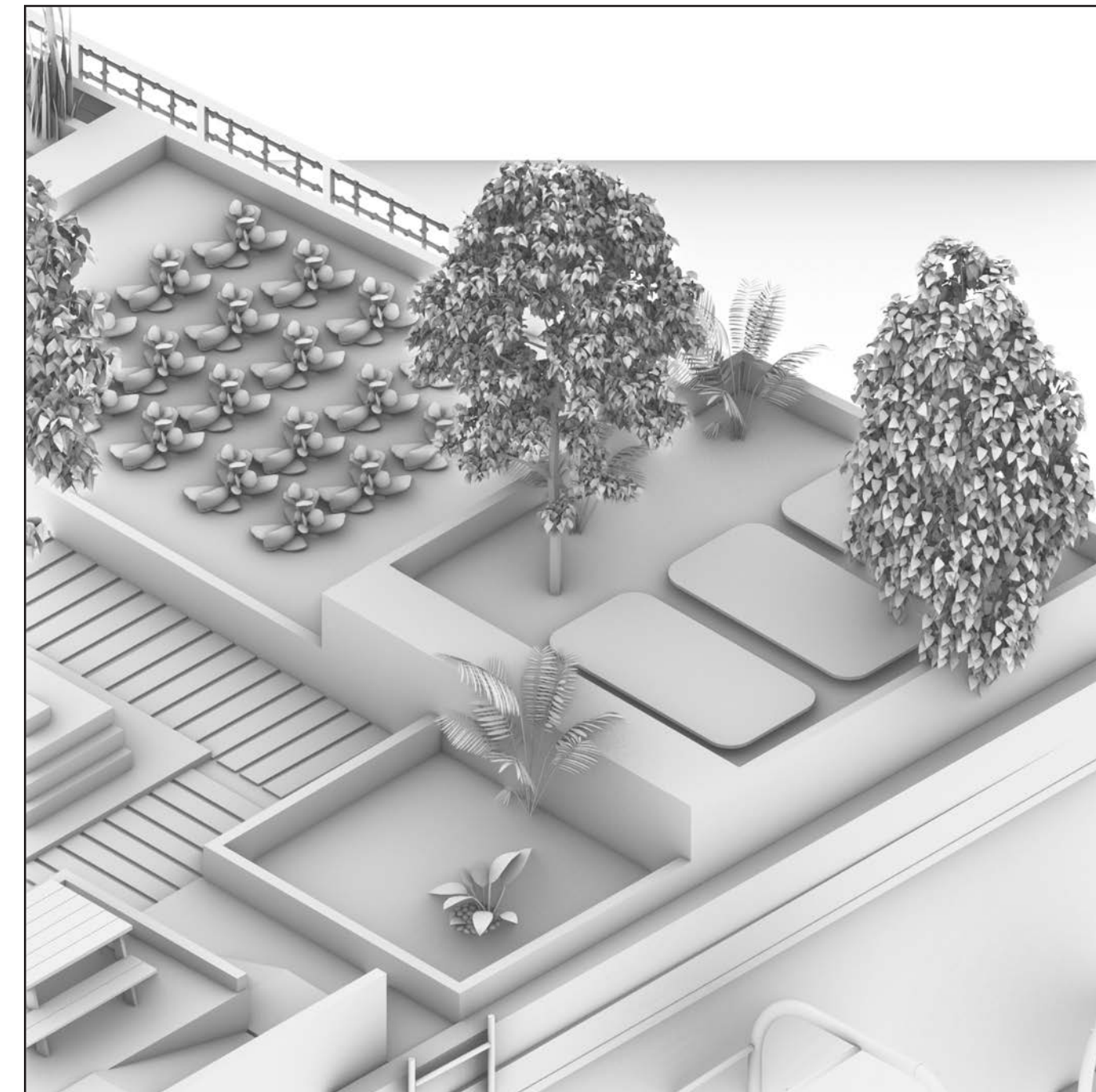
D
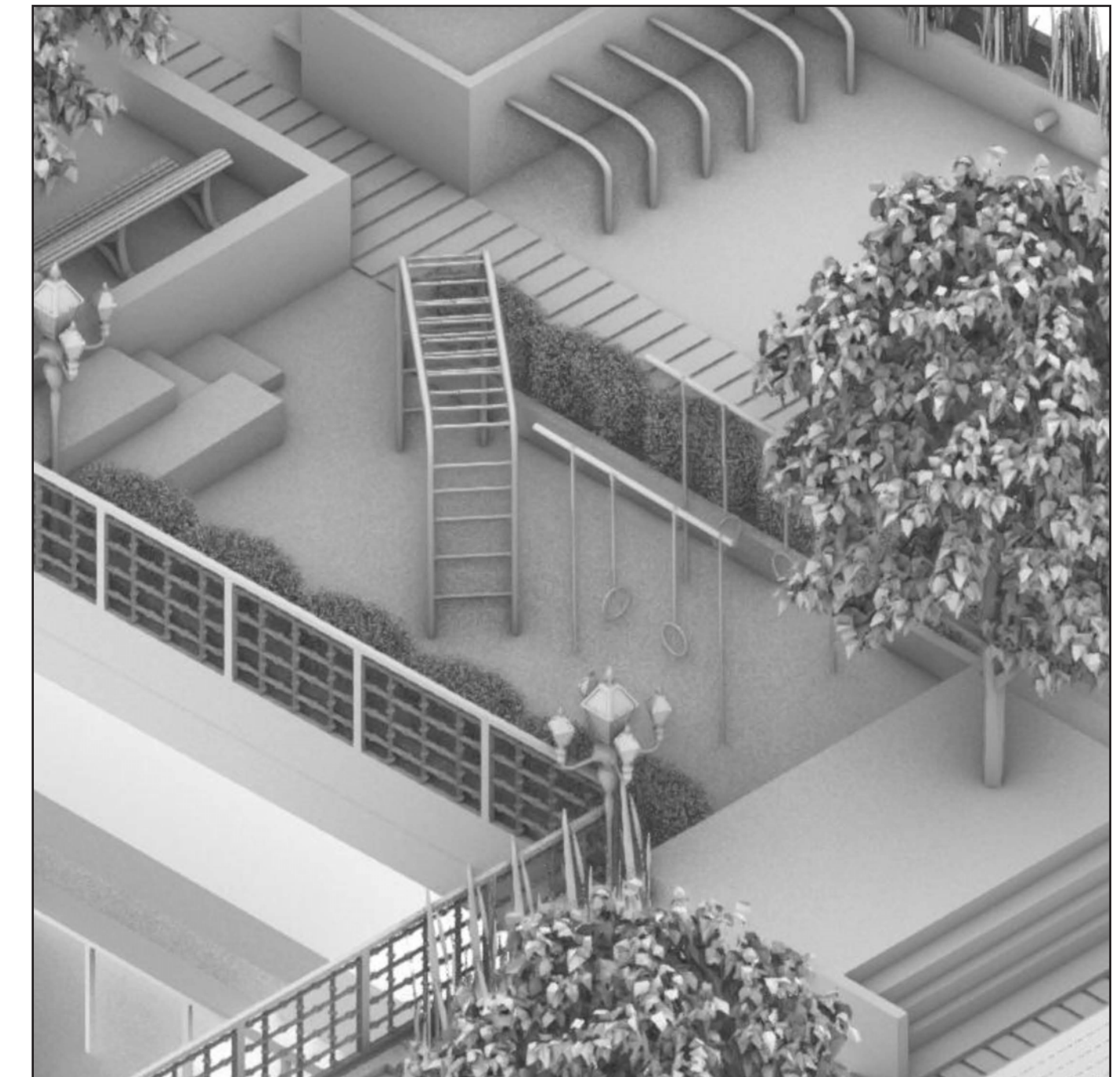
The garden's creation is based on a negotiation between Ahmad's garden, my sports desire, and a possible public space. **(A)** On the left zoom in you, can find Ahmad's tools embodied in the planter. ***By merging the requirements of soils for each tree and other possible functions I was able to create the spaces.*** **(B)** For example, the tree on the right has a 1m requirement of soil which at the same time allows to create a more secluded seating area.

(C) In the left zoom in, one can see the same negotiation happening again, in this case, taking advantage of the 1m soil requirement to create a space allocated for yoga. The plantations can also be seen as separator sometimes, whenever the sports aspect take over. **(D)** Like for example in the zoom in on the right side where the open field takes over. Moreover the plantations of cactus and "khass", also allow to create seating spots.
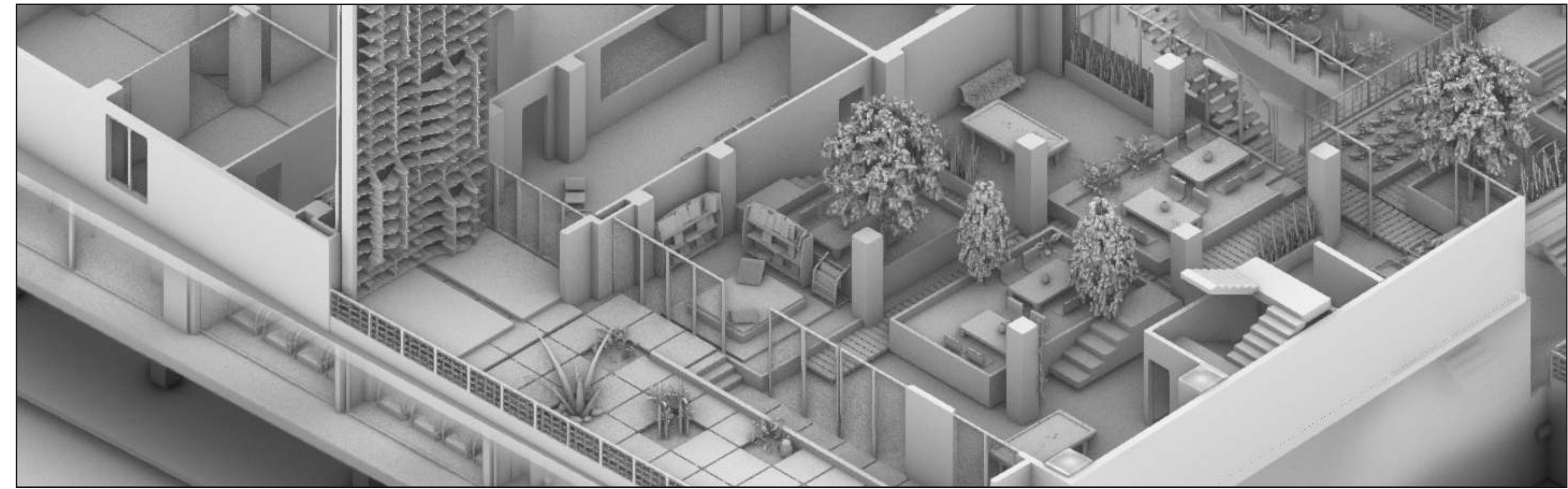
On the right side, you can see a lower space of the garden that is *negotiated in order to create a playing area for the street children.* In this case, I am using Ahmad's garden as a way in for the children.

Yalla sar3eh abel ma yejo el kbar yekhdo el malaab!

RUE HAMRA
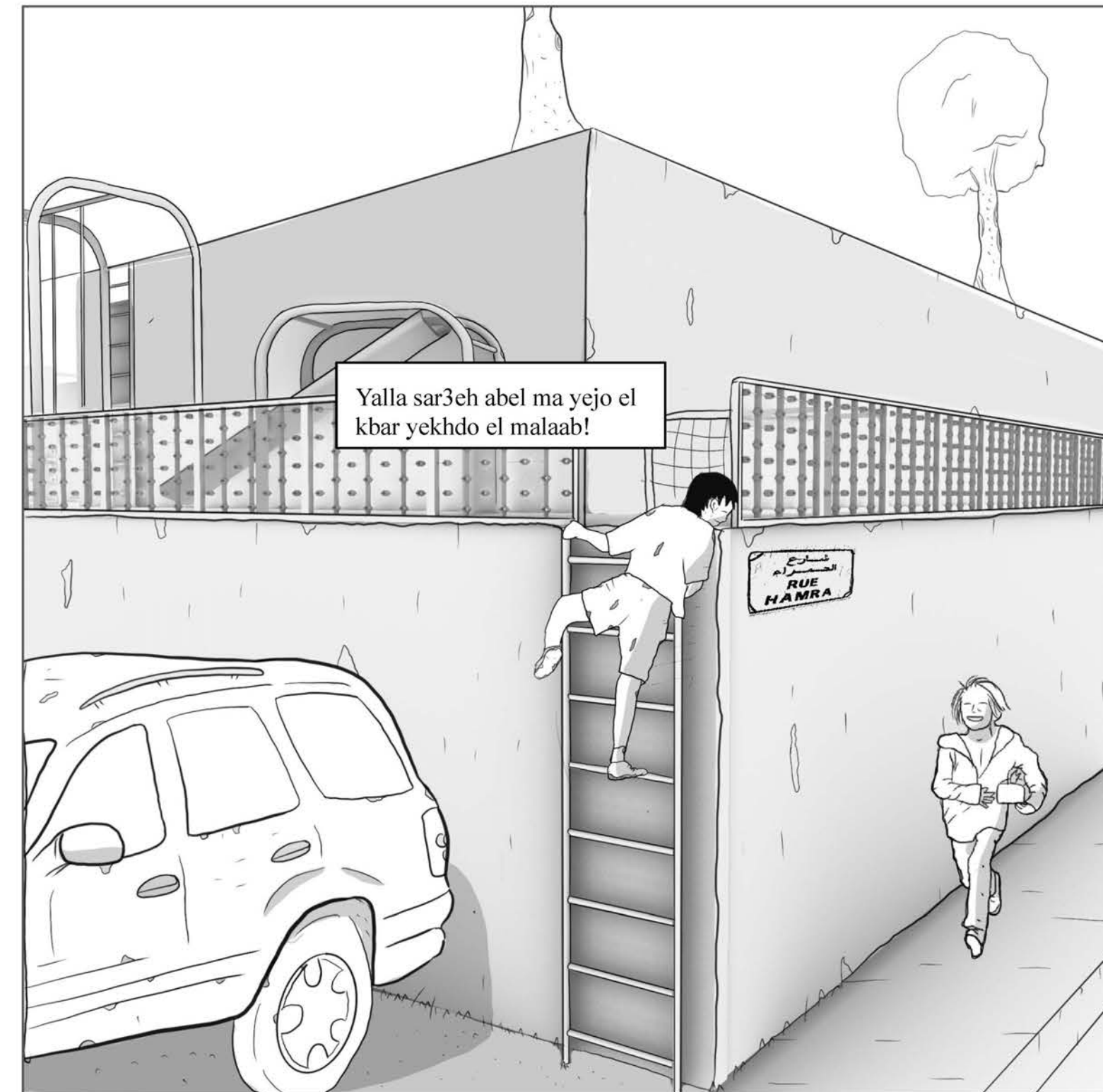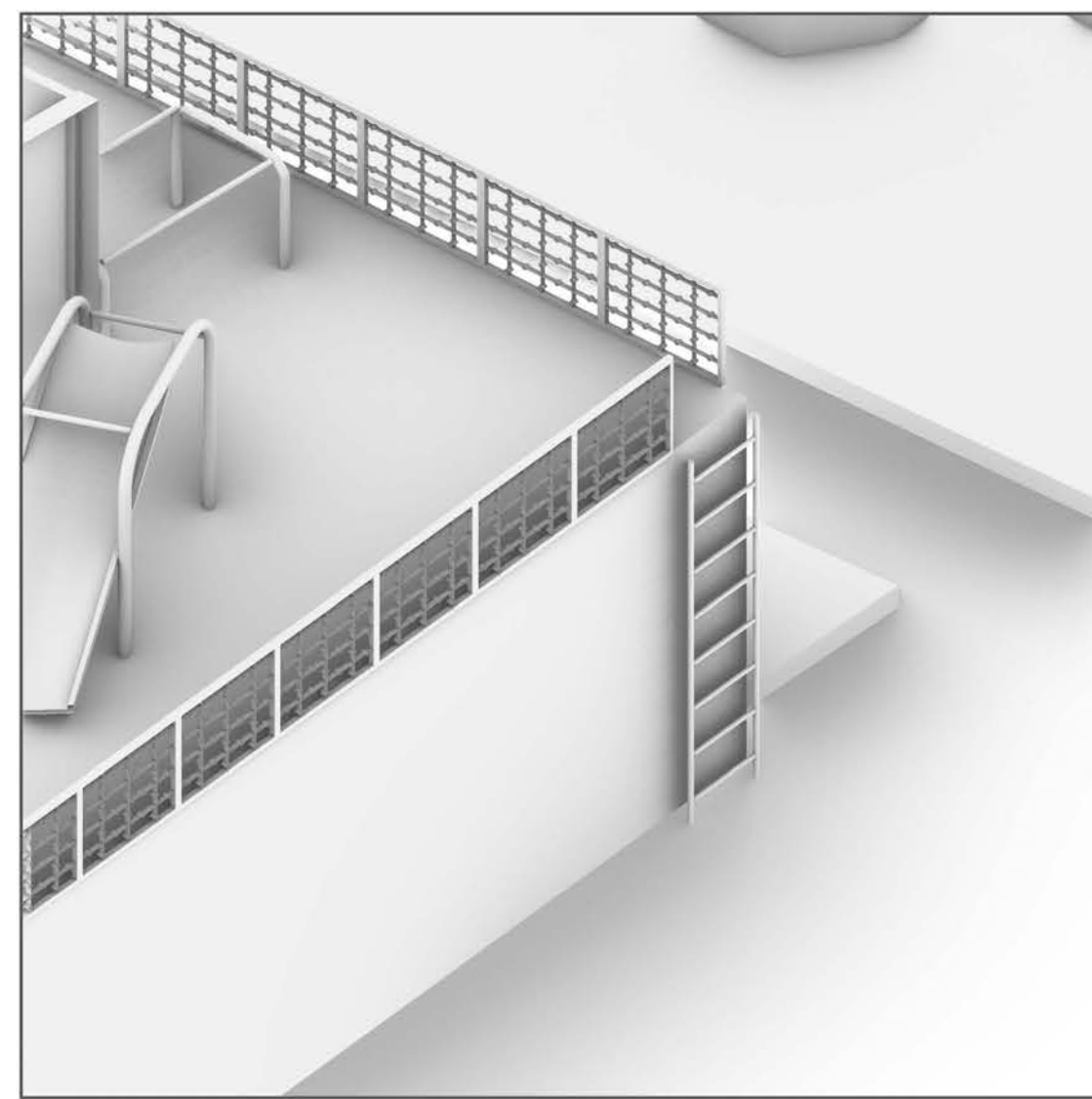
Nicholas

1st floor: garden's negotiation

In this comics, you can see how they get access to this space, which is accessible from the back side of the building from the street. This playground is located next to a parking lot situated on the North side of the Strand.

Teb ma chou sayir aaleh hayda?

Nicholas   Ahmad

2nd floor: Terrace climbing wall

ASHEKMAN
ARABIC STREET WEAR

OMT
F1
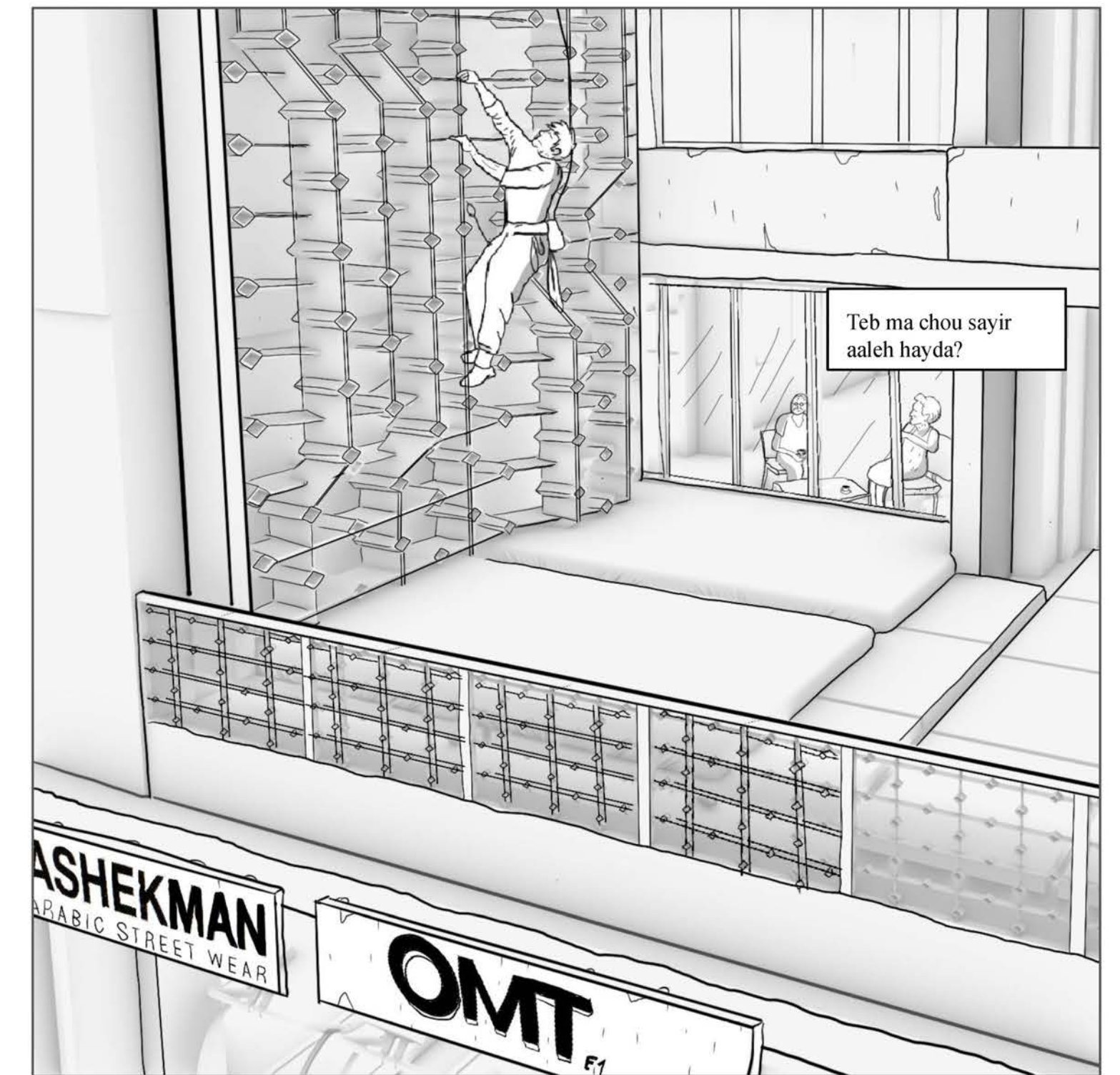
Before going to the section, I will be talking about the terrace next to the working area which is exposed to Jeanne D'Arc Street. Here my desire resurfaces and the sports aspect takes on the envelope of the building. *This vertical element is actually a redesign of the South Facade, molding it into a 3 dimensional climbing wall.* The comic on the right showcases the activation of the wall in context, having two individuals in the lounge on the inside. The position of the wall in this corner is also used to attract students and people coming from Jeanne D'Arc Street.
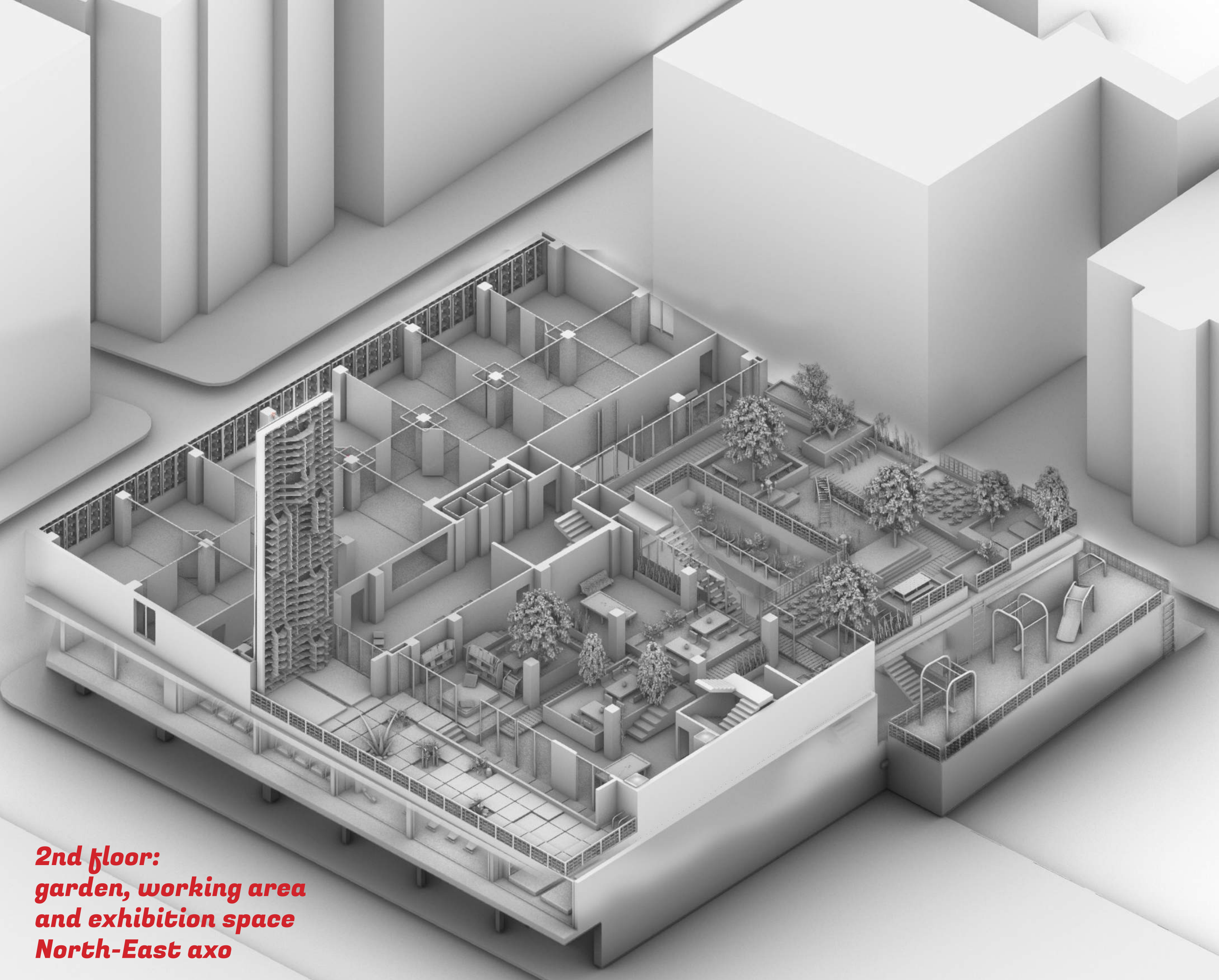
2nd floor:
garden, working area
and exhibition space
North-East axo
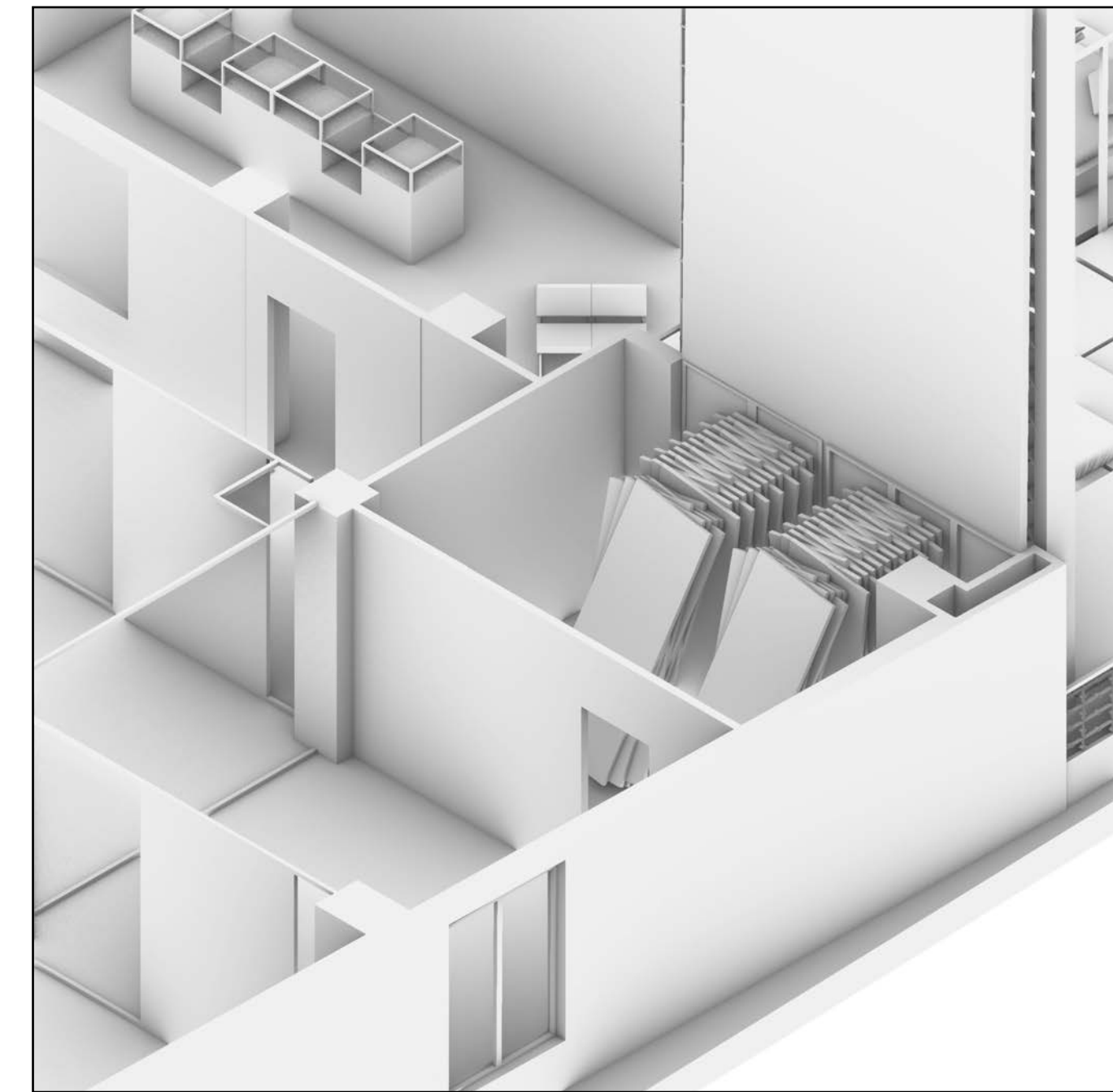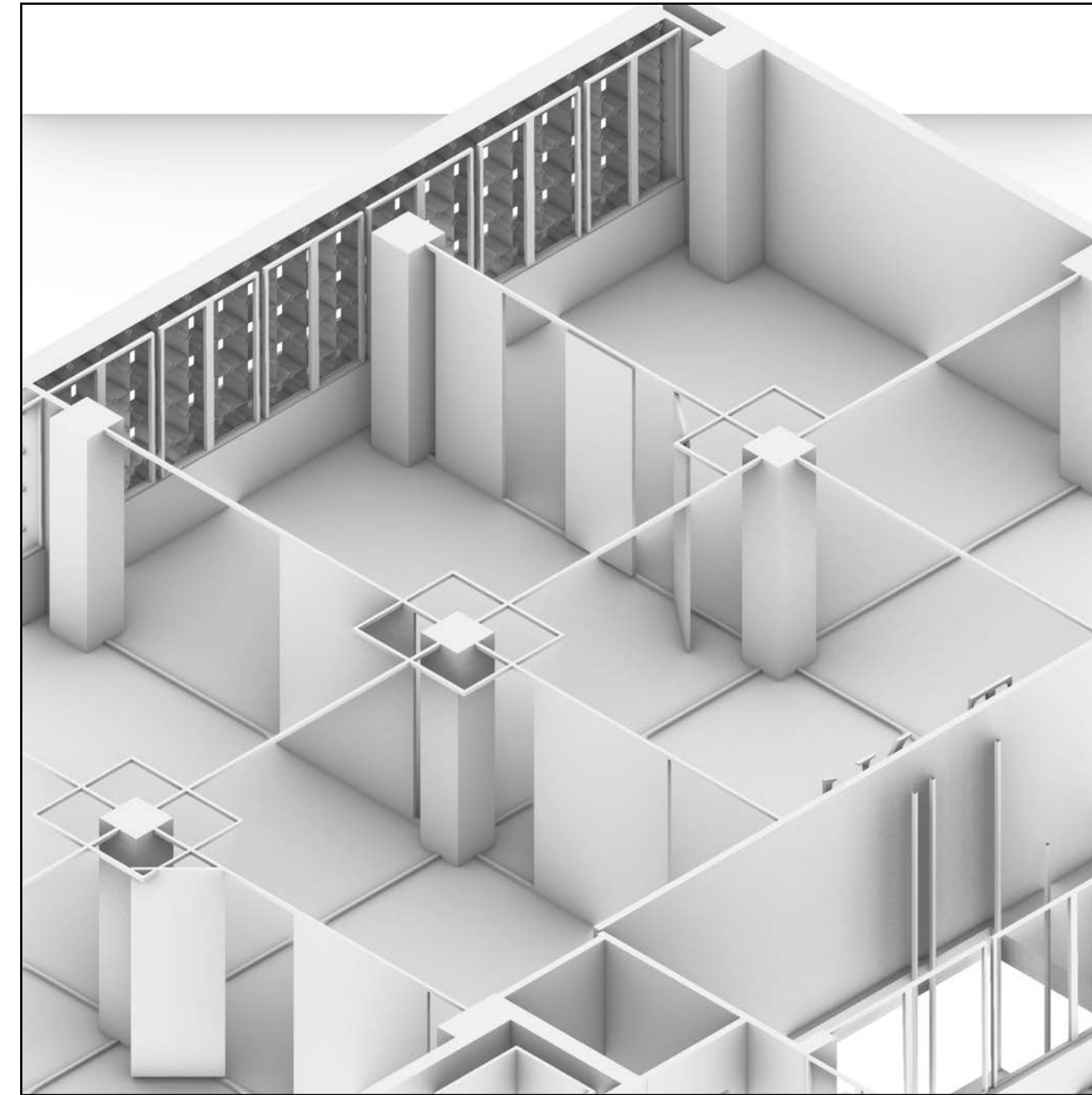
Finally, the last component of the 1st floor is the exhibition space. It can be seen on the South exposure of the building, which is on the upper part of the axo. The intervention here was to remove the existing partitions of the unused offices to open up the plan. Here the space was created by merging my desire with Tony's.

Tony   Nicholas

The exhibition space would be based on a set of railings on the existing structure of the building. These railings would allow to shift sets of gypsum panels in countless ways in the space which makes it suitable for exhibitions. On the right zoom, you can find a storage space for the panels next to the entrance.

**Working area
North-East cut axo
perpendicular to Jeanne
D'arc**

Ahmad

Tony

A

A

B

C

D
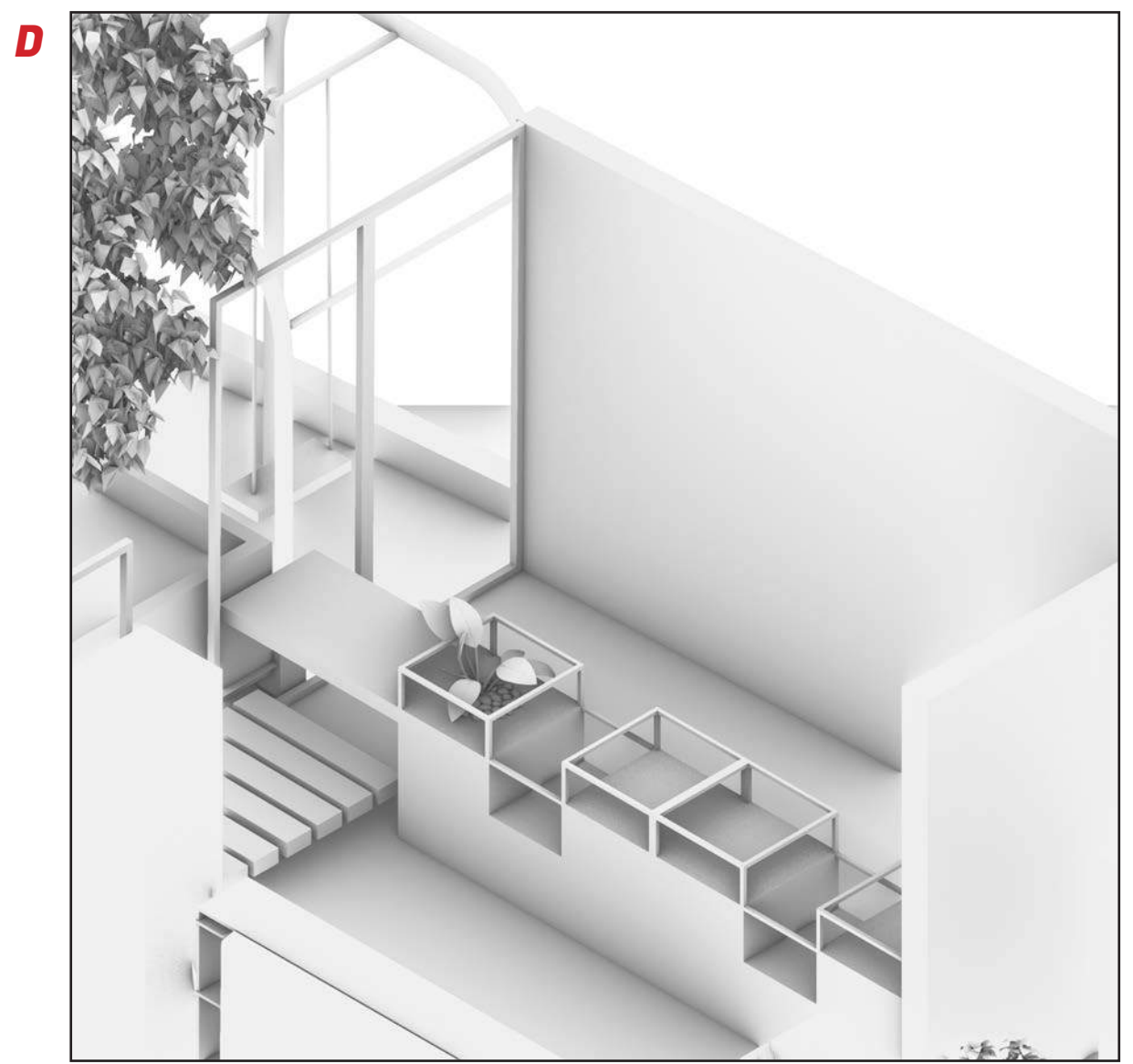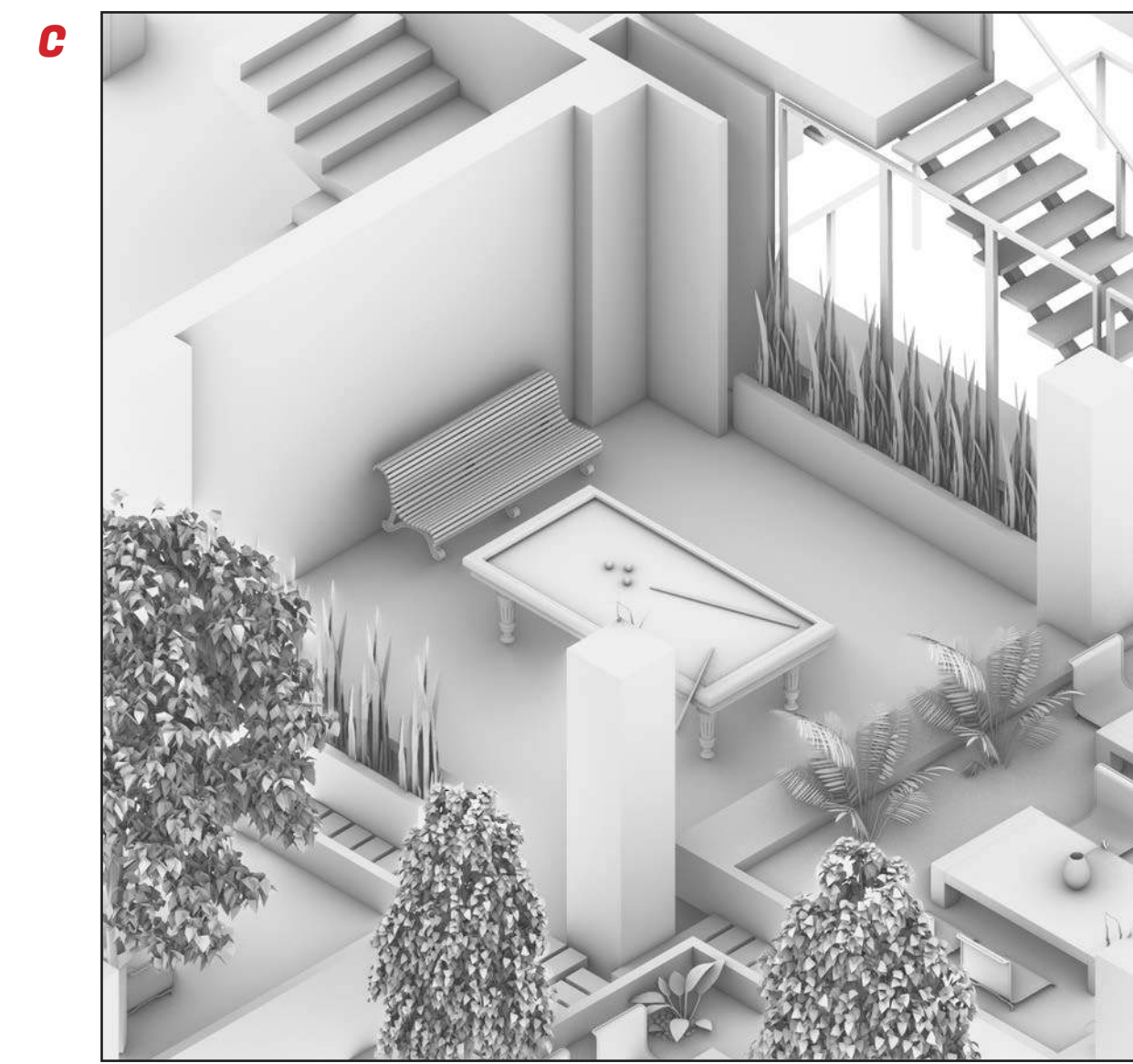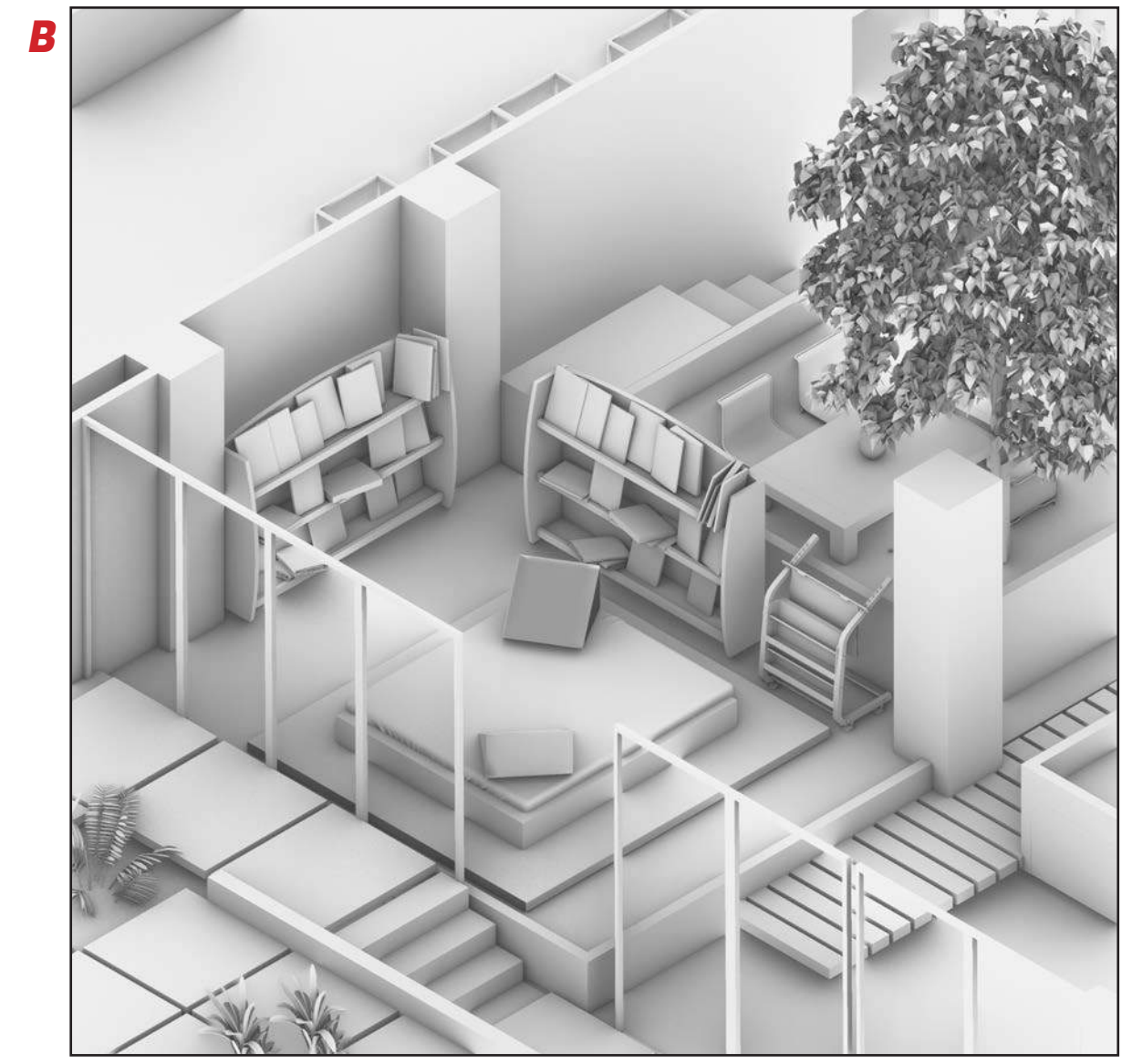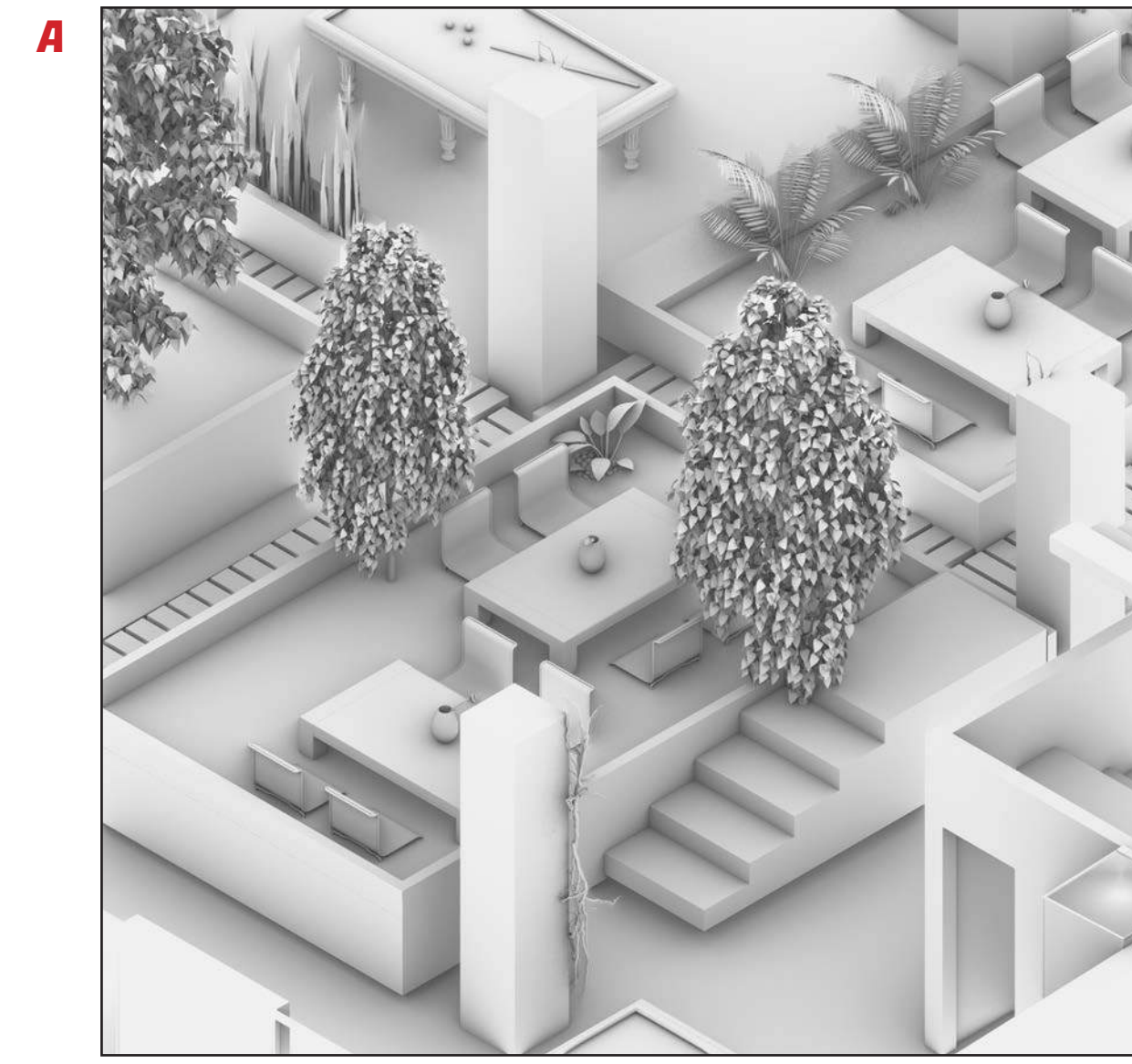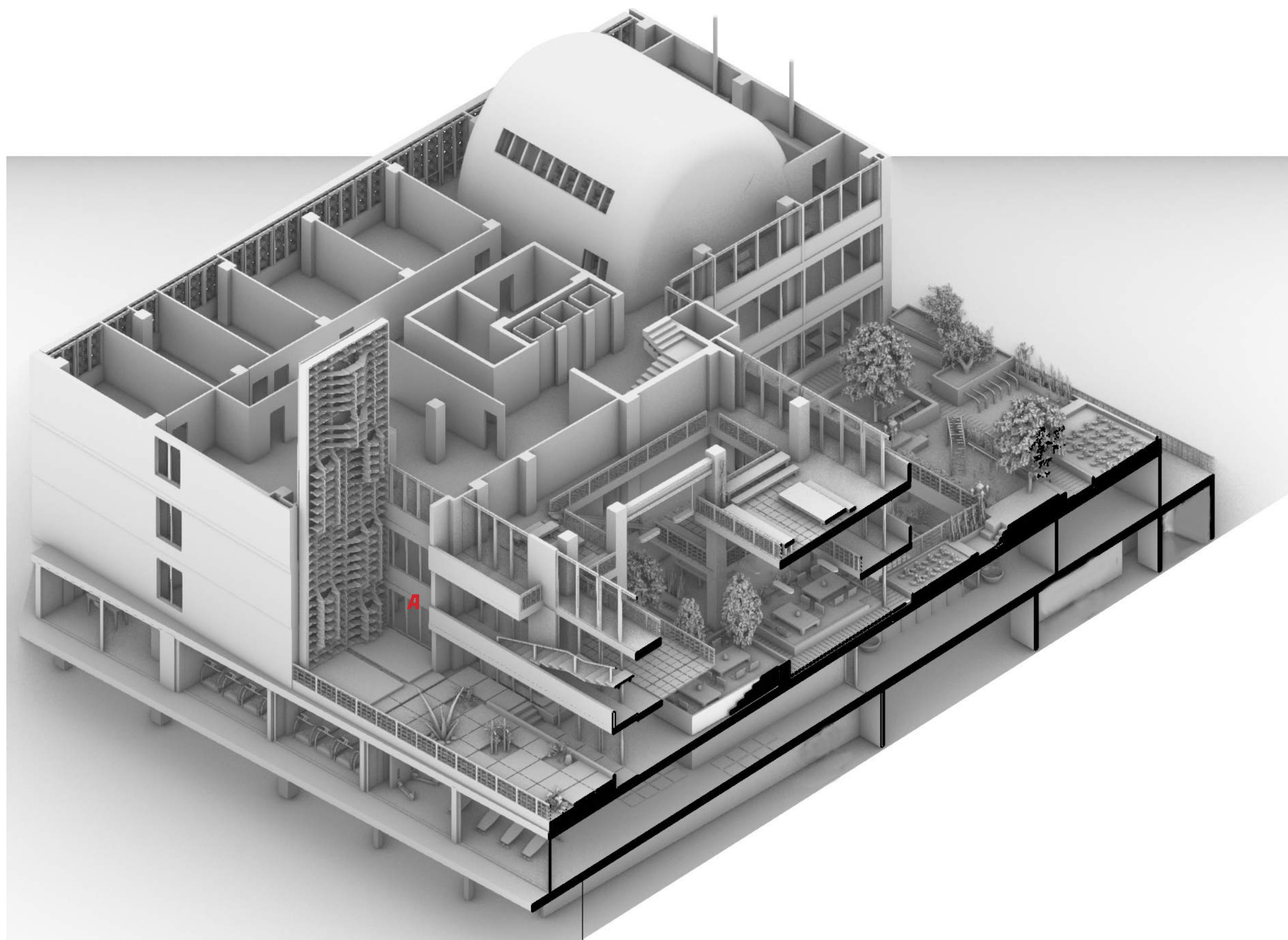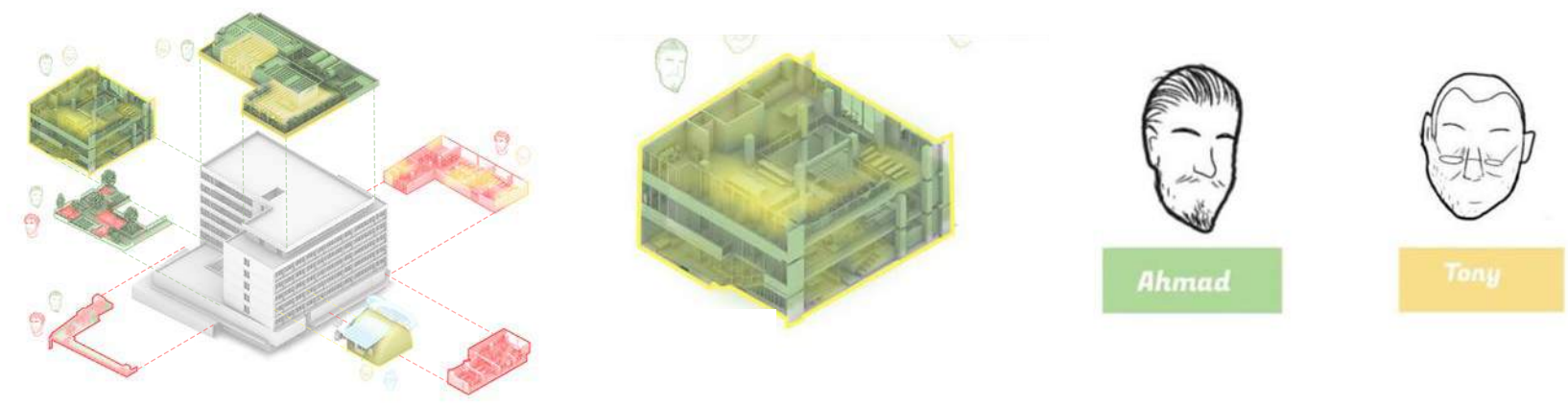
The garden enters the hotel, and in this case, crosses with Tony to create a controlled indoor working area for start-ups, students and individuals to work. As you can see in the axo, this space can be accessed from the vertical core of the hotel, and also from the other core. Since I am talking about Tony's desire, it is important to state, that in a real estate thinking and logic, it wouldn't be logical for me to alter spaces that are currently activated, like the ground floor for example.

(A) Here you can see that the same logic applies and the different soil requirements allow the creation of seating areas on different levels. *(B+C)* This space offers a space for reading, working, and playing games. The work area evolves vertically because of a void created on three floors. This will be seen in section in a bit. *(D)* On the right side one can see the main counter placed next to the entrance from the garden.

This section showcases how the garden of Ahmad enters the working area, and it also shows the vertical void in the working space created by puncturing the slab. The circulation in the working area is based on the addition of steel staircases embodied in the existing balconies of the hotel. The one on the left, going from the 2nd to the 3rd floor allows to attract people coming from Jeanne D'arc Street. Internally, the circulation is on the periphery and allows people to find different working spots in the leftovers of the slabs. **The spaces that have a dark overlay, are the spaces that I haven't modified.** One can find the ground floor, the agriculture company on the right side on the first floor, and finally, the three last floors of the hotel.

This zoom- in highlights the starting point of Ahmad's garden and its evolution vertically. It all started on the 1st floor of Strand where Ahmad used to water the existing plants of his company along the courtyard. The addition that was made was a steel staircase, and a tree at the end of the plants, leading to the garden on the roof of the courtyard.
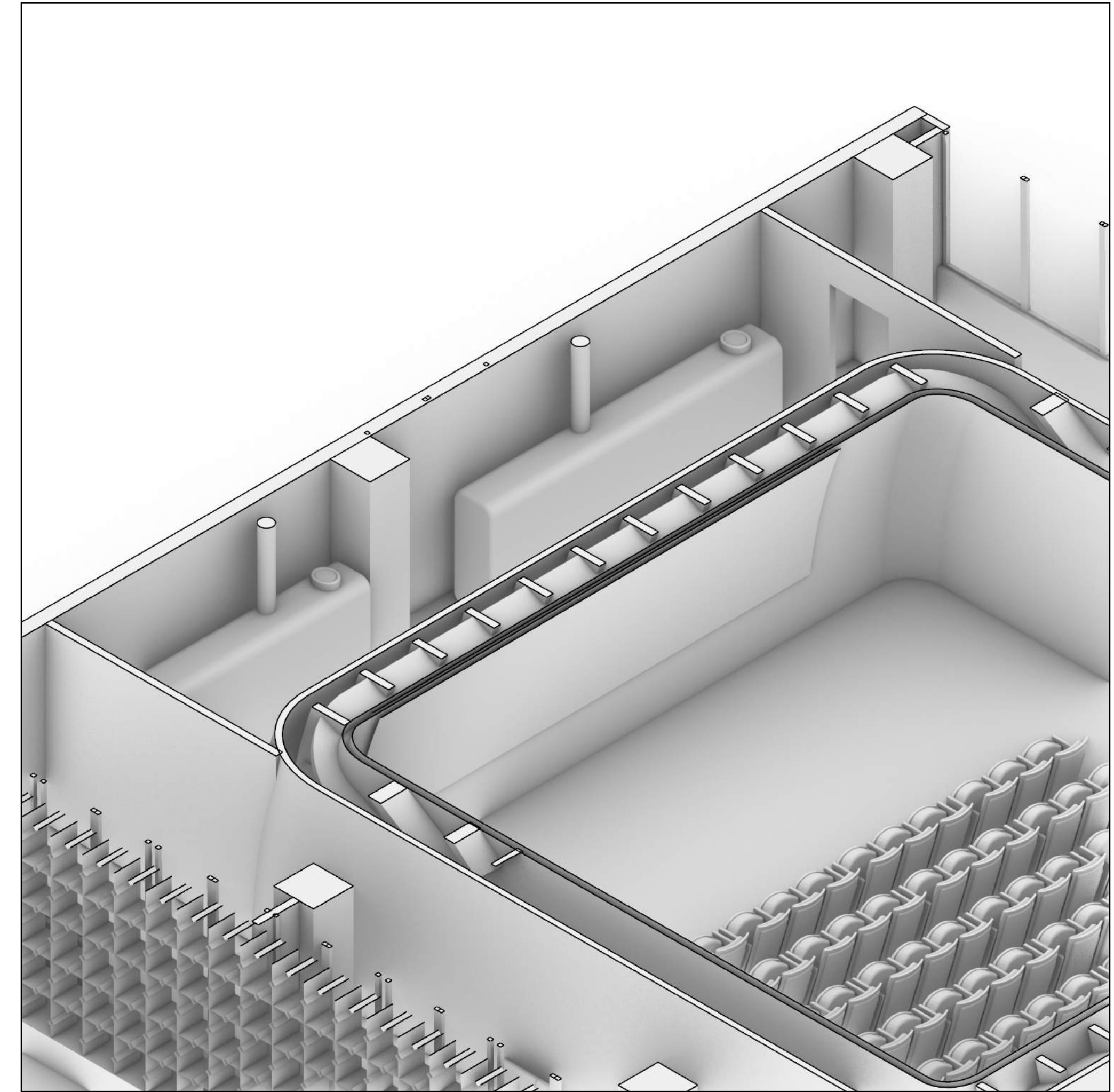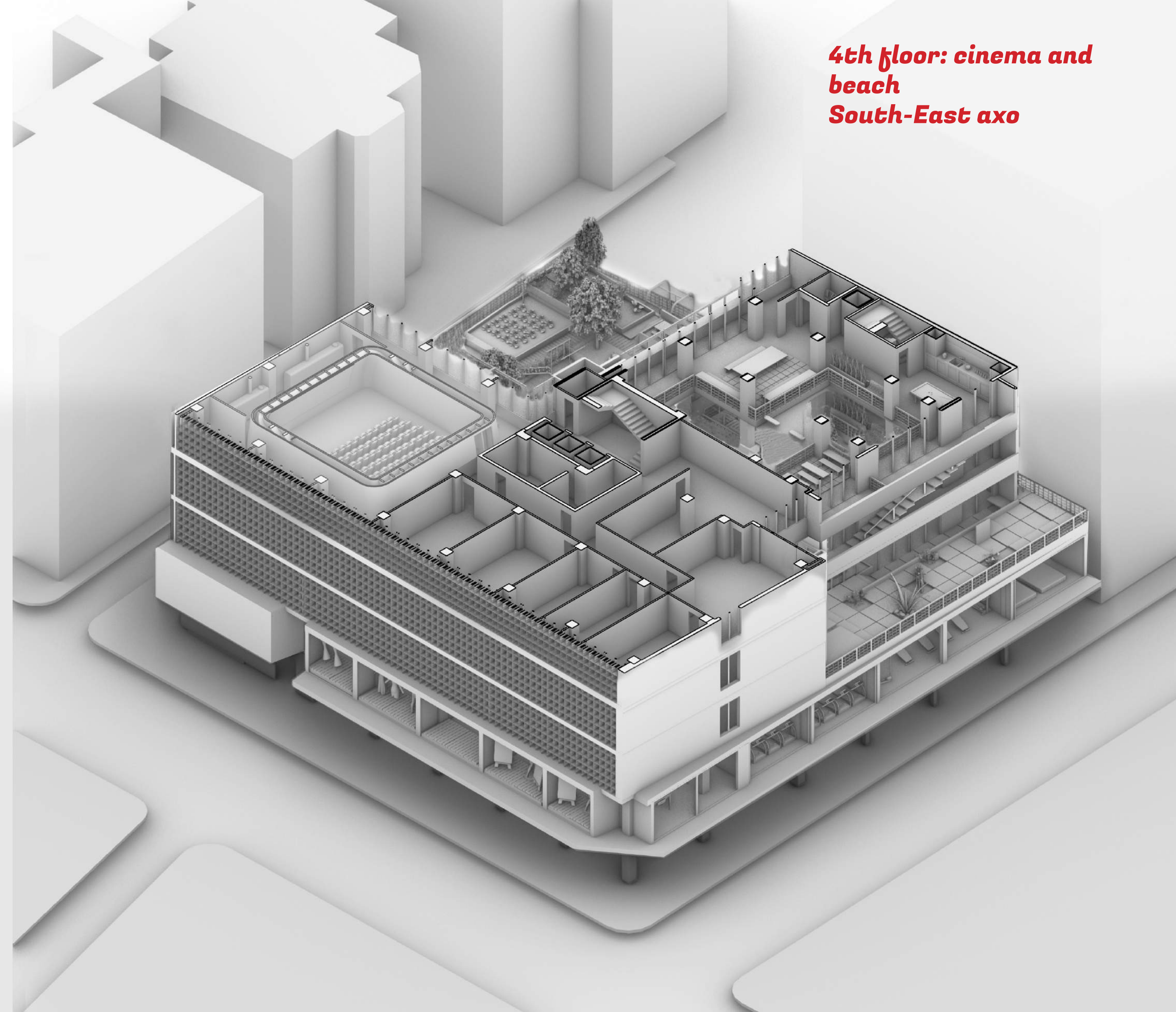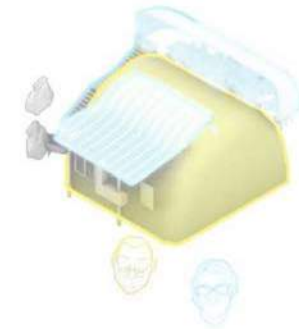
In this cut axo, the left side is exposed to the southern side, which is Hamra Street. *Here I am going to discuss the beach and the cinema, that are Tony and Randa's desires intertwined.* These two work completely as an ecosystem and evolve vertically in relation to one another. On the 4th floor, one can find the entrance of the cinema, that is lead by going through the main core. *Moreover, next to it, on the West side, you can find the water tanks for the beach that will evolve vertically.*

Here are the water tanks leading to the beach upwards. Moreover, the cinema's structure is based on steel ribs that will be discussed later on. The other two edges of the cinema are seating areas for the public before entering the shell, one exposed to Hamra Street and the other to the garden.

A

B

Tony   Randa

Khay, ma fi a7la men hal
a3de ba3ed el ba7ar.
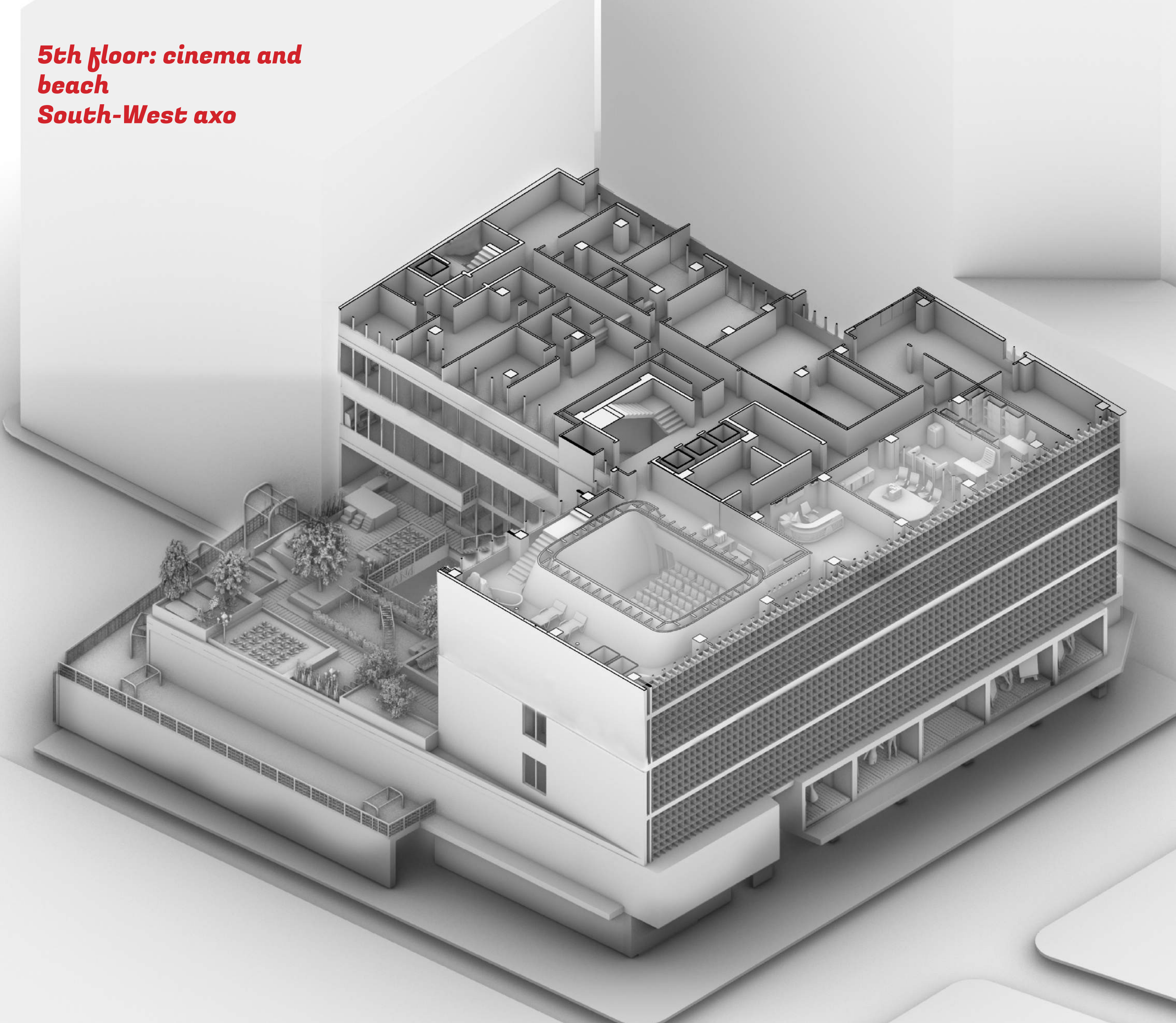
I shifted the direction of this cut plan on the 5th floor to show how the beach evolves. *On this floor, one can find the entrance of the beach.* Moreover, the decision to place it here was based on two factors: The first one being that Randa's office is on the 5th floor, and the second one being that it is on the West side of the building. Moreover, this position also allows an optimal view of the sunset, and also takes advantage of the south - west wind when possible.

(A) Behind the cinema, at this level, there is a direct access to the control room, where the projectors are placed.
(B) The experience here is to always have an exposure to the external exposure of the building, and to the shell of the cinema on the other side. The external part is from one side Hamra Street, and the other, the garden. The experience starts by having changing rooms and a shower and having a seating area resting on the shell, allowing a view of the pool on the upper level.
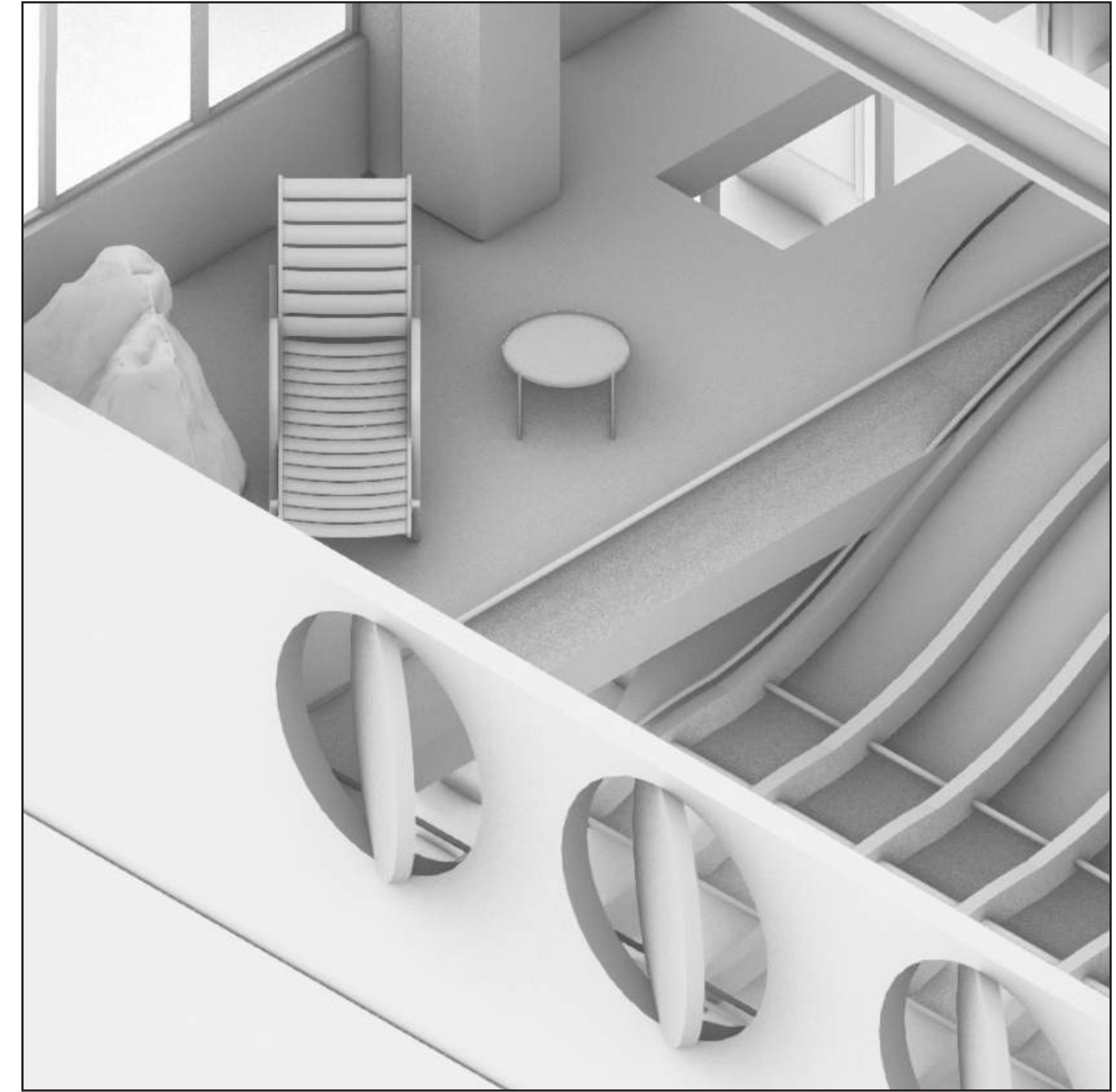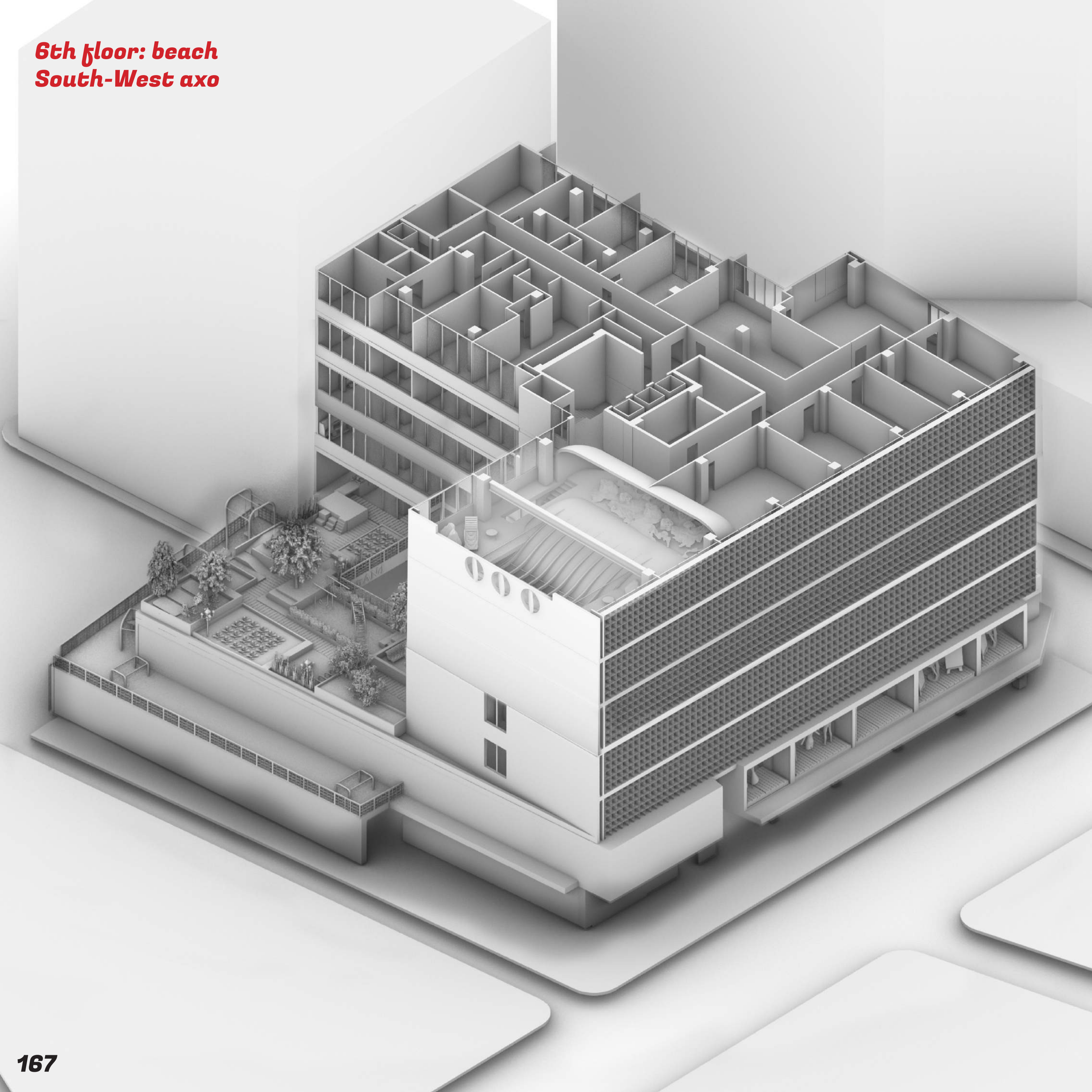
Finally, here is the last level of the beach where it all unfolds. What is interesting is that the beach has only one access point from the building, and is always exposed to external views.

On the edge of the beach one can find the sand area, where Randa or any user can rest and stretch. From this point on, the pool evolves until it reaches the circular openings puncturing the wall. These openings allow the user to shift their views diagonally when they reach them, because of the existing building next to Strand.
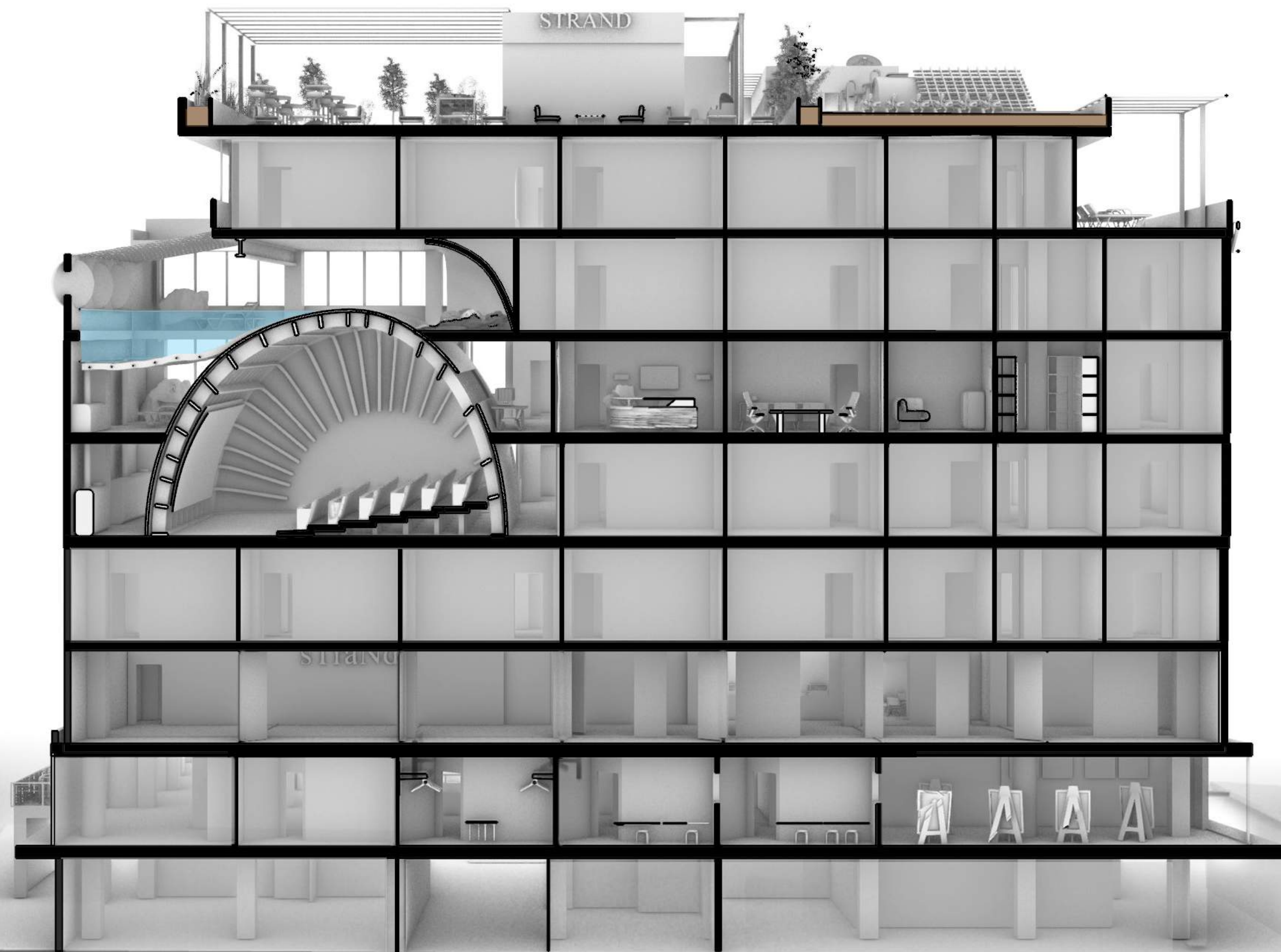
In this section, you can see the strategic location of the beach on the west side of the building, and specifically the way the shell breaks the systematic grid of Strand. On the first floor and 2nd floor, the art center and the exhibition that I discussed beforehand are also visible. One more time, the dark overlays represent the spaces that I didn't alter, leaving room for future investments and adding their values because of my interventions. Here the 3rd, 4tth, 6th and 7th levels of offices are left intact. The ground floor is already in used as I said before.

The cinema and the beach are inversely proportional. The same membrane allows to create the shell of the cinema which enhances the experience acoustically and spatially, and it also continues to create the pool for Randa's space.
Moreover, it is interesting to see how Randa's space enlarges vertically, while the cinema does the opposite. Here you can see all the elements I discussed before, like for instance the double membrane of the shell and the steel ribs in between.

5th floor: Tony and
Randa's offices
South-West axo

A

B

Tony

Ya jameaa,
hayda houwe
Nicholas, 3ando
kam afkar
beddo yehkina
3anna.
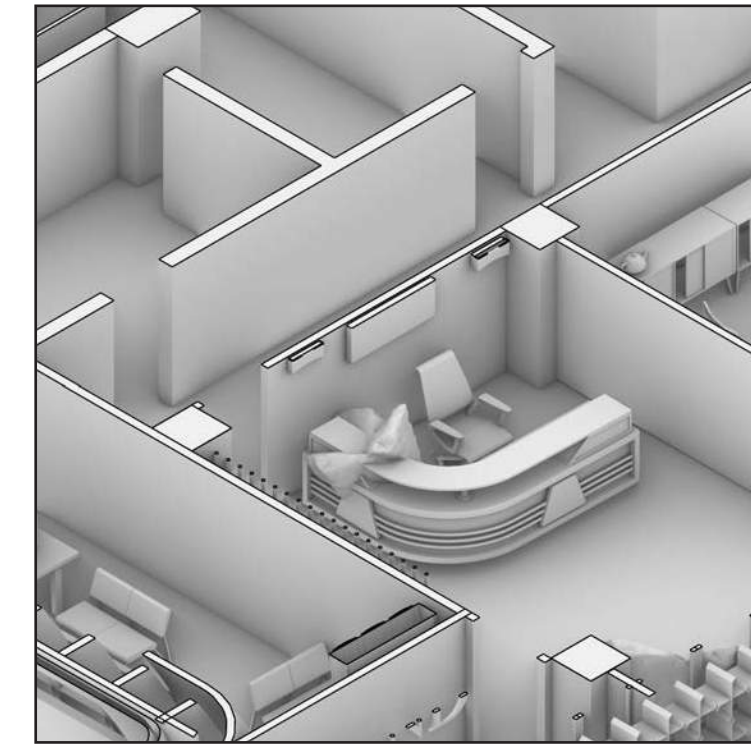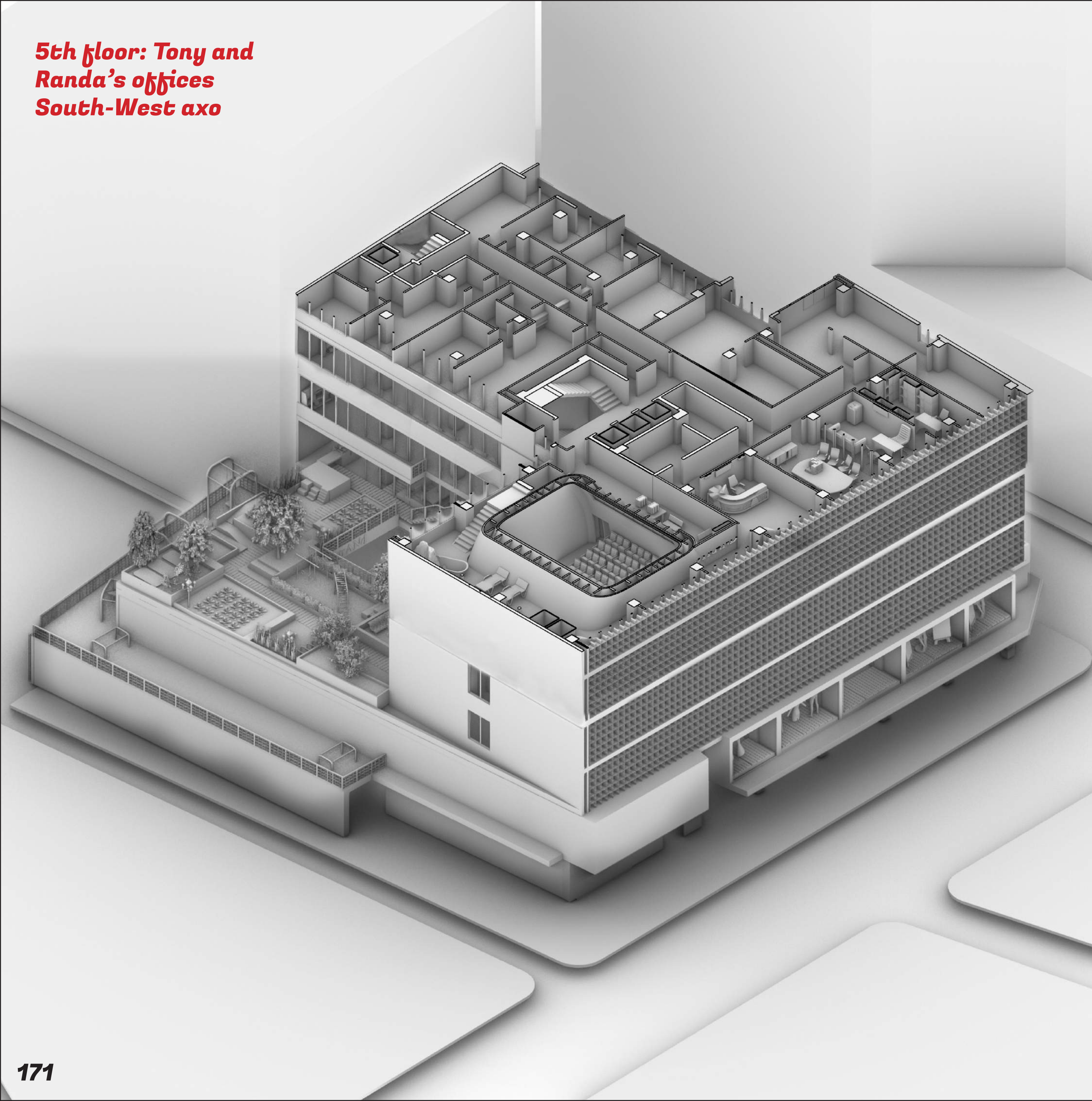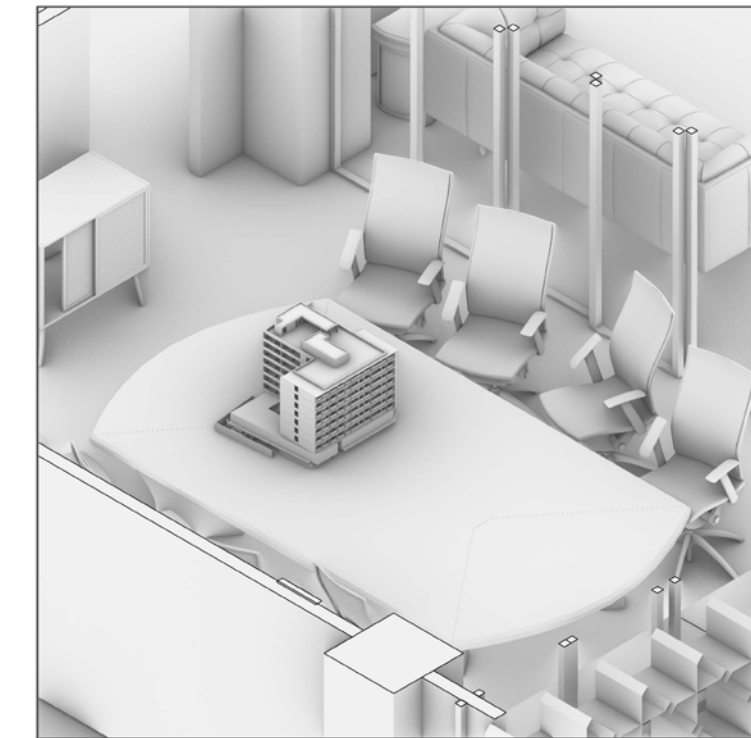
(A) Going back to the 5th floor, here you can see the main entrance of the beach, Tony's office and conference room, and finally next to it Randa's office space. It is important to state here that Randa's beach can be accessed by the public as an individual experience that can be booked. *(B)* Here you can see a zoom in of Tony's office, presenting a model of the Strand building to potential investors. *In this comics, you can see how Tony's office is activated and can see me pitching my ideas to maybe inspire people on how to treat these buildings.* It is not about implementing directly my ideas, it is more about the approach, and the way I thought about regenerating this iconic building. . I will be showing you drawings of the spaces I created, but in the way I would show them to Tony, or people under the same field which is real estate.
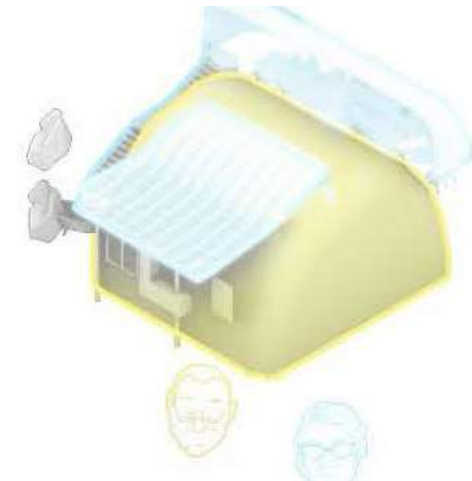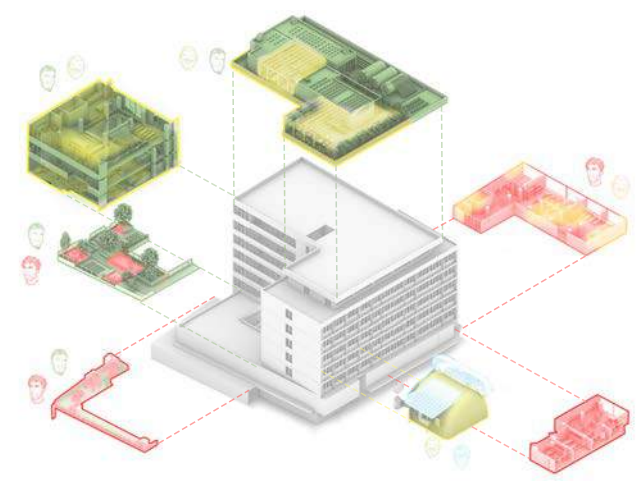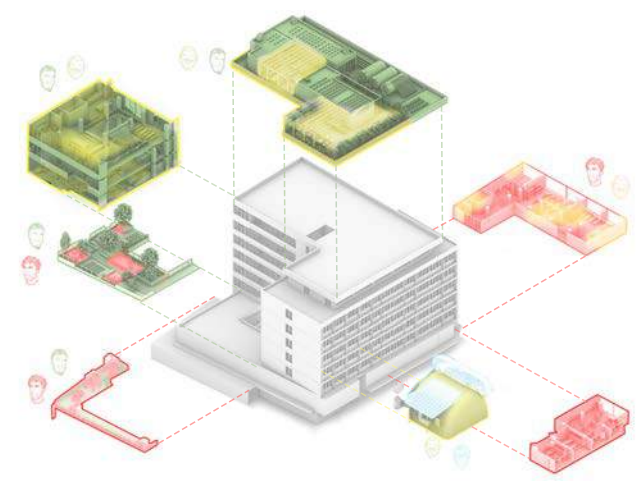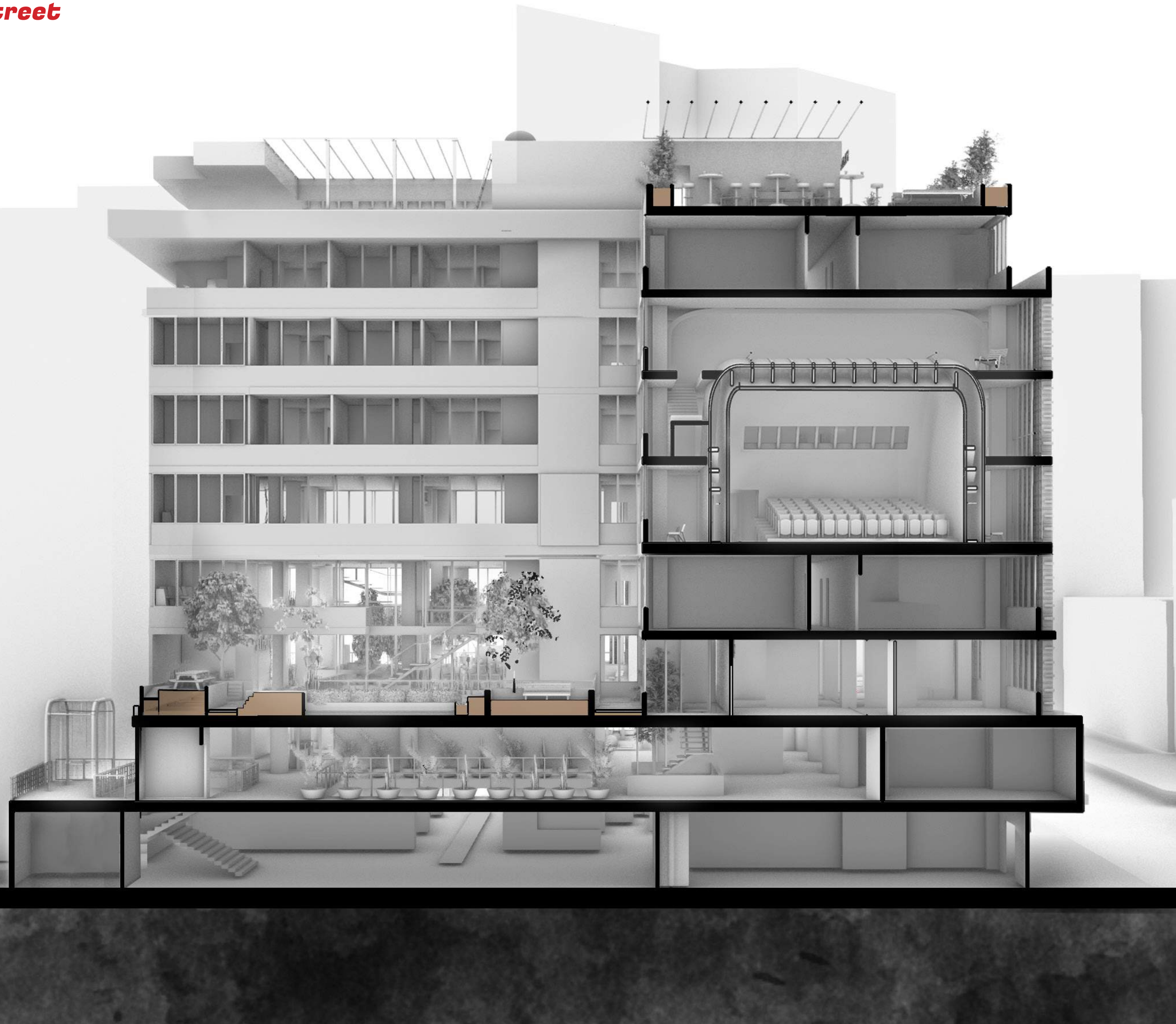
These renderings are part of my pitch to Tony. They show the beach, its materiality, its use during sunset and night time. Through these renderings I am tackling the building through another access than before. Here I am showing the details of the space: lighting, steel, tiling, ceiling, sand, water, glass and handrail.
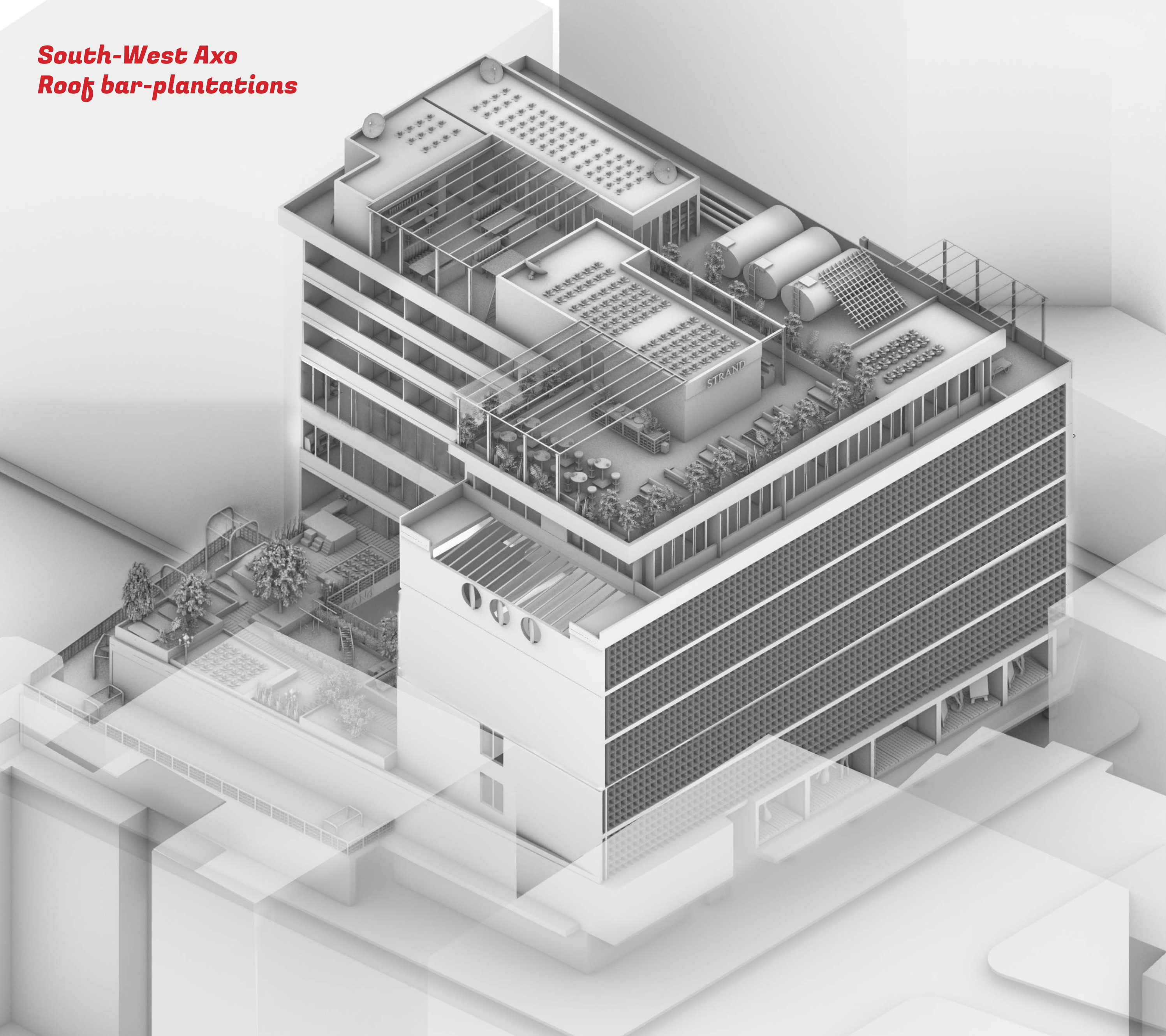
Tony
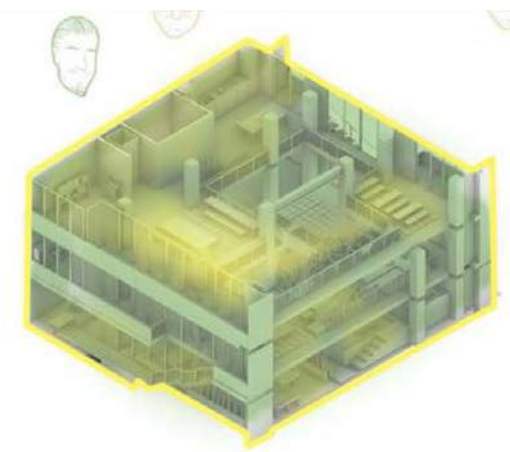
Coming back to the project. This section is perpendicular to Hamra Street. It shows the main stairs on the ground floor, Ahmad's garden and obviously the cinema space on the right hand side. It also showcases the negotiation between Ahmad and Tony on the roof that I will be discussing in a bit. *It particularly shows the vertical evolution of the garden, going from Ahmad's plantations to the stairs, and finally to the garden.*
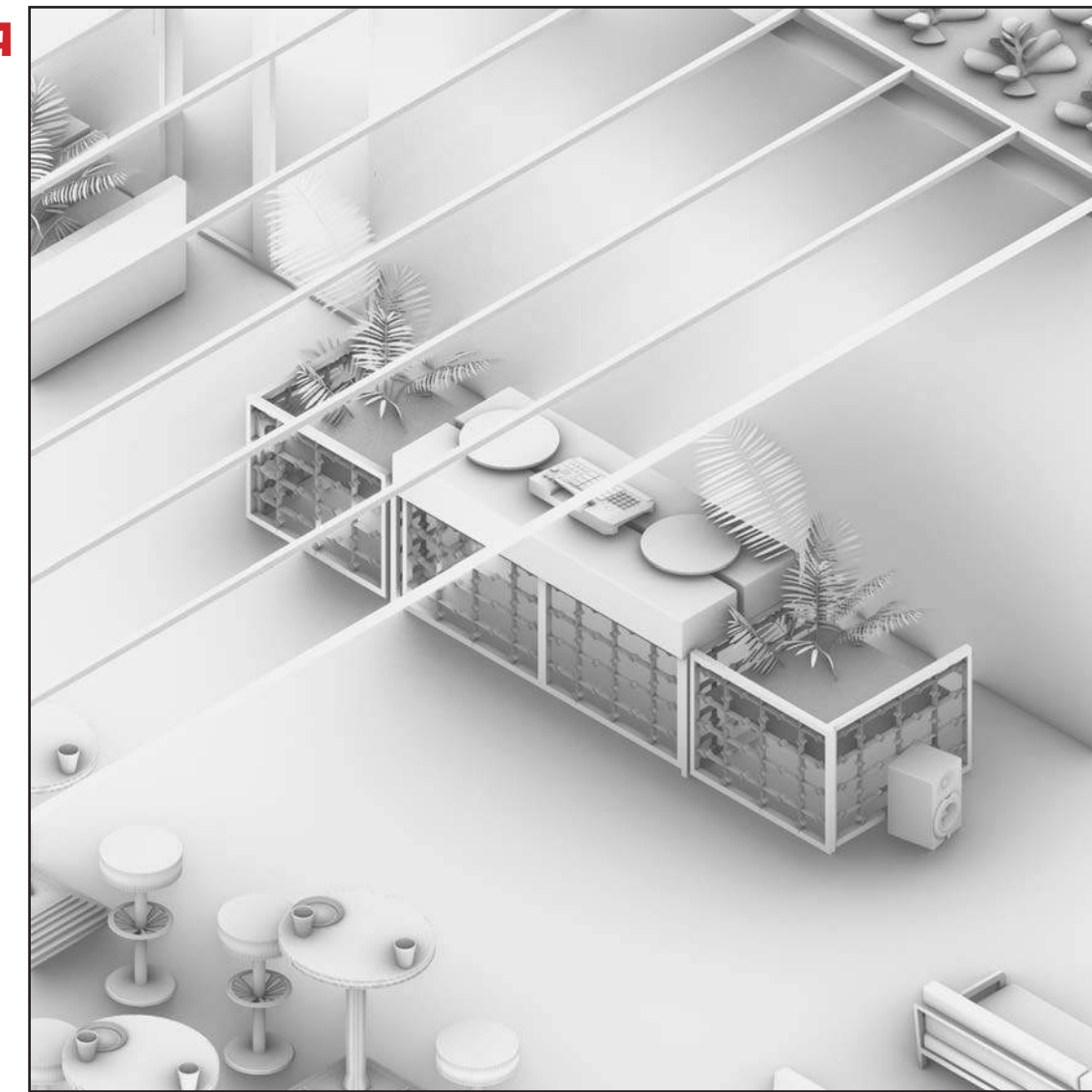
This zoom in from Ahmad's garden showcases different details present in the scenery. *One of the most important ones would be the balustrade that is inspired by Strand's existing facade.* Another component would be the external steel staircase embodied in the working area's balconies.
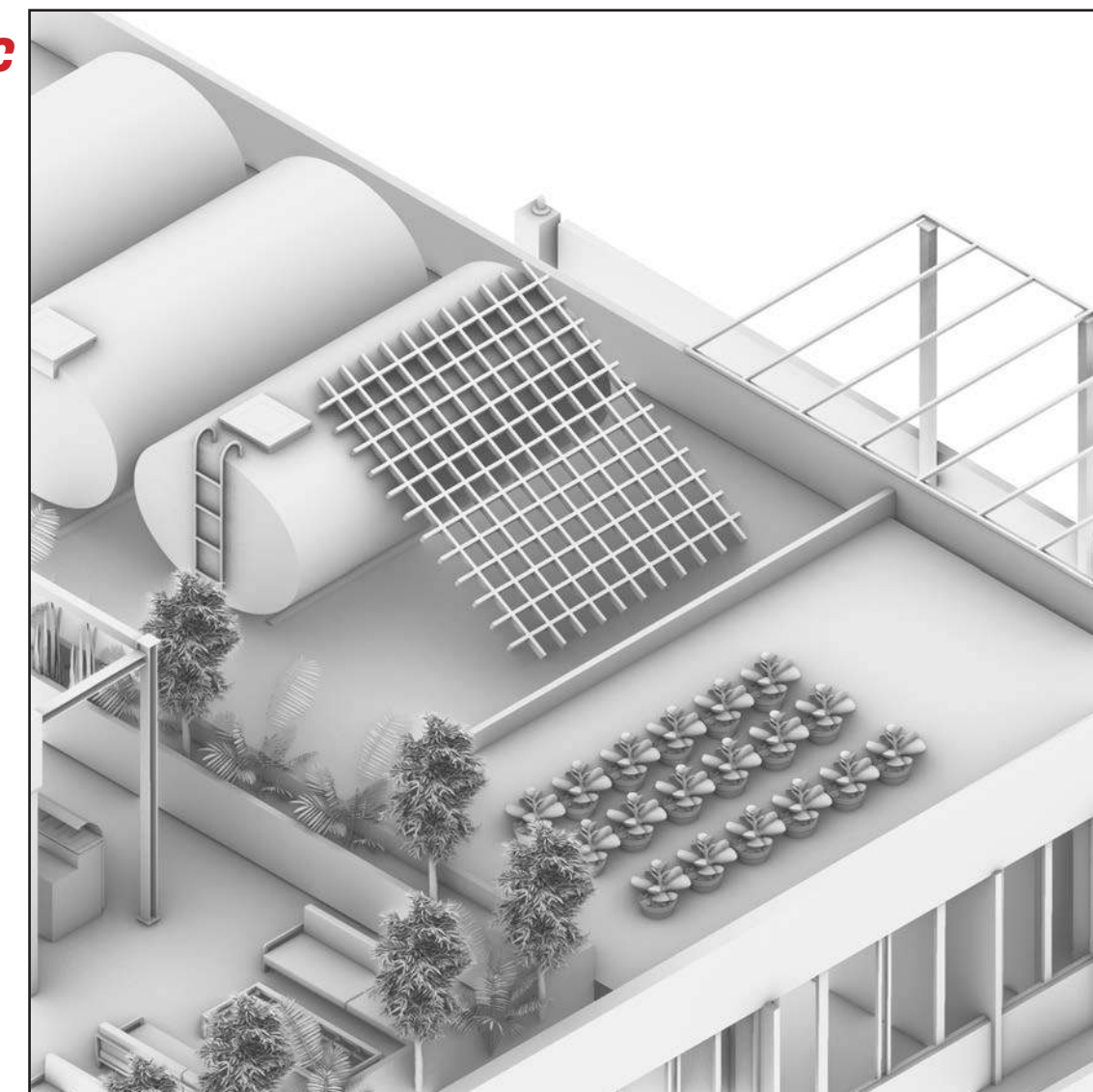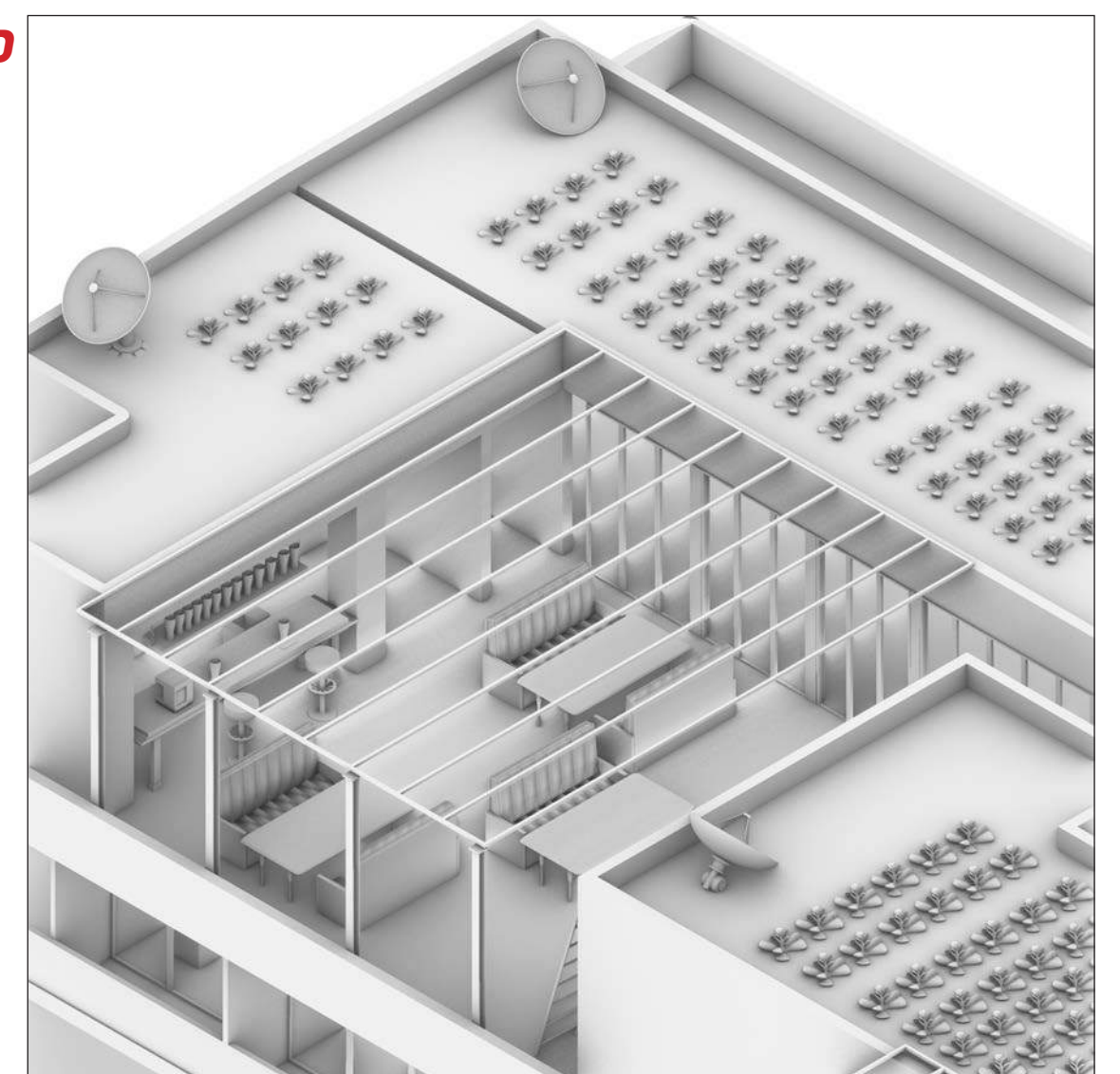
Finally, this is the last intervention. It is located on the roof of Strand, where *the negotiation happens between Tony and Ahmad.*
The intervention here is between using the roof as a rooftop bar with a view towards the sunset, and at the same time using it for Ahmad's plantations and the technical aspect of the building.

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(A + B) You can find the different seating areas on the western side of the roof, where the potential users would have a view of the sunset. **(C+D)** In this case, the plantations are used as boundaries to separate the "commercial" public from the technical space of Ahmad. The concrete structures, water tanks, pipes and satellites were already present in the building, and the roofs are used for Ahmad's plantations.
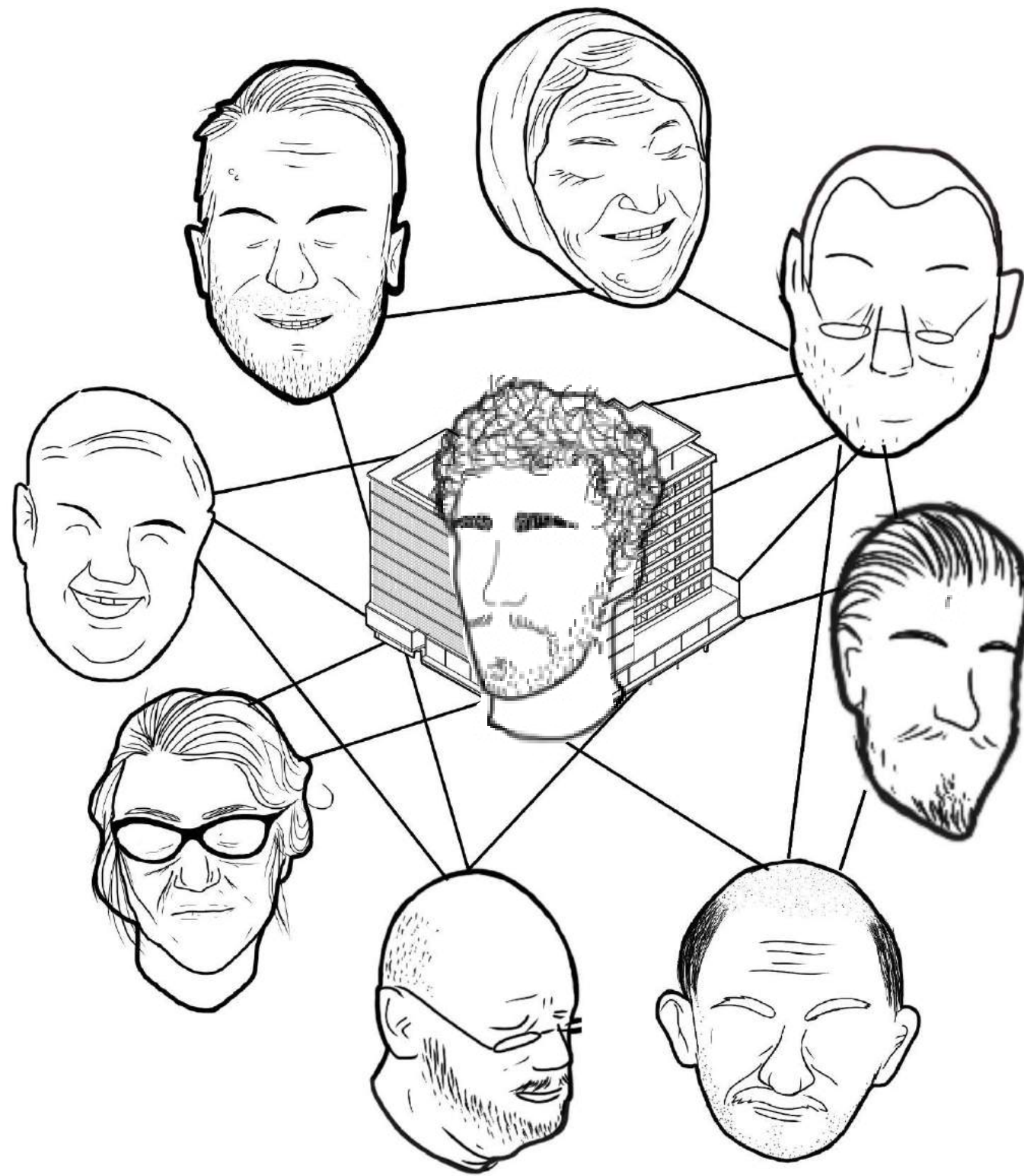
180
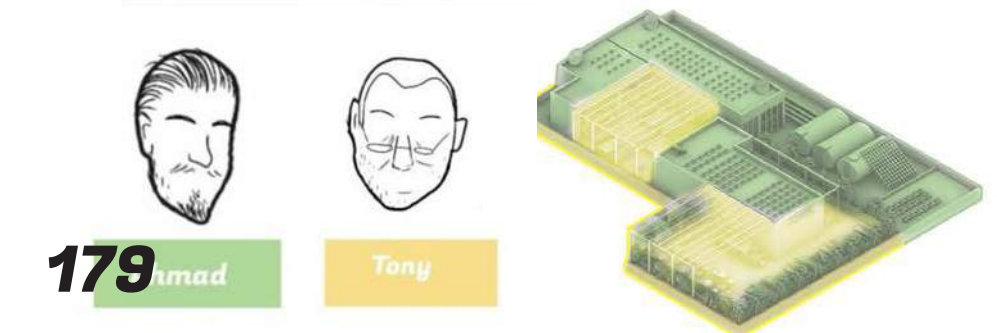
Thank you!

Strand : A collective regeneration

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